



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

## Children's Liturgy of the Word

### TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Today's Gospel is about God setting people free and proclaiming God's mercy. Jesus welcomes everyone. We are encouraged to open ourselves to the needs of all and take people as we find them, as God finds each one of us.

The first reading belongs to the time when Israel was in exile in Babylon. It promises restoration and encourages those who are losing heart. The image of the blind seeing and the deaf hearing is a sign of the fulfilment of God's promise of freedom for the oppressed.

Deafness can symbolize isolation from the community. In the Gospel, Jesus heals a deaf man using physical gestures of touch, and words, which signifies a transformative healing. There are other forms of deafness. We can refuse to listen to what Jesus wants us to hear and neglect to hear what people say to us. Spend time being attentive to the way we use gestures and touch—either to include or exclude others.

#### Leaders Reflections Questions:

- † What new opportunities might arise as we encounter and listen to the teachings of Jesus?
- † What aspects of our life might we need to hear?

## Background

**Isaiah 35:4-7a** Isaiah's proclamation emphasizes that God's saving power is for everyone. It promises renewal for both individuals and nature, focusing on healing and restoring to newness of life through Jesus.

**Psalms 146** The psalm encourages praise for God's faithfulness, justice, and care. It also urges us to imitate God's love and justice in our interactions with others.

**James 2:1-5** James encourages all Christians to show love to everyone, especially the marginalized and the poor. He warns against discriminating based on wealth and encourages treating everyone equally. James believes the poor are closer to God because they rely on and trust God, unlike the rich, who may trust in material possessions. James states that God chose the poor to be "rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom." He encourages imitating God by caring for the poor, who inspire us with their deep trust and love for God.

**Mark 7:31-37** The story of Jesus healing the deaf and mute man is unique in the Gospel of Mark, both in the way Jesus performs the miracle and the setting where it takes place. Unlike his usual healing manner, Jesus touches the man's ears and tongue with his fingers and saliva. Through this story, Mark teaches essential lessons about Jesus' mission and the inclusion of all people in God's saving power. This event takes place in Gentile territory, highlighting that Jesus' mission is for everyone, not just for Jews. Jesus crosses cultural boundaries to bring healing and restoration to all. This story shows how Gentiles were also open to seeking healing from a Jewish man. Jesus uses physical touch and a word of command to heal and restore man to wholeness.

When the man who couldn't speak and hear was healed, it showed God's power through Jesus. This fulfilled what the prophet Isaiah had said earlier. Jesus' touch defeated the forces of evil and opened the ears and mouths of people, allowing them to hear God's words and speak His praises. Like back then, we are also made whole to help others with God's assistance. This is why the people were so amazed by what Jesus did.

## 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)

**Dear children, sometimes we may take the gift of hearing for granted. Today, we hear how one deaf man's world would never be the same again because of Jesus. 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 book of the prophet Isaiah.**

The people were worried.

The Lord told Isaiah to say to the people: "Cheer up! Don't be afraid.

The blind will see, and the deaf will hear.

People will leap about like deer, and tongues, once silent, will shout.

Water will rush through the desert.

Scorching sands will turn into lakes, and thirsty ground will become fountains.

*A period of silence is observed after the reading.*

**The word of the Lord.**

**Children: Thanks be to God.**

*A period of silence is observed after the reading.*

## Responsorial Psalm

**R.** Praise the Lord.

God always keeps his word.

He gives justice to the poor and food to the hungry. **R**

The Lord sets prisoners free and heals blind eyes.

He gives a helping hand to everyone who falls.

The Lord loves good people and looks after strangers. **R**

He defends the rights of orphans and widows,  
but destroys the wicked.

The Lord God of Zion will rule forever!

Shout praises to the Lord! **R**

## Second Reading

### **A reading from the letter of James.**

My friends, if you believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, you won't treat some people as better than others. Suppose a rich person wearing fancy clothes and a gold ring comes to one of your meetings. And suppose a poor person dressed in worn-out clothes also comes.

You must not give the best seat to the one in fancy clothes and tell the one who is poor to stand at the side or sit on the floor. That is the same as saying that some people are better than others, and you would be acting like a crooked judge.

My dear friends, pay attention. God has given a lot of faith to the poor people in this world. He also promised them a share in his kingdom that he would give to everyone who loved him.

*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 Mark.

Jesus left the region around Tyre and travelled through Sidon toward Lake Galilee, passing through the land near the ten cities known as Decapolis.

Some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk. They begged Jesus to touch him.

After Jesus had taken him aside from the crowd, he stuck his fingers in the man's ears. Then he spit and put it on the man's tongue. Jesus looked up toward heaven, and with a groan, he said, "Effatha!" which means "Open up!" The man could hear at once, and he had no more trouble talking clearly.

Jesus told the people not to say anything about what he had done. But the more he told them, the more they talked about it. They were utterly amazed and said, "Everything he does is good! He even heals people who cannot hear or talk."

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:

**NOTE: The children may have higher energy levels than usual on the first Sunday after the beginning of the school year. Be attentive to the children. You may wish to offer suggestions regarding posture, seating, and praying in place of a reflection.**

**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.

**What's the difference between hearing and listening?**

**What does it mean to be a good listener?**

When you listen, you are paying attention to what you hear. When you pay attention to what someone is saying, you show interest by asking questions. Listening can also mean hearing with our hearts.

We can be like the man in today's Gospel story who Jesus cured. His newfound ability to hear Jesus gave him so much joy that he proclaimed how wonderful Jesus was! Every time we come to Mass, we can hear the Word of God and let its message work within us. But we have to listen with open hearts.

**How do you think God helps you to hear and understand his Word?**

**What can you do to open your ears to God's Word?**

Even when we hear God's Word, we do not take the opportunity to speak the Word to others. We might be afraid to challenge a friend who is being mean to another. We might not say anything to stop a classmate who wants to take something that doesn't belong to her. We might say no when someone offers us a chance to serve people experiencing poverty or help someone who needs our assistance. Our words and actions must always proclaim God's goodness.

**What opportunities does God offer you today to speak his Word?**

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:** God hears our prayers and answers them. Let us call upon God with our needs: **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Lector:** For the Church and all who listen to Jesus. Let us pray to the Lord. **R.**

**Lector:** For a world free of terror and ware. Let us pray to the Lord. **R.**

**Lector:** For the sick. Let us pray to the Lord **R.**

**Lector:** For the dead. Let us pray to the Lord. **R.**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

**Leader:** God of love, help us to hear your voice. Hold us in our love through Christ, our Lord.

**All:** 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.

## **Preparing for Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLoW)**

As you embrace CLoW within your parish, remember that influential prayer leaders are individuals of faith with a personal spirituality. When have a genuine love for children and prayer, they will respond wholeheartedly in a spirit of worship. Focus on sharing the Good News and praising God, and children will naturally engage meaningfully and authentically.

Get ready to celebrate CLoW by regularly engaging in personal prayer. Throughout the week, pray with the readings you'll be sharing on Sunday. Stay aware of the themes of the readings in your daily life, and look for ways they are reflected in your experiences. This will enhance your ministry experience and improve your ability to lead prayers with children.

Before CLoW, confidently offer yourself as a powerful instrument for God's work in nurturing the children's relationship with him. Whether you have a fleeting moment before the Liturgy of the Word, use it to take a deep breath, center yourself in God's presence, and unreservedly dedicate yourself and your ministry to him.

Readings: Lectionary For Masses with Children, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, NY, 1983  
Liturgy adapted for Children.  
All rights reserved and prepared by the Diocese of Hamilton, Liturgy Office, © 2024.



**DIOCESE OF HAMILTON**