



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Twenty-Ninth Sunday of Ordinary Time

“Give therefore to the emperor
the things that are the emperor’s,
and to God the things that are
God’s.”

MATTHEW 22:21

Overview

The Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time invites us to reflect on God's sovereignty, our responsibilities in the world, and the faith that becomes visible in daily life.

Isaiah presents Cyrus, a foreign ruler who does not know the Lord, as an instrument in God's plan. The passage stresses that God is Lord of all history, not only of those who already recognize him. This can encourage trust as God's work unfolds through unexpected people or circumstances.

Jesus' answer about the coin recognizes a legitimate distinction between civic obligations and what belongs to God. But it also presses a deeper question: if a coin bears the emperor's image, what bears God's image? Our lives, loyalties, and deepest allegiance belong to God. This does not mean withdrawing from civic life; it means engaging in it without making earthly power ultimate.

Paul praises the Thessalonians for their "work of faith," "labour of love," and "steadfastness of hope." Faith is not merely an idea or a private feeling: it shapes how we work, serve, love, and persevere. Their example suggests that Christian witness is especially credible when the Gospel is embodied in ordinary life.

Psalms 96 calls the whole earth to praise God and to tell the nations of his saving work. Sunday worship is not an escape from the world; it renews us to carry God's praise and justice into it. We worship the Lord as King while faithfully serving our neighbours.

Where do I need to trust God's wider work, meet my responsibilities with integrity, and make faith, love, and hope visible?

Background

Isaiah 45:1, 4–6 The passage refers to Cyrus, the Persian ruler, as the Lord's "anointed," highlighting that God can work through foreign leaders to fulfill His purposes. While Cyrus facilitates Israel's liberation and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the key point is that this deliverance is attributed to God's sovereignty rather than to political power. The declaration "I am the Lord, and there is no other" emphasizes that God's actions are meant for all peoples, encouraging trust in His providence and cautioning against confining His work to a single nation or leader.

Psalms 96 is a song of praise and proclamation. Its call to "sing a new song" is addressed to "all the earth," and worshippers are told to declare God's glory among the nations. Praise is not merely private devotion: it becomes a public witness to who God is. The psalm gives the Sunday liturgy a missionary dimension: those who worship the Lord are called to make known his goodness and justice.

1 Thessalonians 1:1–5b begins with thanksgiving for the Thessalonian Christians, highlighting their "work of faith," "labour of love," and "steadfastness of hope." These qualities manifest in the community's actions and perseverance. Paul stresses that the Gospel comes "not in word only," but with power and conviction through the Holy Spirit, making it a way of life for the community. Despite persecution, the Thessalonians serve as an example to other believers. The Christian witness is both communal and personal, with a parish making the Gospel credible when its faith is active, love is costly, and hope endures through difficulties.

Matthew 22:15–21 The Pharisees confront Jesus about the lawfulness of paying the imperial tax, aiming to trap him with his response. Jesus reveals their insincerity and asks for the coin used for the tax. When they show it, Jesus says, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." He highlights a distinction between civic obligations and what belongs to God, emphasizing that while Christians should engage in society, their ultimate loyalty is to God. The passage invites disciples to reflect on the limits of political claims and their responsibilities. When earthly demands conflict with God's, God's claim must take precedence.

Key Messages for Children

God can help us in unexpected ways. God used Cyrus, a powerful king, to help his people. We can trust that God can work through many different people to do good.

Give God your whole heart. Jesus teaches that we should do our responsibilities in the world, but God comes first. We belong to God, so we should choose what is loving and right.

Show your faith through love and hope. We can praise God and tell others about his goodness by being kind, helping people, and not giving up when things are hard.

Key Messages for Leaders

God can work through unexpected people to do good. In the first reading, God uses King Cyrus to help his people. Encourage the children to notice ways God may work through people who are different from them.

We belong to God, and we show it by choosing what is good. Jesus teaches that we have responsibilities in the world, but God comes first. Invite children to name one way they can show love for God at home, at school, or with friends.

Our faith becomes visible in loving actions. Paul praises the Thessalonians for their faith, love, and hope. Help children connect this to concrete choices, such as including someone, helping without being asked, or encouraging someone who feels left out.

Reflection Question

How can we help children see that they belong to God and express their faith through loving actions?

Focus

Give God your whole heart, and let your faith shine through loving actions.

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.

Today, we hear about two things: God working through someone unexpected and Jesus teaching us to give God what belongs to God.

Go with your leaders and listen to what these readings teach us about trusting God and living as his children. 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.)

**God our Father,
help us remember that we belong to you,
and teach us to show your love
through our choices and actions.
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.

Readings

A reader proclaims the approved readings 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 explain the readings. 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.

First Reading

Isaiah 25:6-10a

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

God said to Cyrus,¹ whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and strip kings of their robes, to open doors before him, and the gates shall not be closed:

"For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I surname you, though you do not know me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides me there is no god. I arm you, though you do not know me, so that all may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is no one besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other."

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

After proclaiming the reading, you could further explain it to a child like this:

God was speaking about Cyrus, a powerful king. God chose Cyrus to help free the people of Israel and bring them home. Cyrus did not know God, but God could still guide him to do something good for God's people.

When the reading says God "grasped" Cyrus's hand and opened doors, it means God helped him and made a way forward—even when the way seemed difficult.

The most important message is: There is only one God, and God can work through many people to help others—even people who do not yet know him.

¹ Founder of the Persian Empire (see Persia) and ruler from 559 to 529 B.C.

R. Give the Lord glory and praise.

O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous works among all the peoples. **R.**

For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. **R.**

Worship the Lord, all the earth. Say among the nations, "The Lord is king! He will judge the peoples with equity." **R.**

After proclaiming the reading, you could further explain it to a child like this:

This song is a happy way to praise God. It says:

- **"Sing a new song"**: We can sing to God and tell him we love him.
- **"Tell everyone about his wonderful works"**: We can share how God made the beautiful world and cares for us.
- **"The Lord made the heavens"**: God made the sky, stars, and everything in creation.
- **"The Lord is king"**: God is our good and loving ruler. He wants people to treat one another fairly and kindly.

So when we say "**Worship the Lord, all the earth,**" we mean: "Everyone, everywhere—let's thank God and praise him!" The psalm invites the whole world to rejoice in God.

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

From Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the Church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, because our message of the Gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

After proclaiming the reading, you could further explain it to a child like this:

Saint Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were friends of Jesus who helped people learn about God. They wrote to the Christians in Thessalonica to say, "God loves you. May you have his grace and peace."

They thanked God for the people there. The Thessalonians showed their faith by trusting God, their love by helping others, and their hope by continuing to trust Jesus, even when things were hard.

Paul and his friends also said that the Holy Spirit helped the people hear the Good News about Jesus and believe it. The message was not just words—it helped them live with faith, love, and hope.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

The Pharisees went and plotted to entrap Jesus in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?"

But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius.

Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

The Gospel of the Lord.

After proclaiming the reading, you could further explain it to a child like this:

Jesus' friends asked him a tricky question because they hoped to get him into trouble. Jesus knew they were not asking honestly. He asked to see a coin and noticed that it had the emperor's picture on it.

Jesus said, "Give to the emperor what belongs to the emperor, and give to God what belongs to God." That means we should do what is fair and right in our community, and remember that God deserves our love, thanks, and obedience.

A coin has the emperor's picture on it. But God made us and loves us, so we can give ourselves to God by praying, loving others, and doing what is good.

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 needed help opening a door that was too heavy? Pretend to push open a big door.

In our first reading, God says he will open doors and help Cyrus, a king. Cyrus did not know God, but God could still use him to help God's people. God wanted them to know that he was with them and cared for them.

Who helps you when something is difficult? Invite children to name someone.

God often helps us through other people—family, teachers, friends, and helpers.

In the Gospel, some people asked Jesus a tricky question about paying a tax. Jesus asked to see a coin. It had the emperor's picture on it.

Do you know what an emperor is? Explain if necessary. Caesar was the emperor.

Then Jesus said, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God."

That means we should do what is right and fair in our community. And we should remember to give God our love and thanks. A coin can have a ruler's picture on it—but **God made each one of us and loves us**. We can give ourselves to God by praying, helping others, and choosing what is good.

What is one kind thing you could do for someone today? Pause for answers.

The first reading and the Gospel remind us that God can work through people and that we belong to him. Let's say together:

"God, thank you for loving me. Help me do what is good."

What is one way you can show God's love this week?

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: Trusting that God works through us, 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 words and actions, we pray to the Lord, we pray: **R:/**
2. For leaders of all of the countries in the world, that they may work for peace and care for all people, we pray: **R:/**
3. For anyone who needs help, that someone may reach out to them with kindness, we pray: **R:/**
4. For ourselves, that we may use our gifts to help others and make good choices, we pray: **R:/**
5. For our families and friends, that God may keep them safe and fill them with hope, we pray: **R:/**

Invite the children to add their own intentions.

Leader: God our Father, thank you for hearing our prayers. Help us to trust you and to show that we belong to you 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



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

Readings: Lectionary Sundays and Solemnities,

Copyright @ Conacan Inc, 1992,

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

New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition

All rights reserved and prepared by the Diocese of Hamilton, Liturgy Office, © 2026

Handouts: please download from:

Bulletin: TheKidsBulletin.com – **Goodwill donation suggested**