



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

This weekend's readings use symbolic language, 'apocalyptic' language, or literary style to highlight the mystery of salvation. This type of rich expression reflects turmoil and transformation for a purpose – to highlight preparation for eternal life. In the Gospel, Jesus uses the fig tree to remind his disciples to remain aware of what is happening to them, signalling change.

The Psalm offers us God's guidance for navigating chaos while sowing hope. Early Christians anticipated Christ's return, but their language shifted to one of calm reassurance over time. Today, we are called to embrace the "signs of the times" with faith and respond positively to life's changes confidently and optimistically!

The Gospel helps us understand different aspects of the end times. It's important not to interpret this message literally but to grasp the broader lesson: to live with an awareness of the end of our own lives. Jesus instructs his disciples to prepare for the moment that God's plan is fulfilled.

Leaders Reflections Question:

- † Do you ever contemplate your death?
- † What helps you to live in an expectant and watchful way?

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Background

Daniel 12:1-3 Today's first reading highlights the Jewish belief in the resurrection of the dead. This belief, which emerged during the persecution by Antiochus IV in 168 BC, affirmed that even amid suffering, God remained faithful. Martyrs were thought to receive new life on the last day, as the Jewish tradition emphasizes bodily resurrection rather than a purely spiritual afterlife. Unlike Hellenistic or Greek culture, which prioritized the spiritual over the material, the Jewish faith sees all creation as God's gift, affirming that the human body is integral to God's plan. The belief in resurrection reflects a commitment to the goodness of material creation.

Psalms 16 is a prayer of unshakable confidence in the Lord. The psalmist's confidence is rooted in a deep relationship with God, ensuring security for his whole being—heart, soul, and body—even in the face of death. He hopes that God will extend his life but primarily draws strength from his closeness to the Lord. This intimate faith paves the way for belief in the Resurrection.

Hebrews 10:11-14, 18 The author of Hebrews emphasizes the superiority of Jesus' sacrifice, noting that while it is perfect, it is not yet complete; Jesus must return to fulfill history. He integrates Hellenistic ideas while also embracing Jewish apocalyptic thought. As Jesus sits at God's right hand, he waits for the day when evil—symbolized by injustice, hatred, poverty, and disease—will be conquered. At the Second Coming, his perfect sacrifice will reach its ultimate conclusion.

Mark 13:24-32 Chapter 13 of Mark's Gospel, often called "The Little Apocalypse," presents Jesus' discourse on the end times. Apocalyptic literature emphasizes transformation rather than mere destruction; the upheaval in celestial bodies symbolizes the transition to God's kingdom. The resurrection of the dead embodies God's wish for us, a belief rooted in Judaism. As we anticipate this future, we should value the material world and care for our bodies, recognizing their significance. God's creation is inherently good, and in God's kingdom, it will be renewed. We must cherish and be responsible stewards of the world around us, as it is part of the new creation.

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, the Scriptures tell us that we may face difficult times, but there is hope because Jesus will return. Nothing on earth lasts forever, but God's love lasts forever. 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.

Good and gracious God, open our minds and hearts to receive your message. Send us your Holy Spirit to help us fulfill our mission to love God and one another.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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 Daniel.

"At that time, Michael, the great prince,
the protector of your people, shall arise.
There shall be a time of anguish,
such as has never occurred
since nations first came into existence.

But at that time, your people shall be delivered,
everyone who is found to be written in the book.
Many of those who sleep
in the dust of the earth shall awake,
some to everlasting life,
and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

"Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the
sky, and those who lead many to righteousness,
like the stars forever and ever."

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. Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope.

The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.

I keep the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. **R.**

Therefore, my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;
my body also rests secure.

For you do not give me up to Sheol,
or let your faithful one see the Pit. **R.**

You show me the path of life.

In your presence, there is fullness of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures
forevermore. **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from a letter to the Hebrews.

Every priest stands day after day at his service,
offering again and again the same sacrifices
that can never take away sins.

But when Christ had offered for all time
a single sacrifice for sins,
"he sat down at the right hand of God."
and since then has been waiting
"until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet."

For by a single offering, he has perfected those who are
sanctified for all time.

Where there is forgiveness of sin and lawless deeds,
there is no longer any offering for sin.

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.

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 spoke to talk to his disciples
about the end which is to come.

"In those days, after the time of suffering,
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds'
with great power and glory.

Then he will send out the angels,
and gather his elect from the four winds,
from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

From the fig tree, learn its lesson:
as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves,
you know that summer is near.

So also, when you see these things taking place,
You know that he is near the very gates.

Truly, I tell you,
this generation will not pass away
until all these things have taken place.
Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words will not pass away.
But about that day or hour, no one knows,
neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son,
but only the Father."

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?

After Jesus rose from the dead, the disciples did not recognize him immediately. That was because Jesus differed from when he was living on earth. But they were able to recognize him by breaking bread at a meal. Then they knew that Jesus had said to them, "This is my body" and "This is my blood."

God has promised that all of us will have resurrected bodies someday, just as he gave Jesus a resurrected, glorified body. We don't know exactly when that will happen, but we can count on God keeping his promise.

Do you know why we will have glorified bodies in heaven instead of souls without bodies?

God created us, and everything in creation matters to Him. God loves all creation, including humans, who are made in God's image. When God made the earth and everything on it, God said, "It is good." God knew creation was good and loved us very much.

Imagine the moment when Jesus returns! Those who have passed away will be united with their bodies once more, but they will be transformed and glorified this time! Picture it: our new, radiant bodies, free from pain and sickness, fully healed and vibrant! We'll be like Jesus in every way! The excitement of our glorified bodies is beyond words—it will be truly amazing! Are you ready for such a magnificent transformation?

Over the last few weeks, we have discussed the importance of looking out for each other, which is fantastic! But let's remember to take care of ourselves, too. Our bodies are unique gifts, and it's up to us to show them some love. That means enjoying tasty and nutritious food and keeping active. Let's make sure we're feeling our best!

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 call on God for all our needs:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Lector: For the Church, that we may grow in love for Jesus, let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For the poor and hungry, that they may receive the food and care they need, let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For teachers, parents, and all who care for us, that God may bless them with patience and wisdom, let us pray to the Lord.

R

For the sick, that Jesus may comfort and heal them, let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For our parish community, we may follow Jesus with pure hearts and joyful spirits, let us pray to the Lord. **R**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: Loving God, help all who seek you 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 Sundays and Solemnities,
Canadian Conferences of Catholic Bishops, 2009, adapted for children.
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