



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Today's readings invite us to consider what it truly means to obtain eternal life and how we live out the greatest commandments: to love God with all our being and love our neighbour as ourselves. This theme is not merely an abstract concept but a concrete demand for action in our daily lives.

Love can be difficult. The first reading from Deuteronomy reminds us that God's commandment is not beyond our reach. It is a law written on our hearts, guiding us towards a life of righteousness and love. We can make loving decisions.

The Gospel presents us with the familiar and powerful parable of the Good Samaritan. A lawyer, seeking to test Jesus, asks, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" and then, "Who is my neighbour?" This parable challenges our preconceived notions of who our neighbour is, revealing that our neighbour is anyone in need, regardless of their background, race, or religion.

Today's readings call us to a radical love that transcends boundaries and embraces all humanity. Love is not merely a feeling but a practical commitment to care for others, especially those most vulnerable and suffering. As Pope Benedict XVI taught, it demands our practical commitment "here and now." We are invited to "go and do likewise," imitating Christ's boundless love and mercy.

Background

Deuteronomy 30:10-14 teaches that God's commandments are not an oppressive burden but a loving invitation to life, readily available to those who turn to God with their whole heart and soul. This ancient truth finds its ultimate fulfillment and deepest meaning in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh, dwelling among us and within us.

Psalms 69 is a lament psalm, expressing deep distress and suffering and pleading for divine intervention. It shifts from an initial cry of anguish and persecution to an expression of hope, trust, and eventual praise for God.

Colossians 1:15-20 is a profound Christological¹ hymn, often considered one of the most significant passages in the New Testament for understanding the person and work of Jesus Christ. It presents Christ as supreme over all creation and as the head of the Church, the agent of reconciliation.

Luke 10:25-37 contains two interconnected parts: a lawyer's question about inheriting eternal life, and Jesus' response through the parable of the Good Samaritan. This passage is central to understanding Christian ethics, particularly the commandment to love one's neighbour. Jesus teaches not with a definition, but with a parable.

Catholic tradition interprets the Good Samaritan as Christ himself. Jesus is the Good Samaritan.

The parable² moves the listener beyond a legalistic interpretation of the Law³ to a spirit of active, compassionate love. It challenges us to become a neighbour to anyone we encounter who is suffering, rather than seeking to define who qualifies as our neighbour. The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches that inheriting eternal life is inextricably linked to living out the commandment of love, which demands active, universal compassion for every human being in need, mirroring the boundless mercy of Christ himself.

¹ Theology that deals with the doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ.

² A parable is a short narrative designed to impart a lesson or truth in a memorable way.

³ The Law of Moses, also known as the Mosaic Law or the Old Law, is a collection of divine prescriptions and norms that God gave to the Israelites through Moses. This Law was a foundational element of the Covenant that God established with his people.

Key Themes:

The Accessibility of God's Law and Love: God's commandments are meant to be embraced with heart and soul, leading to a life of love and obedience.

The Supremacy and Reconciling Work of Christ: Jesus Christ is central to creation and reconciliation.

Active Love of God and Neighbour: Obtaining eternal life requires loving God completely and extending compassionate, merciful love to all people, especially those in need, as exemplified by the Good Samaritan.

Self-Reflection Questions

These questions should be used after praying with the readings, which are positioned as part of the liturgy.

- † What practical steps can you take this week to live out the commandments already "in your heart more consciously"?
- † Think of a time when you might have "passed by" someone in need, perhaps due to busyness, fear, or prejudice. What prevented you from acting, and what can you learn from that experience?
- † The Samaritan showed compassion, bandaged wounds, and provided for the injured man's care. What are the "wounds" you see in your community or the world that you are called to help bandage and heal?

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: Children, today, we hear the parable of the Good Samaritan. Go with your leaders and think about ways that you, too, can be a Good Samaritan.

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.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for bringing us together today to listen to your holy word. Open our hearts and minds so we can understand your message of love. Help us to learn how to be good neighbours.

We ask all this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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 book of Deuteronomy.

Moses spoke to the people, saying,
"Obey the Lord your God
by observing his commandments and decrees
that are written in this book of the Law;
turn to the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul.
Surely this commandment that I am commanding you today
is not too hard for you,
nor is it too far away.
It is not in heaven that you should say,
'Who will go up to heaven for us,
and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?'
Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say,
'Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us,
and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?'
No, the word is very near to you;
it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe."

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. Seek God in your need, and let your hearts revive.

As for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord.

At an acceptable time, O God,

in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me.

With your steadfast help, rescue me.

Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good;

according to your abundant mercy, turn to me. **R.**

But I am lowly and in pain;

let your salvation, O God, protect me.

I will praise the name of God with a song;

I will magnify him with thanksgiving. **R.**

Let the oppressed see it and be glad;

you who seek God, let your hearts revive. **R.**

For God will save Zion

and rebuild the cities of Judah;

the children of his servants shall inherit it,

those who love his name shall live in it. **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians.

Christ is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation;
for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created,
things visible and invisible,
whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers-
all things have been created through him and for him.
Christ is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.
He is the head of the body, the Church;
he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,
so that he might come to have first place in everything.
For in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
by making peace through the blood of his Cross.

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.

A lawyer stood up to test Jesus.

"Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus said to him, "What is written in the Law?

What do you read there?"

The lawyer answered,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,

and with all your soul, and with all your strength,

and with all your mind;

and your neighbour as yourself."

And Jesus said to him,

"You have given the right answer;

do this, and you will live."

But wanting to justify himself, the lawyer asked Jesus,

"And who is my neighbour?"

Jesus replied,

"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho,

and fell into the hands of robbers,

who stripped him, beat him, and went away,

leaving him half dead.

Now, by chance, a priest was going down that road;

and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him,

passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, while travelling, came near him;

and when he saw him, he was moved with pity.

He went to him and bandaged his wounds,

having poured oil and wine on them.

Then he put him on his own animal,
brought him to an inn, and took care of him.
The next day, the Samaritan took out two denarii, ⁴
gave them to the innkeeper, and said,
'Take care of him;
and when I come back,
I will repay you whatever more you spend.'"
Jesus asked,
"Which of these three, do you think,
was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"
The lawyer said, "The one who showed him mercy."
Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

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.

⁴ A Roman silver coin, equivalent to a labourer's daily wage.

Adapted Readings for Children

First Reading

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy

Moses said to the people:

"Obey God

and follow all the laws and commands
in the book of the Law.

Trust him with all your heart and soul.

"What I am telling you today is not too hard.

It is possible.

What I am telling you is in your heart.

All you have to do is obey."

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

R. Turn to the Lord, and you will live.

I pray to you, LORD.

answer me and help me
with your wonderful love. R.

Protect me, God,
and keep me safe!

I will praise God with a song
and a thankful heart. R.

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians

Brothers and sisters:

Christ is the head of the church.

He is the very beginning,
the first to be raised from death,
so that he would be above all others.

God was pleased to live fully in his Jesus.
God was pleased for him to make peace
by the cross,
so that all beings in heaven and on earth
would be brought back to God.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

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

An expert asked Jesus a question
to see what he would say.

"Teacher," he asked,
"What must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus answered, "What is written in the Scriptures?
How do you understand them?"

The man replied, "The Scriptures say,
'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind.'
They also say, 'Love your neighbours as much as you love yourself.' "

Jesus said, "You have given the right answer.
If you do this, you will have eternal life."

But the man wanted to show that he knew what he was talking about.
So he asked Jesus, "Who are my neighbours?"

Jesus replied:

"As a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho⁵, robbers attacked him and grabbed everything he had. They beat him up and ran off, leaving him half dead.

"A priest happened to be going down the same road. But when he saw the man, he walked by on the other side.

Later, a temple helper came to the same place. But when he saw the man who had been beaten up, he also went by on the other side.

"A man from Samaria (i.e. Samaritan) then came travelling along that road. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him and went over to him. He treated his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put him on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.

"The next morning, he gave the innkeeper two silver coins and said, 'Please take care of the man. If you spend more than this on him, I will pay you when I return.' "

Then Jesus asked, "Which of these three people was a real neighbour to the man who was beaten up by robbers?"

The teacher answered, "The one who helped him." Jesus said, "Go and do the same!"

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.

⁵ A town just NW of the Dead Sea, which is best known as the site that Israel first conquered in their entrance into the land of Canaan. The distance is approximately 30 kilometres. It was a major trade route that was known as the "Way of Blood" due to frequent robberies and violence.

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. Then, begin a general discussion, building on their responses, using prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Our first reading tells us that God's rules are not hard to find or understand. They are not far away in the sky or across the ocean. No! God says his rules are "very near to you." This means God's way of loving is already inside our hearts!

Can you think of a time when you just knew in your heart what the right thing to do was?

Our second reading tells us about Jesus. It says Jesus is like the perfect picture of God, and that everything in the world was made through him. Jesus is also the head of our Church family.

What does it mean for Jesus to be the "head" of our Church family?

The Gospel is known as the parable of the Good Samaritan. This is a very famous story Jesus told! A lawyer asked Jesus, "What must I do to get to heaven?" Jesus said, "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself." Then the lawyer asked, "But who is my neighbour?" And Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan.

What was Jesus' answer to that question? (Love God and love your neighbour.)

What was the second question the lawyer asked? (Who is my neighbour?)

Who were the first two people to see the hurt man in the story? What did they do?

Who was the third person who came along? What did he do for the hurt man?

What is one small thing you could do this week to be a "Good Samaritan" to someone? (Encourage specific, age-appropriate examples like sharing a toy, helping a parent, being kind to a new classmate, etc.)

Is it always easy to be a "Good Samaritan"? Why or why not?

So, this week, let's try to be like the Good Samaritan.

Let's look for ways to show mercy and kindness to everyone around us.

Maybe someone at school drops their books – can you help them pick them up?

Maybe a friend is sad – can you offer a kind word?

Maybe your brother or sister needs help with a chore – can you offer to help?

Maybe you can pray for someone who is sick or lonely.

When we do these things, we are showing God's love and being true neighbours, just as Jesus taught us.

Deuteronomy 30:10-14 – God's Word is Near

Key Message: God's commandments are not far away or too hard; they are close to us, in our hearts and mouths. Explain that God's rules (like "love God" and "love others") are not like difficult homework or a secret code. They are simple and easy to understand, right inside us. Ask: **"Have you ever felt in your heart that something was the right thing to do, even if it was hard?"** Connect this to God's word being "in your heart." Emphasize that God wants us to know and follow His ways, and He makes it easy for us to do so.

Psalms 69 – God Hears the Needy

Key Message: The Psalm expresses a cry for help to God, trust in his deliverance, and a promise to praise him. It highlights God's care for the needy. Focus on the idea that God listens when we are in trouble or need help. Encourage children to pray to God when they are sad, scared, or need something. Explain that praising God with songs and thanksgiving pleases God more than big gifts.

Colossians 1:15-20 – Jesus is Lord of All

Key Message: Jesus is the image of God, through whom all things were created and in whom all things hold together. He is the head of the Church and reconciles all things to God through his cross. Explain that Jesus is super important! He was there with God when everything was made (the stars, animals, us!). Use an analogy: "Think of Jesus like the glue that holds everything in the world together, and he's also the leader of our Church family." Emphasize that Jesus made peace between God and us through His love and sacrifice.

Luke 10:25-37 – The Good Samaritan: Who is My Neighbour?

Key Message: Love God and love your neighbour as yourself. Your neighbour is anyone in need, and true love is shown through merciful action. Start with the lawyer's question: "What must I do to get to heaven?" and Jesus' answer: "Love God and love your neighbour." Then, the follow-up: "Who is my neighbour?" Tell the story of the Good Samaritan simply.

A man was hurt and left on the road. A priest and a Levite (important religious people) walked by and didn't help. A Samaritan (someone people didn't usually like) stopped, helped the man, bandaged his wounds, took him to an inn, and paid for his care. Ask: **"Who was a good neighbour?"** The one who showed mercy. Explain that a "neighbour" isn't just someone who lives next door or is our friend. It's anyone who needs our help, even if they are different from us or we don't know them.

Connect to Jesus: Pope John Paul II taught that Jesus is the "Good Samaritan par excellence" who heals humanity. We are called to imitate His compassion.

Call to Action: "Go and do likewise." Encourage children to think of ways they can be a "Good Samaritan" this week: helping a sibling, sharing with a friend, being kind to someone new, or praying for those who are hurting. Emphasize that this love should extend to everyone, even those we might consider "enemies" or different from us.

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: My dear children, let us now offer our prayers to God, who loves us and always listens to our needs. After each prayer, we will say: Lord, hear our prayer. **R.**

Lector: For the Church, our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV, and all bishops, priests, and deacons: that they may always teach us to love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, just as Jesus taught the lawyer in today's Gospel, we pray: **R.**

Lector: For all leaders and people around the world: that they may work for peace and justice, and always show mercy and compassion to those in need, just like the Good Samaritan who helped the injured man, we pray: **R.**

Lector: For those who are sick, lonely, or hurting: that God may comfort them and send people to care for them, just as the Samaritan cared for the man who fell among robbers, we pray: **R.**

Lector: For our families, friends, and all the people in our community, that we may always be ready to help one another, especially those who are different from us or who need our kindness, we pray: **R.**

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: Heavenly Father, you know all our needs even before we ask. Hear these prayers we offer with humble hearts, and help us to live as true neighbours to everyone we meet.
Through Jesus our Lord.
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.

Liturgy adapted for Children.

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