



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

## Children's Liturgy of the Word

### SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

The mission of the Church is love – the love of Jesus shared with the world – all people, everywhere. Love is not optional for a Christian. It is the ultimate sign of Christian behaviour.

The first reading introduces us to Cornelius, a Gentile or non-Jew. Before this passage, Cornelius has a vision instructing him to meet Peter, while Peter himself has a vision that he later understands as a sign that Gentiles who believe in Jesus should be welcomed into the community. When Cornelius meets Peter, a large crowd gathers, and Peter starts to teach that God does not have favourites. God shows no partiality between Jews and Gentiles. The Holy Spirit descends upon the believers, and Cornelius and his household are baptized.

In the Gospel, we learn that the love between the Father and the Son is the same love that should characterize the relationships of Jesus' followers. Christians are commanded to love one another. The word "friend" that Jesus uses to describe his relationship with his disciples is derived from the verb "to love." This friendship emphasizes mutual self-giving and is far deeper than a casual relationship.

## Objective

- † Help children recognize that Jesus is the source of all love.
- † Help children recognize the commandment of love.

## Background

### **Acts 10.25-26, 34-35, 44-48**

After being invited, Peter visited the home of Cornelius, a Roman soldier. During his address to the people in the house, the Holy Spirit came upon everyone, including the non-Jewish Gentiles. Peter ordered that the Gentiles in the household be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

### **Psalm 98.1-4**

This psalm talks about how God loves everyone in the world. God has shown God's saving power to all nations. We can sing a new song to show how happy God has shown us salvation. God came to the house of Israel, but everyone has seen the salvation that God has given us. This is something that deserves our praise and is worth singing about.

### **1 John 4.7-10**

John's message is crystal clear and direct. He emphasizes that God is Love and everything we have flows from God. The focus is on the second part of the double commandment: to love our neighbour as ourselves. We must love one another because of God's love for us. Love distinguishes those who know God from those who don't. God's love for us is so great that God sent God's only Son, and this love is God's initiative. While Christians see God's love through Jesus, the Christian community, which has life through that love, also reveals God's love.

### **John 15:9-17**

Jesus' teachings emphasize love and interconnectedness. His death proves his immense love for us, and we are called to respond to his love by obeying his commands. Love is an action, not just a feeling, and Jesus' standard of perfection makes that very clear. Through his teachings, Jesus sets an example of love that his followers are to emulate.

## Leader's Reflection Questions

- † What does it mean that Jesus calls us friends?
- † How do we show our love for God by loving others?

## 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's commandments are based on love. Go with your leaders to learn how loving God and others are the work of Jesus's disciples.

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.

**Lord Jesus,**

**Bless us with open minds and hearts so that we will hear your message.**

**Amen.**

Invite the children to listen to the readings. It is unnecessary to proclaim all the readings; however, the Gospel is required.

## First Reading

### A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

- 25 On Peter's arrival at Caesarea,  
Cornelius, a centurion, met him,  
and falling at his feet, worshipped him.
- 26 But Peter made him get up, saying,  
"Stand up; I am only a man."
- 34 Then Peter began to speak,  
"God shows no partiality,
- 35 , but in every nation, anyone who fears him  
and does what is right is acceptable to him.
- 44 While Peter was still speaking,  
the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word.
- 45 Those who had come with Peter were astounded  
that the gift of the Holy Spirit  
had been poured out even on the Gentiles,
- 46 for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God.  
Then Peter said,
- 47 "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people  
who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"
- 48 So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.  
Then they invited him to stay for several days.

### The word of the Lord.

At the end of the reading, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The word of the Lord."

### **Children: Thanks be to God.**

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

## Responsorial Psalm

**R.** The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

**or:** Alleluia! (Two or three times)

- 1 O sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvellous things.  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have brought him victory. **R.**
- 2 The Lord has made known his victory;  
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.
- 3 He has remembered his steadfast love  
and faithfulness to the house of Israel. **R.**
- 4 All the ends of the earth have seen  
the victory of our God.  
Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;  
break forth into joyous songs and sing praises. **R.**

## Second Reading

### **A reading from the first letter of John.**

- 7 Beloved, let us love one another,  
because love is from God;  
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
- 8 Whoever does not love does not know God,  
for God is love.
- 9 God's love was revealed among us in this way:  
God sent his only Son into the world  
so that we might live through him.
- 10 In this is love,  
not that we loved God but that he loved us  
and sent his Son for our sins.

### **The word of the Lord.**

At the end of the reading, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The word of the Lord."

### **Children: Thanks be to God.**

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

## 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.**

Jesus said to his disciples:

- 9 "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you;  
abide in my love.
- 10 If you keep my commandments,  
you will abide in my love,  
just as I have kept my Father's commandments  
and abide in his love.
- 11 I have said these things to you  
so that my joy may be in you,  
and that your joy may be complete.
- 12 This is my commandment,  
that you love one another as I have loved you.
- 13 No one has greater love than this,  
To lay down one's life for one's friends.
- 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.
- 15 I do not call you servants any longer,  
because the servant does not know what the master is doing;  
but I have called you friends,  
because I have made known to you everything  
that I have heard from my Father.
- 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you.  
And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last,  
so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.
- 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

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

### The Gospel of the Lord.

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

## 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?**

Allow each child to respond to hearing the Word of God in their own words. Then, begin a general discussion, building on these responses, using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

### **What do you think the word love means?**

### **Who loves you? Whom do you love?**

When we think of loving and being loved, God is the most important one who loves us. Jesus knew that God loved him very much. Jesus tells us that he loves us just like God loves him! That is a very big love! Do you ever wonder how you can show God that you love God? We can't see God, so how can we show God our love?

### **How can you show God that you love God?**

Jesus said that if we listen to and follow his teachings, we show our love for God. The Commandments are ten rules we can follow to show that we care for God and for others. When we follow these rules, we learn to love everyone, treat them fairly, and be kind. Jesus' teachings apply to everyone, so we do good things for others. Following the Commandments brings us closer together, like a big family where everyone is a brother or sister. When we achieve this, we feel happy, which we call joy. Even when things are tough or sad, we can still feel joy in our hearts because we know that Jesus loves us.

Jesus said in the Gospel that we should love others. He said that sometimes we need to put their happiness before our own. This means we should be willing to sacrifice to make others happy. Think about a time when you wanted to play with a toy, but your friend wanted to play with it, too. You decided to give the toy to your friend. Even though you didn't get to play with the toy, you felt happy seeing your friend happy. This may have set a good example for your friend to do the same for you next time. Making others happy is important; sometimes we must put their happiness before ours. This is how we all love each other and feel joy in our hearts.

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 believe.

**Leader:** Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

**All:** We believe.

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

**All:** We 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:** Trusting in the word and love of God, let us pray for our needs.

**Our response is: R./**

**Lector:** For the spirit of love to fill the Church in every country, we pray: **R./**

**Lector:** For people everywhere, that they will know us by our love for one another, we pray: **R./**

**Lector:** For ourselves, that we will care for the sick, the lonely and those without friends, we pray: **R./**

**Lector:** For the spirit of gentleness in our lives, we pray: **R./**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

**Leader:** Loving and faithful God, our hope and salvation, pour your love on us and those for whom we pray. 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.