



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Finding Hope in Bearing Good Fruit

Overview

This week's readings focus on integrity, the power of words, and the importance of bearing good fruit in our lives.

In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches us the importance of genuinely hearing his words. He emphasizes that a real encounter with him leads to a good life. Some people think faith should show through amazing signs, but most disciples live ordinary lives with everyday routines. Our faith should shine in these simple moments. Jesus teaches us to avoid judging others while ignoring our own faults. Instead, we should be merciful and forgiving. These lessons apply to our church communities, too. Pope Francis highlights the dignity of refugees and migrants. He asks us to see them as our brothers and sisters and to offer them hospitality, just like Christ, who was a refugee. [

The book of Sirach also shares wisdom by telling us that our thoughts and words show our character. How we treat others, especially those who are vulnerable, reflects who we really are. Ultimately, we should bear good fruit in our lives and our communities.

Leaders Reflection

- † Are we bearing good fruit?
- † Are we welcoming to everyone, no matter their background?

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Background

Sirach 27:4-7 This passage from Sirach uses the imagery of a sieve, a kiln, and a tree to illustrate how a person's true character is revealed through words and actions. Just as impurities are separated in a sieve, and a tree is known by its fruit, so is a person's speech, which reveals what is in their heart. This emphasizes the importance of sincerity and wisdom in one's words.

Psalms 92:2-3, 13-16 praises God's righteousness and compares the just person to a flourishing tree planted in the house of the Lord. The righteous will continue to bear fruit even in old age, staying strong and full of life, signifying God's faithfulness.

1 Corinthians 15:54-58 Paul speaks about Christ's victory over sin and death. He proclaims that death has lost its sting because of Christ's resurrection, and believers are encouraged to remain steadfast in their faith. Paul reminds them that their labour in the Lord is not in vain, giving hope and motivation to persevere in righteous living.

Luke 6:39-45 In this passage, Jesus teaches humility, self-examination, and the importance of inner goodness. He warns against hypocrisy, using the analogy of a blind person leading another blind person and the famous saying about removing the plank from one's eye before pointing out the speck in another's. Jesus also reiterates that a tree is known for its fruit, emphasizing that good hearts produce good words and actions while evil hearts produce bad ones.

Summary These readings encourage believers—and in today's particular liturgy, children—to think about the goodness God gave them and try to use their words and actions to align with God's goodness, which is their faith. They emphasize that our speech and behaviour reveal our true selves, urging us to cultivate righteousness and integrity.

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)

My dear children, today, Jesus teaches us the importance of living good lives rooted in God. Go with your teachers and listen to the Word of God.

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.

Let us pray:

Loving God, send Your Holy Spirit to help us listen to Your Word and learn to love like Jesus. 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 first book of Sirach.

- 4 When a sieve is shaken, the refuse appears;
so do a person's faults when one speaks.
- 5 The kiln tests the potter's vessels;
so the test of a person is in conversation.
- 6 Its fruit discloses the cultivation of a tree;
so a person's speech discloses the cultivation of the mind.
- 7 Do not praise people before they speak,
for this is the way people are tested.

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. Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

1 It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;

2 to declare your steadfast love in the morning
and your faithfulness by night. **R.**

12 The righteous flourish like the palm tree,
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

13 They are planted in the house of the Lord;
they flourish in the courts of our God. **R.**

14 In old age, they still produce fruit;
they are always green and full of sap,

15 showing that the Lord is upright;
he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters:

- 54 When this perishable body puts on imperishability,
and this mortal body puts on immortality,
then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:
"Death has been swallowed up in victory."
- 55 "Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?"
- 56 The sting of death is sin,
and the power of sin is the law.
- 57 But thanks be to God,
who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 58 Therefore, my beloved,
be steadfast, immovable,
always excelling in the work of the Lord,
because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

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 Luke.

- 39 Jesus told his disciples a parable:
"Can a blind person guide a blind person?
Will not both fall into a pit?"
- 40 A disciple is not above the teacher,
but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher.
- 41 "Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye,
but do not notice the log in your own eye?"
- 42 Or how can you say to your neighbour,
'Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye,'
When you yourself do not see the log in your own eye?
You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye,
and then you will see clearly
to take the speck out of your neighbour's eye.
- 43 "No good tree bears bad fruit,
nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit;
44 for each tree is known by its own fruit.
Figs are not gathered from thorns,
nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.
- 45 "Out of the good treasure of the heart,
the good person produces good,
and out of evil treasure,
the evil person produces evil;
for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks."

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.

Simplified Readings for Children

A reading from the Book of Sirach.

When people speak, we can tell what is inside their hearts. Just like a tree is known by the fruit it grows, a person is known by the way they talk and act. If their heart is full of goodness, their words and actions will be good too!

The Word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 92

R.: Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

It is good to thank the Lord and sing praise to his name. **R.** Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

The just will grow like a strong tree, always close to the Lord. **R.** Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

Those who trust in God will stay strong, always showing His goodness. **R.:** Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

Gospel: Luke 6:39-45

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Children: Glory to You, O Lord.

Jesus said to His disciples, "Can a blind person lead another blind person? No, because they might both fall into a hole! You need to learn before you can teach others.

Also, don't point out a speck in someone else's eye when you have a big log in your own! First, fix yourself, then you can help others.

Remember, a tree is known by the fruit it gives. A good tree gives good fruit, and a bad tree gives bad fruit. In the same way, people with good hearts speak kindly and do good things, but those with bad hearts do bad things. Your words show what is in your heart."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Children: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

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:

Good morning, children! Today, we heard Jesus teach us how our words and actions show what is in our hearts. Let's begin by making the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader:

What did we hear?

Leader:

Jesus is telling us something very important today! He wants us to think about what is inside our hearts.

- If you have a good heart, what kind of words will you say? (Let children respond with kind, loving, helpful words.)
- If you have a bad heart, what kind of words might come out? (Let children respond with mean, hurtful, unkind words.)

Jesus says our words and actions show others what is in our hearts.

- What are some ways we can show that we have good hearts? (Let children give examples like helping, sharing, forgiving, being kind.)

Leader:

This week, let's try to have good hearts and show kindness in everything we say and do!

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.

Alternative Reflection

Leader: Today, Jesus gives us a very important lesson about what is inside our hearts. He tells us that just like a tree is known by its fruit, a person is known by their words and actions. Let's think about that for a moment.

Imagine you have an apple tree in your backyard. If the tree is healthy, what kind of fruit will it grow? *(Let children respond: apples!)* That's right! And what if the tree is sick or rotten? What might happen to the apples? *(Children respond: They might be bad, rotten, or not grow at all.)*

Now, Jesus is saying that people are like trees. If we have good hearts, what do you think will come out of us? *(Children respond: Good words, kindness, love, sharing!)* Yes! But if our hearts are full of anger, jealousy, or selfishness, what do you think will come out? *(Children respond: Mean words, being unkind, hurting others.)*

Jesus teaches us not to criticize others for small faults when we have bigger issues ourselves, like having a speck in our own eye. It reminds us that we often focus on minor mistakes in others while overlooking our own larger mistakes. Have you ever been upset with a friend or sibling for something wrong, only to realize you've done the same thing? *(Let children think and respond.)*

Instead of focusing on what others do wrong, Jesus wants us to look at ourselves first. Are we speaking kindly? Are we being helpful? Are we showing love to others? This week, let's all try to have good hearts. That means:

- Speaking kindly to our family and friends.
- Helping others when they need us.
- Saying sorry when we make a mistake.
- Choosing to forgive instead of staying angry.

Remember, Jesus says, "A good person brings good things out of their heart." Let's all ask Jesus to help us have good hearts so that our words and actions can bring happiness to others!

Leader: Who wants to try to be like a strong, good tree this week? *(Let children raise hands.)* Great! Let's pray that Jesus helps us grow strong in love and kindness!

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: Now, we will pray for our and the world's needs. After each prayer, we will say, "Lord, hear our prayer."

1. For the Church, that we may always share Jesus' love with kind words and good actions. We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
2. For our families and friends, that we may treat each other with kindness and patience. We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
3. For those who are sick or sad, that they may feel God's love through the people who care for them. We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
4. For all of us here, that we may have good hearts and speak words that bring happiness and peace. We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
5. For our own special prayers, which we hold in our hearts...
(Pause for a moment.) We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Loving God, thank you for teaching us how to have good hearts. Help us to speak with kindness and act with love so that others may see Your goodness in us. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Leader: Let's finish by making the Sign of the Cross together.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Return to the church.

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 Sundays and Solemnities, CCCB, Ottawa, ON.
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