



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Overview

On this final Sunday of the liturgical year, we celebrate Jesus as Lord of love, revealing God's love for all people and calling his followers to live in that love. Today's readings remind us to care for society's most vulnerable.

In the first reading, Daniel sees a vision of a human being led into God's presence. The Jewish people interpreted this figure as someone who would judge all the nations in God's name. For us as Christians, it was a small step to see the human as Jesus Christ, risen to glory at the right hand of God. The writing of both the first and second readings is highly imaginative, so we must be aware to avoid literal interpretation.

The second Reading offers three aspects of Jesus' mission: witness, resurrection, and God as master. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet reflect God's place as the starting point and the ending point of history.

In the Gospel, Pilate holds power as prefect or governor of the Roman province of Judea. His reputation as insensitive to Jewish religious practices was often expressed as a brutal force to repress dissent against Roman rule. He struggles to come to grips with the reality of what Jesus presents him in an attempt to trap him into an admission of guilt – "Are you a king? ... What have you done? ... So you are a King?"

The crime Jesus was tried and executed for was sedition – the claim that he was the 'King of the Jews' was a direct threat to the Emperor. Crucifixion was a Roman punishment, not a Jewish one.

Even though it appears that Pilate is sitting in judgment on Jesus, in truth, it is Jesus who is Pilate's judge. If Jesus is King, then all Christians belong to a royal race. The Church is Christ's people, yet ours is a kingship of service which has no concern for the things of the world. We are to bear witness to the truth and be messengers of truth, standing for peace and justice for all oppressed.

In our reflection today, we might consider what conflicts exist between our society's values and the kingdom of Jesus.

Leaders Reflections Question:

† In what ways has Jesus become 'king' of your life?

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Background

Daniel 7:13-14 Chapter 7 of Daniel recounts the prophet's dream vision focused on power and who will rule the earth. It describes four intimidating beasts symbolizing the Babylonian, Medes, Persian, and Greek kingdoms, all destined for destruction. The Ancient One (God) bestows ultimate power upon "one like a Son of Man." This title has various interpretations, including a heavenly figure, a human ruler with divine authority, or a representation of faithful Israel. Ultimately, the vision reassures persecuted Jews under Antiochus IV that God will defeat the evil rulers causing their suffering, establishing justice and eradicating evil.

Psalms 93 emphasizes God's power, portraying God not in physical garments but robed in splendour. God's reign is tied to creation, as God subdued chaotic waters and established the world, making God the King of creation. God's authority extends to the human heart, culminating in the praise of God's decrees that uphold justice and order in society. Both the material world and realms of justice flow from God's strength and glory.

Revelation 1:5-8 Jesus Christ, as the Son of Man and King, is significant in the Book of Revelation. It claims he is the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth due to his resurrection, granting him ultimate authority. The phrase "is coming amid the clouds" links him to the Son of Man vision in Daniel 7. God's title as "the Alpha and the Omega" underscores his vast power, now active in Jesus.

John 18:33b-37 On the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, the Gospel highlights Jesus as "King." While earlier readings depict God's kingship as overcoming evil, Jesus tells Pilate that God's kingdom does not belong to this world. This means Jesus' reign is not about abandoning the world but transforming it by eradicating evil. As followers of Christ the King, we are called to participate in God's mission by promoting justice and peace, demonstrating our allegiance to God and extending God's rule to all.

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, Jesus is the King of the Universe. Know that Jesus brings life and love. Go now 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.

I had a dream and visions as I lay in bed.
As I watched in the night visions,
I saw one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven.

And he came to the One who is Ancient of Days
and was presented before the Eternal God.
To him was given dominion and glory and kingship,
that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that shall not pass away,
and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.

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. The Lord is King.

The Lord is king,
he is robed in majesty;
the Lord is robed,
he is girded with strength. **R.**

He has established the world;
it shall never be moved;
your throne is established from of old;
you are from everlasting. **R.**

Your decrees are very sure;
holiness befits your house,
O Lord, forevermore. **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from the book of Revelation.

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness,
the firstborn of the dead,
and the ruler of the kings of the earth.
To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood,
and made us to be a kingdom,
priests serving his God and Father,
to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Look! He is coming with the clouds;
every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and on his account, all the tribes of the earth will lament.
So it is to be. Amen.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God,
"who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

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 John.

Pilate asked Jesus,

"Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered,

"Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

Pilate replied,

"I am not a Jew, am I?"

Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me.

What have you done?"

Jesus answered,

"My kingdom is not from this world.

If my kingdom were from this world,

my followers would be fighting

to keep me from being handed over to the Jews.

But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

Pilate asked him,

"So you are a king?"

Jesus answered,

"You say that I am a king.

For this, I was born,

and for this, I came into the world,

to testify to the truth.

Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

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?

Do you know what a king is?

What are the responsibilities of a king?

Can you name any kings or the places they ruled over?

Today is Christ the King of the Universe. We remember that while other kings may rule on Earth, Jesus Christ reigns over the entire universe.

Over the many centuries, countries have had different kinds of kings. Some have been good, kind, loving, and caring for the people they ruled. Others, however, were focused on their own wealth and power, sometimes taking land from others. Some kings have tried to tell people how to act and what to believe. But Jesus is not like those kings; Jesus is a different kind of king—he is the one who is loving and compassionate.

In today's Gospel, Pilate has many questions for Jesus. He is curious whether Jesus considers himself a king and what led to his arrest. Jesus doesn't provide straightforward answers. When asked about being a king, he replies, "You say that I am a king." Jesus understands that Pilate didn't grasp that his idea of kingship was very different from how Caesar ruled.

Jesus Christ is not a king like those seen in movies or history books. His kingship is not limited to certain areas of land. Instead, Jesus first served us; in return, we are called to serve him gladly. He rules our hearts, minds, and souls as we learn to align ourselves with his example and his will for our lives.

When we shape our hearts, minds, and souls around Jesus and his teachings, we create a space for him to dwell within us. This is what he desires from us. Jesus is already the King of the Universe and wants to be the king of each of our souls. He calls us to transform the world into God's Kingdom. When we conform ourselves to Jesus, others can witness the goodness, kindness, and love we share freely. By acting this way for Jesus, we help others understand more about him and his desires for his people.

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: Our Lord leads us to truth and justice. Let us follow him and present our needs.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Lector: For the Church, and all called by Christ, that we may serve with joy and a sharing spirit. **R**

For the poor and hungry, that God will provide nourishment through our concern for those that have less than we do; let us pray to the Lord. **R**

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

For our family and friends who have died, may they see the fullness of Jesus, let us pray to the Lord. **R**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: God, you are Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Help us follow you and learn your ways. We ask this through Christ our Lord, King of the Universe.

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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