



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

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

The readings for the Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, present a unified theme centred on hospitality, listening to God's word, and choosing the "better part" in our relationship with God and others. This theme is particularly highlighted through the contrast between active service and contemplative listening, as well as the broader understanding of God's mercy and the demands of discipleship.

The readings collectively invite reflection on the nature of genuine hospitality, the priority of listening to God's word, the balance between action and contemplation and the demands of discipleship. The readings for this Sunday call believers to cultivate a heart that is both hospitable to God and others, and deeply attentive to his word, recognizing that this spiritual foundation is the "better part" that sustains all other forms of service and discipleship.

Self-Reflection Questions

- † How do I practice hospitality in my daily life, not just towards friends and family, but also towards strangers or those in need?
- † Amid my daily tasks and responsibilities, do I make dedicated time to sit at the Lord's feet, like Mary, and listen to his word?
- † How do these readings challenge my understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus today?

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Background

Genesis 18:1-10 recounts Abraham's encounter with three mysterious visitors by the oaks of Mamre.¹ Abraham demonstrates extraordinary hospitality, running to meet them, offering water for their feet, and preparing a lavish meal of bread, curds, milk, and a tender calf. He stands by them as they eat, showing profound respect and service. This act of hospitality is not merely a social custom; it is an encounter with the divine, as one of the visitors promises Abraham and Sarah a son in due season. This narrative underscores that welcoming others, especially strangers, can be an act of welcoming God himself.

Psalms 15 emphasizes integrity, honesty, and justice as essential for righteous living and true hospitality toward God.

Colossians 1:24-28 speaks about rejoicing in sufferings for the Church, completing "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" and emphasizing his mission to reveal God's word fully. This passage connects suffering and service to the Church with the spiritual journey of discipleship and the goal of maturity in Christ.

Luke 10:38-42 The passage recounts the story of Jesus visiting Martha and Mary. Martha is busy with hospitality while Mary sits at Jesus' feet, listening. Frustrated, Martha asks Jesus to tell Mary to help her. Jesus replies that Martha is worried and distracted; only one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen the better part that will not be taken away.

This highlights the tension between active service and contemplative listening. While service is important, Jesus emphasizes the priority of spiritual attentiveness.

Pope Francis notes that prayer comes from listening to Jesus and that family rhythms should include the spirit of prayer.

¹ Important oak grove near which Abraham lived, and named for an Amorite who helped him. Abraham erected an altar under the oak of Mamre. Abraham was sitting by the sacred tree when he welcomed three mysterious guests (ch 18).

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, as you prepare to hear God's word, you will hear about Martha and Mary, two friends of Jesus. May God bless you as you listen and learn.

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.

Dear Jesus, thank you for bringing us together today. Open our hearts and minds to hear your word and help us to understand what you want to teach us. 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 Genesis.

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as Abraham sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing near him.

When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on— since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said."

And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it.

Then he took curds, milk, and the calf that he had prepared and set them before them; he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

They said to Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent."

Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son."

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

R. The just will live in the presence of the Lord.

O Lord, who may dwell on your holy hill?
Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,
and speak the truth from their heart;
who do not slander with their tongue. **R.**

Those who do no evil to their friends,
nor take up a reproach against their neighbours;
in whose eyes the wicked are despised,
but who honour those who fear the Lord. **R.**

Those who stand by their oath even to their hurt;
who do not lend money at interest,
and do not take a bribe against the innocent.
Those who do these things shall never be moved. **R.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

Brothers and sisters:

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.

I became its servant according to God's commission given to me for you: to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints.

To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is Christ whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

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. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

✠A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

Now, as Jesus and his disciples went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.

She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, so she came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me."

But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

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.

Adapted Readings for Children

First Reading

A reading from the book of Genesis

One hot summer afternoon, Abraham was sitting by the entrance to his tent when the Lord appeared to him. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. He quickly ran to meet them and bowed with his face to the ground.

He said, "Please come to my home so I can serve you. I will bring some water so you can wash your feet, and then you can rest under the tree. Let me get you some food to give you strength before you leave. I would be honoured to serve you."

They answered, "Thank you very much. We accept your offer."

Abraham hurried to his tent and said to Sarah, "Hurry! Get some fine flour, mix it and make some bread." He also served his guests some yogurt and milk, together with some meat.

While they were eating, he stood near them under the trees. They asked him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" He answered, "She is right there in the tent."

One of the guests was the Lord, and he said, "I will come back next spring, and when I do, Sarah will already have a son."

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

R. The just will live in the presence of the Lord.

Who may stay in God's temple or live on the holy mountain?

Only those who obey God and do as they should.

They speak the truth and don't spread gossip. R.

They treat others fairly and don't say cruel things.

Those who do these things will always stand firm. R.

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians

Brothers and sisters:

God did this because he wanted you Gentiles to understand his wonderful and glorious mystery. And the mystery is that Christ lives in you, and he is your hope of sharing in God's glory.

We announce the message about Christ and use all our wisdom to warn and teach everyone so that all Christ's followers will grow and mature.

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.

Jesus and his disciples were travelling and entered a village. When they arrived, a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.

She had a sister named Mary, who sat in front of the Lord and was listening to what he said.

Martha was worried about all that had to be done. Finally, she went to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it bother you that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me."

The Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted about so many things; but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best, and it will not be taken away from her."

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 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 about a man named Abraham. One hot day, Abraham was sitting outside his tent when he saw three strangers approaching.

What did Abraham do?

Did he ignore them?

No! He ran to meet them, bowed down, and insisted that they rest and eat at his home. He quickly prepared a big meal for them. Abraham was so kind and generous, showing great hospitality to these visitors. Because of his kindness, one of the visitors, who was the Lord, promised Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son, even though they were very old.

This story teaches us about being welcoming and generous to others, just like Abraham was. When we are kind to others, especially strangers, we are also being kind to God.

In the Gospel, Jesus comes to a village and is welcomed into the home of a woman named Martha. Martha has a sister named Mary. While Martha is busy with many tasks, preparing food and taking care of everything, Mary sits at Jesus' feet and listens to what Jesus says.

Martha became worried and distracted by all her work, and she asked Jesus, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.

" But Jesus answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

What was Martha doing?

What was Mary doing?

Which one did Jesus say chose the "better part"?

This story is very important! Martha was doing good things by serving Jesus, but she was "distracted by many things." Mary, however, chose to sit and listen to Jesus. Jesus tells us that listening to Him and spending time with him is the "one thing" that is most important.

This doesn't mean that serving others, like Martha did, is not important.

The key is to find a balance. We need to serve others, but we also need to make time to listen to Jesus, to pray, and to be with him. Mary chose the "better part" because she prioritized being with Jesus and listening to his words, which is something that will last forever,

So, what can we learn from these readings today?

Be welcoming and generous: Like Abraham, let's be kind and open our hearts to others.

Listen to Jesus: Like Mary, let's make time to pray, read the Bible, and listen to what Jesus wants to tell us. This is the most important thing, and it will help us in all our other activities.

Let's try to be like both Martha and Mary: active in serving, but always making sure we spend time with Jesus, listening to His voice in our hearts..

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: Let us now offer our prayers to God, who always listens to us with love. R.

Lector: For the Church, that we may always welcome Jesus into our hearts and homes, we pray: R.

Lector: For all families, that they always make time to be with Jesus in prayer, we pray: R.

Lector: For ourselves, that we may listen to Jesus, we pray: R.

Lector: For those who are sick or sad, Jesus' presence will give them peace, we pray: R.

Lector: For those who have died, that they may rest with Jesus in heaven, we pray: R.

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: Heavenly Father, thank you for hearing our prayers. Help us to always follow Jesus and to love one another.
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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Acknowledgments:

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LECTIONARY FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN

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