



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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Children's Liturgy of the Word

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

We can't really find the right words to describe God because God is beyond any single image we can think of. We connect with God through Jesus Christ, who shows us his understanding of God as the creator, saviour, and someone we have a close relationship. Our experience of this relationship is feeling the presence of God's spirit within us.

In the Gospel, Jesus instructs his disciples to go out and spread the message and baptize in the name of God. This is the God who loves us like a loving parent; whose own son, Jesus, demonstrated an immense love by sacrificing himself on the cross and then rising again to deliver us from the clutches of sin; whose spirit fills us with the very life of God and ignites our hearts with the warmth of God's love residing within us. Just as the disciples were commissioned, we, too, are called to baptize, preach, share the Good News of Jesus, and inspire and display unexpected, unrequested love for others.

Children instinctively grasp the idea of unconditional love as they frequently encounter it within their families. This love is not contingent on any conditions and offers a secure and nurturing environment, akin to a protective roof or sturdy walls.

Objective

- † To offer the image of a family to consider the nature of the Trinity.
- † To name the Persons of the Trinity and explore their identity.

Background

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40 This passage by Moses summarizes the book of Deuteronomy. He reminds the people of all God has done for them and emphasizes the importance of following the commandments.

Psalms 33:4-5, 6, 9, 18-19, 20, 22 (12b) We praise the Lord for choosing us as his people. We acknowledge God's dependability, fairness, and kindness. We are amazed by the power of God's word and his works. We celebrate being God's people and sing joyfully because God watches over us, taking note of our hope and preserving our lives. We promise to wait for the Lord and recognize the everyday signs of God's kindness.

Romans 8:14-17 Paul's message in Romans builds upon Moses' teachings to the Israelites. While Moses focused on God's historical actions, Paul emphasized God's work within each person. Paul urges the people to be guided by the Spirit, making them heirs of God rather than of land or tradition. This is reminiscent of Jesus' prayer for unity. Unlike Moses, who promised a secure life in the land, Paul reminds believers that being led by the Spirit means sharing in Jesus' fate.

Matthew 28:16-20 The final verses of Matthew's Gospel symbolize Jesus handing over his mission to the disciples and sending them worldwide. The unique description of baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit implies solidarity with the one named and signifies a commitment to observe all of Jesus' commands. These readings remind us of our responsibility to proclaim the Gospel by allowing the Spirit to lead us in action.

Leader's Reflection Questions

- † What does your experience of family tell you about God's love?
- † What symbols of the Trinity resonate with you?
- † Do you relate more to the Person of the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit?
- † Reflect on the reasons why.?

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, you will hear in God's Word how to call upon God like a Father. You will listen to how the Spirit of God unites you with God. There is nothing to fear about God, for you are God's children. Go now in peace to listen to how God has chosen you.

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 in sitting and preparing. **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.

O God,

God our Father, you sent your Son, who makes us free.

You sent your Spirit, who makes us holy. Open our hearts to your

Word so that we may serve you completely. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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

First Reading

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy

Moses spoke to the people, saying,
ever since the day that God created human beings on the earth;
ask from one end of heaven to the other:

'has anything so great as this ever happened
or has it ever been heard of?'

"Has any people ever heard the voice of a god
speaking out of a fire, as you have heard and lived?

Or has any god ever attempted to go
and take a nation for himself
from the midst of another nation,
by trials, by signs and wonders, by war,
by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm,
and by terrifying displays of power,
as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt
before your very eyes?

"So acknowledge today and take to heart
that the Lord is God in heaven above
and on the earth beneath;
there is no other.

Keep his statutes and his commandments,
which I am commanding you today
for your own well-being and that of your descendants after you,
so that you may long remain in the land
that the Lord your God is giving you for all time."

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. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen as his own.

The word of the Lord is upright,
and all his work is done in faithfulness.
He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord. **R.**

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
and all their host by the breath of his mouth.
For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm. **R.**

Truly, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him,
on those who hope in his steadfast love
to deliver their souls from death
and to keep them alive in famine. **R.**

Our soul waits for the Lord;
he is our help and shield.
Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hope in you. **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters,
All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.
For you did not receive a spirit of fear,
but you received a spirit of adoption.
When we cry, "Abba! Father!"
it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit
that we are children of God,
and if children, then heirs,
heirs of God and joint heirs with 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, which the leader proclaims. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel, according to Matthew

Children respond: Glory to you, O Lord.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee,
to the mountain to which Jesus had wanted them to go.
When they saw him, they worshipped him;
but some doubted.
Jesus came and said to them,
"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
and teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you.
"And remember, I am with you always."

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.

Today, we hear that Jesus takes his friends to a mountain in Galilee, which is how we know something special will happen. Jesus' friends believed in him and everything he taught, but they also didn't understand everything. Still, they knew they loved and trusted Jesus, so they wanted him to know that. Just like you don't always understand why your parents tell you certain things, but you know they love you, so you trust them and believe what they are telling you is for your own good.

What was the important thing Jesus told his disciples on that mountain?

Jesus wanted them to teach people about God and baptize them. He gave them very special words to use at the Baptisms. These exact words are used today and were said when you were baptized. He told them to say, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We have a unique name for all three Persons. When we speak about them together, we call them the Holy Trinity. Trinity means "three": Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

When we are baptized, we become followers of Jesus and children of God, the Father, who created the whole world. We become brothers and sisters of Jesus, who lived, died, and rose for us. We become part of a unique community brought together by the love of the Holy Spirit. People all over the world are baptized with the exact words in hundreds of different languages, making us all part of the same family - God's family.

Jesus reassured his friends with powerful words: "I will be with you always, even until the end of the world." This enduring promise reminds us that we are never alone, as His presence is constant, day and night.

How does that make you feel?

How do you know that Jesus is with you?

Who are the people Jesus gives you to share their lives with you and remind you of his promise?

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: I believe.

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

All: I believe.

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

All: I 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 trust in our hearts, we present to God our needs: R./

Lector: For the Church throughout the world, that the Holy Trinity reaches every household, we pray: R./

Lector: For our governments, that God will help them care for the poor, we pray: R./

Lector: For the lonely, the sick, and the hungry, we pray: R./

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: Most Holy Trinity, listen with favour to the prayers of your children made 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.