



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Twenty-Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time

The vineyard of the Lord of
hosts
is the house of Israel.

ISAIAH 5:7

Overview

The readings of the Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time speak about vineyards. The vineyard is not merely an ancient image in Scripture – they are foundational to our Christian faith. The Vineyard of the Lord invites each of us to consider the life God has given us. In the first reading from Isaiah, God lovingly prepares the vineyard and expects it to yield good fruit. Despite God's expectations, the reading ultimately speaks of injustice rather than righteousness. Perhaps we can ask: *What more is there to do for my vineyard that I have not done?*

God is generous, but God's generosity is not meant to stop with us. God gifts us with relationships, responsibilities, and opportunities to serve one another. The question is how we make them and where these gifts bear fruit—in our homes, workplaces, schools, communities, and the Church. Do our decisions and ultimately our choices foster justice, compassion, and peace, or do they leave others carrying the burden of our indifference?

In the Gospel, the tenants forget that the vineyard belongs to someone else. They act as owners rather than caretakers, rejecting the messengers and, finally, the landowner's son. Jesus warns against resisting God's claim upon our lives and failing to offer the fruits of the kingdom.

This warning is a call to conversion: to recognize again that God entrusts our lives and gifts to us. Perhaps we can ask where we have become possessive, unresponsive, or resistant to correction—and where God is inviting us to begin again. The fruit he desires is not perfection, but a life increasingly shaped by faithfulness, mercy, and justice.

A practical prayer for this week might be: *Lord, show me the vineyard you have entrusted to me. Help me notice where it is flourishing and where it needs care. Give me the humility to receive your guidance and the courage to bear fruit for others.*

The vineyard belongs to the Lord. Our calling is to tend it faithfully—and to let his gifts become a blessing beyond ourselves.

Readings

First Reading

Isaiah 5:1-7

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

Let me sing for my beloved ¹ my love song concerning his vineyard ²: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.

What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

¹ God's beloved encompasses Christ preeminently, Israel corporately, and any individual who accepts God's love as a gift rather than something earned.

² The vineyard is a theological symbol, functioning simultaneously as a representation of God's people, an expression of divine care, and a vehicle for judgment. The vineyard frequently symbolizes Israel, establishing a framework that shapes how biblical writers employ the image. This symbolism carries both positive and negative dimensions. Abundant vineyards signify God's blessing, with their fruit bringing gladness and relief from suffering, yet their absence metaphorically represents divine judgment.

R. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

You brought a vine out of Egypt;
you drove out the nations and planted it.
It sent out its branches to the sea,
And its shoot to the River. **R.**

Why then have you broken down its walls,
so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?
The boar from the forest ravages it,
and all that move in the field feed on it. **R.**

Turn again, O God of hosts;
look down from heaven, and see;
have regard for this vine,
the stock that your right hand planted. **R.**

Then we will never turn back from you;
give us life, and we will call on your name.
Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved. **R.**

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

Brothers and sisters: Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

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: "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.

When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

Again, he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they treated them in the same way. Finally, he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'?"

Therefore, I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Background

Isaiah 5:1–7: God is depicted as a vineyard owner who has nurtured a vineyard that symbolizes Israel. The "wild grapes" represent the injustice among the people, in contrast to the goodness God desires. The message highlights the harm their actions cause to the community. For children: liken God's care to tending a garden—watering and helping it grow. Ask, "What good things does God help grow in us?" Responses may include kindness, sharing, honesty, or patience—ways to show God's love, not a test to pass.

Psalms 80 reflects on how God brought the vine from Egypt and helped it grow, but now it is vulnerable. The people plead for God's care to restore it, expressing trust in His help for their health and fruitfulness. For children, the psalm encourages them to ask God for help when someone is struggling and to pray for healing and restoration.

Philippians 4:6–9 encourages the community to bring concerns to God through prayer and thanksgiving, emphasizing what is true, just, pure, and praiseworthy. Prayer influences Christian actions and thoughts rather than being an escape from responsibility. For children, invite them to share something they're thankful for and a need for help. Connect prayer to action by discussing ways to support those feeling alone after praying for them.

Matthew 21:33–43 The parable tells of a landowner who prepares a vineyard and entrusts it to tenants. When the owner sends servants to collect produce, the tenants mistreat them and kill the owner's son. This story illustrates the rejection of God's messengers and the challenge of responding to God's call. It's important to focus on our response: God entrusts us with gifts that we should use lovingly. With children, emphasize that the tenants acted selfishly and discuss how we can care for what God has given us—our family, friends, and the world.

Isaiah illustrates a vineyard that fails to bear good fruit, while the psalm seeks God helps us grow, and we can bear good fruit by loving others. For Children's Liturgy, encourage each child to choose one "good fruit" to practice this week—like welcoming someone, sharing, or helping at home—and remind them to ask God for help when needed.

Key Messages for Children

1. God loves and cares for us, like a gardener tending a vineyard.
2. God helps us grow good fruit—kindness, fairness, and care for others.
3. When we need help, we can pray and trust God, then try to do what is good.

Key Messages for Leaders

1. Care for the children as God's entrusted vineyard. Welcome each child with patience and help them feel safe, seen, and invited to hear God's Word.
2. Help the Gospel bear fruit in daily life. Connect the readings with concrete acts of justice, kindness, and care for others—not just good ideas.
3. Lead through prayer and humble service. The vineyard belongs to God; prepare thoughtfully, listen for his guidance, and serve without seeking control or personal credit.

Leader's Personal Reflection Questions

1. How am I helping each child feel welcomed and cared for as someone entrusted to my service?
2. What "good fruit"—such as patience, kindness, or justice—do the children see in my example?

Takeaway

God loves you and helps you grow in kindness.

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 you will hear about a vineyard—a place where grapes grow. The Bible uses a vineyard to help us think about how God cares for his people and how we can show love to one another.

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,
thank you for caring for us
and helping us grow.
Open our ears to your Word
and help us bear good fruit
by loving one another.
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.

Isaiah 5:1-7

God loved his people like a gardener loves a garden. He chose a good place, cleared away the stones, planted the vines, and cared for them. He hoped they would grow good grapes.

But the grapes were not good. God hoped his people would treat one another fairly and kindly, but some people hurt others instead. God wants us to care for one another and do what is right.

What good fruit can we grow? We can share, tell the truth, include someone who feels left out, and help a person in need. Let's ask God to help us grow in love.

R. God, take care of your vineyard.

God, you brought your people out of Egypt
and planted them like a vine.

They grew strong and spread across the land. **R.**

But the vineyard was hurt,
and people came and took its fruit. **R.**

God, please look after your people,
like a gardener cares for a vine. **R.**

Give us life, help us stay close to you,
and show us your loving face. **R.**

Dear children, when you feel worried, you can talk to God. Tell him what is troubling you, and remember to thank him for the good things in your life. God's peace is with us in Jesus.

Think about what is true, kind, and good. Then try to do those things—like Paul taught the people who followed Jesus.

Jesus told a story about a landowner who planted a lovely vineyard and entrusted workers with caring for it. When he sent messengers to collect some fruit, the workers hurt them. At last, he sent his son, but they hurt him too.

Jesus taught that God sent messengers to help people listen to him, and that he finally sent his Son, Jesus. God wants us to welcome Jesus and grow the good fruits of his kingdom: love, kindness, fairness, and care for others.

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 told a story about a vineyard. The owner cared for it and trusted workers to look after it. He hoped the vineyard would grow good fruit.

What fruit do you think grew there? (Pause for answers.)

The owner sent helpers to collect some fruit, but the workers were unkind to them. At last, he sent his son.

How do you think the workers should have treated the son? (Pause for answers.)

They should have welcomed him and listened. Jesus told this story to teach that God sent his Son, Jesus, and wants us to welcome him. God also wants us to grow good fruit in our lives.

What might "good fruit" look like at home or in school?

(Invite answers: sharing, helping, telling the truth, being kind.)

Who could you show kindness to today?

Let's pretend to plant a seed. (Invite children to mime planting and watering.)

What helps a seed grow?

Just as plants need care, we can ask God to help us grow in love and goodness.

Let's say together: "Jesus, help me grow good fruit!"

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: Let us pray to God, who cares for us and helps us grow in love.

Our response is: **R:/** Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For the Church, that we may welcome Jesus and share God's love with everyone, we pray: **R:/**
2. For children and families who are worried, lonely, or in need, that they may receive comfort and help, we pray: **R:/**
3. For people who are treated unfairly or unkindly, that others may protect and care for them, we pray: **R:/**
4. For our parish, that we may grow good fruit by sharing, forgiving, and being kind, we pray: **R:/**
5. For our families and friends, and for all those who have died, that God may keep them close to him, we pray: **R:/**

Invite the children to add their own intentions.

Leader: God our Father, hear the prayers we bring to you. Help us follow Jesus and grow in goodness.

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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