



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Third Sunday of Lent

God is patient!

Overview

The readings for the Third Sunday of Lent in Year C center on repentance, God's mercy, and the call to bear fruit in one's life. They invite us to reflect on our lives, recognize the need for repentance, and respond to God's mercy by producing good fruits in their actions and relationships.

The theme encourages a more profound commitment to living according to God's will, especially during the Lenten season, a time for spiritual renewal and transformation.

In the first reading, God reveals himself to Moses in the burning bush, calling him to lead the Israelites out of slavery. He shows that he listens and acts to save his people. In the second reading, St. Paul advises us to learn from past mistakes and trust in God. In the Gospel, Jesus shares the parable of the barren fig tree, highlighting God's patience while encouraging us to bear good fruit in our lives.

Leaders Reflection Questions

Reflect on the fruits of your ministry.

1. Do you see any fruits in the children you serve?
2. How are you renewing yourself this Lent?

Contents

Overview	1
Leaders Reflection Questions.....	2
Reflect on the fruits of your ministry.	2
1. Do you see any fruits in the children you serve?.....	2
2. How are you renewing yourself this Lent?.....	2
Background	3
The Liturgy	4
Procession from the main Church	4
Welcome.	4
FIRST READING	5
RESPONSORIAL PSALM	7
SECOND READING	8
GOSPEL.....	9
Adapted Readings for Children	10
FIRST READING	10
SECOND READING - VERY CHALLENGING FOR CHILDREN	12
GOSPEL.....	13
Reflection	14
Prayer of the Faithful	16
Return to the church.....	16

Background

Exodus 3:1-15 In this reading, God reveals himself to Moses through the burning bush, emphasizing his holiness and the importance of his name, "I AM." God expresses his awareness of his people's suffering in Egypt and his intention to deliver them. This highlights God's compassion and readiness to intervene in human affairs, inviting his people to trust in his plan for salvation.

Psalms 103:1-11 The psalm reflects on God's mercy and compassion. It encourages the faithful to bless the Lord and remember his goodness, forgiveness, and healing. This reinforces the theme of repentance, as it acknowledges God's readiness to forgive and the importance of recognizing his mercy in our lives.

1 Corinthians 10:1-12 St. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the experiences of the Israelites during their journey in the desert. He warns them against complacency and urges them to learn from the mistakes of their ancestors, who, despite receiving God's blessings, fell into sin. The call to "take heed lest he fall" emphasizes the necessity of ongoing repentance and vigilance in faith.

Gospel: Luke 13:1-9 In the Gospel, Jesus addresses the notion of suffering and sin, challenging the belief that those who suffer are worse sinners. He calls for repentance, stating that unless people turn away from sin, they, too, will face judgment. The parable of the fig tree illustrates God's patience and mercy as the gardener pleads for more time to nurture the tree, symbolizing God's desire for all to bear good fruit through repentance and conversion.

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, we send you forth so that you may listen to God's Word and think about how much he loves you. When you rejoin us, we will all pray and thank God for sending us his Son, Jesus, as our saviour.

Go in peace.

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:

(pause for a few seconds)

Dear Jesus, thank you for always loving us and being patient with us. Help us to grow in kindness, love, and faith, just like a strong tree.

Amen.

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, the Gospel is required.

FIRST READING

Exodus 3.1-8a, 13-15

Moses, you will tell the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.

A reading from the book of Exodus.

- 1 Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro,
the priest of Midian;
he led his flock beyond the wilderness,
and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
- 2 There, the angel of the Lord appeared to him
in a flame of fire out of a bush;
Moses looked, and the bush was blazing,
yet it was not consumed.
- 3 Then Moses said,
"I must turn aside and look at this great sight,
and see why the bush is not burned up."
- 4 When the Lord saw that Moses had turned aside to see,
God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!"
And Moses said, "Here I am."
- 5 Then God said, "Come no closer!
Remove the sandals from your feet,
for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."
- 6 God said further, "I am the God of your fathers,
the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."
And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.
- 7 Then the Lord said,
"I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt;
I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters.
Indeed, I know their sufferings,
and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians,
and to bring them up out of that land
to a good and broad land,
a land flowing with milk and honey."
- 13 But Moses said to God,
"If I come to the Israelites and say to them,

'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,'
and they ask me, 'What is his name?'
what shall I say to them?"

14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."

He said further,

"Thus you shall say to the Israelites,
'I AM has sent me to you.'"

15 God also said to Moses,

"Thus you shall say to the Israelites,

'The Lord, the God of your ancestors,
the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,
has sent me to you.'

This is my name forever,
and this my title for all generations."

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

Psalm 103.1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8+11 (R.8a)

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

- 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me bless his holy name.
- 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits. **R.**
- 3 It is the Lord who forgives all your iniquity,
heals all your diseases,
- 4 who redeems your life from the Pit,
and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy. **R.**
- 6 The Lord works vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.
- 7 He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel. **R.**
- 8 The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him. **R.**

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 10.1-6, 10-12

Our ancestor's experience in the desert under Moses is recorded to instruct us.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

- 1 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters,
that our ancestors were all under the cloud;
all passed through the sea;
- 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
- 3 all ate the same spiritual food,
- 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink.
For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them,
and the rock was Christ.
- 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of our ancestors,
and they were struck down in the wilderness.
- 6 Now, these things occurred as examples for us,
so that we might not desire evil as they did.
- 10 And do not complain as some of them did,
and were destroyed by the destroyer.
- 11 These things happened to our ancestors to serve as an example,
and they were written down to instruct us,
on whom the ends of the ages have come.
- 12 So if you think you are standing,
watch out that you do not fall.

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.

The children stand for the Gospel. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

GOSPEL

Luke 13.1-9

Unless you turn back to God, you will perish as they did.

A reading from the gospel according to Luke.

- 1 Jesus was teaching the crowds;
some of those present told Jesus about the Galileans
whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.
- 2 Jesus asked them,
"Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way
they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?"
- 3 No, I tell you;
but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.
- 4 Or those eighteen who were killed
when the tower of Siloam fell on them—
do you think that they were worse offenders
than all the others living in Jerusalem?"
- 5 No, I tell you;
but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."
- 6 Then Jesus told this parable:
"A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard;
and he came looking for fruit on it and found none.
- 7 So he said to the gardener, 'See here!
For three years, I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree,
and still I find none.
Cut it down!
Why should it be wasting the soil?'
- 8 The gardener replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year
until I dig around it and put manure on it.
- 9 If it bears fruit next year, well and good;
but if not, you can cut it down.'"

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.

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Exodus.

- 1 Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro,
he led his flock beyond the wilderness,
and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
- 3 Then Moses said,
"I must look at this great sight,
and see why the bush is not burned up."
- 4 When the Lord saw that Moses had turned to see,
God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!"
And Moses said, "Here I am."
- 6 God said, "I am the God of your father,
the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."
- 7 Then the Lord said,
"I have observed my people in Egypt;
and I have come to deliver them,
and to bring them up out of that land
to a good and broad land,
a land flowing with milk and honey."
- 13 Moses said to God,
"If I come to the Israelites and say to them,
'God has sent me to you,'
and they ask, "What is his name?
what shall I say to them?"
- 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM.
15 This is my name forever."

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 kind and merciful.

- 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
- 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits. **R.**
- 8 The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him. **R.**

SECOND READING - VERY CHALLENGING FOR CHILDREN

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

- 1 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters,
that our ancestors were all under the cloud;
all passed through the sea;
- 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
- 3 all ate the same spiritual food,
- 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink.
For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them,
and the rock was Christ.
- 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of our ancestors,
and they were struck down in the wilderness.
- 6 Now these things occurred as examples for us,
so that we might not desire evil as they did.
- 10 And do not complain as some of them did,
and were destroyed by the destroyer.
- 11 These things happened to our ancestors to serve as an example,
and they were written down to instruct us,
on whom the ends of the ages have come.
- 12 So if you think you are standing,
watch out that you do not fall.

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.

The children stand for the Gospel. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

GOSPEL

A reading from the gospel according to Luke.

- 6 Jesus told the people this story:
"A man had a fig tree in his vineyard;
and he came looking for fruit on it and found none.
- 7 So he said to the gardener, 'See here!
For three years, I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree,
and still I find none.
Cut it down!
Why should it be wasting the soil?'
- 8 The gardener replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year
until I dig around it and put manure on it.
- 9 If it bears fruit next year, well and good;
but if not, you can cut it down.'"

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:

Leader: What did we hear?

What kind of tree was the man trying to grow?

Fig trees are easy to grow, but getting them to produce a worthwhile crop of figs is not always easy! They need regular and careful attention from a keen gardener who will do what is necessary to get such a tree to fruit, including frequent watering, cautious pruning, providing a sheltered position and protection from frost.

What was the problem with the fig tree in the story?

Although the tree grew well, it had not produced fruits for the last three years. Fig trees are leafy and cast a lot of shade, and the vineyard owner thought this useless tree was wasting precious space.

What did the man want his gardener to do?

He thought the gardener should cut the tree down to make way for another.

What did the gardener persuade his master to do?

He convinced the man who owned the tree to give it one more chance to produce a crop of fruit. He was ready to make whatever effort was needed to encourage the tree to grow some tasty figs to eat.

What does this story tell us about God?

This story emphasizes God's enormous patience and willingness to give us another chance to live up to his expectations. Even though we might disappoint him with our failures and shortcomings time and time again, he loves us so much that he is always ready to let us have one more go! He will help us in whatever way he can, for however long it takes, to bear the fruit of his love in our lives, to be shared and enjoyed by everyone.

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: As brothers and sisters in one loving family, let us pray to our heavenly Father. Our response is: **R:** Lord, hear our prayer.

1. We pray that everyone who follows Jesus may bear the fruit of his love in their lives. We pray to the Lord. **R:**
2. We pray for people wounded and hurt by hatred and fear that they may be healed by God's merciful peace. We pray to the Lord. **R:**
3. We pray for people touched by pain and suffering, that they may be strengthened by God's patient care. We pray to the Lord. **R:**
4. We pray for our own special prayers, which we hold in our hearts... (Pause for a moment.) We pray to the Lord. **R:**

Loving Father, make our lives pleasing to you as we bear the fruits of your love and produce a rich harvest. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

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.
All rights reserved and prepared by the Diocese of Hamilton, Liturgy Office, © 2025.



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON