



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

## Children's Liturgy of the Word

### FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Nazareth is a small town in the hill country of Galilee where Jesus lived. He spent his childhood living with his parents, Mary and Joseph. Upon returning home, he found that he was not welcome anymore.

The first reading is about Ezekiel's call, which came at a time of great upheaval. Ezekiel was a “watchman” for Israel, warning them of coming judgments if they failed to follow God. However, he also offered hope for God’s saving work.

Jerusalem had been destroyed, and Ezekiel was among the people exiled to Babylon. Like Jeremiah, he went to a defiant and obstinate people and warned from the start that he must be prepared to face misunderstanding and rejection. Despite the difficult message, it mostly expresses faithfulness to follow God's will.

The Gospel presents Jesus as enduring a fate similar to that of Ezekiel and other Jewish prophets of old—rejection of him and his message. There is also a deliberate insult to his name, as the people of his hometown openly wonder about him as "the son of Mary." In the ancient world of Israel, people's last names were typically derived from their father's last name, so it was unusual to be referred to as the son of one's mother. Jesus is deeply affected by how people react to him and their lack of trust in him.

#### Objective

- † Help children to learn about prophets and their purpose.
- † Help children see Ezekiel and Paul's faith in Jesus Christ – Son of God.

## Background

**Ezekiel 2:2-5** God directs the prophet Ezekiel to speak on God's behalf, which he reluctantly does. Despite knowing his message would be rejected, Ezekiel spoke the message God wanted to convey to the people. Prophets can make people uncomfortable by showing the difference between human knowledge and God's wisdom. Speaking God's word in the face of opposition takes great courage and trust. Whether people listen or not, Christians proclaim the salvation of God as God directs.

**Psalms 123** describes how individuals and communities feel when they face scorn. By praising and acknowledging God's greatness and power, we focus on the Lord and rely on God's support and mercy. This trust and confidence in God gives us the strength to endure tough times. Trusting God is the only source of real help.

**2 Corinthians 12:7-10** Some thought Paul was a false prophet who valued his visions more than his message. Paul disagreed with them. Despite having many visions and spiritual insights, he focused exclusively on preaching about Christ Jesus. Paul saw the challenges, insults, and persecutions he faced as a way for the Lord to keep him from becoming too proud of himself.

**Mark 6:1-6** Today's theme of eyes fixed on the Lord amid rejection, misunderstanding, and opposition continues in Mark's narrative of Jesus' return to Nazareth. News of Jesus' healings and exorcisms has reached Nazareth, his hometown. Jesus' return sparks misunderstanding and rejection from those who think they know him best. By preaching and teaching in the synagogue, Jesus arouses jealousy and resentment. The residents of his hometown reject anything Jesus says, refusing to believe or accept him. Despite such rejection, Jesus is aware of God's presence and trusts in God's help and support.

Jesus is part of a long line of prophets who are called to proclaim God's Word. Such a call and commitment demands a focus on God's Word and message, not how people will receive it. Consequently, following Jesus will bring about misunderstanding and rejection. A disciple keeps eyes fixed on the Lord, trusting in God's care and support no matter what happens.

## Leader's Reflection Questions

- † When have you felt rejected because of your beliefs?
- † How did you respond?
- † Jesus could not work miracles in Nazareth because the people's faith was lacking. Has your faith ever been shaken?
- † What experiences have deepened it?

## Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle, sculpture/picture of hands.



## 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, we hear how God sends messengers to proclaim his love and mercy. Go with your leaders and listen to God's Word.

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,**

**Come, Holy Spirit, help us listen to your Holy words.**

**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 the prophet Ezekiel**

As the Lord spoke, his Spirit gave me the power to stand, and I heard him say:

"You are a mere human, but I am sending you to the people of Israel. All of them have rebelled against me, and they are still rebelling, just as their ancestors did. They are stubborn and hard-headed.

"But I am the Lord God, and I am sending you to speak to them in my name. They are stubborn. So maybe they will listen, and maybe they won't. But at least they will know that a prophet has come to them."

### **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.** Lord, you are good and forgiving.

Or Alleluia.

You willingly forgive, and your love is always there for those who pray to you. Please listen, Lord!

Answer my prayer for help. **R**

You, the Lord God, are kind and merciful.

You don't easily get angry, and your love can always be trusted.

Look on me with kindness.

Make me strong and save me. **R**

## Second Reading

### **A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians.**

Brothers and sisters:

I am now referring to the wonderful things I saw.

One of Satan's angels was sent to make me suffer terribly so that I would not feel too proud. Three times, I begged the Lord to make this suffering go away. But he replied, "My kindness is all you need. My power is strongest when you are weak."

So, if Christ keeps giving me his power, I will gladly brag about how weak I am. Yes, I am glad to be weak, insulted, mistreated, or to have troubles and sufferings if it is for Christ because when I am weak, I am strong.

### **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 Mark.**

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

Jesus returned to his hometown with his disciples. The next Sabbath he taught in the Jewish meeting place.

Many people who heard him were amazed and asked, "How can he do all this? Where did he get such wisdom and the power to work these miracles? Isn't he the carpenter, the son of Mary? Aren't James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon his brothers? Don't his sisters still live here in our town?"

The people were very unhappy because of what he was doing. But Jesus said, "Prophets are honoured by everyone except the people of their hometown, their relatives, and their own family."

Jesus could not work any miracles there except to heal a few sick people by placing his hands on them. He was surprised that the people did not have any faith.

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 their responses, using prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

**Do you know what a prophet is?** (A prophet listens to God, and God uses it to teach people about how God wants us to live).

Two people in today's readings were prophets: Ezekiel and Jesus. Both talked about how the people were moving away from God's plan for them, and both were unpopular with the people.

Prophets are often unwelcome, especially among those who think they already know them very well. They ruffle our feathers and make us feel uncomfortable.

Also, over the past couple of Sundays, we have learned a lot about what it means to have faith. Having faith may make us feel uncomfortable from time to time. We heard about the disciples feeling scared on the stormy sea, and Jesus calmed the rough waves. Last Sunday, we heard that Jesus was able to heal a very sick girl whose father had faith in him. Today, we hear that Jesus couldn't do anything for the people of his hometown because they had no faith.

### **What does it mean to have no faith?**

In the Gospel, some people were unwilling to listen to Jesus, missing out on seeing amazing miracles. Think about all the people who wanted to hear and be with Jesus. He could help them. However, some people in his hometown of Nazareth did not believe him and rejected him. They even insulted him. They did want him to stay with them. We should never insult anyone – especially God. Jesus invites us to behave nicely.

Jesus wants to stay with us and hopes we welcome him to our hearts. We learn about Jesus and know him best from inside our hearts. The people of Jesus' hometown missed a great blessing because they wouldn't invite him in.

### **How can you be open to having Jesus come into your heart?**

### **How can you grow in faith?**

### **What is the message for us?**

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 hopeful hearts and strong faith, let us call upon God for our needs: **R./**

**Lector:** For the Church, home of the faithful, that she will bring light into the world, we pray: **R./**

**Lector:** For peace in the world, we pray: **R./**

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

**Lector:** For those who have died, we pray: **R./**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

**Leader:** Generous God, have mercy on us and those we pray for. Strengthen our faith in you.

Through Jesus 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.



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## Peoples' Hands

AT MASS, people use their hands for a variety of purposes, but there is little legislation governing what to do with them. All the faithful should make the Sign of the Cross with the priest at the beginning. They sign their foreheads, lips, and breast with the deacon or priest just before the Gospel. They may offer some sign of peace. They have the option of receiving Communion in the hand.

The priest follows plenty of instructions. He extends his hands for prayers and greetings, and he outstretches them for solemn blessings. During the Eucharistic Prayer, people may see him raise his hands during the Preface dialogue, impose them over the bread and wine, sign the same elements with the Cross, lift and show the Body and Blood of Christ to the people, make a Sign of the Cross over himself, and elevate the Body and Blood of Christ for the final doxology. The priest breaks bread with his hands and holds a broken host while saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God."

People use their hands for some actions that are not in the rubrics, but are sensible nonetheless. They switch off electronic devices upon entering the church. They hold participation aids to join in the singing and the responses. They place contributions into the collection basket.

Some people improvise other actions. They hold a rosary. They gesture back to the priest when he gestures to them. They join hands with others and raise them together. They sign themselves with the cross for the final blessing.

People's most common gesture associated with prayer—folding hands—is never explicitly mentioned in the rubrics of the Mass. However, in the interests of popular piety, it is a praiseworthy practice. Especially when the words people say or hear are directed to God, they may fold their hands in a way that signals to the individual, to other worshipers, and to God, that a moment has arrived to pray.

*Bulletin Inserts for the Liturgical Life of the Parish: Gestures, Postures, and Customs of the Liturgy* © 2020 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications. All rights reserved. Written by Paul Turner.

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Lectionary for Masses with Children, Catholic Book Publishing Co, New York, NY, 1993.

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Liturgy adapted for Children.

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