



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

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

God always offers hope, which we receive in the bread that is broken and given, the Eucharist, spiritual food to sustain us. The people had great difficulty accepting Jesus' true identity and understanding the new reality that God's gift surpasses the Law and offers so much more—his flesh for the life of the world. The bread of life sustains and gives life, and it is also the presence of God in our midst. Jesus offers us a powerful gift. Jesus is the bread of life sent by God.


In the Gospel of John, we find several powerful "I am" sayings embodying the profound revelation of God's self-identification to Moses as "I am who I am." Through these words, Jesus reveals his true identity as the Son of God.

Objective

- † To introduce Jesus, the Bread of Life, as our food for the journey.
- † To help children see Jesus as the source of their sustenance.
- † To assist children to recognize that the Eucharist strengthens us to serve God and one another as a disciple of Christ.

I AM

"The bread of life." - John 6:35
"The light of the world." - John 8:12
"The door of the sheep." John 10:7
"The resurrection and the life." - John 11:25
"The good shepherd." - John 10:11
"The way, the truth and the life." - John 14:6
"The true vine." - John 15:1


GOSPEL OF JOHN

Background

1 Kings 19:4-8 After defeating the prophets of Baal, Elijah is threatened by King Ahab and Jezebel, and he flees into the desert, feeling despondent and asking for death. God, however, sustains him by sending an angel to provide food and water. Elijah is refreshed and embarks to encounter the Lord at Mount Horeb. This event reflects the theme of God's sustenance and nourishment for those on a challenging journey, which is affirmed in Christian belief through Christ as the Living Bread.

Psalms 34 Psalm 34 praises God for rescuing the psalmist from danger, fear, and affliction. It invites everyone to trust in God, who hears our pleas and responds to our calls for help. The psalmist uses the image of food to encourage trust in God, saying, "Taste and see that the Lord is good."

Ephesians 4:30 - 5:2 The passage from Ephesians urges the community to imitate God and Christ by promoting love, unity, and harmony. It emphasizes replacing bitterness, rivalry, and anger with kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. We are called to sacrifice ourselves for others through baptism, becoming living witnesses to Jesus. In doing so, we become a fragrant aroma to God and those around us, growing more like Jesus through the Spirit.

John 6:41-51: The Gospel heard by the adults at today's Mass continues Jesus' argument with an unbelieving crowd after his declaration that he is the bread that came down from heaven. The murmuring crowd, reminiscent of their lack of faith in God during the Exodus experience, responds that they know Jesus' parentage, so how can he claim heavenly origins? Jesus responds that to know him demands that they be open to being drawn to him by the Father, who is the true teacher in all matters of faith. If they were open to the Father's actions, they would come to know and accept Jesus, the "bread of life."

Jesus continues to instruct them by affirming that to know him is to know the Father. Since he is the "bread of life," whoever believes in him will have eternal life. The desert manna that came down from heaven did not provide eternal life. Instead, Jesus, the "living bread that came down from heaven," is the true bread that offers eternal life to all who believe and partake, "whoever eats this bread will live forever."

The Gospel for the children has been shortened to focus on Jesus as our true source of nourishment in the Eucharist. Partaking of Jesus, the "bread of life," calls all who partake to give of themselves for the life of the world.

We are nourished by Jesus so that we can nourish others both physically and spiritually. Jesus came to model how to be sources of nourishment for one another by being willing to partake of the rich nourishment that the Father has given us in Christ.

Visio Divina

This exercise is to assist leaders in preparing themselves. It is not meant for Children's Liturgy of the Word.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Drawing on the principles of Lectio Divina, Visio Divina is the slow, thoughtful contemplation of a picture, photo, work of art, or really anything visual that invites God to speak to me in a deeper way.



† Open with a prayer

† Consider your first impressions

† Listen for God's voice

† Respond to Visio Divina

Leader's Reflection Questions

- † Is there a time when another person strengthened or nourished you?
- † How can you share this gift with others?

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)

My dear children, in today's readings, listen carefully to how God cares for his prophet Elijah by providing food and water and how, in the Gospel, Jesus teaches his disciples that he is the Living Bread. Go now in peace with our prayers that you know God always strengthens 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,

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 first book of Kings.

Elijah went on a day's journey into the wilderness,
and came and sat down under a tree.

He asked that he might die:

"It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life,
for I am no better than my ancestors."

Then Elijah lay down under the tree and fell asleep.

Suddenly, an angel touched him and said to him,

"Get up and eat."

He looked, and there at his head
was a cake baked on hot stones
and a jar of water.

He ate and drank and lay down again.

The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him,
and said, "Get up and eat;

otherwise, the journey will be too much for you."

Elijah got up and ate and drank;

then he went in the strength of that food

forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mountain of God.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

Responsorial Psalm

R. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad. **R.**

O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together.
I sought the Lord, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears. **R.**

Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.
This poor soul cried and was heard by the Lord
and was saved from every trouble. **R.**

The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him and delivers them.
O taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him. **R.**



Second Reading

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

Brothers and sisters,

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God,
with which you were marked with a seal
for the day of redemption.

Put away from you all bitterness and wrath
and anger and wrangling and slander,
together with all malice,
and be kind to one another,
tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children,
and live in love,
as Christ loved us
and gave himself up for us,
a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

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. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel, according to John.

Jesus said to the crowd:

"I am the bread of life.

Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.

This is the bread that comes down from heaven,
so that one may eat of it and not die.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven.

Whoever eats of this bread will live forever;

and the bread that I will give for the life of the world
is my flesh."

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.

We have been thinking and talking about bread for a few weeks now, haven't we?

Have you ever made bread?

Perhaps you mixed the ingredients, kneaded the dough, or placed it in the oven. When bread is baked, a delicious smell fills a home. How wonderful it is to enjoy the bread, to savour the aroma, and to taste its goodness.

In today's first reading, we hear that the prophet Elijah received a gift of extraordinary bread while on a journey. It was called a hearth cake, a bread that could be baked on a big, flat hearthstone in front of a cooking fire. Elijah was given this gift at a challenging moment in his life.

We are all on a journey toward God, travelling the path of our entire lives. Our hope and prayer are to meet God face to face and for God to come close to us. To reach our destination, we need strength and nourishment. We have been given bread for our journey. This bread is the Bread of Life, Jesus himself. Jesus Christ provides the strength and nourishment we need for our trip. Jesus, the Bread of Life, is essential for us to reach our destination.

While we travel this path, we know that we are not alone. We are surrounded by others who are also on this journey and need the Bread of Life. The letter to the Ephesians gives important instructions to Christians. It tells us to be a fragrant offering to Christ—maybe to have the aroma or smell of Christ.

How can we smell like the Bread of Life?

When we act like Jesus, living with love, we can help others feel his strength. Being kind, understanding, and forgiving can help others experience his nourishment. Soon, we will come together as a community, gathering around the Lord's table to see and understand how he ultimately gives himself to us during Mass as the Eucharist.

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: Full of the hope in the Gospel, let us call upon God for our needs: **R.**

Lector: For the Church, mother of the lonely and the homeless, that our arms will be open to welcome those searching for hope, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

Lector: For the hungry, we pray to the Lord. **R.**

Lector: For the sick, we pray to the Lord: **R.**

Lector: For the dead, we pray to the Lord: **R.**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: Almighty God, you give your children the Word of God and the Eucharist. Bless us and those for whom we pray through Jesus 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.



The Director for Masses with Children tells us ...

As children develop, they are constantly challenged to discover the meaning of things and relationships as well as aspects of themselves personally. Children are full of wonder and awe about their world. They have a built-in appreciation of natural things. An awareness of God's mysteries demands reverence—a sense of the Holy. Reverence is not alien to a child. For children, life itself is a mystery.

Adults help children by providing opportunities to express their reverence for people and things. As life unfolds, the child comes to new insights into life through the help of adults who have not lost their reverence for God's creation. Even if adults have lost some sense of wonder over mystery, children can draw adults back into the world of mystery and awe. It works both ways - adults lead children to spiritual growth, and children lead adults to a greater love of the Creator. Rituals both in the home and in the Church express reverence through how they are carried out, with attention and care and prayerfulness and naturalness. Let us pray:

Almighty God, giver of all that is good, we thank You for the precious gift of human life:

For life in the womb, coming from your creative power,

For the life of children, making us glad with their freshness and promise,

For the life of young people hoping for a better world,

For the life of people with disabilities, teaching us that every life has value,

For the life of the elderly, witnessing the ageless values of patience and wisdom.

Like Blessed Mary, may we always say "YES" to Your gift. May we defend it and promote it from conception to its natural end. And bring us at last, O Father, to eternal life in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

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

Liturgy adapted for Children.

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Prayer for Reverence, Archdiocese of Vancouver, BC.

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