



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Children's Liturgy of the Word The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed

Overview

The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, also known as All Souls' Day, is celebrated on November 2. On this day, the Church prays for all the faithful who have died. It follows All Saints' Day and reflects belief in the Communion of Saints — the unity of the faithful on earth, and the saints in heaven.

Celebrating CLoW today requires sensitivity. Parents may not realize that when they sent their children to CLoW, today is All Souls Day. Children may have suffered the death of a loved one or a friend and have difficulty with death. Be sensitive and observant.

The day expresses faith in God's mercy and the hope of resurrection. The living can help the departed through Masses, prayers, and works of charity.

All Souls' Day reminds believers that death is not an end but a transformation. In the words of the Roman Missal: "For your faithful, Lord, life is changed, not ended."

READINGS

FIRST READING

Wisdom 3:1-9

Like a sacrificial burnt offering, he accepted them.

A reading from the book of Wisdom.

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
and no torment will ever touch them.
In the eyes of the foolish, they seemed to have died,
and their departure was thought to be a disaster,
and their going from us to be their destruction;
but they are at peace.
For though in the sight of others they were punished,
their hope is full of immortality.
Having been disciplined a little,
they will receive great good,
because God tested them
and found them worthy of himself;
like gold in the furnace he tried them,
and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them.
In the time of their visitation they will shine forth,
and will run like sparks through the stubble.
They will govern nations and rule over peoples,
and the Lord will reign over them forever.
Those who trust in him will understand truth,
and the faithful will abide with him in love,
because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones,
and he watches over his elect.

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

R. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul. **R.**

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil; for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—they comfort me. **R.**

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows. **R.**

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long. **R.**

SECOND READING

Revelation 21:1-7

Death will be no more.

A reading from the book of Revelation.

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.

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem,
coming down out of heaven from God,
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

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;
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."

And the one who was seated on the throne said,
"See, I am making all things new."

I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end.

To the thirsty I will give water as a gift
from the spring of the water of life.

The one who conquers will inherit these things,
and I will be his God and he will be my son.

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus went to a town called Nain,
and his disciples and a large crowd went with him.
As he approached the gate of the town,
a man who had died was being carried out.
He was his mother's only son,
and she was a widow;
and with her was a large crowd from the town.
When the Lord saw her,
he had compassion for her and said to her,
"Do not weep."
Then he came forward and touched the pallet,
and the bearers stood still.
And Jesus said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!"
The dead man sat up and began to speak,
and Jesus gave him to his mother.
Fear seized all of them;
and they glorified God, saying,
"A great prophet has risen among us!"
and "God has looked favourably on his people!"
This word about Jesus spread throughout Judea
and all the surrounding country.

The gospel of the Lord.

Background

Wisdom 3:1-9 addresses the reasons for suffering and death among the righteous. While it may seem unjust, their souls find peace and glory in God's plan. Key themes include Divine Protection and the hope of immortality, leading to the Christian promise of resurrection and eternal life through Christ. The reading reframes death as not an end, but an entrance into God's care, encouraging believers to persevere in faith, trusting that true judgment is found in the eternal life to come.

Psalms 23 is a psalm about trust. It ultimately finds meaning in Christ, who is known as the Good Shepherd. It expresses trust and the presence of God in our lives. It reassures us that no matter what happens—whether we experience joy or sorrow, life or death—we are cared for by the Shepherd who gives us a place to dwell forever.

Revelation 21:1-7 is often recited at funerals and on All Souls Day as it conveys the ultimate hope—the transformation of sorrow into eternal joy. In Christ, the new creation has already started; through baptism, believers become citizens of the new Jerusalem, anticipating its full revelation. God, who initiated creation, will bring it to completion, leading not to exile but to homecoming.

Luke 7:11-17 deepens Luke's portrayal of Jesus as the Lord of life and compassion. It highlights Jesus as the one whose words restore existence and whose compassion reflects the heart of the Father. This passage anticipates His victory over death through His Resurrection and points to the promise of eternal life for all who believe in Him.

Jesus' compassion arises not from human requests or merits, but from divine mercy freely given. He confronts and conquers death, foreshadowing His own resurrection. The widow's loss is reversed; life and relationships are restored—symbolizing God's renewal of His people.

This is a powerful revealing of God's mercy in action. In the midst of human grief and hopelessness, Christ offers consolation and new life. The gospel passage invites believers to trust in the Lord, who not only observes suffering but also enters into it to transform it, turning mourning into eternal life.

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

Dismissal

Priest: Dear children, today we hear how Jesus healed a young man and returned him to his mother. Go with your leaders and listen to how much Jesus loves 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.

Let us pray:

Pause for 5 – 10 seconds

**Loving God,
Help us always remember
our family and friends who have died.
May our love for them grow stronger
as we walk together in faith.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

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

ADAPTED READINGS FOR CHILDREN

FIRST READING

Wisdom 3:1-9

Like a sacrificial burnt offering, he accepted them.

A reading from the book of Wisdom.

The souls of good people are safe with God.

No harm can really touch them,
because they are in God's hands.

Some people might think they have died,
but God knows they are at peace.
It may look like they have suffered,
but God is bringing them into joy and rest.

God will care for them forever,
because they trusted Him with their lives.

They will live with God in love,
and His kindness will never end.

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

R. The Lord is my shepherd.

The Lord is my shepherd;

He gives me everything I need. **R.**

He shows me the right way to live,
because I belong to Him. **R.**

Even when I walk through dark or scary places,
I will not be afraid, because You, Lord, are with me. **R.**

Your goodness and love will be with me
all the days of my life, and I will live with You forever. **R.**

SECOND READING

Revelation 21:1-7

Death will be no more.

A reading from the book of Revelation.

I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

The old ones were gone.

A loud voice said,

"God now lives with His people!

He will stay with them forever.

They will be His people,
and He will be their God."

God will wipe away every tear.

There will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain.

All those things are gone forever.

God said,

Those who stay close to Me will receive My promise.

I will be their God,
and they will be My children."

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

One day, Jesus went to a town called Nain,
and His friends and many people followed Him.

As He came near the town gate,
He saw people walking in a funeral.
They were carrying the body of a young man who had died.
He was the only son of his mother,
and she was a widow—she had no husband.
A large crowd from the town was with her.

When Jesus saw the woman,
His heart was filled with love and kindness.
He said to her, "Don't cry."

Then Jesus walked up to the coffin and touched it.
The people carrying it stopped.
Jesus said, "Young man, I tell you, get up!"

Right away, the young man sat up and began to talk!
Jesus gave him back to his mother.

Everyone was amazed!
They praised God and said,
"A great prophet has come among us!
God has come to help His people!"

News about what Jesus had done spread everywhere.

The gospel of the 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?

I want to share a story with you. One bright autumn morning, Sophie and her little brother Eli walked with their parents to the cemetery. Her mom carried a bunch of yellow chrysanthemums. "Who are these flowers for?" she asked. "For Grandma and Grandpa," her mom said. "And for all the people we love who are with Jesus now."

Have you ever brought flowers or said a prayer for someone you love who has died?

Eli looked around. "But I don't see them," he said. "How can we visit them if they're gone?" Their dad smiled and knelt beside them. "That's what All Souls' Day is about. We can't see them, but they are still part of God's family. We pray for them, and they pray for us. God's love keeps us all connected — even between heaven and earth."

What do you think it means that God's love connects heaven and earth?

They placed the flowers near the stone cross. Sophie whispered, "Jesus, please take care of Grandma and Grandpa." A gentle breeze passed through the trees, and a few golden leaves danced in the air. Eli whispered, "I think Grandma heard us."

When you pray, do you sometimes feel close to someone you love, even if they're in heaven?

As they walked home, Sophie asked, "Will people pray for us one day?" "Yes," her mom said. "Because in God's family, love never ends. When we pray for others, we help them come closer to God. And one day, someone will do the same for us."

Sophie smiled and looked up at the sky. "Then God's love is like a garden — it keeps growing, even when we can't see all the flowers."

Her dad nodded. "Exactly. That's why today we pray for all souls — because in God's garden, every soul blooms forever."

What can you do today to show love for someone who has gone to be with God?

(Examples: light a candle, say a prayer, draw a picture, or visit a cemetery.)

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: Today, we remember all who have died and gone to be with God. Let us pray for them and for everyone who needs God's comfort and hope. Our response is: Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For all who have died—our grandparents, parents, friends, and all the faithful departed—that God may welcome them with love into heaven. We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
2. For people who miss someone they love—that God will comfort them and fill their hearts with peace. Let us pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
3. For all who are sick, lonely, or afraid—that they will feel God's closeness and care each day. We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.
4. For our parish family and for all children who pray today—that we may always remember to pray for those who have died and trust that God's love is forever. We pray to the Lord. All: Lord, hear our prayer.

5. The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: Loving God, You promise that life with You never ends. Hear our prayers for all who have died and for all who hope in Your mercy. We ask 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:

LECTIONARY SUNDAYS AND SOLEMNITIES

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