



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

In today's readings, we are reminded that God provides all the basic needs for human life, such as food, which is essential for survival. We learn that Jesus is not only resourceful, but he himself is the resource. The lesson is that God is the source of all and will supply all we require; God provides even in times and places where it doesn't seem possible. God provides abundantly for the needy, even to the point of over-abundance. This lesson is summed up in response to the Psalm: "The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs."

In today's reading, we see Jesus' power over nature illustrated when he multiplies loaves and fishes. We remember how he once walked on water and calmed the storm. Even today, these deeds make us cry out in wonder as we look out for the hand of God in the world around us.

The providential act performed by both Elisha and Jesus the Messiah, taking bread, giving thanks, and distributing it to those in need, reminds us that we, too, perform this act through God's saving love each Sunday when we gather to give thanks and remember.

There is a challenge for us here, too. Only when we share the little we think we have will we discover how much we have left over. The exhorting words of Paul are also to be remembered as we prepare what we want the children to take from these readings. We are one as Christ, and the One who sent him are one. We are one in faith, hope and love.

We are each part of the Church, which comes together on Sundays to celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ; this is what binds us together as one people, this bread that we share and eat.

Objective

- † To identify the miracle of feeding the five thousand as a miracle of God's provision for human needs.
- † To show children the connection between the miracle of feeding the five thousand and the Eucharist.

Images from the Readings

- † Already knew
- † Nothing wasted
- † Be alone
- † Feed us Lord

Background

2 Kings 4:42-44 Elisha, a prophet, offered twenty barley loaves to feed a hundred people during a famine. Despite doubts, the loaves were shared, and miraculously, there was enough for everyone, showing that God provides abundantly for our needs.

Psalms 145 highlights the fact that the hand of the Lord feeds us and answers all our needs. It praises God for being faithful and reliable whenever anyone calls. All who trust the Lord never go away empty or unsatisfied, for the Lord feeds us and answers all our needs.

Ephesians 4:1-6: Ephesians encourages us to live with humility and gentleness and to bear with one another through love. Unity is based on the "one body and one Spirit" that bonds Jesus' followers. Sharing one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all should energize unity and oneness. Our Trinitarian God is one, mighty and present in us and all of creation.

John 6:1-15 The Gospel readings for the next five Sundays will focus on chapter 6 of John's Gospel, called the Bread of Life discourse. This chapter tells the story of Jesus feeding a large crowd with only five barley loaves and two fish. The message emphasizes God's ongoing desire to provide for all living things. It highlights how Jesus, through this miracle, shows his identity as the divine one, generous and ready to nourish us. The story also shows how Jesus' followers should love others as he loved them and be willing to give of themselves so that others may be fed. In John's Gospel, these signs aim to help people see and believe, making us living witnesses to God's transforming power.

Leader's Reflection Questions

- † How does God provide for you? How do you express your gratitude?
- † Today's Gospel reading is about Jesus giving us spiritual nourishment. Reflect on how much Christ shares of himself in the Word and the Eucharist.

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a loaf of bread.



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: (in these or similar words)

Children of God, in today's readings, the prophet Elisha trusts that there is more than enough food to feed the people. Jesus' disciples want to feed the crowd but don't know how with the little food they have. But Jesus feeds them all! Go in peace.

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, fill us with your presence.

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 second book of Kings.

One day, a man from the town of Baal Shalishah came with some food for Elisha. The man brought him twenty loaves of barley bread made from the first crop of grain and some fresh heads of grain.

Elisha told his servant. "Let the people have it to eat." His servant replied, "This isn't enough to feed a hundred people." But Elisha told him, "Give the food to the people! The Lord has said that when they are through eating, there will be some left over."

The servant gave them the food. And when they had finished eating, there was some leftover, just as the Lord had promised."

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. You open your hand to feed us, Lord;
you answer all our needs.

Or Alleluia.

All creation will thank you,
and your loyal people
will praise you.

They will tell about
your marvellous kingdom
and your power. **R**

Everyone depends on you,
and when the time is right,
you provide them with food.
By your own hand, you satisfy
the desires of all who live. **R**

Second Reading

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

Brothers and sisters:

As a prisoner of the Lord, I beg you to live in a way that is worthy of the people God has chosen to be his own.

Always be humble and gentle. Patiently put up with each other and love each other. Try your best to let God's Spirit keep your hearts united. Do this by living in peace.

All of you are part of the same body. There is only one Spirit of God, just as you were given one hope when you were chosen to be God's people.

We have only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. There is one God who is the Father of all people. Not only is God above all others, but he works by using all of us, and he lives in all of us.

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 John.

Jesus crossed Lake Galilee, which was also known as Lake Tiberias. A large crowd had seen him work miracles to heal the sick, and those people were with him. It was almost time for the Jewish festival of Passover, and Jesus went up on a mountain with his disciples and sat down.

When Jesus saw the large crowd coming towards him, he asked Philip, "Where will we get enough food to feed all these people?" He said this to test Philip since he already knew what he would do.

Philip answered, "Don't you know that it would take almost a year's wages just to buy only a little bread for each person?"

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the disciples. He spoke up, saying, "There is a boy here with five small loaves of barley bread and two fish. But what good is that with all these people?"

The ground was covered with grass, and Jesus told his disciples to have everyone sit down. About five thousand people were in the crowd.

Jesus took the bread in his hands and gave thanks to God. Then, he passed the bread to the people and did the same with the fish until everyone had plenty to eat. The people ate all they wanted, and Jesus told his disciples to gather the leftovers so that nothing would be wasted. The disciples gathered them and filled twelve large baskets with what was left over from the five barley loaves.

After the people had seen Jesus work this miracle, they began saying, "This must be the Prophet who is to come into the world!"

Jesus realized they would try to force him to be their king, so he went up to a mountain where he could be alone.

Children respond: Glory to you, O 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 their responses, using prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

The children might enjoy reviewing the actions described in today's reading from John's Gospel. Talk about food—bread in particular—how it builds up our body and how spiritual food strengthens our spirit and makes us one with each other through Christ. Leaders could bring some bread that could be blessed, broken, and distributed to the children. The idea of everyone sharing the same loaf can be discussed.

Do people sometimes tell you that you are too young to do something?

Or do you think you are too little to do something big sometimes?

Today's Gospel tells the story of a boy who helped Jesus feed thousands of people. The disciples were worried about not having enough food, but they only had a little boy's offering of five loaves of bread and two fish. Andrew, one of the disciples, doubted that it would be enough. However, Jesus prayed over the food; miraculously, there was enough to feed everyone with leftovers.

How did the boy feel when he saw the miracle Jesus performed with his fish and bread?

Today, Jesus is still interested in children, just like you! You are never too young, like the boy in the Gospel, to do the work of Jesus. You can invite a friend to church. You can tell a classmate what your favourite Bible story is. You can pray for other people.

Jesus performed a miracle. He did something that only God can do. He was showing us that he is God. But he did so with the help of a little boy and his small offering of food. Jesus teaches us that when we come to him with our small offerings and our faith and trust. God will use them to give us many blessings.

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 the readings we have heard today in our hearts, let us call upon our loving God for our needs: **R.**

Lector: For the Church throughout the world that it will reach out with compassion to all people who suffer. Let us pray to the Lord: **R.**

Lector: That there will be food for the hungry. Let us pray to the Lord: **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: 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.



✠ Entering the Church

WHEN ENTERING the church for Mass, Catholics typically perform a series of rituals. They may greet people they see. They cross the threshold that separates the outside world from the church. They may pick up the parish bulletin or a religious newspaper. They dip their hand in holy water and make the Sign of the Cross. They approach the place where they will sit. They genuflect. They enter the seat, where they may kneel for a few moments, perhaps making the Sign of the Cross again during the genuflection or on taking their place. Many Catholics do all this even if they arrive late for the service. If they have arrived before Mass begins, they may sit for a while and read the materials they picked up on the way in.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says very little about how Catholics should enter the church. Most of these particular rituals have derived from custom rather than law.

Of all these gestures, the instruction makes only some brief comments about the respect shown the altar and the tabernacle. If the tabernacle is in the sanctuary, the ministers genuflect to it at the beginning and the end of Mass, but not during it. "Otherwise, all who pass before the Most Blessed Sacrament genuflect, unless they are moving in procession" (274). "A bow of the body, that is to say a profound bow, is made to the altar" (275b).

Upon entering the church, Catholics should either genuflect or bow. They genuflect to the tabernacle if it is in the sanctuary. If it is not, they make a bow of the body toward the altar before taking their place.

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Lectionary for Masses with Children – Lagron Miller Company. <https://www.lagron-miller.com/products/lectionary-for-masses-with-children>

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Liturgy adapted for Children.

Reflections on the Sunday Gospels 2018 | Mercy World.
<https://www.mercyworld.org/library/reflections-on-the-sunday-gospels-2018/>

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