



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Lectionary for Masses with Children does not include the pericope (section) ahead of the Gospel below. The missing pericope is Jesus telling the apostles of his passion and death. While there are several possible themes, one for children is that hospitality should be offered to those from whom we can benefit the least.

The trust that Jesus places in God compares to the trust of a little child. Jesus uses the opportunity to discuss who is the greatest to teach the disciples what the ideal of "first place" must be in the Church community, which they will become once he is no longer with them. Our faith should make a difference in the way we treat others. Jesus draws on the simplicity and humility of the child as a model for us.

If you consider one or two of the 'great' people you know, how could they be described as servants?

Leaders Reflections Questions:

- † What about children leads Jesus to make acceptance of them a test of the disciples' attitude to him?
- † Are there things I do not understand and am afraid to ask?
- † What are my ambitions? Is service of others among them?

Contents

Leaders Reflections Questions:	1
What is the Directory for Masses with Children?	2
Which Lectionaries does the Church use for 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 – Intermediate Grades	10
Focus on Church Teaching	10
The Creed	11
Prayer of the Faithful	12

What is the Directory for Masses with Children?

This document was approved by Pope Paul VI in 1973. It was developed as a response to the direction in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which provided for adaptations of the liturgy for particular groups. The Directory for Masses with Children is a unique pastoral document focused on the liturgical formation of children.

Which Lectionaries does the Church use for Children

LECTIONARY FOR MASS:

The ritual book includes the readings for Mass. It is divided into several volumes, which include the readings for Sundays, Solemnities and Feasts of the Lord, Masses for the weekdays and the saints, and rituals such as weddings and funerals.

LECTIONARY FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN: The ritual book, including readings adapted for children's liturgical and cognitive needs.

Background

Wisdom 2:12, 17-20 The words in today's first reading from the Book of Wisdom are the author's attempt to justify the God of Israel to sophisticated Jewish students who were being influenced by Hellenistic culture. The wicked in the reading reveals their ignorance as they attack the "just one" for not agreeing with their philosophy, contrasting their virtues with those of the just one who trusts God. The author uses the disdain of the wicked to emphasize the importance of trusting in the power of God for true wisdom.

Psalm 54 The truth of human existence can only be found in a relationship with the true God. Psalm 54 is an individual prayer for help, grounded in God's faithfulness to the one who prays. The psalmist proclaims, 'God is my helper; the Lord sustains my life.'

James 3:16-4:3 The reading from James emphasizes the importance of virtues and the negative impact of vices. James urges us to adopt a perspective of humility, replacing worldly values with God's perspective. This aligns with the teaching in the Book of Wisdom and the Gospel.

Mark 9:30-37 Today's Gospel presents us with the second of three Passion predictions in Mark's narrative. These predictions attempt to lead the Gospel's disciples and readers to reverse popular cultural convictions, to think as God does and not as humans do. Mark follows each of the predictions with a teaching of Jesus that centers on an understanding that must be reevaluated.

In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches that we must redefine greatness. We are essential not when we place ourselves first but when we assume the last place. Greatness is not found in an exalted position but in service. Contrary to the assumptions of our society, humility is true power. Humility is not negating ourselves but immersing ourselves in the truth God has revealed. Jesus enacts a parable by embracing a child. In the ancient world, children were those without legal standing and societal influence. Jesus shows us that when we identify with those who are marginalized and vulnerable, we are glorified in God's sight. This is how we adopt the divine perspective that both the Sage of Wisdom and the author of James promote.

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, God wants us to have the right relationship with others and the world. This means giving up selfishness. God asks that we treat everyone with equal importance and respect. This is God's wisdom: to be peaceful, gentle, kind, and doing good. Go in peace now and listen attentively to God's Word.

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 Wisdom.

This week, the First Reading from the Book of Wisdom does not appear helpful for Children's Liturgy of the Word.

For this reason, the Lectionary for Mass with Children omits it.

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. Give us peace, Lord.

It made me glad
to hear them say,
Let's go to the house of the Lord!
Jerusalem, we are standing
inside your gates. **R**

Because of my friends
and my relatives,
I will pray for peace.
And because of the house
of the Lord our God,
I will work for your good. **R**

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of James.

Brothers and sisters:

The wisdom that comes from above leads us to be pure, friendly, gentle, sensible, kind, helpful, genuine, and sincere. When peacemakers plant seeds of peace, they will harvest justice.

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 and his disciples went to his home in Capernaum. After they were inside the house, Jesus asked them, "What were you arguing about?" They had been arguing about which one of them was the greatest, and so they did not answer.

After Jesus sat down and told the twelve disciples to gather around him, he said, "If you want the place of honour, you must serve others!" Then Jesus had a child stand near him. He put his arm around the child and said, "When you welcome even a child because of me, you welcome me. And when you welcome me, you welcome the one who sent me."

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.

Today's Gospel includes the character of a child. This child could have been just like you. This child doesn't say anything in the Gospel, but they are essential because the child helps Jesus settle an argument among the disciples. They were all trying to figure out who was the greatest. Jesus explained that to be considered great in God's eyes, you must serve a child.

What could Jesus mean by that?

Did he mean that only children need help?

It means doing good things for everyone, not just the adults. It means helping people who need help the most. That could mean your classmate, who's sitting right next to you, or someone who is disabled, or someone who is sick. Jesus said that caring for others is more important than anything else. Being able to love others is what makes someone great. Everything we do for others, we do for Jesus. Being kind to someone is the same as being kind to God. It doesn't even matter how young or old you are! You are never too young to serve God.

Sometimes, people think that having more toys, sports ability, or living in a bigger house makes us better people. Sometimes, people waste time arguing when they could be using that time to be kind.

What are some ways you can show you care?

We can welcome new people in our community, stand up for someone being bullied, hold the door for others, or help someone with trouble. We can be friends with someone who is lonely or encourage a teammate. We can pray to God to help us do the right thing even if it's hard. God always helps those who try to do the right thing. We can also pray for those who treat us unkindly, asking God to help them see that there's a better way to be.

Alternate Reflective Approach – Intermediate Grades

Focus on Church Teaching

Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection reveal that authentic power is service. Every Christian is called to embrace the marginalized. We will be judged on our love for the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner. Humility must accompany every good work so we do not make our service about us. In humility, we find authenticity.

Think of some examples of people you consider important.

Who are they?

Have you ever considered someone like yourself as important?

Jesus certainly did! In today's Gospel, the disciples disagreed about who was the greatest. Imagine their surprise when Jesus said the greatest should be like a child.

What qualities of a child is Jesus asking us to imitate?

Jesus taught the disciples that good leaders will not just tell people what to do or delegate tasks. They must set an example by serving the people they are leading. Children like yourselves are likely followers and not necessarily thought of as leaders. But children like you can listen, allowing you to trust and be humble. These are important qualities that distinguish good leaders from bad ones.

What are some other good qualities of children?

Much of what Jesus was teaching was radical for people of that time to understand. It wasn't just the idea of what an ideal leader is. In today's Gospel, Jesus refers to his passion again and refers to his future suffering and death. The disciples don't understand what Jesus is trying to tell them. Even today, we often have trouble wrapping our minds around his teachings. God goes beyond our human understanding. But here is an opportunity for us to be as open and trusting as a child and to listen to God's Word with our hearts.

How can you put Jesus' teaching into practice today?

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: Let us pray to our God for our needs. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**

Lector: For leaders in the Church.
Let us pray to the Lord. **R.**

Lector: For our family, we treat one another well.
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, you care for your people. Hear our prayers to you through Jesus 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