



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word

ASCENSION OF THE LORD

The mission of the church is to evangelize. Our Gospel reading tells us that before Jesus left the disciples to be with God, he gave them a job. Go to every part of the world and tell everyone the Good News. This command is accompanied by the promise that Jesus will be with them always.

These final Gospel verses show that from the earliest times, the disciples realized that even though Jesus was no longer physically with them, the Lord was working with them.

The word "apostle" comes from the Greek for 'one who is sent out' and is used for those who met the risen Lord. Indeed, the apostles did go forth unhesitatingly and preached everywhere. Mark uses vivid and dramatic figures of speech when referring to demons, snakes and poison to illustrate that those who believe in the good news of Jesus Christ and preach it can face all that threatens or destroys life and overcome it. This stewardship of life includes stewardship of all creation.

The presence of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and the extraordinary signs and miracles shown by the apostles did not end with them. They shared what they had received with all those they baptized, and they continued the work. We are the baptized of today, and the same promises that Jesus made to the apostles belong to us now. You are preaching the good news to the children you gather with this Sunday.

Objective

- † To help children recognize the Ascension of our Lord.
- † To help children recognize that they carry on the work of Jesus because of their baptism and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Background

Acts 1:1-11 The opening verses of the Acts of the Apostles provide a seamless transition from Luke's Gospel account. Although the Gospels do not mention it, in Acts, Luke refers to a momentous forty-day period following Jesus' resurrection, during which he appeared to his disciples and provided them with crucial instruction through the Holy Spirit. At the end of this period, the disciples were still grappling with their understanding of the kingdom of God and sought privileged information about the future. In response, Jesus reminded them of the Holy Spirit's promise to provide them with everything they needed to fulfill their role of witnessing him throughout the world, just as he had taught them to pray for their needs.

Psalms 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9 This psalm portrays the Lord taking a throne, marking the beginning of a new reign. We celebrate God's kingship and the joy it brings.

Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13 Paul wants the community to remember the gift they received from the Lord. The Lord's departure was necessary for the Spirit to come and bestow gifts upon them.

Mark 16:15-20 Today's reading focuses on the disciples' mission, just as Jesus had instructed them before his Ascension. Verse 15 echoes Matthew 28:19, emphasizing the connection between Christ and Salvation. The Gospel concludes briefly and straightforwardly, stating that Jesus was taken up and seated at God's right hand without any further details, with the last words of Jesus in this reading urging the disciples to spread the message of hope and salvation to the world.

Leader's Reflection Questions

- † What do the eyes of your heart focus on most often? How does this affect your actions?
- † What are you sent forth to do? How do you use your gifts in this mission?

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: Children of God, you will hear how Jesus is taken to heaven today. While Jesus is no longer with the disciples in person, he did not abandon them or us.

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.

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did from the beginning until when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

After his suffering, he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father.

"This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

So when they had come together, they asked him,

"Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, two men in white robes suddenly stood by them.

They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?

This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come like you saw him go into heaven."

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. Go make disciples of all nations; I am with you always.

Clap your hands, all you people;
shout to God with loud songs of joy.
For the Lord, the Most High, is awesome,
a great king over all the earth. **R.**

God has gone up with a shout,
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God, sing praises;
Sing praises to our King, sing praises. **R.**

For God is the king of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm.
God is king over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne. **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from the first letter of Ephesians.

I, Paul, a prisoner in the Lord,
beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling
to which you have been called,
with all humility and gentleness, with patience,
bearing with one another in love,
making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit,
just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all and through all and in all.

But each of us was given grace
according to the measure of Christ's gift.

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles,
some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints
for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ,
until all of us come to the unity of the faith
and of the knowledge of the Son of God,
to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

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 Mark

Children respond: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus appeared to the eleven, and he said to them,
"Go into all the world
and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.
The one who believes and is baptized will be saved;
but the one who does not believe will be condemned.
And these signs will accompany those who believe:
by using my name, they will cast out demons;
they will speak in new tongues;
they will pick up snakes in their hands,
and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them;
they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."
So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them,
was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.
And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere,
while the Lord worked with them
and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.
The gospel of the Lord.."

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 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. Some words that you may wish to include are go, tell, believe, baptized, power, preached, message, and miracles.

When Jesus lived on earth, he worked every day to bring about God's Kingdom.

Tell me some of what Jesus did. He helped the people who were sick. He fed people who were hungry. He included people who were left out. He taught people about God and showed them how to love one another.

Jesus' work wasn't finished. He gave us a start by teaching us all these things, but now we have the job of continuing his work. Jesus told his friends long ago that they had to keep doing what he taught them. Jesus' friends started right where they lived. People kept spreading the news about Jesus Christ. For hundreds and hundreds of years, people have been working on this. Imagine how far that message travelled around the world! It's a huge accomplishment, but there is more work to do.

Now, it is our turn. It is not easy work, but Jesus trusted that we can do it. Jesus wants us to continue to grow as his followers. He promised to help us with the work he had given us to do. He said that if we work hard, we can do "wonderful things."

What else needs to be done? Listen closely to their answers!

Who helps the sick? Doctors, caregivers, parents

You can help the sick by drawing cheerful pictures or writing cheerful messages to help them feel better.

Feed the hungry.

Who feeds the hungry?

You can help the hungry when you share your food with someone hungry. Or when you go to the grocery store, you can ask your parent to use the money they would spend on a snack for you to donate to a soup kitchen or food pantry.

Who teaches us about God? Parents, grandparents, catechists, teachers, priests, deacons, religious.

You already know much about God and his love, about Jesus Christ and his teachings. You can tell your friends and classmates about what you already know.

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: On the day Jesus was lifted up into Heaven, let us pray before God. Our response is: **R./**

Lector: That God will give wisdom and insight to those who lead the Church, we pray: **R./**

Lector: That we share the wonderful things that God has done for us with those we meet, we pray: **R./**

Lector: That God's strength helps the suffering, we pray: **R./**

Lector: That God's hope bring peace to the world, we pray: **R./**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: God, most holy, hear our prayers as we wait for Jesus to return in glory. 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.