



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

## Children's Liturgy of the Word

First Sunday of Lent

*Trusting in God's Word*

### Overview

The readings for the First Sunday of Lent focus on God's saving power, faith, and resisting temptation.

In Deuteronomy, Israel expresses gratitude for God's deliverance and emphasizes trust in God's faithfulness.

The psalm reflects on God as our refuge in spiritual battles.

St. Paul highlights faith in Jesus as the pathway to salvation for all who believe.

In the Gospel, Jesus resists temptation in the wilderness using Scripture, showing the importance of faith and reliance on God's Word.

These readings remind us to trust God and draw strength from him to overcome sin throughout Lent.

## Leaders Reflection

- † How do you draw strength in the midst of temptation?
- † How will you grow further in Christ this Lent?

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## Background

**Deuteronomy 26:4-10** This passage comes from a section in Deuteronomy that prescribes a confession of faith to be made when presenting the first fruits of the harvest at the Temple. The passage recalls God's intervention in Israel's history—from oppression in Egypt to their deliverance and entry into the Promised Land. This confession is liturgical, reinforcing the idea that worship involves remembering and proclaiming God's saving deeds. By offering the first fruits, the Israelites acknowledge that their blessings come from God, teaching gratitude and dependence on God.

**Psalm 91** is a prayer of trust and confidence in God's protection. This psalm reassures us that God is our refuge and protector, especially in times of trial. It reminds us to trust in God's presence and guidance during our Lenten journey.

**Romans 10:8-13** St. Paul emphasizes the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Confessing Jesus as Lord was a radical declaration, especially in a Roman world where Caesar was seen as lord. Belief in the resurrection is central to Christian faith—acknowledging Christ's victory over sin and death. We are encouraged not just to believe in our hearts but also to publicly profess our faith through words and actions.

**Luke 4:1-13** This passage follows Jesus' baptism and marks the beginning of his public ministry. He faces three temptations which reflect common struggles: Turning stones into bread (the temptation to satisfy physical desires). Receiving worldly power (the temptation to seek authority outside of God's will). Testing God (temptation to demand proof of God's care). Jesus responds with Scripture, showing the power of God's Word in overcoming temptation. Lent is a time of fasting, prayer, and spiritual battle—just as Jesus faced in the wilderness.

The First Sunday of Lent calls us to:

1. Remember God's faithfulness (Deuteronomy).
2. Trust in His protection (Psalm 91).
3. Profess faith in Jesus (Romans).
4. Follow Jesus' example in resisting temptation (Luke).

This week's readings set the stage for a Lenten journey of faith, renewal, and spiritual strength, encouraging us to rely on God and prepare for Easter.

## 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 resisting temptations that oppose God's will.**

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.

**Good morning, everyone! Today is the first Sunday of Lent. Lent is a special time when we get ready for Easter by praying more, helping others, and trying to be more like Jesus. Today, we will hear a story about Jesus in the desert.**

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 Deuteronomy.**

Moses spoke to the people, saying:

"When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, you shall make this response before the Lord your God:

"A wandering Aramean was my father; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression.

"The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me."

And Moses continued,

"You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God."

*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.** Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.

You who live in the shelter of the Most High,  
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,  
will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress;  
my God, in whom I trust." **R.**

No evil shall befall you,  
no scourge come near your tent.  
For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways. **R.**

On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.  
You will tread on the lion and the adder,  
the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot. **R.**

Those who love me, I will deliver;  
I will protect those who know my name.  
When they call to me, I will answer them;  
I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honour them. **R.**

Second Reading

**A reading from the first Letter of Paul to the Romans.**

Brothers and sisters,

what does scripture say?

"The word is near you,  
on your lips and in your heart"

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);

because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord  
and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,  
you will be saved.

For one believes with the heart and so is justified,  
and one confesses with the mouth, and so is saved.

The scripture says,

"No one who believes in him will be put to shame."

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek;

the same Lord is Lord of all

and is generous to all who call on him.

For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

*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.

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished.

The devil said to him,  
"If you are the Son of God,  
command this stone to become a loaf of bread."  
Jesus answered him,  
"It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

Then the devil led him up  
and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.  
And the devil said to him,  
"To you, I will give their glory and all this authority;  
for it has been given over to me,  
and I give it to anyone I please.  
If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."  
Jesus answered him,  
"It is written,  
'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem,  
and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him,  
"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,  
for it is written,  
'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,'  
and 'On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"  
Jesus answered him, "It is said,  
'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"



When the devil had finished every test,  
he departed from him until an opportune time.

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

### First Reading

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy (adapted for children)

Moses spoke to the people and reminded them about everything God had done for them. He told them, 'Remember when our ancestors were in Egypt, they were treated very badly. They prayed to God for help, and God listened to them. He brought them to a new land, a land filled with good things. So now, we must always remember to thank God for all God has done and share what we have with others.

**Children:** Thanks be to God.

### Responsorial Psalm (adapted for children)

**R.** God, You are always with me!

When I feel afraid, I know you will protect me. **R.**

You send your angels to watch over me and keep me safe. **R.**

I trust you, God, because you love me and care for me. **R.**

### Gospel (adapted for children)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

**Children:** Glory to You, O Lord.

After Jesus was baptized, he went into the desert. He stayed there for 40 days and 40 nights, praying and thinking about God. While he was there, he became hungry because he had not eaten any food. Then the devil came to test him.

First, the devil said, "If you are really the Son of God, turn this stone into bread!" But Jesus said, "No, because people need more than food—they need God's word!" Next, the devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and said, "If you bow down and worship me, I will give You power over all of this!" But Jesus said, "No! I will only worship God." Finally, the devil took Jesus to the highest part of the temple and said, "If you are really God's Son, jump down, and God's angels will catch you!" But Jesus said, "No! I will not test God." After that, the devil left, and Jesus stayed strong and close to God.

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:

## Leader:

### **What did we hear?**

#### **Have you ever been really, really hungry?** (Pause for answers.)

Well, Jesus was in the desert for 40 days with no food! But something else happened too—someone tried to make him do the wrong things."

## Leader:

The devil tried to trick Jesus three times. He wanted Jesus to make bad choices, but Jesus always said, 'No!' Let's look at what happened.

The First Temptation Jesus faced was to turn stones into bread. The devil said, "If you are the Son of God, turn this stone into bread!" Jesus was very hungry, but he said, "No! People need more than just food. They need God's word." This reminds us that even when we really want something, we should think about what is most important—loving God and doing the right thing.

#### **Have you ever really wanted something but had to wait?** (Examples: a snack before dinner, a toy at the store, etc.)

The Second Temptation was that the devil wanted to control the world. The devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms and said, "If you bow down to me, I will give you power over all of this!" But Jesus said, "No! I will only worship God." Sometimes, we are tempted to want more toys or to be the boss, but Jesus teaches us that loving God is more important than having lots of things.

#### **What is something you really like to have?** (Toys, video games, candy, etc.)

#### **Do you think having more things makes us happy forever?**

#### **Why or why not?**

The Third Temptation was when the devil suggested that Jesus jump off the temple to see if God would catch him. But Jesus said, "No! I will not test God." Jesus knew that we should trust God but not do silly or dangerous things just to see what happens.

**Have you ever wanted to do something risky just to see what would happen?**

**Why is it important to make safe and smart choices?**

Jesus gives us a great example to follow. He trusted God, prayed, and made good choices. Let's try to be like Jesus this week.

When we feel tempted to do the wrong thing, let's stop and ask, 'What would Jesus do?' And then, let's make the right choice!"

**What is one good choice you can make this week?**

**How can you remember to follow Jesus during Lent?**

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 always trust in God, we pray... Lord, hear our prayer.
2. For people who are hungry or sad, that they may find help, we pray... Lord, hear our prayer.
3. For our families and friends, that we may love and care for each other, we pray... Lord, hear our prayer.
4. For ourselves, that we may follow Jesus and make good choices, we pray... Lord, hear our prayer.
5. For our own special prayers, which we hold in our hearts... (Pause for a moment.) We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** Jesus, thank You for teaching us to make good choices. Help us to trust in God and follow You always. 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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