



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

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

Overview

The context of today's readings comes from the perspective of *story*. It is meant to convey a particular truth in a meaningful way. They speak about God's commitment to women, men, and the welfare of all creation, but also, most importantly, Jesus' commitment to children, the model for all who belong to the kingdom of heaven. We are made in God's image and likeness.

List in your mind all the qualities you think are important components of a commitment, such as honesty, trust, openness, dependability, etc. God puts a seal on the sacredness of the union of woman and man, on the partnership, and on the cooperative nature. This is a seal on the liaison between all women and all men—this is to be a cooperative endeavour. The blessed nature of humanity is emphasized in the story.

In the Gospel, Jesus points to the example of children not because they are naive but because they are more open to reality and to the workings of the spirit than adults.

The Readings today speak to us about commitment to each other and to all people, commitment to the common humanity that binds us all to each other.

Leaders Reflections Questions:

- † How do we reflect this divine care for creation and our common humanity in the everyday moments of our lives??

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Background

The readings have multiple themes. Focus on God who created humans in God's own image and likeness. Women and men are called into equal but different relationships with God and one another. We are all children of God and ought to have a child-like disposition.

Genesis 2:18-24 The passage is from the second creation account in Genesis in which God created humans. It is a story to illustrate a point. God created us for community and one another. Marriage is the most explicit expression of this unity, but the desire for unity with God and others is true for all humans, even those who do not marry.

Psalms 128 Wisdom literature teaches that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. This Psalm starts with a blessing for all those who fear the Lord. Fear, in this context, refers to awe and reverence for the gracious and mighty deeds that the Lord has done. Those who show reverence to the Lord are blessed and favoured by Him. The greatest expression of God's blessing in this life is the harmony, peace, and fruitfulness of family life. Community originates from God and becomes the source of personal and familial strength and blessing.

Hebrews 2:9-11 The reading from the letter to the Hebrews focuses on God, in Jesus, becoming human to save sin and repair the ruptured relationship caused by humans. Jesus, by suffering and dying, restores the familial relationship between us and God, who is not ashamed to identify with us as brothers and sisters.

Mark 10:13-16 Mark focuses on God's intentions for humanity. Marriage becomes an example of the community relationship God intended from the beginning.

The scene of Jesus with the child shows us how far the disciples were from accepting the teachings of Jesus about welcoming children. To be able to welcome the kingdom of God as a child does is to recognize, despite human failure, the value of God's original design for women and men. The purpose of the sacred myth recounted in the first reading impresses upon us that God created woman and man in a relationship with one another, a relationship and partnership that is to last until the last day; we are locked in partnership as coinhabitants of God's creation. All of us need commitment to make this relationship work.

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.

Dear children, as you listen to today's readings, hear Jesus speaking to you. See how he is asking you to live like him. When you return to us, you can show us how to follow Jesus more closely in our lives, too. Go in peace.

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 Genesis.

God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a partner."

God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man. Then, God took a rib, made it into a woman, and brought her to the man.

Then the man said, "This is the flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man, this one was taken."

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. May the Lord bless us all our lives.

The Lord will bless you
if you respect him
and obey his laws.
Your fields will produce
and you will be happy
and all will go well. **R**

Your wife will be as fruitful
as a grapevine,
and just as an olive tree
is rich with olives,
your home will be rich
with healthy children. **R**

That is how the Lord will bless
everyone who respects him.
I pray that the Lord
will bless you from Zion
And let Jerusalem prosper
as long as you live. **R**

Second Reading

A reading from a letter to the Hebrews.

The reading is not helpful for children; however, it is good for leaders in the next few weeks.

We do indeed see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death so that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone.

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering.

For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified, all have one Father. For this reason, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

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.

Some people brought their children to Jesus so that he could bless them by placing his hands on them. But the disciples told the people to stop bothering him.

When Jesus saw this, he said, "Let the children come to me! Don't try to stop them. These children belong to the kingdom of God. I promise you that you cannot get into God's kingdom unless you accept the kingdom the way a child does."

Then Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them by placing his hands on them.

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.

When discussing families, be sensitive to children who live with single parents, stepparents and stepsiblings, extended family, or foster or adoptive parents.

Have you ever been left out of anything because you were too young?

In the Gospel, Jesus' disciples didn't want anyone to interrupt him while he was teaching. They thought that bringing children for a blessing would bother or distract Jesus, and they were telling the children to go away. Jesus, however, never turns anyone away, especially children. Children are a very important part of a family. Jesus let the children help him with his teaching. Jesus was teaching the people about how important family is. Jesus told the crowd that people who are like little children belong to the Kingdom of God because children accept the Kingdom of God so beautifully and easily.

How special are these words?

Jesus wanted adults to have these same qualities of trusting and loving, and that is what Jesus wanted for all people, not just children.

Do you know why Jesus would want all people to accept the Kingdom of God?

Jesus wants all of us to be part of the Kingdom of God and to joyfully come to him. Adults are still beloved children of God. We are made in God's image and are part of a community.

What does it mean to be part of a community?

Being a part of the community means living in a relationship with one another and with God. Our community has a relationship with God, and the larger body is the Church, while our smaller community is the parish.

Who are some of the people in your parish community?

What is your role in the community?

Because we are part of a community, we depend on one another. We need one another, and without one another, we are not a community. We are not created to be alone.

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 love one another.
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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