



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

MATTHEW 13:44

NRSVCE

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For Adults

Today's readings encourage us to think about a simple yet important question: What is truly valuable in life?

In the first reading, God offers Solomon a great chance: "Ask me for anything you want, and I will grant it." Instead of asking for money, power, or a long life, Solomon asks for wisdom—the skill to make good choices. Biblical wisdom means more than just being smart. It involves understanding life from God's viewpoint and making choices that follow God's will. This wisdom comes from having a close relationship with God, which helps us face everyday challenges with faith.

As followers of Christ, we need wisdom to guide our choices about what truly matters, how to treat others, how to forgive, and how to understand justice. Like Solomon, we might want to ask God for wisdom every day. Matthew tells us that Jesus is the true teacher of wisdom. Through parables, Jesus shows us what God's kingdom is like. He doesn't give exact definitions but instead encourages us to find meaning in the Kingdom of God.

The focus of these parables is the joy and excitement of recognizing something truly special and being fully committed to it. In these parables, the treasure is often found suddenly, while the pearl represents a long journey of searching. Both situations remind us that God's grace comes in various forms. Some people discover Christ unexpectedly, while others spend years seeking Him. Regardless, the response is the same: everything else fades in significance.

These parables are less about sacrifice and more about joy. When someone finds something genuinely priceless, letting go of lesser things feels like a natural choice. So, what do we value the most? Jesus encourages us to understand that living in God's Kingdom is the greatest treasure we can find. Following Jesus might involve some sacrifices, but the rewards far exceed any costs.

Like Solomon, we can seek wisdom to identify what truly matters. Like the treasure finder and the merchant looking for pearls, let us find the courage to place Christ above all else, trusting that nothing compares to the joy of being part of God's kingdom.

Overview

When children hear about treasure, they often imagine a chest filled with gold, jewels, or money. Jesus uses images to teach something much more important. The greatest treasure is not something we can hold in our hands—it is knowing Jesus.

This week's CLoW continues helping children develop their love for the Kingdom of God. This is particularly true in the Gospel, which shares with children the specific analogies Jesus offers to them and us.

The readings invite children to discover that nothing is more valuable than God's friendship and the gift of living as members of his Kingdom. The readings teach that when we recognize how much God loves us, we gladly place Jesus first in our lives. Rather than focusing on what we must give up, the Gospel encourages us to find joy in something so wonderful that everything else becomes secondary.

Everything we own will eventually wear out, break, or be left behind. Even the happiest moments pass. But Jesus' love never ends. He is always with us, whether we are happy, sad, scared, or excited. He listens when we pray, forgives us when we make mistakes, and helps us become the people God created us to be.

Jesus is the greatest treasure because He helps us discover who God is. When we know Jesus, we learn to love others, forgive, share, tell the truth, care for the lonely, and trust God in every situation. These gifts make our hearts richer than any amount of money ever could.

A child who knows Jesus has a friend who never leaves them. At school, at home, on the playground, or at church, Jesus walks with them. He gives them courage when they are afraid, hope when they are discouraged, and joy that lasts much longer than a new toy or game.

Most importantly, Jesus opens the way to eternal life. His friendship begins now and continues forever. That is why he is the greatest treasure anyone can ever find.

READINGS

First Reading

1 Kings 3.5-12

At Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you.

The word of the Lord

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

R. Lord, how I love your law!

The Lord is my portion;

I promise to keep your words.

The law of your mouth is better to me
than thousands of gold and silver pieces. **R.**

Let your steadfast love become my comfort
according to your promise to your servant.

Let your mercy come to me, that I may live;
for your law is my delight. **R.**

Truly, I love your commandments more than gold,
more than fine gold.

Truly, I direct my steps by all your precepts;
I hate every false way. **R.**

Your decrees are wonderful;
therefore, my soul keeps them.

The unfolding of your words gives light;
it imparts understanding to the simple. **R.**

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

Brothers and sisters:

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus spoke to the crowds:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Key Messages for Children

- † Jesus is God's greatest gift to us.
- † Knowing Jesus is the greatest treasure we can ever find.
- † Following Jesus is more valuable than toys or possessions.

Key Messages for Leaders

- Keep the focus on Jesus rather than treasure.
- Present Jesus as a living friend who listens to our prayers.
- Connect the readings if you use more than the Gospel.

Leader's Personal Reflection Questions

1. What does it mean to me to say that Jesus is the greatest treasure in my life?
2. How do I treasure God's Word?
3. How can I connect today's Gospel to the children's everyday experiences?

Takeaway

Jesus is God's greatest gift.

Background

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12 God invites young King Solomon to ask for anything he wants. Solomon could have chosen wealth, success, or power, but he asked for wisdom so he could lead God's people well. Children face choices every day—whether to tell the truth, include someone who is left out, forgive a friend, or obey their parents. Wisdom is God's gift that helps us choose what is loving and good. As CLoW leaders, we can help children understand that the best decision we can make is to keep growing closer to Jesus, who is God's perfect Wisdom and shows us how to live.

Psalms 119 says that God's law is more precious than gold and silver. Children may not yet understand the value of money, but they understand the value of something special—a favourite toy, a cherished stuffed animal, or a meaningful gift. The psalm reminds us that God's Word is even more valuable because it teaches us how to know Jesus. Every Gospel story helps children discover who Jesus is and how deeply he loves them.

Romans 8:28-30 St. Paul reminds us that God is always working for the good of those who love him. Children sometimes experience disappointment, illness, family struggles, friendship problems, or fears about school. This reading reassures them that Jesus never abandons them. Even when they cannot understand why something happens, they can trust that Jesus walks beside them, giving them strength, hope, and peace.

Matthew 13:44-52 Jesus compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a hidden treasure and a priceless pearl. When someone discovers something truly valuable, they joyfully give everything to possess it. The treasure is ultimately Jesus himself. Once we discover his love, forgiveness, and friendship, we realize that nothing else compares.

Children know the excitement of finding something they thought was lost or receiving a long-awaited gift. Jesus invites them to experience an even greater joy—the joy of knowing that they are loved by God every day. Unlike toys that break or possessions that wear out, Jesus remains with them forever.

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, do you like treasure? Today, Jesus tells us the stories about finding treasures. Isn't that exciting? Go with your leader and find out who is the greatest treasure.

We will 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.

Jesus,

Thank you for loving us.

Thank you for being our greatest treasure.

Help us to know you more each day.

Stay with us at home, at school, and wherever we go.

Amen.

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

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

1 Kings 3.5-12

Before we hear today's first reading, let's learn about Solomon. Solomon was a young king. He was the son of King David, who loved God very much. Solomon wanted to be a good king and help God's people, but he knew he could not do it by himself.

One night, while Solomon was sleeping, God spoke to him in a dream.

God said, "Solomon, I love you very much. What gift would you like me to give you?"

Solomon thought carefully. He could have asked for lots of money, a beautiful palace, or many wonderful things.

Instead, Solomon said,

"Lord, I am still young. Please give me wisdom so I can know what is right and help your people."

God was very happy with Solomon's answer.

God said,

"You did not ask for riches or power. You asked for wisdom so you could help others. I will give you a wise and understanding heart."

And God blessed Solomon with great wisdom.

R. Lord, your words help us follow you.

Jesus, we love to listen to you.
Your words show us the right way to live.
Your love is worth more than all the treasures in the world. **R.**

When we are sad or afraid,
you comfort us with your love.
You are always with us,
and you help us make good choices. **R.**

Your words teach us
to love,
to share,
to forgive,
and to be kind.
Following you fills our hearts with joy. **R.**

Your words are like a bright light
that helps us know where to go.
Help us to listen to you every day
and to follow you with happy hearts. **R.**

St. Paul wanted everyone to know some very good news.

He said,

"God loves you very much. No matter what happens, God is always with you and is helping you grow.

Jesus calls each one of us to be part of God's family. He teaches us to love, to be kind, to forgive, and to care for others.

When we follow Jesus, we become more like him every day. God has wonderful plans for all of us because we are his beloved children."

One day, Jesus told the people some stories.

He said,

"God's Kingdom is like a hidden treasure. One day, a man found a treasure buried in a field. He was so happy that he sold everything he had so he could buy the field and have the treasure."

Then Jesus said,

"God's Kingdom is also like a beautiful pearl. A merchant searched everywhere until he found one very special pearl. It was so wonderful that he gladly gave everything he had to make it his own."

Then Jesus told one more story.

"God's Kingdom is like a big fishing net that caught many kinds of fish. The fishermen carefully kept the good fish."

Then Jesus said,

"These stories teach us that God's Kingdom is the greatest treasure of all. When we know and love God, our hearts are filled with joy. Nothing is more precious than being a friend of Jesus."

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?

I have a question for you.

If you found a treasure chest, what do you think would be inside? (Pause)

Wow! Those would be exciting things to find! In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us about a man who found a hidden treasure. The man was so happy that he did everything he could to have that treasure. Then Jesus tells another story about a man who found a beautiful pearl. It was so special that he gladly gave everything he had to have it. Now I have another question.

Do you think Jesus was really talking about gold and jewels? (Pause)

No! Jesus was talking about something much more wonderful. Jesus was talking about knowing him and being his friend. Jesus is the greatest treasure we can ever find.

Can you think of some treasures in your life? (Pause: parents, grandparents, etc.)

Those are wonderful gifts from God. But Jesus gives us something even greater.

Who loves you all the time? (Jesus)

Who listens when you pray? (Jesus)

Who forgives you when you make a mistake? (Jesus)

Who is always with you, even when you feel lonely or afraid? (Jesus)

That's why Jesus is our greatest treasure. His love never breaks, never gets lost, and never runs out.

Remember Solomon from our first reading? God asked him what gift he wanted. Solomon didn't ask for money or a palace. He asked for wisdom—the wisdom to make good choices. Jesus gives us that wisdom, too. He helps us choose kindness over being mean, sharing over being selfish, telling the truth over lying, and forgiving over staying angry.

Let's see if we can remember today's message.

Who is our greatest treasure? (Jesus)

How do we become better friends with Jesus? (Pause)

Excellent!

This week, every time you pray, help someone, share with a friend, or show kindness, remember that you are choosing the greatest treasure of all.

Let's say today's message together:

Jesus is God's greatest gift, and Jesus is my greatest treasure!

One more time!

Jesus is God's greatest gift, and Jesus is my greatest treasure!

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.

I'd like you to imagine something. You're walking through a park with your family when you notice something sticking out of the ground. You brush away the dirt and discover an old treasure chest. Inside are gold coins, sparkling jewels, and treasures worth millions of dollars!

What would you do? (Pause)

Most people would probably be very excited! In today's Gospel, Jesus tells two stories about people who find something incredibly valuable—a hidden treasure and a priceless pearl. Both people joyfully give up everything else to have what they found.

Why do you think they did that? (Pause)

Because they knew they had found something worth far more than anything else they owned.

But here's the important question:

What do you think Jesus is calling the "treasure"? (Pause)

The treasure is Jesus himself and life in God's Kingdom. Jesus isn't saying that toys, sports, music, friends, or hobbies are bad. These are wonderful gifts from God. But none of them can love us the way Jesus does.

Think about it:

- Your favourite game might become old.
- A phone will eventually stop working.
- Clothes wear out.
- Even trophies collect dust.

But Jesus' love never wears out. He is with you when you succeed. He is with you when you fail. He is with you when you're happy. He is with you when you're worried or afraid.

That's why Jesus is the greatest treasure anyone can find.

Our first reading helps us understand this even more. God asked Solomon, "What would you like me to give you?"

If God asked you that question today, what would you ask for? (Pause)

Solomon could have asked for money, power, or a long life. Instead, he asked for wisdom—the ability to know what is right and make good decisions.

Why?

Because Solomon knew that making good choices was more valuable than becoming rich.

Jesus gives us that same wisdom when we pray and listen to His Word.

Here's another question:

What are some choices you might face this week where Jesus can help you?

(Sanding up for someone, telling the truth, forgiving a friend, resisting peer pressure, including someone who's left out, choosing kindness online.)

Let's finish with one final question.

If someone watched the way you lived this week, would they be able to tell that Jesus is your greatest treasure?

That's something each of us can think about.

This week, whenever you have to make a choice, ask yourself:

What would Jesus want me to do?

If you choose what Jesus would choose, you'll be choosing the greatest treasure of all.

Remember: Treasure isn't measured by what you own. Treasure is measured by who you love. And the greatest treasure we can ever have is Jesus.

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:

Leader:

Today we learned that Jesus is God's greatest gift and our greatest treasure. Let us ask him to hear our prayers, saying, "Lord, hear our prayer."

R. Children: Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For Pope Leo, our bishops, priests, and deacons, that they may help everyone know and love Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For children everywhere, that they may discover that Jesus is their best friend and greatest treasure, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For our families, that we may pray together, be kind to one another, and grow closer to Jesus every day, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For people who are sick, lonely, sad, or afraid, that Jesus will comfort them with his love and give them hope, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

5. For all of us here today, that we may choose kindness, tell the truth, forgive others, and remember that Jesus is our greatest treasure, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader:

Loving God, thank you for giving us your Son, Jesus, the greatest treasure we will ever know. Hear these prayers that we bring before you with trusting 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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