



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD Twenty-Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time

3 Do nothing from selfish
ambition or conceit, but in
humility regard others as better
than yourselves.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3

Overview

The readings invite us to examine whether our lives truly reflect the faith we profess. Their central message is that God desires genuine conversion—not simply good intentions or religious words, but a sincere change of heart expressed through faithful actions.

In the first reading, the prophet Ezekiel teaches that people are responsible for their choices. A person who turns away from wrongdoing and chooses what is right will find life. God does not define us only by our past. His mercy continually offers us the opportunity to change direction and begin again.

Saint Paul presents Jesus as the perfect example of faithful obedience. Christ did not seek status or privilege; he humbled himself, became a servant and remained obedient even unto death. Christian discipleship, therefore, requires humility, concern for others and a willingness to place God's will before our own desires.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of two sons. One initially refuses his father's request but later changes his mind and obeys. The other promises to go but does nothing. Jesus teaches that actions speak more truthfully than words. Saying "yes" to God has little meaning unless that promise shapes how we live.

The readings highlight several spiritual themes:

- **Conversion:** It is never too late to turn back to God.
- **Personal responsibility:** Our choices have spiritual consequences.
- **Humility:** Jesus shows us that true greatness is found in loving service.
- **Obedience:** Faithfulness means carrying out God's will, even when it is difficult.
- **Integrity:** Our actions should correspond with the faith we profess.
- **Hope:** God's mercy allows every person to begin again.

The challenge of this Sunday is to move beyond promises and appearances. God asks us not merely to say that we believe, but to demonstrate our faith through repentance, humility, compassion and loving service.

Readings

First Reading

Ezekiel 18:25-28

A reading from the book of the Prophet Ezekiel.

Thus says the Lord: You object, O House of Israel! You say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die.

Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life.

Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die.

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

R. Lord, be mindful of your mercy.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. **R.**

Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love, remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord! **R.**

Good and upright is the Lord; therefore, he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. **R.**

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

Brothers and sisters: If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

Let the same mind be in you that was 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 the chief priests and the elders of the people: "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.'

He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went.

The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go.

Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.

For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Background

Ezekiel 18:25–28 The people complain that God's ways are unfair, but Ezekiel explains that each person is responsible for the direction of their life. Someone who turns away from wrongdoing and begins doing what is right will receive life. God's judgment is not intended to trap people in their past; it leaves room for repentance, mercy and a new beginning. Children sometimes make poor choices, but those choices do not have to define them. They can admit what they have done, apologize, make a better choice and begin again with God's help.

Psalms 25 humbly asks God to teach His ways and paths, recognizing Him as a patient guide. Just as children need parents and teachers, they need God to understand love, truth, and kindness. Prayer is essential for listening to His direction.

Philippians 2:1–11 Saint Paul encourages Christians to live in unity, care for others and avoid selfishness. Jesus is presented as the supreme example: although he was divine, he humbled himself, became a servant and remained obedient to the Father. His humility and loving service reveal the way of Christian discipleship. Children follow Jesus when they share, include someone who feels left out, help without demanding attention and think about another person's needs. True greatness is found in loving and serving others.

Matthew 21:28–32 Jesus tells of two sons. The first refuses his father's request but later changes his mind and obeys. The second politely says yes but does nothing. The first son ultimately does the father's will. Jesus teaches that genuine conversion and faithful actions matter more than promises or appearances. Saying "I will help," "I am sorry," or "I believe in Jesus" is important, but our actions must support our words. Children can show their "yes" to God by obeying, telling the truth, helping others and correcting a wrong choice.

All the readings teach that God looks at the direction of our hearts and the choices we make. We may sometimes say no to God or act selfishly, but God always invites us to change. Jesus shows us how to say a genuine "yes" through humility, obedience and loving service.

Key Messages for Children

1. God always gives us another chance.
2. Our actions should match our words.
3. Jesus teaches us to serve others.

Key Messages for Leaders

1. God's mercy always makes conversion possible. Our past choices do not have to determine our future. God continually invites us and the children we serve to turn toward what is good.
2. Christian faith requires integrity. The Gospel challenges us to ensure that our actions reflect our promises. Children learn what it means to follow Christ by observing how we live.
3. Leadership begins with Christlike humility. Following the example of Jesus, leaders are called to listen, serve, and place others' spiritual needs before personal recognition.

Leader's Personal Reflection Questions

1. When have you changed your mind and made a better choice after doing something wrong?
2. What loving action can you do this week to show God that you truly mean "yes"?

Takeaway

We say "yes" to God by making loving choices.

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.

Good morning, everyone! Today, Jesus tells us about two sons. One son says "no" to his father but later changes his mind and obeys. The other says "yes" but does not do what his father asks. Today, we will learn that what we do matters and that God is always ready to welcome us when we turn back to him.

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 space, 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.

(Silence for a few seconds.)

**Loving God,
help us to listen to your word,
to admit when we have done wrong,
and to show our love by what we do.
Give us hearts like Jesus,
who served others with humility.
Amen.**

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

READINGS FOR CHILDREN

A reader proclaims the approved text below. 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.

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

Ezekiel 18:25-28

Some people said, "God is not fair!"

But God answered, "Am I unfair—or are you making unfair choices?"

God teaches us that our choices matter. When someone who has been doing good chooses to do wrong and refuses to change, those wrong choices lead away from life.

But when someone who has been doing wrong stops, says, "I'm sorry," and begins choosing what is good and right, God welcomes that change. That person can begin again and live in God's friendship.

R. Lord, show us your way!

Lord, help me learn what is right.

Teach me how to follow you.

Guide me with your truth,
because you are my Saviour.

I will wait and listen for you. **R.**

Lord, remember your kindness and love.

Please forgive the wrong things I have done.

Be kind to me because you are good. **R.**

You are good and fair, Lord.

You teach people who have made mistakes
how to choose the right path. **R.**

If Jesus loves us, comforts us, and gives us his Spirit, then we should share that love with one another.

Be kind and caring. Work together and help one another. Do not always try to be first or get your own way.

Instead, be humble. Notice what other people need, not only what you want.

Think like Jesus: love others, serve others, and put kindness into action.

Jesus told a story about a father and his two sons.

The father said to the first son, "Please go and work in the vineyard today."

The son answered, "No, I don't want to." But later, he changed his mind and went to help.

Then the father asked his second son to go. The second son said, "Yes, I will go." But he never went.

Jesus asked, "Which son did what his father wanted?"

The answer was, "The first son."

Jesus teaches us that it is not enough to say the right words. We should also do what is right.

Sometimes we make a bad choice or say no to God. But we can change our minds, say we are sorry, and begin again. Jesus welcomed people whom others looked down on because they listened to God and changed their lives.

God is happy when we turn back to him and show our love through what we do.

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?

Jesus tells us about two brothers. Their father asked them to help. One brother said, "No," but later changed his mind and helped. The other said, "Yes," but did not go. Jesus teaches us that our actions matter more than just our words.

Sometimes we say "no" or make a poor choice. That does not mean we must stay that way. We can change, say sorry, and do what is loving and right. God teaches humble people his way and shows mercy when they turn back to him.

Have you ever changed your mind and chosen to do something kind?

Which is better: saying "I will help" or actually helping?

What could you do today to help someone?

If you make a mistake, what can you say to God?

Can we all say together: "Lord, help me show love by what I do!"

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: God teaches us his ways and helps us choose what is good. Let us bring our prayers to him. Our response is: **R:/** Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For the Church, that we may show God's love through our actions, we pray: **R:/**
2. For families, that they may forgive one another and begin again, we pray: **R:/**
3. For children who are lonely, sick, or afraid, that they may know God's care, we pray: **R:/**
4. For people who have made wrong choices, that God may help them change and choose what is right, we pray: **R:/**
5. For our parish community, that we may help one another and care about each other's needs, we pray: **R:/**

Invite the children to add their own intentions.

Closing Prayer

Loving God, teach us your paths and help us follow Jesus by loving and serving others. 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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Readings: Lectionary Sundays and Solemnities,

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Canadian Conferences of Catholic Bishops, Ottawa, Canada, 2009.

New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition

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