



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

## Children's Liturgy of the Word

### Third Sunday of Easter

#### Overview

The theme of the readings for the Third Sunday of Easter, Year C, beautifully illuminates the transformative power of the risen Christ. He calls his followers, once trapped in failure and paralyzed by fear, into a vibrant life filled with forgiveness, purpose, and profound love.

The mighty presence of the risen Lord empowers the disciples, emboldening them to share their witness with unwavering conviction. Their testimony is a direct result of their intimate encounter with the risen Christ, coupled with the remarkable gift of the Holy Spirit, which ignites their faith and fortitude. This deep-rooted belief in the resurrection propels them to bear witness fearlessly, even in the face of suffering and adversity.

God's redemptive nature is vividly evident as he rescues and restores his people; we are filled with joy because God reaches down to lift us from our struggles. In this profound journey, Christ restores the fallen, rekindles broken relationships, and entrusts his followers with a sacred mission. Jesus lovingly invites us into a deeper connection, revives us through our moments of faltering, and sends us out to shepherd others, sharing the love and hope we have found in him.

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## Background

**Acts 5** describes a trial where the apostles, especially Peter, are questioned by the Sanhedrin for preaching about Jesus despite being told not to. Peter boldly states that they must obey God instead of human authorities. He shares the message of Jesus's death and resurrection and explains that God has lifted Jesus up, and they witnessed these events. After being punished, the apostles feel joy for suffering for Jesus's sake. This highlights a key Christian belief that God's authority is greater than human laws, reflecting Jesus's obedience to God, and sets an example for the Church in facing persecution.

**Psalms 30** reflects a personal resurrection experience—emotional, physical, or spiritual healing.

**Revelation 5** is part of the heavenly vision in Revelation chapters 4–5. After writing to the seven churches, John is taken into heaven where he sees God seated on the throne holding a sealed scroll. No one is worthy to open it—except the Lamb who was slain (Christ). This marks a pivotal moment: the risen Christ is revealed as the one who can unveil and accomplish God's saving plan.

**John 21** recounts a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus by the Sea of Tiberias (Galilee). The disciples, led by Peter, return to fishing but catch nothing until Jesus appears on the shore. Following his guidance, they experience a miraculous catch. After breakfast, Jesus restores Peter through a threefold question—"Do you love me?"—and entrusts him with the care of the Church. John 21 is often considered an epilogue to the Gospel of John, added to conclude the apostolic mission and emphasize Peter's leadership. Without Christ, the disciples' fishing fails. With Christ, it is abundant. Peter's leadership is not based on power or success, but on love for Christ. This Gospel reflects Easter's call to renewed vocation: the Risen Lord meets us not just to console us, but to call us again. Like Peter, we may have failed—but the resurrection offers restoration, reconciliation, and recommissioning. It calls to follow Jesus in self-giving love, pastoral service, and ultimate fidelity.

## Key Message for Children

- † Jesus is Alive: The most important message is that Jesus is not dead but alive. The readings tell us about how Jesus appeared to his friends after he rose from the dead. This shows us that Jesus is more powerful than death and that he is always with us.
- † Recognizing Jesus: The Gospel reading often tells a story about how Jesus' friends didn't recognize him at first. But then, something happened that helped them see it was really him. We can learn to recognize Jesus in our lives, too, through prayer, reading the Bible, and helping others.
- † Being Brave for Jesus: The first reading tells us that Jesus' friends were arrested for talking about him, but they didn't stop. They were brave and kept telling people about Jesus, even when it was hard. We can be brave for Jesus, too, by standing up for what is right and being kind to others, even when it's not easy.

## Key Message for Leaders

- † The Reality of the Resurrection: Emphasize that the Resurrection is not just a story but a real event that transformed the lives of Jesus' disciples. The readings provide accounts of the Risen Christ's appearances, offering concrete evidence of his victory over death. Help children understand the significance of the Resurrection as the foundation of Christian faith and hope.
- † The Role of the Holy Spirit: Highlight the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering the apostles to carry out their mission. Explain that the Holy Spirit is the same Spirit that dwells within us, guiding and strengthening us to live out our faith. Encourage children to cultivate a relationship with the Holy Spirit through prayer and openness to His promptings.
- † Liturgical Connection: Connect the themes of the readings to the liturgical season of Easter and the celebration of the Eucharist. Explain how the Eucharist is a privileged encounter with the Risen Christ, where we receive his Body and Blood and are nourished for our journey of faith. Encourage children to participate fully in the Mass and to appreciate the richness of the Church's liturgical traditions.

## 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)

**Good morning! Do you know that Jesus is alive? He is present to us in the readings we hear at Mass, in the Eucharist and in you. Go with you leaders to listen to God and becoming more like him.**

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)

**God our Father, by raising Jesus, you conquered death and opened the way to eternal life.**

**Let our liturgy today raise us and renew our lives by the Holy Spirit that is within us.**

**Amen.**

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

## Readings

### FIRST READING

Acts 5.27-32, 40b-41

*We are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit.*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

- The captain went with the temple police  
and brought the apostles, who were teaching in the temple,  
27 and had them stand before the council.  
28 The high priest questioned the apostles, saying,  
"We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,  
yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching  
and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us."  
29 But Peter and the apostles answered,  
"We must obey God rather than any human authority.  
30 The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus,  
whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.  
31 God exalted him at his right hand  
as Leader and Saviour  
that he might give repentance to Israel  
and forgiveness of sins.  
32 And we are witnesses to these things,  
and so is the Holy Spirit  
whom God has given to those who obey him."  
40 Then the council ordered the apostles not to speak in the name of Jesus,  
and let them go.  
41 As they left the council,  
they rejoiced that they were considered worthy  
to suffer dishonour for the sake of the name.

*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 30.1+3, 4-5, 10+11a+12b

**R.** I will praise you, Lord,  
For you have rescued me.

**or:** Alleluia! (Two or three times)

**1** I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,  
And did not let my foes rejoice over me.

**3** O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,  
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit. **R.**

**4** Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones,  
and give thanks to his holy name.

**5** For his anger is but for a moment;  
his favour is for a lifetime.  
Weeping may linger for the night,  
but joy comes with the morning. **R.**

**10** Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me!  
O Lord, be my helper!

**11** You have turned my mourning into dancing.

**12** O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever. **R.**

## SECOND READING

Revelation 5.11-14

*Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power  
and wealth and wisdom and might.*

A reading from the book of Revelation.

- 11 I, John, looked,  
and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne  
and the living creatures and the elders;  
they numbered myriads of myriads  
and thousands of thousands,  
12 singing with full voice,  
"Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might  
and honour and glory and blessing!"  
13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth  
and under the earth and in the sea,  
and all that is in them, singing,  
"To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb  
be blessing and honour and glory and might  
forever and ever!"  
14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!"  
And the elders fell down and worshipped.

*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

John 21.1-19

*Jesus took the bread and gave it to them,  
and did the same with the fish.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

- 1 Jesus showed himself again to the disciples  
by the Sea of Tiberias;  
and he showed himself in this way.
- 2 Gathered there together were Simon Peter,  
Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee,  
the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples.
- 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."  
They said to him, "We will go with you."  
They went out and got into the boat,  
but that night they caught nothing.
- 4 Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach;  
but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.
- 5 Jesus said to them,  
"Children, you have no fish, have you?"  
They answered him, "No."
- 6 He said to them,  
"Cast the net to the right side of the boat,  
and you will find some."  
So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in  
because there were so many fish.
- 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter,  
"It is the Lord!"  
When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord,  
he put on some clothes, for he was naked,  
and jumped into the sea.
- 8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish,  
for they were not far from the land,  
only about ninety metres off.
- 9 When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there,  
with fish on it, and bread.  
Jesus said to them,  
"Bring some of the fish that you have just caught."
- 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore,  
full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them;  
and though there were so many, the net was not torn.

- 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast."  
Now none of the disciples dared to ask him,  
"Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord.
- 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them,  
and did the same with the fish.
- 14 This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples  
after he was raised from the dead.
- 15 When they had finished breakfast,  
Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"  
He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."  
Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs."
- 16 A second time, he said to him,  
"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"  
He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."  
Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep."
- 17 He said to him the third time,  
"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"  
Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time,  
"Do you love me?"  
And he said to him,  
"Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."  
Jesus said to him,  
"Feed my sheep."
- 18 "Very truly, I tell you,  
when you were younger,  
you used to fasten your own belt  
and go wherever you wished.  
But when you grow old,  
you will stretch out your hands,  
and someone else will fasten a belt around you  
and take you where you do not wish to go."
- 19 He said this to indicate the kind of death  
by which he would glorify God.  
After this, he said to him,  
"Follow me."

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

Acts 5.27-32, 40b-41

*We are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit.*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Some of Jesus' friends, the apostles, are in trouble. The high priest, a leader, asks them why they keep teaching about Jesus, even though they were told not to.

Peter and the apostles answer bravely, "We must listen to God more than anyone else!"

They explained that God raised Jesus from the dead after people killed Him. Jesus is now a leader and saviour, offering forgiveness. The apostles say they saw all of this happen, and the Holy Spirit helps them tell the truth.

The leaders get angry and have the apostles whipped. They ordered them never to speak about Jesus again.

But the apostles are happy because they were able to suffer for Jesus! They leave and keep teaching and telling everyone the good news about Jesus.

*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 30.1+3, 4-5, 10+11a+12b

**R.** I praise you, Lord, for you have raised me up.

I called you, Lord,  
and you healed me. **R.**

I will sing praise to you and never stop.  
Lord, I will always thank you. **R.**

## SECOND READING

Revelation 5.11-14

*Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power  
and wealth and wisdom and might.*

A reading from the book of Revelation.

I looked, and heard many angels all around the throne, and the creatures, and the elders. They were singing loudly, "The Lamb (Jesus) is worthy to receive power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, and blessings!"

Then I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea, singing, "Blessing, honour, glory, and power to the one who sits on the throne (God) and to the Lamb forever and ever!"

The four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders bowed down and worshiped.

*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

John 21.1-19

*Jesus took the bread and gave it to them,  
and did the same with the fish.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

Jesus showed himself to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. Simon Peter and some other disciples were there. Peter said, "I'm going fishing." The others said, "We'll go with you." They fished all night but caught nothing.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples didn't know it was him. Jesus called out, "Friends, have you caught any fish?" They said, "No." He told them, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." They did, and they caught so many fish they couldn't pull the net in!

The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Peter jumped into the water to go to Jesus. The other disciples came in the boat, pulling the net full of fish. When they got to shore, they saw a fire with fish and bread cooking. Jesus said, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." Simon Peter pulled the net ashore. There were 153 big fish, but the net didn't tear!

Jesus said, "Come and have breakfast." The disciples knew it was the Lord, so they were a little afraid to ask who he was. Jesus took the bread and fish and gave it to them.

When they finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon, do you love me more than these others?" Peter said, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Jesus asked twice more, "Simon, do you love me?" Peter said, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." Then Jesus said, "Follow me."

*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?** *(Allow children to respond)*

In today's Gospel story, we hear about Jesus showing himself to his disciples again. They were by the Sea of Tiberias, and some of them decided to go fishing. They fished all night, but guess what? They didn't catch anything! Can you imagine how disappointed they must have felt?

But then, Jesus appeared on the shore. He told them to throw their net on the right side of the boat, and they would find some fish. They did, and wow! The net was so full of fish that they couldn't even pull it in! It was a miracle!

### **What do you think this Gospel tells us?**

It tells us that Jesus is always there to help us, even when we feel like we've tried everything and nothing is working. Sometimes, we might feel like the disciples, fishing all night and catching nothing. But Jesus can show us where to find the "fish" we need, whether it's help with a problem, comfort when we're sad, or just a little bit of hope.

### **Where do we find "fish" or hope from Jesus?**

After the big catch, Jesus and the disciples had breakfast together. Then, Jesus asked Peter a very important question: "Simon, do you love me?" Peter said, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you." Jesus asked him two more times, and each time Peter said he loved Jesus. Jesus asked him to care for His sheep. "Feed my lambs" means to take care of people, especially those who need help.

### **How Can We Show Our Love?**

So, how can we show Jesus that we love Him? We can show our love by being kind to others, helping those in need, and sharing our toys or snacks with our friends. We can also show our love by praying and learning more about Jesus.

Think about one thing you can do this week to show your love for Jesus. Maybe you can help your mom or dad with chores, be nice to your siblings, or say a prayer for someone who is sick.

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

The intercessions are said. The Leader introduces them, and an assistant announces them.

**The leader says:**

**Jesus walks with us and listens to our hearts. Trusting in his love, let us bring our prayers to God: we will say, "Lord, hear our prayer." R: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Assistant:**

**For the Church: that all members of the Church will share the joy of Jesus' resurrection. We pray to the Lord. R:**

**Assistant:**

**For our world: that people everywhere will choose peace instead of fighting. We pray to the Lord. R:**

**Assistant:**

**For children and families in need: that those without enough food, a home, or love may be helped by caring people. We pray to the Lord. R:**

**Assistant:**

**For those who are sad or lonely: that they will feel Jesus walking beside them and know that they are never alone. We pray to the Lord. R:**

**Assistant:**

**For the Cardinals electing a new Pope - that the Holy Spirit will inspire and strengthen them as they choose a new Holy Father. We pray to the Lord. R:**

**The Leader says:**

**Loving God, you hear our prayers and are always near us. Help us to follow Jesus and to share His love every day. We ask this through 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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