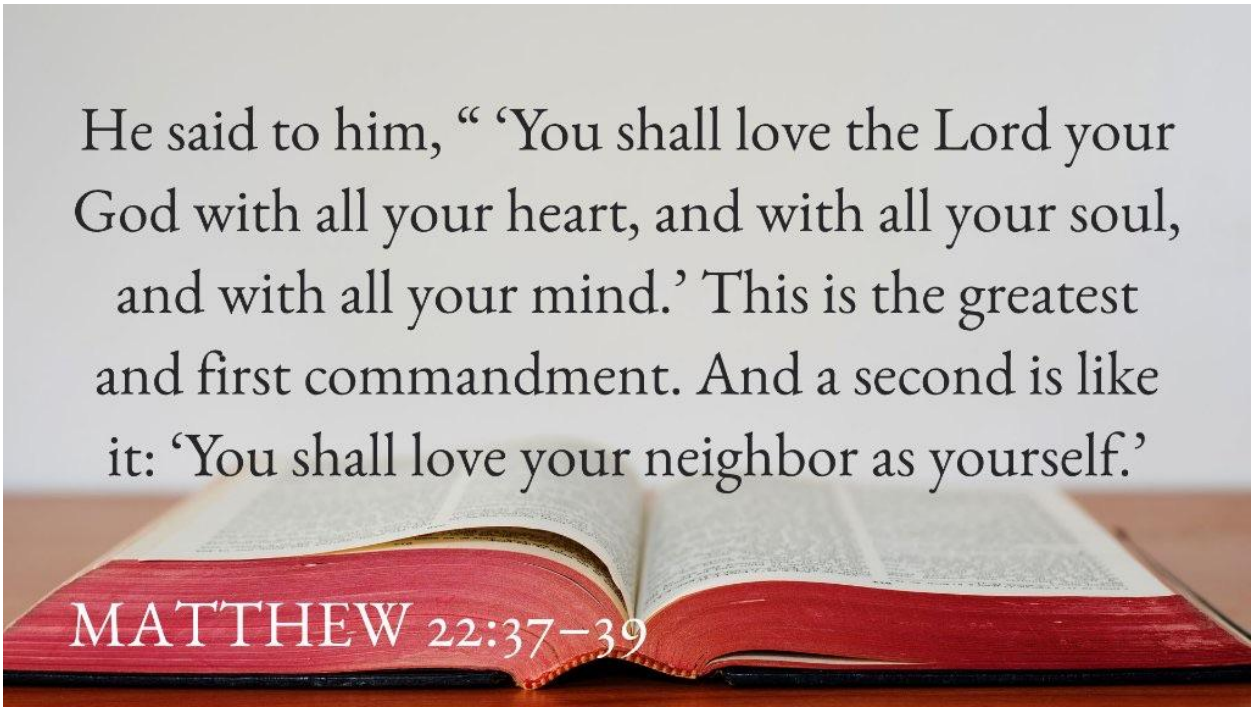
DIOCESE OF HAMILTON
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CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Thirtieth Sunday of Ordinary Time



Children's Liturgy of the Word Pastoral Suggestions.

Begin with a warm welcome.
Learn children's names, greet them kindly, and help newcomers feel included. A calm, welcoming presence helps children feel that they belong to the Church.

Prepare through prayer and reflection.
Read the Sunday readings beforehand. Consider what they reveal about God and what might connect with children's lives. Let the Word speak to you before you help children receive it.

Keep the gathering prayerful.
Give space to listening, responses, singing, and brief silence. Activities and conversation should help children enter into the Word and prayer.

Use concrete, familiar examples.
Connect Scripture with friendship, family life, sharing, feeling left out, forgiving, and helping someone. Explain unfamiliar religious words simply.

Invite participation without pressure.
Ask open questions: "What did you notice?" or "How do you think that person felt?" Allow children to listen quietly, and avoid putting anyone on the spot.

Receive children's contributions gently.
Listen with interest. When an answer needs correction, acknowledge the child's effort and guide them toward a clearer understanding without embarrassment.

Welcome different needs and family circumstances.
Children vary in attention, communication, mobility, and familiarity with church. Offer different ways to participate, and avoid assuming that every child lives with both parents or has a secure home life.

A helpful measure of success: Did the children experience welcome, hear something of God's love, and have an opportunity to respond? Quiet attention and small discoveries can matter as much as spoken answers.

Overview

The Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time invites us to take a closer look at what the Christian life is all about: love. This love isn't just a nice idea; it's a deep commitment to God that touches every part of our lives and shapes how we treat others. The way we care for our neighbours is a real-world demonstration of our love for God. When we reach out to those in need, we show the faith that means so much to us.

This journey of love starts with a solid trust. When life throws challenges our way, we're gently reminded of God's constant presence and His care for us. Trusting God doesn't mean we'll never face hard times; it means we don't let fear or struggles take over our lives. Instead, it opens our hearts and lets God help us love more truly and deeply.

As our trust grows, it naturally leads to a faith that's clear and actionable. The Gospel isn't just something we listen to or admire; it should inspire how we make decisions, nurture our relationships, and live our everyday lives. Love is shown through our actions—being patient, generous, fair, and paying attention to those who often feel overlooked: the lonely, the poor, the sick, the outsider, or anyone who can't speak up for themselves.

This deep love encourages us to look beyond our own worries. It challenges us to make time for those who might never be able to return our kindness and to see Christ in those who desperately need compassion and help. Even simple acts—like being a good listener, offering a warm welcome, or standing up for someone who's facing injustice—can be powerful ways to showcase God's enduring love.

The real question we should ask ourselves goes beyond simply saying we believe in God; it's about whether His love is actually changing how we live. As we trust in Him, let's work on keeping our hearts open, shedding any walls we've built up, and becoming more generous. In doing so, our love for God shines through in the dignity, mercy, and care we give to everyone we meet.

Background

Exodus 22:20–26 highlights the treatment of vulnerable groups like immigrants, widows, orphans, and the poor. Israel is instructed not to oppress resident aliens, recalling their own history as aliens in Egypt. This memory fosters compassion and justice, requiring lenders to show mercy, such as returning a poor neighbour's cloak before nightfall. Compassion is framed as a matter of justice and covenant faithfulness, with the community accountable for the treatment of the oppressed. Remembering God's past actions should inspire attention to those currently facing hardship.

Psalm 18 expresses confidence in God as the source of protection, strength, and deliverance in our lives. This trust inspires care and justice, reflecting God's opposition to evil and concern for human suffering.

1 Thessalonians 1:5c–10 The Thessalonians[1] received the Gospel with joy, inspired by the Holy Spirit, despite persecution. Their faith became an example to others, spreading beyond their community. Their conversion involved turning from idols to serve the living God and await Jesus, raised from the dead. This passage shows that faith is an active, public reality, with the transformative power of the Gospel evident in the lives of believers. The Thessalonians' hope in the risen Jesus led to steadfastness, serving as a witness to others and illustrating that Christian hope is seen in how a community lives, especially during challenging times..

Matthew 22:34–40 asks which commandment is greatest. Jesus joins two commands: love God with the whole heart, soul, and mind, and love one's neighbour as oneself. He says that the whole law and the prophets depend on these two. Jesus does not set love of God against love of neighbour. Rather, he shows that they are inseparable dimensions of a faithful life. Love of God involves the whole person; love of neighbour gives that devotion a concrete form.

[1] The Thessalonians were the people of Thessalonica, a city in Macedonia. St. Paul preached there, and the Christian community he founded there was the one he addressed in his two letters to the Thessalonians.

Key Messages for Children

Love God with your whole heart. Make room for God in your life through prayer, worship, and choosing what is good.

Treat others with kindness and fairness. Notice people who may feel left out or need help, and show them care through your words and actions.

Let your faith show in what you do. Like the first Christians, you can be a good example by following Jesus, even when doing the right thing is hard.

Key Messages for Leaders

Make love the center of the session. Help children see that loving God and loving one another belong together; invite them to name simple ways to practise both at home, at school, and in the parish.

Make care for vulnerable people concrete. Explore how children can welcome someone who has been left out, share fairly, or seek help when someone is being treated badly. The reading calls God's people to protect those who are easily overlooked or mistreated.

Model the faith you teach. Children learn from leaders' example as well as their words. Encourage them to see that faith can be lived joyfully and shared through everyday actions.

Reflection Question

How do my words and actions help children understand that loving God means caring for others?

Whom might I be overlooking or failing to welcome in the children's group?

Focus

Love God by caring for every neighbour, especially the vulnerable.

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! Today, you will hear that loving God and loving our neighbours belong together. We can show our love for God by how we treat people—especially those who feel lonely or left out, or who need help.

Go with your leaders and listen to what these readings teach us.

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 bringing us together.
Help us listen with open hearts,
love you with all that we are,
and care for the people around us.
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

Exodus 22.21-27

A reading from the book of Exodus.

Thus says the Lord: You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, [2] for you were aliens in the land of Egypt [3]. You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry.

If you lend money to my people, to the poor one among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; [4] you shall not exact interest from them. If you take your neighbour's cloak in pawn, [5] you shall restore it to that person before the sun goes down; for it may be their only clothing to use as cover; in what else shall that person sleep? And if that person cries out to me, I will listen, for I am compassionate.

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 wants us to be kind and fair to everyone, especially to those who are poor, far from home, or in need of help. He reminds us that the Israelites were once strangers and encourages us to welcome and support others. God hears the cries of those treated poorly and calls on us to notice and care for those in need.

How can we welcome someone who is new or help someone who feels alone?

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[2] A resident alien was a foreigner living among Israel, whom God's people were commanded to protect and love.
[3] Egypt was the land from which the Israelites journeyed toward the Promised Land. In the Bible, their departure from Egypt is remembered as God's deliverance of his people.
[4] The command not to act as a creditor means the lender must not exploit the borrower, for example, by charging interest or keeping a needed cloak as security.
[5] It means the lender accepted the borrower's cloak as security for a loan. Because it might be the borrower's only covering at night, the lender had to return it before sunset.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 18

R./ God is our strength.

I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer. My God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the source of my salvation, my stronghold.R./

I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, so I shall be saved from my enemies. From his temple, he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. R./

The Lord lives! Blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation, Great triumphs he gives to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed.R./

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

In the psalm, someone is thanking God and saying, “You are my strength and my safe place.” The psalm reminds us that when we are afraid or having a hard time, we can talk to God and trust that he hears us. **When might you want to ask God for help?**

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 1.5-10

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

Brothers and sisters: You know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us, and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia [6] and in Achaia. [7]

For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. For the people of those regions, report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

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 is happy because the people in Thessalonica have heard about Jesus and are trying to follow him. They kept trusting God even when things were difficult. The Holy Spirit helped them have joy and courage.

Other people could see their faith in the way they lived. They had turned away from the things they used to worship and chose to serve the living God. We can be like them when we try to follow Jesus' teachings, even if it takes courage.

What is one thing you could do that would show someone you are trying to follow Jesus?

[6] Macedonia was a region north of Greece. In St. Paul's time, it was a Roman province; its cities included Philippi and Thessalonica, where Paul preached and formed Christian communities.

[7] Achaia was a Roman province in southern Greece, with Corinth as its capital. St. Paul preached there and founded the Christian community in Corinth.

Gospel

Matthew 22:34-40

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

When the Pharisees [8] heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, [9] they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. Teacher, which commandment in the Law is the greatest?

Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law [10] and the Prophets.[11]

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Someone asks Jesus which commandment is most important. Jesus teaches that we should love God with our whole heart, our whole life, and our whole mind. We love God when we pray, thank him, listen to his teaching, and try to do what is good.

Jesus also says to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. Our neighbours are the people around us—not only our friends, but also people who are lonely, new, or in need of help. We show love when we share, listen, invite someone to join us, or ask a grown-up to help someone who is being treated unfairly.

What is one loving thing you can do for God or for another person this week?

[8] The Pharisees were an influential Jewish religious group who emphasized observance of the Law and believed in resurrection and angels.
[9] The Sadducees were a Jewish religious group, many of whom were associated with the priesthood. They accepted the written Law of Moses but rejected belief in the resurrection of the dead and in angels.
[10] The Law usually means the Torah: God's instructions and commandments for Israel. It was given as part of God's covenant with his people and guided their worship and daily life. Christians believe Jesus fulfilled the Law and taught its heart: love of God and neighbour.
[11] Prophets were people called by God to speak his message to the people. They warned against wrongdoing, called Israel back to its covenant with God, defended the poor, and offered hope.

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 gives us two great commands: love God, and love our neighbour as ourselves. They are like two parts of one big heart. We show God our love when we pray and thank Him—but also when we share, welcome someone, speak kindly, or stand up for someone who is being treated unfairly.

What are some ways we can show love for God?

The first reading reminds us that God cares about people who are vulnerable or overlooked. That can include someone who is new, someone who has no one to play with, or someone who is having a hard day. We may not be able to fix every problem, but we can notice, include, listen, and ask a trusted adult for help when someone is being hurt.

What could you say or do if someone is being treated unfairly?

The Christians who lived shortly after Jesus rose from the dead showed their faith through their everyday actions and the way they lived. Their love and kindness were clear in how they treated people, often going out of their way to help someone or offer a kind word. We also have the chance to embrace this spirit of compassion. A small act of kindness, even if it seems small at first, can really brighten someone's day and make them feel appreciated. When we do this, we not only improve their lives but also showcase the endless love of God that flows through us.

If you see someone sitting alone, what kind thing could you do?

Which might be a challenge for you this week: sharing, including someone, listening patiently, or asking for help?

Let's choose one small act of love to try this week. You can tell God silently what you hope to 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 hears us when we pray and cares for every person. Let us pray. Our response is: R:/ Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For the Church: may we show the love of Jesus by welcoming and caring for all people, we pray to the Lord, we pray: R:/
2. For people who are poor, lonely, or far from home: may they find safety, friendship, and help, we pray: R:/
3. For anyone who is being bullied, left out, or treated unfairly: may they be protected and supported, we pray: R:/
4. For each of us: may we find one practical way this week to love God by caring for our neighbour, we pray: R:/
5. For anyone who is sick or worried, and for those who care for them: may God be their strength and comfort, we pray: R:/

   Invite the children to add their own intentions.

Leader: Loving God, thank you for hearing our prayers. Help us love you with our whole hearts and show that love by caring for 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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