



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Unfortunately, Christianity often experiences divisions and conflicts between denominations and even within the same church. The Holy Spirit can work through unexpected people.

The story in the First Reading concerns two elders who were not among Moses' chosen leaders. The main point of the reading is Moses' response to the upset chosen leaders. He tells them that people cannot control the spirit of God, which goes wherever it wants. It's not limited to those with special roles or responsibilities. This lesson reinforces the idea that God's ways are different from ours.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells his followers not to be a closed, exclusive, or narrow-minded group. He emphasizes that everyone who contributes to the well-being of humanity in his name is welcomed and should not be rejected. Jesus also warns against causing others to lose faith in him. In the full Gospel reading for this Sunday, Jesus uses strong language to urge his followers to get rid of anything that could lead to sin. In the New Testament, the body is often used as a metaphor for the church, so Jesus may have been referring to excluding those who offended the community.

Leaders Reflections Questions:

- † How open are we to others?
- † How well do we reflect Jesus' generosity of spirit?

Contents

Leaders Reflections Questions:	1
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
The Creed	10
Prayer of the Faithful	11

Background

Numbers 11:25-29 Moses, feeling overwhelmed, asks God for help. God gave some of Moses' spirit to seventy elders, including Eldad and Medad, who prophesied even though they did not attend the ritual. Joshua objects, but Moses explains that God can give the spirit to anyone. The story teaches us to be open to experiencing God's spirit wherever and whenever it happens.

Psalms 19 celebrates God through the sun and the law. The first part praises the sun as an image of God, while the second part praises God's law as a guide for living faithfully. The text also addresses the possibility of not being aware of our weaknesses despite striving to live faithfully according to the law.

James 5:1-6 James strongly condemns the rich in the New Testament, accusing them of unjustly exploiting workers and living selfishly. He warns that God will right these injustices in this life or the next.

Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48 The main obstacle to humans living according to God's desires is our constant temptation to want things our way and control life. This temptation is at the root of all sinfulness, leading to prejudice, blindness, lack of openness, insincerity, lack of compassion and understanding, injustice, and many other problems.

In today's Gospel, Jesus rebukes John for wanting to control who can act compassionately toward others in his name. Instead of trying to control, we should be open to the unexpected ways in which God directs others to act, even if it differs from our own way of acting. We lead ourselves and others to sin when we refuse to live according to God's wisdom and precepts. Our desire to control people and things prevents us from allowing God to be God.

When we prioritize our own wisdom and precepts over God's, we become focused only on ourselves, completely missing what God is saying through other people, places, and things. Faithful living no longer centers on God and others, but focuses solely on self, leading to unfaithful living. This is what Jesus condemns in today's Gospel reading.

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)

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.

Children, joy comes from following Jesus. In the gospel, Jesus welcomes people who are doing good. Follow Jesus and do good.

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 Numbers.

The Lord came down in a cloud and spoke with Moses. Then, he took some of the Spirit's power that he had given to Moses and gave it to the seventy leaders. The men prophesied, but they did it only this one time.

Two leaders had stayed in camp and not gone to the sacred tent. They were Eldad and Medad. But the spirit also took control of them, and they prophesied. A young man told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

Joshua, son of Nun, was still a boy when he first started helping Moses. Joshua was there then and said to him, "Master, make those men stop!"

Moses replied, "Are you saying this for my good? I wish the Lord would give his spirit to all people and let them become his prophets!"

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. Let the earth cry out to God.

Tell everyone on this earth
to shout praises to God!
Sing about his glorious name.
Honour him with praises. **R**

We all sing praises to you.
Come and see the things our God has done! **R**

All who worship God,
come here and listen;
I will tell you everything
God has done for me. Let's praise God!
He listened when I prayed
and he was always kind. **R**

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of James.

Brothers and sisters:

You rich people should cry and weep! Terrible things are going to happen to you. Your treasures have already rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your money has rusted, and the rust will be evidence against you, as it burns your body like fire.

Yet you keep on storing up wealth in these last days. You refused to pay the people who worked in your fields, and now their unpaid wages are shouting out against you. The Lord All-Powerful has surely heard the cries of the workers who harvested your crops.

While here on earth, you have thought only of filling your own stomachs and having a good time. But now you are like fat cattle on their way to be butchered. You have condemned and murdered innocent people, who couldn't even fight back.

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.

The disciple John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw a man using your name to force demons out of people. But he was not one of us, and we told him to stop."

Jesus said to his disciples: "Don't stop him! No one who works miracles in my name will soon turn and say something bad about me. Anyone who is not against us is for us. And anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name will surely be rewarded just because you belong to 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.

Was there ever a time when you had a friend and did not want that friend to play with anyone else but you?

At that moment, were you feeling a little jealous?

In the Gospel, the disciples were concerned about someone who was not part of their group but could still help others in Jesus' name. They thought they should only be able to heal people in Jesus' name because they were his official followers and knew all his teachings. They wanted to keep Jesus to themselves, just like you might have felt when you didn't want to share your best friend. However, Jesus explained that they should not stop others from doing good deeds in his name. He also taught them the importance of humility and following God's rules.

Jesus wants to see everyone doing good things in his name. It doesn't matter if the person isn't an "official follower." Anyone who does good things out of love for Jesus is a friend of Jesus. We know Jesus is good, and we can do good things to show our love for him. In the same way, Jesus knows that we're his friends when we do good things in his name.

What are other ways we can do good things in the name of Jesus?

We live faithfully when we follow God's way. For example, if your friend gets something you want, be happy for her instead of jealous. God wants us to do this, and it brings joy to our souls.

How do we live out our faith?

Attending Mass is one way we live out our faith. We are learning more about God and how to live a Christian life. Attending Mass brings us closer to God, and receiving the sacraments gives God's grace to us.

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.

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