



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

## CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

*When we love Jesus and show kindness to others, we are caring for Jesus Himself.*

Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

MATTHEW 10:39

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## Overview

The readings for the Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time focus on a profound question: What does it mean to belong to Christ? The answer unfolds through three interconnected themes: welcoming God, living our Baptism, and placing Christ at the centre of our lives.

The first reading presents the story of a woman who recognizes God's presence in the prophet Elisha and welcomes him generously into her home. Her hospitality is more than good manners; it is an act of faith. By making room for God's servant, she makes room for God. This theme of welcome and openness to God's presence prepares us for the Gospel, where Jesus teaches that welcoming his disciples is the same as welcoming him.

The second reading deepens the meaning of discipleship by reminding us of our Baptism. Through Baptism, we are united to Christ's death and resurrection. This means that Christian life is not simply about believing certain truths; it is about living a transformed life. The old way of selfishness and sin gives way to a new life of grace, hope, and holiness. Baptism becomes the foundation for all Christian discipleship.

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks challenging words about loving him above all else. He is not asking us to love our families less. Rather, he is teaching that every relationship finds its proper place when God is first. When Christ is at the centre, we learn to love others more deeply, more generously, and more faithfully.

A final theme running through the Gospel is the importance of small acts of love. Jesus points to something as simple as offering a cup of cold water. In God's kingdom, no act of kindness is insignificant. Great holiness is often found not in extraordinary deeds but in ordinary acts of love performed with faith.

Taken together, the readings reveal that discipleship begins by welcoming Christ, is sustained by the grace of Baptism, and is expressed through daily acts of faithful love. The Christian life is not primarily about grand achievements; it is about making room for God, putting Christ first, and allowing his love to shape every aspect of our lives.

### Key Messages for Children

- † God loves us forever and is always with us.
- † Jesus wants to be first in our hearts.
- † We follow Jesus by making good and loving choices.

### Key Messages for Leaders

- † Discipleship begins with putting Christ first.
- † Hospitality is a spiritual practice.
- † Baptism is the foundation of Christian life.
- † Faith is lived through actions.

### Leader's Personal Reflection Questions

- † How am I putting Jesus first in my life this week?
- † How am I showing the love of Jesus through my words and actions?
- † How can I help children feel welcomed, loved, and closer to Jesus today?

## Background

**2 Kings 4:** A wealthy woman in Shunem often welcomes the prophet Elisha when he passes through her town. She recognizes that he is a holy man of God and, together with her husband, prepares a small room for him to stay and rest. Seeing her generosity and kindness, Elisha wishes to repay her. Learning that she has no son, he promises that God will bless her, and she will hold a son in her arms the following year. Children can learn that welcoming others is one way of welcoming God. The Shunammite woman did not help Elisha for a reward; she helped because she was kind and generous. God saw her loving heart and blessed her. Children can think about how they welcome others—sharing toys, including someone who is alone, helping at home, or greeting visitors at church. These simple acts of kindness help make others feel loved and welcomed.

**Psalms 89** emphasizes God's everlasting love and faithfulness. It reassures us that walking with God brings strength, joy, and hope, as God is always present. The psalm can show children that God's love is constant, much like a caring parent's. By remembering God's love, they can trust in God's presence.

**Romans 6:** St. Paul reminds us that through Baptism, we join Jesus in His death and resurrection, inviting us to live a new life as God's children. Children can relate this to their own Baptism, which welcomed them into God's family and gifted them with His life. They are encouraged to embody kindness, truth, help, and love in their daily choices and to embrace the new life Jesus offers.

**Matthew 10:37–42** Jesus tells his disciples that God should be first in their hearts. He invites them to follow him, even when it is difficult. Jesus also teaches that when we welcome others and show them kindness, we are welcoming him. Even a small act, like giving someone a cup of water when they are thirsty, is important to God. Children can understand this Gospel as an invitation to love Jesus and follow him every day. Putting Jesus first means listening to him, praying, and trying to do what is right. Jesus reminds us that small acts of kindness matter. Sharing a snack, helping a friend, including someone who is left out, or offering a smile can all be ways of showing love to Jesus.

## The Liturgy

### Procession from the main Church

At the proper moment, the priest invites the children to come forward. The leaders may come forward and stand facing the altar with the children. The priest then addresses the children.

**Dear children, today we hear how God loves us, calls us to follow Jesus, and invites us to show kindness to others. As you go now to listen to God's word, may you learn how to put Jesus first in your hearts and share his love with everyone you meet.**

**Go in peace to hear God's Word, and we look forward to welcoming you back.**

Once most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the celebration site. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the CLoW room, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

### Welcome

The leaders help the children sit and prepare. **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 offer the following prayer, in these or similar words.

**Let us quiet our hearts and make the Sign of the Cross.**

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

**Father,  
you call your children  
to walk in the light of Christ.  
Keep us in the radiance of your truth.**

**We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
God, forever and ever.**

**Amen.**

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, at a minimum, proclaim the Gospel.

## READINGS

### First Reading

2 Kings 4.8-12a, 14-16

A reading from the second book of Kings.

One day, Elisha was passing through Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged him to have a meal. So whenever he passed that way, he would stop there for a meal. She said to her husband, "Look, I am sure that this man who regularly passes our way is a holy man of God. Let us make a small roof chamber with walls, and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that he can stay there whenever he comes to us."

One day, when Elisha came there, he went up to the chamber and lay down there. He said to his servant Gehazi, "What then may be done for the woman?" Gehazi answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old." Elisha said, "Call her." When the servant had called her, she stood at the door. Elisha said, "At this season, in due time, you shall embrace a son."

The word of the Lord

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

**R.** Forever I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord.

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever;  
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.  
I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;  
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. **R.**

Blessed are the people who know the festal shout,  
who walk, O Lord, in the light of your countenance;  
they exult in your name all day long, and extol  
your righteousness. **R.**

For you are the glory of their strength;  
by your favour our horn is exalted.  
For our shield belongs to the Lord,  
our king to the Holy One of Israel. **R.**

## Second Reading

Romans 6.3-4, 8-11

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

Brothers and sisters:

All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus said to his Apostles:

"Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you — that person will not lose their reward."

The Gospel of the Lord.

## REIMAGINED READINGS FOR CHILDREN

The reimagined readings below are intended for use after the children have heard the original reading. The intent is to allow the children to listen to the original reading and help them better understand it (not replace it).

Read at a minimum, the Gospel, which has the highest priority, and then ask the children to sit down. You can then read the reimagined reading. Leaders may not have time to read all of the reading. If time permits, after the Gospel, proclaim the Psalm, and then the first reading, if time permits.

Reimagined readers must always remain faithful to the original Scripture's intent, making it age-appropriate for children.

### First Reading

2 Kings 4.8-12a, 14-16

One day, a prophet named Elisha was travelling through a place called Shunem. In Shunem, there was a very kind and wealthy woman who often saw Elisha pass by. She said to herself, "That man is a holy man of God. He helps people with God's goodness." So she invited Elisha to come eat with them whenever he passed their way.

And she didn't stop there. She told her husband, "Let's make Elisha a special place to stay. Let's build a small room on the roof—with walls—so he can rest when he visits." They made the room just right: a bed for sleeping, a table for eating, a chair to sit, and a lamp to make it warm and bright.

Whenever Elisha came to their town, he would go up to that room. One day, he arrived and lay down to rest. Then Elisha said to his helper, Gehazi, "Let's see what we can do for the woman." Gehazi answered, "She doesn't have a son, and her husband is old." Elisha said, "Call her."

When she came to the door, Elisha told her something surprising and wonderful: "At this season, in due time, you shall have a son." The woman was careful and respectful. She said, "No, my lord... please do not deceive me."

But God was faithful. At that season, in due time, the woman had a baby boy—just as Elisha said.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

**R.** Lord, your love lasts forever.

God loves us all the time.

His love never ends.

We can sing about God's love  
and tell others how good God is. **R.**

Happy are the people who stay close to God.

When we walk with God,  
it is like walking in a bright light.

God helps us feel joyful and safe. **R.**

God gives us strength when we are weak.

God takes care of us like a good shepherd.

We can trust God  
because God is always faithful. **R.**

## Second Reading

Romans 6.3-4, 8-11

When you were baptized, God welcomed you into His family. Baptism is a special gift that joins us to Jesus.

Jesus died and then rose again to new life. Because we belong to Jesus, we are invited to live a new life—one filled with love, kindness, and goodness.

Every day we can choose to follow Jesus. When we make good choices, forgive others, share, and help people, we show that God's life is growing in us.

Jesus is alive forever, and He is always with us. He helps us turn away from what is wrong and live as children of God.

Jesus said, "Love me more than anything else. Love your family, but always keep God first in your heart.

Sometimes following me is not easy. You may need to do the right thing even when it is hard. But if you stay close to me and follow me, you will find true life and happiness.

Jesus also said, "When you welcome others, you welcome me. When you are kind to someone, you are being kind to me."

Even small acts of love matter to God. If you give a drink of water to someone who is thirsty, help a friend, or care for someone who is sad, God sees it and is pleased.

## 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.

### **What did you hear?**

Today, Jesus teaches us something very important. He wants us to love and follow him every day.

### **Who here has a best friend?** Allow responses.

A best friend is someone we like to spend time with, listen to, and care about. Jesus wants to be our friend, too! He wants us to keep him close in our hearts and remember him when we make choices.

### **Can you think of some ways we can show Jesus that we love him?** Pray, Church, help others, be kind.

That's right! We show Jesus our love by listening to him and doing what he teaches us.

In the Gospel, Jesus also says that when we welcome and help other people, we are welcoming and helping him. Allow responses.

### **Have you ever shared a toy with someone?**

### **Or helped a friend who was sad?** Allow responses.

Those are wonderful ways of showing love.

Jesus even says that giving someone a cup of water is important. That sounds like a very small thing, doesn't it?

### **What are some small things you can do to help others?** Hold a door, share a snack, help at home, smile at someone.

Every time we do something kind, Jesus notices. Even small acts of love are precious to him. Let's think about this week.

### **Is there someone at school, at home, or at church who might need a friend?** Allow responses.

### **What could you do to make them feel welcome?** Allow responses.

That's exactly what Jesus wants us to do.

## Alternative Reflection

This reflection is for older children, teenagers, or even young adults. It may provide CLoW leaders with a broader perspective, using the Church readings.

Today's Gospel can sound a little surprising. Jesus says that we should love him more than anything else. Does that mean Jesus doesn't want us to love our families? Of course not! Jesus wants us to love our families very much. What he means is that God should be first in our hearts because he teaches us how to love everyone else well.

Think about a compass. A compass points north and helps people find the right direction. Jesus is like a compass for our lives. When we keep our eyes on him, he helps us know what is right, what is loving, and what is true.

Following Jesus can be easy when being kind and helpful feels good. However, it can also be challenging, such as including someone who is left out, telling the truth, or forgiving those who hurt you. Jesus teaches that while following him isn't always easy, it is always worth it.

Jesus also teaches that small acts of kindness matter. He says that even giving someone a cup of cold water is important. Why? Because every act of love shows that God's love is living in us. We don't have to do something famous or amazing to follow Jesus. We can follow him through simple actions every day.

The first reading shows this, too. The woman from Shunem welcomed Elisha into her home and cared for him. She wasn't trying to become important; she simply showed kindness and hospitality. God used her simple act of generosity to bring blessing into her life.

Through Baptism, God has made each of us part of his family. Every day we have a chance to live as disciples of Jesus by putting him first, welcoming others, and showing love in the little things we do.

### Questions for Reflection

1. What does it mean to put Jesus first in your life?
2. When has it been difficult for you to do the right thing?
3. What is one small act of kindness you can do for someone this week?
4. How can you help someone feel welcomed or included?

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, concluding it with the cue for the response: 'We pray.' All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

The intercessions are said. The Leader introduces them, and an assistant announces them.

The leader says:

**God loves us and listens to our prayers. Let us bring our needs and the world's needs before him. Our response is, Lord, hear our prayer.**

Assistant:

**For the Church, that we put Jesus first in our lives and share his love with others, we pray to the Lord. R:**

Assistant:

**For our families, that our homes may be places of love, kindness, and welcome, we pray to the Lord, we pray to the Lord. R:**

Assistant:

**For children everywhere, especially those who are lonely, hungry, or afraid, that they may find care, friendship, and hope, we pray to the Lord. R:**

Assistant:

**For our parish community, that we may welcome others as we welcome Jesus, we pray to the Lord. R:**

Assistant:

**For ourselves, that we may follow Jesus each day through small acts of kindness, sharing, and friendship, we pray to the Lord. R:**

The Leader says:

**Loving God, you know what is in our hearts and you never stop caring for us. Hear these prayers and help us to follow your Son, Jesus, every day. We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

## Return to the church

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and reflect on what they have heard and what they are now doing. Be mindful of children who may have difficulty finding their families.

**Please note that the Handouts are available at:**

**Bulletin: TheKidsBulletin.com – Goodwill donation suggested**  
**Quiz Handout provided by: thewordthisweek.net**



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