



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

## Children's Liturgy of the Word

### FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Today, we hear Jesus tell a story about wheat and how it can live in a different way after it has died or broken down.

The whole purpose of Jesus' existence is to redeem us through Calvary and his life. The law and covenant that Jeremiah (first reading) wanted to replace was written on stone and had been handed down from Moses and was to be rewritten in the hearts of the people because, as Jeremiah saw, unless the covenant and the law of God are taken to heart, conversion from sin is impossible.

Jesus, by his message and life that speaks to the hearts of all people, has become the archetype for that conversion of heart. And the message is the message of today's Gospel- unless you die to yourself, you will not have life in you, and so the call of Lent for a change of heart, a turning back to God, is echoed once more. It is Christ's journey to death and resurrection that draws us to him, we are, in a way, the fruits of that journey and within us is implanted its seed.

The Gospel calls us to live as God's people by dying to our selfishness and living for others. This is our baptismal covenant, and, like Jesus, our true life comes from living with and for others. In him, we too must face the paradox of the cross—we too must die and be raised to new life.

## Objectives

- † To help children grow in Christ.
- † To associate children with new life in Christ.

## Background

- † Today brings us to the threshold of Holy Week.
- † The Gospel prepares us to enter into the paschal mystery.
- † Conversion is at the heart of today's liturgy.
- † We become converted to God, who is in a relationship with us.
- † We are converted to God who forgives.
- † We are converted to God, who cares for the poor and rejected.
- † Jesus freely takes up his cross.
- † We are invited to take up our cross.

## Leader's Reflection Questions

- † How have you grown this Lent?
- † What is your cross?
- † How will you relate to the children in this liturgy?

# The Liturgy

## Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

**Priest: Dear children, go with your leaders and God, and listen to Jesus.**

When most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the place of the celebration. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the location of the celebration, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

## Welcome.

The leaders assist the children to sit and prepare. Begin with the Sign of the Cross. Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may say the following prayer in these or similar words.

**Loving God, you invite us to follow you. Help us to listen to your voice.  
Amen.**

Invite the children to listen to the Gospel.

## Gospel

The children stand for the Gospel. The leader proclaims it. All sign themselves on the forehead, lips and chest.

### ✠ A reading from the holy Gospel, according to John

**Children respond: Glory to you, O Lord**

**J**esus said to his disciples: "I tell you for certain that a grain of wheat that falls on the ground will never be more than one grain unless it dies. But if it dies, it will produce lots of wheat.

"If you love your life, you will lose it. If you give it up in this world, you will be given eternal life.

"If you serve me, you must go with me. My servants will be with me wherever I am. If you serve me, my Father will honour you."

At the end of the Gospel, the Minister of the Word proclaims The Gospel of the Lord.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Children: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

The children sit to listen to the reflection.

## Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions.

An excellent place to begin is the question:

### **What did you hear?**

Every seed has a special kind of life inside of it. If you plant a tree seed, will a flower grow? No. Because, inside a tree seed, there is only the life of a tree. The seed absorbs water from the soil, and, little by little, the seed opens, and its roots sprout. The seed loses its shell, and soon, it doesn't look like a seed anymore. Every part of the seed has turned into something different. It has given its life to become a tree. This is how a seed works.

### **What would happen if you put a seed in an empty jar?**

#### **Would it change?**

#### **Would anything grow from it?**

It would always be just a seed. It would never grow or change.

Jesus told us that if we want things to change and be different, we must also change. Suppose you want to be good friends with someone.

#### **What might you have to do?**

You might have to take turns on the playground. You might have to share a toy. You might have to do what they want sometimes and not always what you want to do. You may have to give up and give in sometimes. It's not easy. We might always want our way, but then we wouldn't have a friend. So, when we think about what we might like more, we might choose a friend more than having our way. That is a good lesson.

Having a great friend is a wonderful experience. Giving up some of our time, toys, and way is worth it. God says that we should think about that and always try to change and grow to make choices that give us a happier and better life, even if it is difficult in the beginning.

Jesus is your greatest friend.

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith.

Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

### The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: We do believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who became our brother and gave his life for us?

All: We do believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: We do believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

### Prayer of the Faithful

leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. It may be necessary for the leader to repeat and paraphrase the petition and conclude it with the cue for the response: we pray. All respond to each petition by saying: Lord, hear our prayer. Sample intercessions are below.

**Leader: With joy, we offer God our needs. Our response is: Lord, hear our prayer. R./**

**Lector: For the Church, the sign of God's love in the world, that all people will be drawn in and welcomed, we pray: R./**

**Lector: For the sick, the weak and the elderly, we pray: R./**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children or add intercessions based on the Church's current needs, the world, or the local community.

**Lector: For forgiveness, that we may give it and receive it, we pray: R./**

**Leader: Ever loving God, you show love for your people. Send your love into our lives and those for whom we pray in faith through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and think about what they have heard and are now doing.

Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.

Readings: Lectionary Sundays and Solemnities, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ottawa, ON, adapted for children.  
Word & Worship Workbook for Year B, Mary Birmingham, Paulist Press, New York, NY.  
Celebrating the Lectionary for Preschool and Kindergarten Year B, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, IL.  
Sunday Weekly Leader Guide, Treehaus Communications, Inc., Loveland, OH.  
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