



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

## Children's Liturgy of the Word

### SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

We don't pray to change God but to open ourselves to God changing us. In this Sunday's Gospel, the man with leprosy, isolated by the disease (representing sin), prays to be changed. He is searching for faith in God. We are challenged to consider how the touch of Jesus Christ increases our faith and changes us.

The readings may be difficult for children. They use the disease of leprosy to symbolize sin (clearly indicated in both the Old and New Testaments) and that Jesus has the power to forgive sin. We can easily move, however, to a secondary, though not less important, focus.

All diseases and illnesses, especially as severe as leprosy (AIDs, COVID, etc), are dreaded by human beings. Jesus reveals that he has the power to heal these ailments and wants to. Jesus, in his compassion, reached out and touched a man with leprosy. This was not a demonstration against the law. It was an act of genuine love. This Gospel focuses on the compassion and the power of Jesus to help children develop faith in the Lord.

Suffering, violence and oppression are contrary to God's plan. Children's Liturgy of the Word leaders participate in God's plan by helping children grow in faith and see hope in Jesus. Suffering cannot have the last word.

## Objectives

- † To help children grow in faith in Jesus.
- † To introduce children that Jesus is our Healer.

## Leader's Preparation:

- † Pray the Lectionary readings.
- † Review the background.
- † Reflect upon the reflection questions.

## Environment and Materials

- † Two screened adult leaders.
- † Liturgical space: the liturgical colour is **Green**.
- † White cloth, Lectionary and a candle.
- † Place the Bible in a prominent location for the children to see.
- † Select volunteers (older children or adults) to proclaim the readings.

## Background

### First Reading: Leviticus

- † This reading presents a Jewish law that people with leprosy or other skin diseases were considered contagious. This was to protect the transmission of disease.
- † It also served the dual purpose of protecting others and expressing a belief that illnesses were caused by other powers, whether God or demons.
- † As a result, only God could heal these types of illnesses.
- † Judging someone as "unclean" excluded them from society and religious death.
- † The work of the priest was not to heal but to judge whether or not the person was afflicted or fully cured.
- † All a victim could do was call on God.

### Gospel: Mark

- † Jesus' last action in the opening chapter of Mark's Gospel connected him to someone who wanted help.
- † The leper's statement said much more than we might first assume.
- † Because only God or God's chosen one could heal leprosy, people understood such healing to be a sign of the coming of God's kingdom.
- † In saying, "If you wish, you can," the man was proclaiming faith in Jesus' preaching that the kingdom of God was at hand.
- † This leper was a man whose disease had cut him off from everything.
- † Jesus' healing words and touch show extraordinary solidarity with the sick man.
- † Jesus himself became unclean by that touch. But, while that legal element did not overly concern Jesus, he did not flout the law.
- † Although Jesus healed him, the man was only restored to social and religious life with the approval of a priest.
- † Jesus sent him to fulfill what Moses had ordered.
- † Jesus, God's High Priest, ultimately healed the man and returned him to the community. Jesus restores the man's faith in God. Jesus is the reason for our Faith.

### Leader's Reflection Questions

- † Who in your life is experiencing the need for healing from illness and isolation?
- † Where is their division in your life?
- † How can Jesus bring healing to it?

## 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, God helps us to see and reach out to people who feel unworthy. Jesus shows us that the Kingdom of God begins with faith in God.**

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 about 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.

## First Reading

The children sit during the proclamation of the reading.

### **A reading from the book of Leviticus.**

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:

When a person has a spot on the skin of his body that turns into a leprous disease, he shall be brought to Aaron, the priest or one of his sons, the priest.

The person with the leprous disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head be dishevelled, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, "Unclean, unclean."

He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

The Word of the Lord.

**Children: Thanks be to God**

## Gospel

The children stand for the Gospel. The leader proclaims the Gospel. All sign themselves on the forehead, lips and chest. Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark. All sign themselves on the forehead, lips and chest.

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

**✠ A reading from the holy Gospel, according to Mark**

A leper came to Jesus begging and, kneeling, saying, "If you choose, you can make me clean."

Moved with love, Jesus touched him and said to him, "Be made clean!" Immediately, the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

Jesus told him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and do what Moses commanded, to show others."

But the man went out and told many people that Jesus could not stay where he was but had to go out into another place, and even there, people came to him from everywhere.

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. Please consider 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:

### **Have you ever heard of leprosy? What is it?**

Leprosy is a skin disease. People who had it had painful sores on their skin. In Jesus' time, people with leprosy were not allowed to come near healthy people because the disease was contagious. That means other people could have caught it by being near those affected. Today, we have medicines that treat this skin disease, but in Jesus' time, those who had leprosy were ordered to live far outside of the town. They couldn't work or get food. So, the man in the Gospel would have gotten into a lot of trouble for coming near Jesus. But he trusted Jesus so much that he wasn't afraid. Listen also to the trust in his words to Jesus: "You have the power to heal me if you want to."

### **Why do you think Jesus wasn't afraid he'd get sick if the man was near him?**

Jesus' love was more significant than any fear or worry of disease. Jesus is God and wants us to have a full and joyous life. The man had great faith in God. God wants all of us to have a strong faith and to trust in his love.

### **If the healing of the man was such a good thing, why didn't he allow the man to tell everyone what happened?**

Jesus knew that if people found out he could work miracles, they'd come pouring out just to be cured. Jesus was meant to do more than cure people. His mission was to teach and to tell people about living fully in God's love. But when something extraordinary happens to us, we can't keep it to ourselves! The man was so happy he had to tell everyone how he was healed. That's how God's love makes us feel. It fills us with joy, and we can't keep it in. We want to share this love with others so they, too, can experience that fullness of life in God.

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

Invite the children to think of the needs of others and to announce their petitions. The 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: For this, we pray. All respond to each petition by saying: Lord, hear our prayer. Sample intercessions are below.

**Leader:** Having listened to the Scriptures, let us call on God with happy hearts for our needs. Our response is: Lord, hear our prayer. **R./**

**Lector:** For the suffering, that we try to bring Jesus' healing to others, we pray: **R./**

For our family and friends, that their faith in Jesus increases, 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:** That those who have died live in God's Light forever, we pray:

**Leader:** Jesus, our healer, increase our faith. Strengthen us to serve and follow you. Amen.

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.

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.  
Prepared by the Diocese of Hamilton, Liturgy Office, © 2024



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