



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Eighteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

MATTHEW 14:19

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For Adults

Someone who knows the Diocese of Hamilton can find signs of today's Gospel within it. The De Mazenod Door at St. Patrick's Parish in Hamilton welcomes our neighbours in need with food, clothing, and dignity. Tiny Home Takeout at St. Mary's Parish in Kitchener serves fresh meals on a pay-what-you-can basis, ensuring no one is turned away. And in parish after parish, members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul quietly visit families, deliver grocery cards and food, and help with rent and utilities, reminding our neighbours in need that they are not alone.

Our first reading from the Prophet Isaiah invites everyone to God's banquet: "Come, all who are thirsty... Come and eat without paying." God offers life as a free gift to all who will listen and come to God. In the Gospel, Jesus fulfills that promise. Taking the little that is offered—five loaves and two fish—He blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to the people until all are satisfied. These actions point beyond the miracle to the Eucharist, where Jesus continues to take, bless, break, and give himself as the Bread of Life.

Each time we gather for Mass, we first come to the table of God's Word, where we hear similar invitations to Isaiah and other Prophets and the Gospel's call to trust in Christ. Then we come to the table of the Eucharist, where Jesus feeds us with his very Body and Blood. Strengthened by these two tables, we are sent into the world to become bread for others.

De Mazenod Door, Tiny Home Takeout, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul show us what happens when Catholics take the Eucharist seriously. Nourished by Christ, they become Christ's hands and heart for those in need. Like the disciples, they offer what they have. Like Jesus, they trust that God will multiply even the smallest gifts.

The same invitation is given to us today. Come to the Lord's table. Receive his Word. Receive his Body. Then go and help feed a hungry world—not only with bread, but with hope, compassion, dignity, and the love of Christ. In this way, the miracle of the loaves and fishes continues every day through the Church.

Overview

The readings this Sunday focus on a simple but powerful message that children can easily understand: Jesus cares for us and gives us everything we truly need. Throughout the readings, God invites us to come to him, trust him, and share what we have with others.

The first reading from Isaiah begins with a wonderful invitation: "Come, everyone who is thirsty." God invites everyone to his table. Children can understand that God wants everyone to belong, just as everyone is welcome at a family meal or birthday party. God's love is a free gift that cannot be bought.

The Psalm reminds us that God is kind and generous. Just as parents provide food, clothing, and love for their children, God watches over all people and cares for every living thing.

In the second reading, St. Paul assures us that nothing can separate us from God's love. Children sometimes worry about being alone, making mistakes, or not being good enough. This reading reminds them that Jesus never stops loving them. No matter what happens, they belong to him.

The Gospel tells the familiar story of Jesus feeding more than 5,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish. Children are often amazed by this miracle, but they also understand something even more important: Jesus noticed that people were hungry and did something about it. He cared for them.

We can learn from the miracle that started when someone shared their food. Five loaves and two fish didn't seem like much, but Jesus used this small gift to help many. Help children connect small acts of kindness—like sharing a snack, including someone at recess, helping at home, praying for someone, or donating food—to how they can make a big difference when offered to Jesus.

This Gospel also provides a beautiful opportunity to introduce the Eucharist. Just as Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the people, he continues to do the same at every Mass. While the children may not yet receive Communion (or may be preparing for First Communion), they can learn that Jesus feeds us with his love through both God's Word and the Holy Eucharist. Every Mass strengthens us so that we can go out and care for others.

Readings

First Reading

Isaiah 55.1-3

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

The word of the Lord

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

R. You open your hand to feed us, Lord,
and satisfy our needs.

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.**

The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.
You open your hand,
satisfying the desire of every living thing. **R.**

The Lord is just in all his ways,
and kind in all his doings.
The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth. **R.**

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

Brothers and sisters:

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

When Jesus heard that Herod had beheaded John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat."

They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish."

And he said, "Bring them here to me."

Then Jesus ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.

And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Background

Isaiah 55.1-3 The prophet Isaiah addressed God's people after their years of exile from their homeland, reminding them that God had not forgotten them. Instead of scolding, God invited them back into a loving relationship, using images of water, bread, milk, and wine to emphasize that God wants to meet their deepest needs for hope, joy, peace, and love. God's love is a free gift available to all, similar to how children eagerly anticipate invitations to parties or meals. Isaiah conveys that everyone is invited to God's table because of God's love for us.

Psalms 145 is a song of praise that celebrates God's goodness, reminding us that all blessings come from God. It highlights God's kindness, patience, generosity, and faithfulness, helping children understand that God is the source of every good gift.

Romans 8:35, 37-39 St. Paul wrote to Christians who were facing many hardships. Some were afraid because following Jesus was difficult. Paul reminds them that God's love is stronger than fear, sadness, suffering, or even death. Jesus never stops loving us. Children sometimes worry about making mistakes or being afraid, and Paul answers every one of those fears: Nothing can separate us from Jesus' love.

Matthew 14:13-21 After hearing of John the Baptist's death, Jesus sought solitude but was followed by crowds trusting in him. Instead of sending them away, he showed compassion by healing the sick and feeding the multitude. Matthew presents this as a miracle that foreshadows the Eucharist, where Jesus takes, blesses, breaks, and gives bread—actions mirrored in every Mass. The miracle started with just five loaves and two fish, highlighting that Jesus asks for what we have, no matter how small. Children can grasp this lesson: they're encouraged to share simple gifts like a smile, a toy, or help around the house. By offering our little contributions, Jesus can bless many.

At Mass, Jesus still takes, blesses, breaks, and gives. Now he gives us the Bread of Life in the Eucharist so we can become his loving disciples. Even children who have not yet received First Communion can understand that Jesus welcomes them at Mass, feeds them with God's Word, and prepares them to receive him one day in the Eucharist.

Key Messages for Children

- † God always provides for us.
- † Jesus cares about everyone.
- † Sharing is important.
- † Jesus feeds us at Mass

Key Messages for Leaders

- God multiplies what we offer.
- The Gospel reveals Jesus' compassion.
- Discipleship is active.
- The miracle points to the Eucharist.

Leader's Personal Reflection Questions

1. What surprised you about today's Gospel?
2. Who might need your kindness or help this week?
3. How does Jesus feed you at Mass?

Takeaway

- Place your small gifts in Jesus' hands.

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 to eat bread? Today, Jesus performs a miracle, turning bread into His own Body. Go with your leader and listen to God.

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.

**Father of everlasting goodness,
hear our prayers.**

Forgive our sins and give us eternal life.

Keep us safe in your love.

Nourish us in the Eucharist.

Grant this through Christ, our Lord.

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

Isaiah 55.1-3

God said,

"Everyone is welcome! Come to me if you are thirsty or hungry. I have everything you need. You do not have to earn my love or buy my gifts—they are free because I love you.

Sometimes we spend too much time chasing things that do not make us truly happy. But when you listen to God, follow my ways, and stay close to me, your heart will be filled with joy and peace.

Come to me. Listen to my voice. I will always love you and never leave you. My love for you lasts forever."

R. Thank you, God, for caring for us!

God is patient and full of love.
He is kind to everyone
and cares for all that he has made. **R.**

Everyone looks to God,
and he gives us the food we need.
God opens his hands
and shares his good gifts with all. **R.**

God is always fair and good.
He is close to everyone who prays to him
with honest and loving hearts. **R.**

My dear friends,

Nothing can stop Jesus from loving you.

Sometimes we have hard days. We might feel sad, scared, lonely, or worried. But Jesus is always with us.

No matter what happens, Jesus' love is stronger than anything. Nothing—not our fears, our mistakes, or even the hardest days—can separate us from God's love.

God will always love you and stay close to you.

One day, Jesus wanted some quiet time, but many people knew where he was going and followed him.

When Jesus saw the crowd, he felt sorry for them because they needed help. He welcomed them, cared for the sick, and spent time teaching them.

As it became late, the disciples said, "Jesus, the people are hungry. They should go and find something to eat."

But Jesus said, "Give them something to eat."

The disciples looked around and found a little boy who had only five loaves of bread and two fish. It didn't seem like enough.

Jesus smiled and said, "Bring them to me."

Jesus thanked God for the food. Then he broke the bread and shared it with everyone. The disciples helped pass it around.

Something amazing happened! Everyone had enough to eat. There was even food left over—twelve baskets full!

Jesus showed everyone that when we trust God and share what we have, God can do wonderful things.

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 opened your lunch bag and thought, "That's not very much!" Maybe you had just one sandwich, a few crackers, or one piece of fruit.

In today's Gospel, Jesus and his friends saw a huge crowd. Everyone was hungry! The disciples looked at what they had and said, "We only have five loaves of bread and two fish." It didn't seem like enough.

Can you hold up five fingers? (Pause.)

Now hold up two fingers. (Pause.)

Do you think five loaves and two fish would feed thousands of people? (Pause.)

The disciples thought, "No way!" But Jesus said, "Bring them to me."

Jesus thanked God for the food, blessed it, and shared it with everyone. Then something amazing happened—everyone had enough to eat, and there were twelve baskets of leftovers!

Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples to bring him the little bit of food they had? (Pause.)

Jesus was teaching them—and us—that when we share what we have and trust God, wonderful things can happen.

We may not have a lot of money or a lot of toys, but we all have something we can give.

What are some things you can share? (Kindness, toys, snacks, smiles, helping at home, praying.)

Every time we come to Mass, Jesus does something wonderful again. Through the Priest, Jesus takes the bread, gives thanks, breaks it, and gives it to us as the Eucharist. Jesus feeds our hearts with his love so that we can go and share that love with others.

Let's Think Together

What small gift could you give Jesus this week?

Who could you help at home or at school?

How can you show kindness to someone who is lonely?

What happens at Mass that reminds us of today's Gospel?

How do you think the people felt after Jesus fed everyone?

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.

Imagine your teacher tells your class, "Today we're going to feed everyone in the school—but you can only use what is in your lunch bag."

How would you feel? You'd probably think, "That's impossible!"

That is exactly how the disciples felt. They looked at thousands of hungry people and only saw five loaves of bread and two fish. They focused on what they didn't have.

But Jesus saw something different. He saw what could happen when people trusted God. Instead of saying, "It's not enough," Jesus said, "Bring it to me."

Jesus didn't need a huge amount of food. He simply asked the disciples to offer what they had. After thanking God, Jesus blessed the food, and everyone ate until they were full. There were even twelve baskets of leftovers!

This miracle isn't only about feeding hungry people. It's about learning to trust Jesus. Sometimes we think:

- I'm too young to help.
- I'm not good enough.
- I don't have enough time.
- Someone else can do it.

Jesus says to us, just as he said to the disciples, "You give them something." That "something" might be your kindness, your time, your friendship, your encouragement, your prayers, or your willingness to stand up for someone who is being left out.

At every Mass, through the Priest, Jesus does something very similar. He takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to us as the Eucharist. Then he sends us out to become his hands and heart in the world. We are fed so that we can help feed others—with love, hope, kindness, and generosity.

Let's Talk About It

- **Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples to help instead of doing everything himself?**
- **What do you think the little boy who shared the bread and fish was thinking?**
- **Have you ever thought, "I can't make a difference"? What happened?**
- **What gifts has God given you that you could use to help others?**
- **Why do you think there were twelve baskets left over at the end?**
- **How does today's Gospel remind you of what happens at Mass?**
- **What is one small thing you can do this week to help someone else?**

This week, don't wait until you think you have "enough" to help someone. Offer Jesus what you have today—your smile, your talents, your time, your kindness, or your courage. Ask him to bless your small gift and use it to make a big difference in someone else's life.

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:

Jesus loves us and cares for all our needs. Trusting in his love, let us bring our prayers to God, saying, "Lord, hear our prayer."

R. Children: Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For the Church, that we may share God's love with everyone we meet, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For people who are hungry, lonely, or sad, that they may find food, friendship, and hope, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For our families, that our homes may be filled with love, kindness, and generosity, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For people who are sick, and for everyone who cares for them, that Jesus may bring them comfort, strength, and healing, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

5. For ourselves, that this week we may gladly share our time, our kindness, and our gifts with others, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader:

Loving God, thank you for feeding us with your love and for giving us Jesus, the Bread of Life. Help us to trust you, share what we have, and care for others every 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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700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

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