



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time



Overview

The readings for the Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time reveal a beautiful image of Jesus as a gentle, humble, and welcoming Savior. Together, the readings invite us to reflect on God's desire to bring peace, comfort, and new life to His people. For CLoW leaders, this Sunday offers a wonderful opportunity to help children discover that Jesus is someone they can trust with their worries, fears, and struggles.

In the first reading, the prophet Zechariah announces the coming of a king who is unlike earthly rulers. Rather than arriving with power, wealth, or armies, this king comes humbly, riding on a donkey, bringing peace to the nations. We recognize this prophecy as pointing to Jesus, whose kingdom is built on love, mercy, and reconciliation.

The psalm continues this theme by praising God for His goodness, compassion, patience, and care for all creation. Encourage children to help them see the many ways God shows His love each day through family, friends, and the gift of faith.

In the second reading, Saint Paul reminds us that God's Spirit lives within us and helps them live according to God's ways. While children may not fully grasp Paul's language, they can understand that the Holy Spirit helps them make loving choices and grow closer to Jesus.

The Gospel is the heart of this Sunday's message. Jesus invites all who are weary and burdened to come to Him and find rest. He describes Himself as "gentle and humble of heart." Many children experience worries, disappointments, fears, or pressures. Jesus assures them that they do not have to carry these burdens alone. He wants to walk with them, help them, and teach them how to live with peace and trust.

The central theme for Children's Liturgy of the Word is simple yet profound: Jesus is gentle, loving, and always ready to help us. When we bring our worries to Him, He gives us strength, peace, and rest.

Key Messages for Children

- † Jesus is gentle, kind, and loving.
- † Jesus wants to help us when we feel worried, sad, or tired.
- † We can always talk to Jesus in prayer.
- † Jesus gives us peace when life feels difficult.
- † God is patient, merciful, and cares for everyone.

Key Messages for Leaders

- Present Jesus as approachable, compassionate, and trustworthy rather than distant or demanding.
- Help children understand that they can bring their worries, fears, and struggles to Jesus in prayer.
- Emphasize that true greatness in God's kingdom is found in humility, openness, and trust.

Leader's Personal Reflection Questions

1. What worry or burden do I need to give to Jesus today?
2. How can I show Jesus' kindness and gentleness to the children this week?
3. What is Jesus teaching me right now, and am I listening?

Leader Takeaway

Jesus invites us to trust Him, learn from Him, and share His love with others.

Background

Zechariah 9:9-10 tells God's people that their king is coming. But unlike powerful rulers who arrive with armies and weapons, this king comes humbly, riding on a donkey and bringing peace to everyone. This king is Jesus who shows us that true greatness comes from being humble, kind, and peaceful. Children can learn that they do not need to be the strongest or most important person to make a difference.

Psalms 145 praises God for His kindness, mercy, patience, and love. God cares for all people and helps those who are struggling or feeling weak. The psalm can help teach children that God loves them deeply and is always ready to help them when they are sad, worried, or afraid.

Romans 8:9, 11-13 St. Paul teaches that God's Spirit lives within us. The Holy Spirit helps us choose what is right and gives us the strength to live as followers of Jesus. The reading reminds children that they are never alone. The Holy Spirit is with them, helping them make good choices, show kindness, and grow in faith.

Matthew 11:25-30 Jesus thanks His Father for revealing His love to humble and trusting people. He then invites everyone who is tired or carrying heavy burdens to come to Him. Jesus promises to give them rest because He is gentle and humble of heart. Children often carry worries, fears, disappointments, or struggles. Jesus wants them to know that they can always turn to Him. He listens, cares, and helps carry their burdens. He teaches them to trust God and find peace in His love.

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, Jesus is a gentle and loving friend who welcomes us, helps us with our worries, and teaches us how to live with peace, kindness, and trust in God.

Go in peace to hear the Word of God, and may the Lord be with you. We will welcome you back after your reflection.

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.

**Loving God,
thank you for sending Jesus.
Help us to love you and love others.
Forgive us when we make mistakes.
Fill our hearts with joy and peace.
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

Zechariah 9:9–10

A reading from the book of the Prophet Zechariah.

Thus says the Lord God: Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war-horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

The word of the Lord

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

R. I will bless your name forever, my God and King.

I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.
Every day I will bless you,
and praise your name forever and ever. **R.**

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
The LORD is good to all,
and his compassion is over all that he has made. **R**

All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,
and all your faithful shall bless you.
They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom,
and tell of your power, **R**

The LORD is faithful in all his words,
and gracious in all his deeds.
The LORD upholds all who are falling,
and raises up all who are bowed down. **R**

Second Reading

Romans 8:9, 11–13

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

Brothers and sisters:

You are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

At that time Jesus said “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

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 the reading. If time allows, after the Gospel, proclaim the Psalm, and then the first reading, if time allows.

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

First Reading

Zechariah 9:9–10

Listen to this good news from God:

“Be happy and celebrate! God is sending a special King to you. He is not coming on a big horse or in a fancy parade. He is coming quietly and humbly, riding on a little donkey.

This King is Jesus. He comes to bring love, kindness, and peace. He does not want people to fight. He wants everyone to be friends and care for one another.

Jesus’ love is for everyone—people nearby and people far away, all around the world. Wherever people live, Jesus wants them to know God’s peace.

So open your hearts and welcome Jesus, the gentle King who comes to bring peace and joy to everyone.”

R. My God and my King, I will praise your name forever.

I will praise you, my God and my King,
and I will bless your name forever.

Every day I will thank you
and sing your praises.

R. My God and my King, I will praise your name forever.

The Lord is kind and full of love.

He is patient and caring.

The Lord is good to everyone,
and he loves everything he has made.

R. My God and my King, I will praise your name forever.

Everything you made gives thanks to you, Lord,
and your people praise you.

They tell others that you are a wonderful King
and that your love is strong.

R. My God and my King, I will praise your name forever.

The Lord always keeps his promises
and is loving in everything he does.

He helps those who are weak,
lifts up those who are sad,
and gives them hope.

R. My God and my King, I will praise your name forever.

Dear friends,

God has given you his Holy Spirit to live in your hearts. When we welcome the Holy Spirit, we belong to Jesus.

The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is with you. That Holy Spirit gives you new life and helps you grow every day.

So let us not choose things that lead us away from God. Instead, let the Holy Spirit help us make good choices, love others, and do what is right.

When we follow the Holy Spirit, we live the life God wants for us.

Jesus prayed,

“Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you show your love to people who have simple, trusting hearts, just like children. This is what makes you happy.

My Father has given everything to me. I know my Father, and I help others come to know and love him, too.

Come to me when you are tired, worried, or carrying heavy troubles. I will give you rest.

Stay close to me and learn from me, because I am gentle and kind. You will find peace in your hearts.

When you follow me, I will help you, and the way will become lighter.”

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?

Have you ever had to carry something that was heavy? Maybe a big backpack, a box of toys, or a bag of groceries?

Can you show me with your hands how heavy it felt?

Sometimes we carry things that aren't heavy on the outside, but they feel heavy in our hearts. Maybe we're worried, sad, scared, or upset with someone.

Have you ever felt worried or sad? (Allow children to respond.)

In today's Gospel, Jesus says, "Come to me, and I will give you rest." Does that mean Jesus wants us to take a nap? Not exactly! Jesus is talking about the kind of rest we feel in our hearts when we know he is with us. When we pray, talk to Jesus, or remember that he loves us, we don't have to carry our worries all by ourselves. Jesus also says that he is gentle and humble.

What do you think it means to be gentle? (Kind, careful, helping, speaking softly.)

That's right! Jesus is kind and patient with everyone. He wants us to be gentle with our families, our friends, and even people we don't know very well. At the beginning of the Gospel, Jesus thanks God because children and people with simple, trusting hearts can understand God's love.

Why do you think Jesus loves it when we trust him like children?

When we trust Jesus, we know he is always with us. We don't have to know everything. We only need to remember that Jesus loves us and will never leave us. So, this week, whenever something feels hard, remember Jesus' invitation: "Come to me." You can say a little prayer: "Jesus, I am worried. Please help me" or "Jesus, thank you for loving me." He is always listening.

Questions to Consider if more time needed.

- When can you stop and say, "Jesus, please help me"?
- Who could use your kindness this week?

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.

Have you ever felt like you had too much to do?

Maybe you had homework, sports, music lessons, chores, or problems with friends. Sometimes it can feel as if you are carrying a backpack that is getting heavier and heavier.

What are some things that can make life feel “heavy” for someone your age?

In today’s Gospel, Jesus says something wonderful: “Come to me, all you who are tired and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

What do you think Jesus means by “rest”? Is he only talking about sleeping?

No. Jesus is talking about the peace that comes from knowing he is always with us. When we trust him, he helps us with our worries. Jesus also tells us to have childlike hearts—hearts that trust God, stay open to him, and are ready to learn from him.

What do you think a childlike heart looks like? (Trusting, humble, curious, forgiving.)

In the second reading, Saint Paul reminds us that the Holy Spirit lives within us, so we are never alone. The Holy Spirit helps us choose kindness, honesty, forgiveness, and courage every day.

Can you think of a time when it was hard to make the right choice? What helped?

Jesus says, “Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble.” The world tells us to be the best or the most popular, but Jesus teaches us that real strength is being kind, forgiving, and helping others. This week, when life feels difficult, remember that Jesus is with you. Bring your worries to him, trust him, and let the Holy Spirit help you make good choices every day.

Questions to Think About

- What does it mean to have a childlike heart?
- How can you be gentle and humble like Jesus at home, at school, or with your friends this week?

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 to the Lord.' All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

The leader says:

Jesus is gentle and kind, and he always listens to us. Let us bring our prayers to our loving Father.

1. For the Church: that we may help everyone know the love and peace of Jesus, we pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.
2. For our world: that people will choose peace, kindness, and forgiveness instead of fighting, we pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.
3. For people who are worried, sick, lonely, or sad: that Jesus will comfort them and fill them with hope, we pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.
4. For our families, teachers, and friends: that the Holy Spirit will help us be gentle, loving, and helpful to one another, we pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.
5. For all of us here today: that we will trust Jesus, bring him our worries, and follow him each day, we pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader

Loving Father, thank you for always listening to our prayers. Help us to trust in Jesus and follow him with joyful hearts. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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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