



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

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

Most children enjoy eating. Expanding on last week's reading, this week, the children are introduced to the idea that bread satisfies the body and that Jesus Christ satisfies the soul. Explain that we all make choices that can help Christ to feed our souls, for he is the Bread of Life.

God nourishes us physically and spiritually through the Eucharist. The readings help to highlight the transition from manna in the desert to Jesus as the true bread from heaven. God abundantly provides for us through our faith in Christ.

The Israelites were unhappy about leaving Egypt and going into the desert with Moses and Aaron. Their complaints were indeed against God. They were worried about not having enough food. So, God gave them a special food called manna daily to show that he would care for them. It went bad when some people tried to keep the manna for the next day.

The Responsorial Psalm recognizes that God provides more than enough for us.

The Gospel tells us that God gives us the most precious gift of all - Himself. He sent His son into the world not to judge or condemn it but to save it. On the cross, God's own body was broken and offered as real nourishment for a hungry world. His heart was broken for us so we might never feel spiritually hungry again.

Objective

- † To identify Jesus as the Bread of Life.
- † To contrast earthly bread and the One who is Bread from heaven.

Images from the Readings

- † Food that lasts
- † Bread from heaven
- † I am the bread of life

Background

Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15 After the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they complained to Moses about the lack of familiar food. Despite their doubts, God provided them with manna and quail, showing that He cared for them and reassuring them that their freedom was meaningful and valuable.

Psalms 78 emphasizes the importance of remembering God's actions and passing those stories on to future generations. The psalmist explicitly mentions God's "glorious deeds," including the provision of manna as "heavenly bread" for nourishment in the desert.

Ephesians 4:17, 20-24 The Ephesians are encouraged to live fully in Christ, not like the Gentiles or pagans, and to put away their old selves. In Christ, they have become new creations, renewed in mind and body, living by "God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth."

John 6:24-35 Following Jesus' miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes, many began to follow him because of the spectacular nature of the miracle. John's Gospel delves deeper. He highlights how the crowd was preoccupied with worldly matters such as sustenance and miraculous displays while Jesus sought to guide them toward having faith in him as the "Son of Man" sent by "the Father, God." Jesus wanted to redirect their focus away from seeking material provisions and miracles and instead encouraged them to cultivate a profound faith in him as the Son of God. He emphasized that such a transformation of faith would be God's handiwork, aiding people in attaining a greater understanding of Jesus. Jesus proclaimed, "I am the bread of life," signifying that he could fulfill their spiritual hunger and thirst eternally.

Leader's Reflection Questions

- † What signs of God's presence do we pay attention to?
- † What can we do to accomplish the works of God?

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, you know what it's like to be hungry and then satisfied when you eat. People hunger for food, love, friendship, and God. Today's readings talk about believing in God gives life like bread does. 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 Exodus.

The whole congregation of the children of Israel complained in the wilderness.

"If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Then the Lord said to Moses,

"I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day, the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way, I will test them, whether they will follow my instructions or not.

'At twilight, you shall eat meat, and in the morning, you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'"

In the evening, quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning, a layer of dew was around the camp.

When the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a fine, flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground.

The Israelites said to one another, "What is it?"

Moses said to them,

"It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat."

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

Responsorial Psalm

R. The Lord gave them the bread of heaven.

Things that we have heard and known,
that our ancestors have told us we will not hide;
we will tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the Lord and his might,
and the wonders that he has done. **R.**

He commanded the skies above
and opened the doors of heaven;
he rained down on them manna to eat
and gave them the bread of heaven. **R.**

Man ate of the bread of angels;
he sent them food in abundance.
And he brought them to his holy hill,
the mountain his right hand had won. **R.**

Second Reading

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

Brothers and sisters:

Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord:
you must no longer live as the Gentiles live,
in the futility of their minds.

That is not the way you learned Christ!
For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him,
as truth is in Jesus.

You were taught to put away your former way of life,
your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts,
and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,
and to clothe yourselves with the New Man,
created according to the likeness of God
in true righteousness and holiness.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

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.

When the crowd saw that Jesus
was not at the place where Jesus had given the bread,
they got into the boats
and went to Capernaum, looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the sea,
they said to him,

"Rabbi, when did you come here?"

Jesus answered them,

Do not work for the food that perishes,
but for the food that endures for eternal life,
which the Son of Man will give you.

For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal."

Then they said to Jesus,

"What must we do to perform the works of God?"

Jesus answered them,

"This is the work of God,

I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

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.

Where does your food come from? (Children might answer that it comes from their parents, the grocery store, or farmers. Help them trace the origins of their food to God, who gives us all good things.)

What foods do you eat most days?

Most of us eat bread on a daily basis. During the time of Jesus, most people ate bread daily, too. Making bread in those days was a lot of hard work. Farmers did not have machines to help plant and harvest the grain, so people worked hard in the fields and did every-thing by hand or with the help of an animal. There were no supermarkets, so families made their bread by kneading the ingredients and baking it on a fire. Making enough food to feed a family was a lot of hard work, so food was precious.

Do you remember the reading from last Sunday? Jesus multiplied the loaves of bread and the fish to feed thousands of people! They were very grateful to Jesus for feeding them and amazed at the miracle!

Are you grateful when your mom or dad gives you delicious food?

The people in this Gospel were also grateful for food and wanted to stay close to Jesus. In the Gospel, Jesus tells people they followed him across a lake because he fed them the loaves and the fish. He told them that they shouldn't work for food that spoils but for food that gives eternal life. Is food important to you? Yes! Food is essential to all of us because we need it to survive.

When your tummy is hungry, what do you do?

Our souls are hungry, too. They are hungry for Jesus, and we can help them receive Him. In this Gospel reading, Jesus tells us that it is essential to feed our souls with food that will give us eternal life, and he says that food comes from himself. Food like bread and fish fill our tummies. We do need our tummies filled, but we also need our souls fed. Our souls don't crave bread and fish; our souls crave Jesus Christ!

How do we feed our souls?

We feed our souls by praying, listening to Bible stories, and following Jesus' example. We can help Jesus feed our hungry souls by going to Mass and listening to God's Word. We can pray that God helps us to be Jesus' hands and feet. We can practice kindness, help others, and show God's love through our actions. We can follow God's rules for us.

How do you feel when you do kind things for others?

What are some ways you will feed your soul this week?

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: Turning to God who sent us Jesus, the bread of life, we offer our prayers: **R.**

Lector: We pray that church leaders will be examples of honesty and faithfulness to the Gospel. **R.**

Lector: We pray that we will appreciate the gift of the Eucharist. **R.**

Lector: That the sick will come to the Lord in their pain, seeking healing and wholeness, we pray: **R.**

Lector: That the dead will soon experience the eternal feast awaiting them in heaven, we pray: **R.**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: God of life and love, you people offer you our needs. Hear our prayer through Jesus, the bread of life. 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.



1. First Eucharist is celebrated with children who have reached the age of reason (usually in Grade Two) and have participated in the immediate sacramental/liturgical preparation for the Sacrament through their parish.
2. The decision concerning a child's readiness to receive First Eucharist rests with the child's parents, who consult with the parish priest. This is particularly the case for parents of children with special needs.
3. Celebrating First Eucharist at a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass is preferable. However, if large numbers cannot be accommodated in the parish church at Sunday Mass, the celebration may occur at another time.
4. The Church's discipline regarding the reception of Holy Communion in the hand or on the tongue applies to celebrating the First Eucharist. Communion is received while standing, and children may not be prevented from receiving It in the hand or on the tongue.
5. The liturgical celebration of the First Eucharist is the responsibility of the parish priest and those who collaborate with him in the preparation. It takes place according to the norms in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and Gathered into One.
6. Approved resources suitable for preparation are available from the Office for Evangelization and Catechesis. Adaptive resources are also available to prepare children with special needs for their First Communion.

Readings: Lectionary, Sundays and Solemnities, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ottawa, ON.

Liturgy adapted for Children.

All rights reserved. Prepared by the Diocese of Hamilton, Liturgy Office, © 2024



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON