



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Gospel above, taken from the Lectionary for Masses with Children, is a shortened form of today's Gospel. Leaders may read the Gospel in full to highlight Peter's confession of faith and give fuller context to Jesus' acceptance of the Cross. Often, as disciples of Jesus, while professing our faith, we are faced with struggles and trials that challenge our faith. Jesus' acceptance of the inevitability of the Cross challenged Peter's faith. In professing our faith, like Peter, we must come to think like God.

The people have been asking who Jesus is, and there have been lots of rumours flying about regarding him and his background, including those that say he is out of his mind and in league with the devil. Jesus challenges the disciples, asking them who they say he is, and Peter answers. "You are the Christ." However, Peter's and the other disciples' ideas of the Messiah differ from those of the Suffering Servant, who has the role of redeeming Jesus. Jesus has to take Peter back from his self-assumed position as a defender of that notion and bring him back to reality with a jolt: "Get behind me, Satan!" There is a message here for the others as well.

Leaders Reflections Questions:

- † Who is Jesus for you?
- † How would you answer Jesus?
- † Why?

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Leaders Reflections Questions: | 1 |
| Can I send any material home with the children? | 2 |
| Background | 3 |
| The Liturgy | 4 |
| Procession from the main Church | 4 |
| Welcome | 4 |
| First Reading..... | 5 |
| Responsorial Psalm | 6 |
| Second Reading..... | 7 |
| Gospel | 8 |
| Reflection | 9 |
| Alternate Reflective Approach | 10 |
| The Creed | 11 |
| Prayer of the Faithful | 12 |

Can I send any material home with the children?

You may want to consider sending some material home (children's bulletins, etc.) to help parents reflect on what they heard in the Scriptures with their children. We suggest avoiding, if at all possible, having the children carry papers or books back with them into the main assembly when the Liturgy of the Word has concluded since these materials can serve as distractions and may give children the impression that the Mass is over.

Instead, see if you can hand out these materials at the end of Mass as people leave or if you can disseminate them on the parish website or through the bulletin. You should always consult with your pastor before giving out materials.

Background

Isaiah 50:5-9a is a reading where suffering is not attributed to anyone specific. The main characters are the testifying servant and God. Unlike other prophets who complain in some prophetic books, the servant in Isaiah 50 expresses only gratitude. He acknowledges God as the one who opens his ears, keeps him from disgrace, and prevents him from being proven wrong. This is the song of a disciple who values a faithful relationship with God above everything else.

Psalms 116: This psalm of thanksgiving follows the first reading from one of the Servant Songs in beautiful harmony. Whereas the servant proclaimed that God opened his ear, we are invited to join the psalmist in singing the praise of the God who hears our cries.

James 2:14-18 James explains that having faith in Christ goes beyond believing in God. He says real faith is shown through acts of kindness, like helping those in need. The reading from James connects to the Gospel reading, where Peter learns that true faith in Jesus means being willing to accept and share in His suffering.

Mark 8:27-35 In today's Gospel, Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter responds, "You are the Christ," but Peter doesn't fully understand what that means. Jesus begins to teach them about his identity and mission, shattering their expectations. The disciples struggled to comprehend that a Messiah would be rejected and killed, as their understanding was limited.

When Peter tried to change Jesus' mind about what would happen, Jesus told Peter that he was causing a problem. Jesus called Peter "Satan" to show that Peter was acting like a tempter, not a devil. When Jesus said, "Get behind me," he meant that Peter should follow Jesus, not lead him. This showed that Jesus was the teacher, and Peter should be the follower.

Jesus understood God's plan. He knew that confronting evil would cause evil to attack him. Peter focused on safety and triumph. Jesus knew his teaching would bring him suffering, but he also trusted that God would help him. It has always been challenging to share this message.

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, today's Gospel teaches that he has immense love for us through his suffering. We believe that Jesus rose and, through the cross, brought God's eternal life to everyone who believes. We send you to remember all the amazing things God has done in your life through 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 Lord All-Powerful gives me just the right words to comfort the weary. Each morning, he makes me eager to learn from his teachings.

The Lord All-Powerful made me willing to listen and not rebel or run away. And so, I let them beat my back and pull out my beard. I didn't turn aside when they made fun of me and spit in my face. But the Lord God keeps me from being embarrassed. And I refuse to give up, because

I know I will never be ashamed. My Protector is nearby. No one can stand here and accuse me of anything wrong.

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. I will walk in the presence of God.

I love you, Lord!

You answered my prayers.

You paid attention to me,

so I will pray to you as long as I live. **R**

You are kind, Lord,

and good and merciful.

You protect ordinary people, and when I was helpless,

you saved me. **R**

You, Lord, have saved

my life from death,

my eyes from tears,

my feet from stumbling.

Now, I will walk at your side

in this land of the living. **R**

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of James.

My friends, what good is it to say you have faith when you don't do anything to show that you have faith? Can that kind of faith save you?

If you know someone without clothes or food, you shouldn't say, "I hope all goes well for you. I hope you will be warm and have plenty to eat."

What good is it to say this unless you do something to help? Faith that doesn't lead us to do good deeds is all alone and dead!

Suppose someone disagrees and says, "It is possible to have faith without doing kind deeds."

I would answer, "Prove that you have faith without doing kind deeds, and I will prove that I

have faith by doing them."

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 began telling his disciples what would happen to him. He said, "The nation's leaders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law of Moses will make the Son of Man suffer terribly. He will be rejected and killed, but three days later, he will rise to life."

Then Jesus explained clearly what he meant.

Peter took Jesus aside and told him to stop talking like that. But when Jesus turned and saw the disciples, he corrected Peter. He said to him, "Satan, get away from me! You are thinking like everyone else and not like God."

Jesus then told the crowd and the disciples to come closer. He said, "If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me. If you want to save your life, you will destroy it. But if you give up your life and the good news for me, you will save it."

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.

How would you describe yourself if someone asked you who you are? When speaking about yourself, you might mention your name, a student, or sports team or musical group involvement.

What would you say?

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks his disciples what people say about him. The disciples tell him that he is described in many ways. Then, he asks them who they think he is.

Why do you think he asked them this question?

Jesus likely wanted to know who his closest followers believed he was. Peter called Jesus "the Christ," which means "the anointed one." God chose to save us. Jesus knew he would die to save people and told his followers that true disciples might have to suffer and die. It's a tough challenge. We need faith in God to face the difficulties in our lives with courage and strength. Right now, we can show we are true disciples of Jesus by thinking of sacrifices we can make for others, like "taking up a cross."

What would you say if someone asked you to tell them who Jesus is?

How would you describe yourself as a true disciple of Jesus?

Alternate Reflective Approach

Some things are hard and not always easy, as our parents or teachers tell us. Ask the children to name some things they find difficult to do (e.g., Going to the doctor or learning to swim). List these and ask the children how they feel when they have to do something difficult.

Ask them what helps them to do this difficult thing. (Mom comes with me, I get a reward for being brave; I pray for Jesus to be with me).

How do you feel when that problematic thing is over and done with? (proud, brave, glad).

We are happy to be followers of Jesus.

In the first Reading, what does Isaiah say about what God has done for him?

What has God given him strength to do?

What has God done for you?

In the Gospel, what did Jesus ask his disciples?

What is Jesus' message to those who follow him?

What can we expect if we decide to follow Jesus?

In your life now what good action do you find hard to do?

What does Jesus mean when he says, "If you want to be my follower, take up your cross and follow me?"

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. The leader may need 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 follow Jesus.
Let us pray to the Lord. **R.**

Lector: For peace in the world.
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: Loving God, from you, we receive life. Have mercy on us and those for whom we pray 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.

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