



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

## Children's Liturgy of the Word

### Fifth Sunday of Easter

#### Overview

The readings this Sunday highlight the theme of love, centred on the "new commandment" Jesus gives his disciples: to love one another as he has loved them. This love is the defining mark of a Christian.

The first reading encourages the disciples to stay firm in their faith, noting that entering the kingdom of God may involve persecution. Jesus' command of love is an active commitment that supports believers during trials.

The Psalm underscores God's grace and compassion, while the reading from Revelation describes a new heaven and earth, where God wipes away tears and ends suffering. This vision represents God's ultimate love and the realization of his presence.

Overall, the Fifth Sunday of Easter emphasizes the transformative love Christians are called to embody, drawing them closer to God and each other.

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## Background

**Acts 14:21-27** recounts a pivotal moment in the early Church, detailing Paul and Barnabas's return journey to the cities where they had previously preached, solidifying the faith of new disciples, and reporting back to the church in Antioch. Several key themes emerge from this passage, including perseverance in faith, church structure, missionary activity, and the Gentiles' <sup>1</sup> inclusion. The reading illustrates the consolidation of the early Church through the strengthening of believers, the establishment of local leadership, and the affirmation of God's work among Jews and Gentiles.

**Psalms 145** is a hymn of praise, extolling God's attributes and his universal reign. These verses emphasize God's mercy, compassion, and eternal kingdom.

**Revelation 21:1-5** presents a vision of a new creation, symbolizing the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises and the restoration of all things.

**John 13:31-33a, 34-35** is part of the Last Supper <sup>2</sup> narrative, where Jesus speaks of his glorification and gives his disciples a new commandment: to love one another. Several key themes emerge from this passage: Glorification through Sacrifice, Imitation of Christ's Love and Love as a Witness. Mutual love among believers is a powerful witness to the world, demonstrating the reality of Christ's presence and message.

In summary, the Gospel reveals Jesus's glorification through his impending sacrifice, tender care for his disciples, and new commandment to love one another as a defining characteristic of Christian discipleship.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hebrews called the Gentiles those who have not received the faith or law of God. Richard Watson, "Gentile," in *A Biblical and Theological Dictionary* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1851), 401.

<sup>2</sup> The setting of the Last Supper was a large upstairs room, traditionally called the Cenacle, in a house in Jerusalem (Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12), probably the same upper room where the apostles stayed and prayed after the Ascension and before Pentecost (Acts 1:13) Scott Hahn, ed., *Catholic Bible Dictionary* (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 2009), 256.

### Key Message for Children

- † Love One Another: Jesus wants us to love everyone. Just like he loves us, we should show love to our family, friends, and even those who are hard to love.
- † God is Kind and Caring: he is always there for us, even when things are difficult.
- † God is Always With Us: Even though Jesus went away, he is still with us in our hearts. We can feel his love and guidance every day.

### Key Message for Leaders

- † Love is the defining characteristic of a Christian.
- † Perseverance in faith is essential, even when facing challenges.
- † God is always with us, offering love, comfort, and hope.
- † We are called to share God's love with others and support them in their faith journey.

### Self-Reflection Questions for Leaders

- † In what specific ways do I embody Christ's commandment to "love one another as I have loved you" daily?
- † How do I personally demonstrate perseverance in my faith?
- † How do I cultivate gratitude for God's goodness and compassion?
- † How does the vision of a new creation shape my perspective?

## 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! Today, in our Gospel reading, Jesus gives us a very special instruction. He gave them a new commandment. Go with your teachers and learn more about the new commandment. May God bless you!**

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 loving us so much. Help us to love each other, just like you love us. Help us be kind and helpful today. We love you.**

**Amen.**

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

## Readings

### FIRST READING

Acts 14.21b-27

*They called the church together and related all that God had done with them.*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

- 21 Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra,<sup>3</sup>  
then on to Iconium and Antioch.
- 22 There, they strengthened the souls of the disciples  
and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying,  
"It is through many persecutions  
that we must enter the kingdom of God."
- 23 And after they had appointed elders for them in each church,  
with prayer and fasting, they entrusted them to the Lord  
in whom they had come to believe.
- 24 Then they passed through Pisidia<sup>4</sup> and came to Pamphylia.
- 25 When they had spoken the word in Perga,<sup>5</sup>  
they went down to Attalia.
- 26 From there, they sailed back to Antioch,<sup>6</sup>  
where they had been commended to the grace of God  
for the work that they had completed.
- 27 When they arrived, they called the church together  
and related all that God had done with them,  
and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles.

*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.*

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<sup>3</sup> A city in Lycaonia, in central Asia Minor. Scott Hahn, ed., Catholic Bible Dictionary (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 2009), 559.

<sup>4</sup> A mountainous region in south-central Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Scott Hahn, ed., Catholic Bible Dictionary (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 2009), 714.

<sup>5</sup> Perga was the main religious center for Pamphylia and boasted a temple of Artemis. Scott Hahn, ed., Catholic Bible Dictionary (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 2009), 695.

<sup>6</sup> One of the most prominent cities in the Roman Empire, first built in 300 b.c. by Seleucus I Nicator on the Orontes River in Syria and named after his father Antiochus. Scott Hahn, ed., Catholic Bible Dictionary (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 2009), 51.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 145.8 9, 10-11, 12-13

**R.** I will praise your name forever, my king and my God.

**8** The Lord is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**9** The Lord is good to all,  
and his compassion is over all that he has made. **R.**

**10** All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord,  
and all your faithful shall bless you.

**11** They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom,  
and tell of your power. **R.**

**12** To make known to all people your mighty deeds,  
and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.

**13** Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,  
and your dominion endures throughout all generations. **R.**

## SECOND READING

Revelation 21.1-5a

*God will wipe every tear from their eyes.*

A reading from the book of Revelation.

- 1 Then I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth;  
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,  
and the sea was no more.
- 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem,  
coming down out of heaven from God,  
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
"See, the home of God is among humans.  
He will dwell with them as their God;  
they will be his peoples,  
and God himself will be with them;
- 4 he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more;  
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away."
- 5 And the one who was seated on the throne said,  
"See, I am making all things new."

*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 13.1,31-33a, 34-35**

*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

- 1** Before the festival of the Passover,<sup>7</sup>  
Jesus knew that his hour had come  
to depart from this world and go to the Father.  
Having loved his own who were in the world,  
he loved them to the end.
- 31** During the supper, when Judas had gone out, Jesus said,  
"Now the Son of Man has been glorified,  
and God has been glorified in him.
- 32** If God has been glorified in him,  
God will also glorify him in himself  
and will glorify him at once.
- 33** "Little children, I am with you only a little longer.
- 34** I give you a new commandment,  
that you love one another.  
Just as I have loved you,  
you also should love one another.
- 35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples,  
if you have love for one another."

*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.

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<sup>7</sup> One of the most important feasts of the Israelite calendar. The word "Passover" is an echo of the verb pāsah, "pass over," indicating that the feast was instituted to commemorate the deliverance of Israel from Egypt when the angel of death passed over the Israelites' firstborn (Exod 12:13, 23, 27). Scott Hahn, ed., Catholic Bible Dictionary (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 2009), 679–680.

## FIRST READING

Acts 14.21b-27

*They called the church together and related all that God had done with them.*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Let me tell you a story about two friends named Paul and Barnabas. They loved Jesus and travelled to many towns to tell people about him.

Paul and Barnabas returned to the towns where they had taught about Jesus. They wanted to help their friends be strong in their hearts, like having strong muscles for their faith! They told them that even when things are hard, like when someone is mean to them, they should keep believing in Jesus.

In each town, they picked some good helpers to lead the group of friends who loved Jesus. It's like picking team captains! They prayed for these helpers and asked God to take care of them.

Then Paul and Barnabas went back home to Antioch. They gathered all their friends and told them about all the wonderful things God helped them do, like teaching many people about Jesus. It was like show-and-tell, but with incredible stories about 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

Psalm 145.8 9, 10-11, 12-13

**R.** I will praise your name forever.

The Lord is merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in love.  
The Lord is good to all,  
He has compassion over all. **R.**

Your kingdom is everlasting,  
and your dominion endures throughout all generations. **R.**

## SECOND READING

Revelation 21.1-5a

*God will wipe every tear from their eyes.*

A reading from the book of Revelation.

Imagine a brand new world! The old one, with all its stuff like sadness and tears, is gone. God makes a new heaven and a new earth. It's beautiful and clean!

God comes to live with everyone. He's like a loving dad who wants to be with his children. He makes a home with all people, who are his very own.

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. No more crying, no more being sad, and no more pain! Everything that made people sad or hurt is gone. It's like a fresh start where everything is happy and good!

God says, "I am making all things new!" He's making everything better than ever before!

*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 13.1,31-33a, 34-35**

*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

Before the special Passover feast, Jesus knew it was time to leave his friends and return to his Father. He loved his friends more than anything and wanted to show them how much he cared.

After one of Jesus' friends left, Jesus said it was time for him to be special and amazing, like his Father in Heaven. He said that he would be leaving soon, and his friends would look for him, but they couldn't go with him yet.

Jesus gave his friends a new, most important rule: "You must love each other. Love each other just like I have loved you." This meant they should be kind, helpful, and caring to everyone.

Jesus said that if his friends loved each other, everyone would know they were his disciples. It's like wearing a special badge that shows they belong to Jesus. So, they should always show love so everyone can see they are disciples of Jesus.

*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.

### Tips for Asking Questions:

- Use simple language.
- Give children time to think and answer.
- Be encouraging and positive.
- Don't be afraid to rephrase the question if they don't understand.
- Listen carefully to their answers and affirm their efforts.
- Relate the questions to their everyday experiences.
- Make it a conversation, not an interrogation!

### What did you hear? *(Allow children to respond)*

Imagine you're playing a game, and someone says, "Here's a new rule!" That's kind of what Jesus did. But instead of a game, it's about how we live our lives. And what was this new rule? He said, "You must love each other. Love each other just like I have loved you."

**Can you all say that with me?** "Love each other just like I have loved you."

### What does it mean to love someone?

Think about your family and friends.

### How do you show them love?

Maybe you hug them, or share your toys, or help them when they're sad. Jesus wants us to love everyone like that!

### Now, how did Jesus love us?

He loved everyone so much that he even died on the cross for us. That's a lot of love! He wants us to be kind and helpful, even when it's hard.

The first reading today talks about Paul and Barnabas, who went to different cities to tell people about Jesus. They helped the disciples stay strong in their faith, even when things got tough.

### How can we be like Paul and Barnabas?

We can encourage our friends when they are having a hard time, share our toys or snacks, and be kind to lonely people.

Jesus tells us that everyone will know we are his disciples if we love one another.

**What is a disciple?**

A disciple is someone who follows Jesus. So, when we are loving and kind, we show everyone that we are followers of Jesus. It's like wearing a special badge that says, "I love Jesus, and I love you too!"

**Can you think of one way to show someone love this week?**

**How does it make you feel when someone shows you love?**

**Why do you think Jesus wants us to love one another?**

So, let's all try our best to follow Jesus' new commandment: "You must love each other. Love each other just like I have loved you." When we love, we show the world that we are Jesus' disciples and help bring God's love and joy to everyone.

## Adapted Reflection for Children

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words.

Once upon a time, in a bright and colourful land, lived a group of friends who loved Jesus very much. They were like a family, always helping and caring for each other.

One sunny day, Jesus told them something very important. "I'm going to be with you for just a little while longer," he said with a gentle smile. "But I have a special rule: Love each other, just like I love you. If you do this, everyone will know you are my friends." The friends were sad that their leader was leaving, but they remembered his words about love. They decided to follow his rule with all their hearts. They shared their toys, helped each other with their chores, and always said kind words.

Two brave helpers were travelling in a faraway city. They told everyone about Jesus and how much He loved them. They helped the new friends strengthen their hearts and promised them that they should never give up, even when things got tough. The helpers chose wise people to guide each group, and together, they prayed and trusted in God.

Everywhere in the land, people started noticing how kind and loving these friends were to each other. They saw them sharing, helping, and always being there for one another. They realized that these friends were special because they followed Jesus's rule of love.

Far away, up in the heavens, God was preparing a new home for everyone. It would be a beautiful city full of light and happiness, with no more tears or sadness. God promised that He would make everything new and wonderful.

The friends continued to live by Jesus's rule, spreading love and kindness wherever they went. They knew that even though they missed their leader, they could still feel close to him by loving each other. And they looked forward to the day they would all be together in God's new and wonderful home.

And so, the friends lived happily ever after, always remembering to love one another, just as Jesus loved them. They knew that by spreading love, they were making the world a brighter and happier place for 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

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

**The leader says:**

**We talk to God because he loves us very much and always listens. Let's ask him to help us and everyone in the world. We will respond to each prayer by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." R: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Assistant:**

**Let us pray for our Church, that we allow God to make it a place where everyone feels loved and safe. Let us pray to the Lord. R:**

**Assistant:**

**Let us pray for Pope Leo XIV, our bishops, priests, deacons and all the people who help us learn about Jesus, that God will make them kind and happy. Let us pray to the Lord. R:**

**Assistant:**

**Let us pray for our moms, dads, grandparents, and all who care for us, that God continues to help them be healthy and strong. Let us pray to the Lord. R:**

**Assistant:**

**Let us pray for all the children who are sick or sad so that they may feel better soon and know that Jesus loves them. Let us pray to the Lord. R:**

**Assistant:**

**Let us pray that the leaders of our countries will listen to the Holy Spirit and make good choices that help everyone. Let us pray to the Lord. R:**

**The Leader says:**

**Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers. Help us to love one another and to be kind to everyone we meet. We ask this through Jesus, your Son, who lives and reigns with you forever and ever. 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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