



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word

ASCENSION OF THE LORD

The readings this Sunday have two different versions of the Ascension by the same author.

In the reading from Acts, we see Jesus commissioning the apostles, while the Gospel anchors us to God's plan revealed to us in the Scriptures and Jesus himself in Ephesians as head of the Church, which is his body. The baptized essentially make Christ's body present on earth, particularly after receiving Holy Communion.

As Catholic Christians, our centre is Christ. We are called to focus on him and, in doing so, to carry out his work of praising God and serving others.

The readings also help us to begin to realize that Jesus is not leaving us, but giving us the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide our Christian lives.

We may not always know what to say in certain circumstances; however, we can always 'watch' Christ and know that we can call upon the Holy Spirit for wisdom, insight and strength.

Why did Luke create two accounts of the Ascension? He wants us to remain grounded in the Risen Lord on Sunday and throughout the week through our Christian actions.

Objective

- † To introduce children to the Ascension as Jesus' return to his Father in Heaven after his resurrection.
- † To help children recognize that they carry on the work of Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

Background

Acts 1:1-11 provides a direct account of the Ascension, which is a pivotal moment in salvation history. It sets the stage for the mission of the Church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the fulfillment of God's promise, the hope of the Second Coming, and the commission to witness.

Psalms 47 celebrates God's universal kingship and triumph. In relation to the Ascension, these verses highlight Christ's enthronement in heaven and his reign over all creation.

Ephesians 1:17-23 speaks of God's power in raising Christ from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavenly places. This passage emphasizes Christ's supreme authority and head of the Church. The Ascension highlights the fulfillment of Christ's earthly mission and his exaltation to divine glory.

Luke 24:46-53 describes Jesus' final instructions to his disciples, his ascension into heaven, and the disciples' reaction to this event. The Gospel is the central passage to understanding the meaning and significance of the Ascension in our faith. It emphasizes the fulfillment of Scripture, the proclamation of repentance, the role of the disciples as witnesses, the promise of the Holy Spirit, and the joy and worship that follow the Ascension.

Leader's Reflection Questions

- † How does the Ascension challenge or deepen my understanding of Jesus' departure?
- † How can I encourage others to embrace the hope, power, and mission that flows from the Ascension?

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: My dear children, today's readings will tell you how Jesus is taken to heaven. While he is no longer with the disciples in person, he did not abandon them or us.

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.

**God our Father,
make us joyful in the Ascension of your Son Jesus Christ.
May we follow him into the new creation,
for his ascension is our glory and our hope.
Through Christ our Lord.**

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 Acts of the Apostles.

Jesus told his disciples,

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power.

Then, you will be my witnesses to all the earth."

When he had said this, as they were watching,

he rose up into the sky, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

While they were looking up to heaven,

two men in white robes suddenly stood by them.

They said, "Why do you stand looking up toward heaven?

This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven,

will come like you saw him go into heaven."

The word of the Lord.

At the end of the reading, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The word of the Lord."

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

Responsorial Psalm

R. God has gone up to Heaven.

Clap your hands;

shout to God with songs of joy.

The Lord, the Most High, is awesome,

king over all the earth. **R.**

God has gone up,

Sing praises to God,

sing praises;

Sing praises to our King, sing praises. **R.**

God is the king of all the earth;

sing praises.

God is king over the nations;

God sits on his holy throne. **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from the first letter of Ephesians.

Brothers and sisters:

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation
as you come to know him,
so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened,
you may know what is the hope to which he has called you,
what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints,
and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power
for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.
God put this power to work in Christ,
and above every name that is named,
not only in this age but also in the age to come.
And he has put all things under his feet
and has made him the head over all things for the Church,
which is his body,
the fullness of him who fills all in all.

The word of the Lord.

At the end of the reading, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "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, which the leader proclaims. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

✠ **A reading from the holy Gospel, according to Luke.**

Children respond: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to the disciples,

"These are my words that I spoke to you.

You are my witnesses.

I am sending upon you what my Father promised;

so stay here until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Then he led them out as far as Bethany,

and, lifting his hands, he blessed them.

While he was blessing them,

he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.

Then they worshipped him,

and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;

and they were continually blessing God.

At the end of the Gospel, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The Gospel of the Lord."

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:

What did you hear? Allow each child to respond to the Word of God in their own words

Today, we celebrate a very special day called the Ascension. Can you say "Ascension"? It sounds like "a-SEN-shun."

Do you remember how much Jesus loved to teach and help people?

What did he do?

He travelled all around, telling stories about God's love, healing the sick, and showing everyone how to be kind and forgiving.

After Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, he stayed with his friends, the apostles, for 40 days. That's even longer than a whole month! He taught them more about God's kingdom and helped them understand what they needed to do.

Then, one day, Jesus took his friends to a place near Bethany¹. He lifted His hands and blessed them. And guess what happened? Jesus started to rise into the sky! He was going home. The Bible tells us that a cloud hid him from their sight. Jesus went up, up, up into Heaven to be with God, his Father. That's the Ascension!

How do you think the apostles felt when they saw Jesus going up into Heaven?

The apostles were probably a little sad and confused. But then, two angels appeared! They said, "Why are you standing here looking up at the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Even though Jesus isn't here on Earth, how can we still feel close to him?

So, even though Jesus isn't walking around on Earth with us anymore, he is still with us in a special way. He sent us the Holy Spirit to help us, guide us, and give us the strength to do good things. The Holy Spirit is God's presence that lives inside each one of us!

The Ascension reminds us that Jesus is King of Heaven and Earth! He is in charge, and he loves us very much. And one day, he will come back again!

What is one way you can share Jesus' love with others this week?

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith.

¹ Bethany is located on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about 2 kilometres east of Jerusalem.

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: We believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: We believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: We 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: **Let us pray to Jesus, who has ascended to Heaven, but remains with us always in spirit. The response is: Lord, hear our prayer R./**

Lector: **For the Church: that she may be a shining light, sharing the Good News of Jesus with everyone, everywhere. We pray to the Lord. R./**

Lector: **For our leaders in the Church: that our Pope, Bishops, Priests and Deacons may be filled with wisdom and courage to guide us on the path of faith. We pray to the Lord. R./**

Lector: **For all those who are sad or lonely: that they may feel Jesus' love and comfort, knowing that He is always with them, even when they feel alone. We pray to the Lord. R./**

Lector: **For our families and friends: that we may always be kind, loving, and helpful to one another, showing Jesus' love in our homes and communities. We pray to the Lord. R./**

Lector: **For those who are sick: that they may feel Jesus' healing touch and be made well again. We pray to the Lord. R./**

Lector: **For those who have died: that they may be with Jesus in Heaven, enjoying eternal happiness. We pray to the Lord**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: **Loving God, we thank you for sending your Son, Jesus. We thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Hear our prayers, and help us to live as faithful followers of Jesus, until we are united with Him in Heaven. Amen.**

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.