



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Fifteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time



Overview

The readings for the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time focus on how God communicates with us because of His love. Just like rain helps plants grow, God's words can change our hearts for the better. Jesus illustrates this idea by comparing our hearts to different types of soil. When we pay attention, pray, and try to follow Jesus' teachings, we allow God's love to flourish within us, bringing kindness, faith, and joy.

The prophet Isaiah likens God's words to rain and snow that nourish the earth and help plants thrive. Similarly, each time we hear stories from the Bible, pray, or learn about Jesus, something beautiful is growing inside us, even if we can't see it right away.

The psalm reminds us that God lovingly cares for the world and makes it a wonderful place. Everything we enjoy—like flowers, animals, food, and sunshine—is a gift from God.

Saint Paul encourages us, saying that even when life is tough, God has amazing plans for us. Just like we look forward to special occasions like birthdays or vacations, Christians wait with hope for God's Kingdom. While we wait, we can still make the world a better place by showing love to others.

Jesus shares the Parable of the Sower, in which the seed represents God's Word and the different types of soil symbolize our hearts. The hard path shows when we're not really listening. The rocky ground represents the moment when we get excited at first, but then give up. The thorns are like our worries taking over. Good soil is what happens when we listen, believe, and live by God's Word.

Children can easily relate to seeds and gardens, so this is a great chance to connect these ideas. You might want to link what helps seeds grow to what helps our faith grow, making it practical and relatable for everyone.

Key Messages for Children

- † God is always speaking to us.
- † God's Word helps us grow.
- † Faith grows little by little.
- † Everyone can bear good fruit.
- † God never gives up on us.

Key Messages for Leaders

- Children often think growing happens quickly. Faith grows slowly, just as a seed grows over time.
- Every prayer, Bible story, act of kindness, and Sunday Mass helps God shape children's hearts.
- Encourage children not simply to hear God's Word, but to let it change how they treat family, classmates, teachers, and friends.

Leader's Personal Reflection Questions

1. What is one thing that Jesus is teaching me today?
2. What helps your friendship with Jesus grow?
3. How is growing in faith like growing a plant?

Takeaway

I can be good soil by listening to Jesus and showing his love every day.

Background

Isaiah 55:10–11 is from the final chapters of Isaiah, meant for the Jewish people returning from Babylonian exile. They questioned if God's promises remained trustworthy after years of hardship. Isaiah reassures them with imagery of rain and snow, illustrating that just as rain nourishes the earth, so God's Word fulfills its purpose, even when results are not immediately visible. For children: God's Word is alive and helps them grow in faith and love through Scripture and prayer.

Psalms 65 praises God as Creator and Provider, highlighting His care for the earth through rain and harvests, which symbolize His blessings to the Israelites. The Church connects this psalm with Isaiah and the Gospel, using imagery of seeds, soil, rain, and harvest to illustrate God's work. For children: God lovingly cares for creation and helps everything, including our hearts, to grow.

Romans 8:18–23 Saint Paul tells Christians in Rome that suffering is part of life, but through Christ's Resurrection, all creation is moving toward renewal. He describes creation as eagerly awaiting God's restoration. Christians have the Holy Spirit as the "first fruits" of this renewal, but look forward to its full realization. For children: Growing takes time. God is renewing us and the world through Jesus, and we live with hope as we wait.

Matthew 13:1–9 This is the first of several parables Jesus tells beside the Sea of Galilee. A farmer scatters seed generously over every kind of ground. While this might seem careless to modern readers, first-century farmers often scattered seed before ploughing, making the image familiar to Jesus' listeners. The seed represents God's Word, which is generously offered to everyone. The different soils symbolize different ways people receive God's message. The emphasis is not on the quality of the seed—it is always good—but on the openness of the hearer. The good soil produces an astonishing harvest—thirty, sixty, or one hundredfold—far beyond what would normally be expected. This abundance highlights the extraordinary fruitfulness of God's grace in receptive hearts. For children: Jesus wants us to have hearts that listen, trust, and act on his Word. When we welcome Jesus into our lives, God's love grows and blesses many other people through us.

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 going to tell us a story about a farmer planting seeds. As you go now to listen to God's Word, ask Jesus to help your hearts be like good soil—ready to listen, learn, and grow in his love.

Go in peace to hear God's Word, and we'll welcome you back soon.

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 Jesus,

Thank you for bringing us together today. Open our hearts to listen to your Word. Help us to be like good soil, where your love can grow. Teach us to be kind, to share with others, and to follow you every day.

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

Isaiah 55.10-11

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord: "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the one who eats, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

The word of the Lord

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

R. The seed that fell on good soil produced a hundredfold.

You visit the earth and water it,
you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide the people with grain. **R.**

For so you have prepared the earth:
you water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges, softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth. **R.**

You crown the year with your bounty;
your pathways overflow with richness.
The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy. **R.**

The meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy. **R.**

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

Brothers and sisters:

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!"

The Gospel of the Lord.

REIMAGINED READINGS FOR CHILDREN

The 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 least the Gospel, then ask the children to sit down. You can then read the reimagined reading. Leaders may not have time to read all the reading.

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

First Reading

Isaiah 55.10-11

Rain and snow fall from the sky. They water the ground and help things grow. They help seeds grow into plants, and they help food grow for people. God's word, that is the Bible, works the same way. When God sends His word and speaks to us in the Bible, He always does what He says He will do. It never comes back empty. It always makes God's plan happen.

R. Some seeds fell on good soil. They grew into a lot of grain—one seed produced 100 times more!

God loves the earth.

He comes and waters it, like a kind Father.

When God waters the ground, everything grows!

He makes the fields full of green, and He helps people have grain to eat. **R.**

God doesn't just sprinkle a little—

He waters a lot,

and He sends gentle showers to help plants grow strong.

Then God blesses the whole year with good things. **R.**

In God's world, hills and valleys are full of joy:

meadows grow grass for animals,

valleys grow with grain,

and the whole land seems to shout and sing for happiness. **R.**

Second Reading

Romans 8.18-23

Brothers and sisters: Some people do things that displease God. But if the Holy Spirit is alive in you, you can live as God wants you to. God's Spirit can help you.

Jesus went out and sat by the sea. Many people came to listen, and they gathered so closely that Jesus got into a boat. From the boat, Jesus talked to everyone on the shore. Jesus told a story that helps us understand God. "Listen!" Jesus said. "A farmer went out to plant seeds. Some seeds fell on the path, and birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground. They started to grow quickly, but there wasn't much soil. Then the sun got hot, and the little plants withered because they had no deep roots. Other seeds fell where thorns grew, and the thorns grew up and choked the plants. Some seeds fell on good soil, and they grew into grain. If you have ears, listen!" Jesus said.

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 planted a flower or a seed in a little cup?

What did the seed need to grow? (Water. Sunshine. Good soil.)

That's right! A seed needs good soil, water, and sunshine. Today, Jesus tells us about a farmer who scattered seeds everywhere. Some seeds landed on the path, some on rocky ground, some among thorny bushes, and some landed on good soil.

Can anyone guess which seeds grew the best? (Good soil)

Jesus says the seed is like God's Word, and the soil is like our hearts.

Do you think Jesus wants our hearts to be hard like a road or soft like good garden soil? (Good garden soil)

How can we have a "good soil" heart?

Can we listen when someone is reading the Bible? (Yes)

Can we pray? (Yes)

Can we be kind to our family and friends? (Yes)

Can we forgive someone who hurt our feelings? (Yes)

Every time we do those things, God's love grows a little more inside us—just like a tiny seed growing into a beautiful plant.

Let's think about this week:

When someone needs help at home, what could you do? (Let children answer.)

Those are all ways of letting God's Word grow in your heart. So this week, every time you hear God's Word, remember the little seed.

Ask yourself: **"Am I letting Jesus' love grow in my heart today?"**

Let's all say together:

Leader: Jesus, help my heart be good soil.

Children: Jesus, help my heart be good soil.

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 tried to grow a plant?

At first, nothing seems to happen. You water it, wait, and wonder if the seed is even alive. Then one day, a tiny green shoot appears. Faith can be like that.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells a story about a farmer planting seeds. The seed is the same every time—it is good. The difference is the soil where it lands.

Jesus is asking us an important question:

What kind of soil is your heart?

Think about your week.

When someone gives you advice, do you listen or ignore it?

When you hear God's Word at Mass, do you really pay attention, or are you thinking about sports, games, friends, or your phone?

What are the "thorns" in your life?

They might not be actual plants; they could be too focused on social media, fitting in, or being overly busy to pray. While these aren't bad in themselves, they can block the space where God wants to speak to us.

The good news is that Jesus never says, "You're bad soil forever." A gardener can prepare the soil, remove rocks, pull weeds, and help it become healthy again. God does the same for us. Every time we pray, read the Bible, celebrate Mass, receive the sacraments, forgive someone, or choose kindness instead of anger, God is making our hearts better soil. Then something amazing happens. The seed begins to grow, and other people notice. They see someone who is honest, kind, patient, forgiving, and willing to stand up for what is right.

This week, ask yourself these questions:

- **What kind of soil is my heart right now?**
- **What distractions keep me from listening to Jesus?**
- **What is one thing I can do this week to make more room for God?**

Remember, God isn't asking you to be perfect. God is asking you to keep your heart open so that God's Word can take root and grow.

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:

God loves us and listens to our prayers. Let us bring our needs before him, saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." **R.** Children: Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For the Church: that all people may listen to God's Word and share Jesus' love with others, we pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.
2. For our families: that our homes may be filled with kindness, forgiveness, and joy, we pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.
3. For children everywhere: that they may grow in faith and learn to follow Jesus each day, we pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.
4. For people who are sick, sad, or lonely: that they may know God's comfort and the care of others, we pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.
5. For ourselves: that our hearts may be like good soil where God's love can grow, and that we may share that love with everyone we meet, we pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader

Loving God, thank you for planting your Word in our hearts. Help us to listen to Jesus and grow in faith each day. 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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Readings: Lectionary Sundays and Solemnities,

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