



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The readings for the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, focus on prayer, particularly its persistence, efficacy and God's mercy and faithfulness. They collectively invite believers to a deeper life of prayer, marked by persistence, humility, and confidence in God's boundless mercy and faithfulness. They assure us that God hears our prayers, forgives our sins through Christ, and desires to bestow good gifts upon us, particularly the Holy Spirit.

Each time we ask for something in prayer, we dive a little deeper into what we really want or need. That deeper need will always lead us to the Holy Spirit, which God readily gives us.

Self-Reflection Questions

- † Can I identify areas in my life or in the world where I am called to intercede with persistent prayer, even when the situation seems dire?
- † The psalm states that God "regards the lowly." How does this truth encourage me to approach God with humility and trust, knowing God cares for me?
- † How often do I specifically ask God for the gift of the Holy Spirit in my life, and what difference do I believe this gift can make?

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Background

Genesis 18 describes Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah, where God reveals his intention to investigate the cities' sins. Abraham boldly pleads with God, asking if he would spare the cities for the sake of fifty righteous people and negotiates down to ten. Each time, the Lord agrees, showing his willingness to be merciful for the righteous. This passage highlights Abraham's close relationship with God and the power of persistent prayer in seeking mercy.

Psalms 138 expresses gratitude for God's steadfast love and faithfulness. It highlights God's attentiveness to those who call on him, reminding us that God strengthens the soul. God cares for the lowly and is distant from the proud. The psalm emphasizes God's responsiveness to prayer and enduring love.

Colossians highlights our spiritual transformation through baptism, with St. Paul noting that believers are "buried with him in baptism" and "raised with him through faith." He emphasizes that God made them alive in Christ, forgiving all trespasses and cancelling their legal debts. This passage illustrates the grace received through Christ's sacrifice, freeing the baptized from sin and death, and affirming our ability to approach God in prayer with the assurance of forgiveness.

In Luke, a disciple asks Jesus to teach them to pray, so Jesus teaches them the "Our Father," which includes always honouring God, praying for God's Kingdom, providing us with our daily bread (Eucharist), forgiveness of our sins and others, and the grace to deliver us from our trials. Jesus shares a parable about a persistent friend who asks a neighbour for bread at midnight, illustrating the power of persistence in prayer. He encourages his disciples to "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened." Jesus emphasizes that if earthly parents can give good gifts, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. This passage highlights the importance of persistent prayer and God's generosity.

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: Jesus teaches us to pray and to call God Father. He encourages us to always pray. Go and listen to Jesus.

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:

Guide us to everlasting life by helping us to use wisely the blessings you have given the world.

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 and said, "How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know."

Then Abraham came near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake."

Abraham answered, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And the Lord said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there."

Again, Abraham told the Lord, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it."

Then Abraham said, "Oh, do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there." The Lord answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there."

Abraham said, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." The Lord answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it."

Then Abraham said, "Oh, do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there." The Lord answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

R. Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.

I give you thanks, O Lord,
with my whole heart,
before the gods I sing your praise;
I bow down toward your holy temple.
I give thanks to your name
for your steadfast love and your faithfulness. **R.**

For you have exalted your name
and your word above everything.
On the day I called, you answered me.
you increased my strength of soul. **R.**

For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly;
but the haughty he perceives from far away.
Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies. **R.**

You stretch out your hand and your right hand delivers me.
The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands. **R.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

Brothers and sisters,
as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord,
continue to live your lives in him,
rooted and built up in him and established in the faith,
just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,
and you have come to fullness in him,
who is the head of every ruler and authority.

In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual
circumcision, by putting off the body of flesh in the
circumcision of Christ. When you were buried with
Christ in baptism,
you were also raised with him
through faith in the power of God,
who raised Christ from the dead.

And when you were dead in trespasses
and the uncircumcision of your flesh,
God made you alive together with him,
when he forgave us all our trespasses,
erasing the record that stood against us with its legal
demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the 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. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

✠A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."

He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.'"

And Jesus said to the disciples, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' And your friend answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' "I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence, he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

"So I say to you: ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. "Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

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

The Lord told Abraham, "I heard that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are doing all kinds of evil things. I am going down to see if those people are really that bad. If they aren't, I want to know about it."

The Lord went to Sodom and stayed with Abraham, who asked, "Lord, when you punish the wicked people, are you also going to punish the good ones? Would you spare the city if there are fifty good people in it? Surely, you wouldn't let the good ones be killed when you destroy the bad ones. You are the judge of the earth, and you do what is right." The Lord replied, "If I find fifty good people in Sodom, I will save the city to keep them from being killed."

Abraham answered, "Lord, please forgive me for daring to speak to you like this. But suppose there are only forty-five good people in Sodom. Would you still punish the whole city?" The Lord replied, "If I find forty-five good people, I won't punish the city."

Abraham asked the Lord, "Suppose there are just forty good people?" The Lord replied, "Just for them, I won't punish the city."

Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry, if I ask you what you would do if there are only thirty good people in the city." The Lord replied, "If I find thirty, I still won't punish it."

Then Abraham said, "Lord, I don't have any right to ask. But what would you do if you find only twenty?" The Lord replied, "Because of them, I won't punish the city."

Finally, Abraham said, "Lord, please don't become angry, if I speak just once more. Suppose you find only ten good people there." The Lord then replied, "For the sake of ten good people, I still won't destroy the city."

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

R. Lord, when I called for help, you answered me.

I thank you, O Lord,
with my whole heart. R.

On the day I called, you answered me.
you increased my strength of soul. R.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies. R.

The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. R.

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Colossians.

Brothers and sisters,
You received Jesus in baptism.
Live your lives like him,
in prayer,
just as you were taught.

When you were baptized,
you were also raised with him
through the power of God,
who raised Christ from the dead.

And when you sin,
God forgives them through Jesus.

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.

One of Jesus' disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his followers to pray."

So Jesus taught them, "Pray this way: 'Father, help to praise your name. Come and set up your kingdom. Give us each day the food we need. Forgive our sins, as we forgive everyone who has done wrong to us. And keep us from being tempted.'"

Then Jesus said: "Suppose one of you goes to a friend in the middle of the night and says, 'Let me borrow three loaves of bread. A friend of mine has dropped in, and I don't have a thing for him to eat.' And suppose your friend answers, 'Don't bother me! The door is bolted, and my children and I are in bed. I cannot get up to give you something.' "He may not get up and give you the bread, just because you are his friend. But he will get up and give you as much as you need, simply because you are not ashamed to keep on asking.

"So I tell you to ask and you will receive, search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who asks will receive, everyone who searches will find, and the door will be opened for everyone who knocks."

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 story is about a man named Abraham. God was sad because some cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, were doing many bad things. God was thinking about what to do, but Abraham was brave and started talking to God about it.

Abraham asked God, "Lord, if there are good people in that city, will you still punish everyone?" God, who is so kind, said, "If I find fifty good people there, I will spare the whole place!" But Abraham didn't stop there! He kept asking, "What if there are only forty-five? Or forty? Or thirty? Or twenty? Or even just ten good people?" And each time, God said, "Yes, for their sake, I will not destroy it."

What does this teach us?

This first story teaches us about God's immense love and attentiveness to our prayers, especially for those in need. Abraham's persistence in prayer teaches us to never give up, as God is always ready to listen and show mercy.

In the Gospel, Jesus' friends asked Him to teach them how to pray, leading to the special prayer known as the Our Father. It guides us to communicate with God as our loving Father, to ask for our needs, and to seek forgiveness.

Jesus also shared a story about a friend who, despite being in bed, would eventually get up to help if you persistently ask for food at night. This shows the importance of persistence in prayer.

What does this teach us?

Jesus teaches us that God is better than any human friend or parent. He loves us deeply and wants to provide for our needs. We should continually ask, seek, and knock, as God always listens and is eager to help us.

Let's Think and Pray:

Do you have something you really want to ask God for?

Remember Abraham and the persistent friend – don't give up!

Alternate Reflection

Below is an alternate reflection to use should the Liturgy of the Word have many children who do not know the Lord's Prayer.

The Our Father Prayer

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
Amen.

What the Prayer Means

Line	Meaning for children
Our Father, who art in heaven	God is our loving Father who lives in Heaven.
Hallowed be thy name	God's name is holy and special.
Thy Kingdom come	We want God's love and peace to fill the world.
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven	We want to do what God wants, just like the angels do in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread	Please give us what we need each day.
And forgive us our trespasses	We will also forgive others who hurt us.
As we forgive those who trespass against us	We will also forgive others who hurt us.
And lead us not into temptation	Help us say no to doing wrong things.
But deliver us from evil	Keep us safe from all bad things

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, now it's time for us to talk to God, our loving Father, and like Abraham, who bravely spoke to God, and as Jesus taught us, let's bring our prayers to Him with trust and love. **R.**

Lector: For the Pope, all bishops, priests and deacons, that they may always teach us about God's great love and mercy, we pray: **R.**

Lector: For our families and friends, that we may always love and help each other, and forgive each other when we make mistakes, we pray: **R.**

Lector: For anyone who is sick or hurting, that God's healing love may touch them and make them feel better, 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, we thank you for listening to our prayers. You are so good and loving, and we trust that you will always give us what we truly need. We ask all this through Christ 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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Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops 2500 Don Reid Drive Ottawa, ON K1H 2J2

LECTIONARY FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN

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