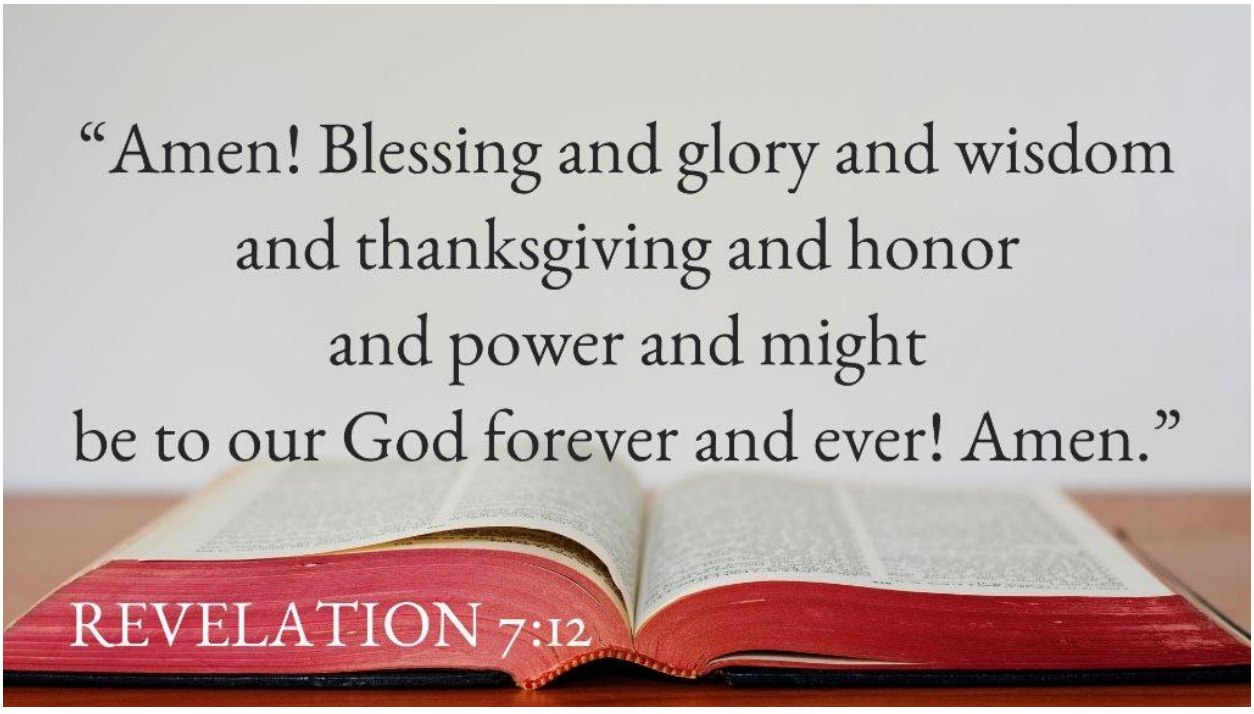
DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

All Saints Day

Following Jesus, growing in holiness together.



Overview

Today the Church celebrates All Saints' Day, which invites children to see holiness as a life with God that is already beginning in ordinary people—and will be complete in heaven. The feast celebrates not only famous saints whose names are known, but also the countless holy people known fully only to God. Its readings hold together three hopeful truths: God gathers his people, calls us his children, and teaches us the way of life through Jesus' Beatitudes.

All Saints' Day is a celebration of the whole company of saints: those officially recognized by the Church and the many others whose faithful lives may never be widely known. Pope Benedict XVI describes them as an "innumerable crowd" that includes the baptized of every time and nation who sought to follow God faithfully and lovingly.

That makes the feast especially accessible to children. Saints are not only people in distant stories, with extraordinary lives or statues in a church. Pope John Paul II points to mothers and fathers devoted to their children, and to people who served neighbours in need, as among the anonymous saints known to God. A child can begin to understand holiness through concrete examples: telling the truth when it is hard, including someone who is left out, making peace after an argument, or helping without expecting a reward. These are not the whole of holiness, but they help children see that following Jesus belongs in daily life.

The saints are not worshipped as gods. The Church gives worship to God; she honours the saints because their holiness is God's gift, and asks them to pray with and for us. The prayers of the Mass express both ideas: they ask God for grace and speak of the saints' concern for our salvation. For children, a simple way to explain this is: "We thank God for the saints, and we can ask them to pray for us, just as we ask people on earth to pray for us."

Invite children to name a saint or a kind person they know. Emphasize that All Saints includes both well-known saints and those known only to God. If they mention deceased family members, acknowledge their responses sensitively, noting that All Saints celebrates those with God while the Church prays for the dead separately. Focus on the hope of heaven and the communion of saints.

Background

Revelation 7 offers a great vision of people from every nation gathered before God. The image helps children picture the Church as much bigger than one parish, family, or country. The people wear white robes and praise God; Pope Francis explains that their salvation comes through Christ, "the blood of the Lamb," rather than being something they achieved by themselves. This is a useful safeguard against presenting saints as people who never needed help or grace. Their holiness is a response to God's love, and their hope rests on Jesus.

Psalm 24 begins with the conviction that the earth and all who live in it belong to the Lord. This can broaden children's sense of belonging: God's care is not restricted to any particular group, and the saints' great diversity reflects a world that belongs to God.

1 John 3 turns to our identity and our hope: we are God's children now, even though we do not yet fully understand what we will become. The reading says that when God is revealed, we will be like him and see him as he is. Leaders can help children hear the difference between "I am already loved by God" and "I am still growing." Becoming holy is not about pretending to be perfect; it is about living in God's love and letting that hope shape the way we act.

Matthew 5:1–12a presents Jesus teaching the Beatitudes. He calls blessed people the world may overlook: the meek, the merciful, peacemakers, those who grieve, and those who long for what is good. The Beatitudes describe the way of life Jesus lived and ask his followers to walk. Pope Francis calls this the way of holiness and happiness, and connects it with humility, mercy, justice, and peace.

Some Beatitudes can sound puzzling to children. Being "blessed" does not mean that sadness, unfairness, or persecution are good in themselves. Rather, Jesus promises that people who suffer or choose what is right are not forgotten by God. "Peacemakers," for example, are not simply people who avoid every disagreement; they are people who try to repair harm and help others live in peace. "The merciful" show kindness and forgiveness. Leaders can explain each saying in language children can connect with, while keeping Jesus' promise and challenge together.

Key Messages for Children

We belong to God's big family. The saints include people we know by name and many faithful people known only to God.

God loves us as we grow. We do not have to be perfect; with God's help, we can keep learning to love and do what is right.

Jesus shows us how to live. We follow him by being kind, forgiving, making peace, and standing up for what is right.

Key Messages for Leaders

We belong to God's great family. Help children see that All Saints celebrates both well-known saints and countless faithful people whose names are known only to God. Invite them to think of people who show them kindness or help them follow Jesus.

God loves us as we grow. Emphasize that children are loved by God now; holiness does not mean never making mistakes. The saints encourage us to keep following Jesus and growing in love.

Jesus shows us how to live. Connect the Beatitudes to children's everyday choices: showing mercy, making peace, being gentle, and caring about what is right. Explain that Jesus' way can be challenging, but it leads us toward God.

Reflection Question

How can we help children recognize that the saints include ordinary people who quietly lived with faith and love—and that they, too, are called to holiness in daily life?

Which Beatitude might we model most clearly for the children—such as mercy, meekness, or peacemaking—and how can we connect it to a situation they understand?

Focus

Following Jesus, growing in holiness together.

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, the Church celebrates All Saints' Day. We remember all the holy people who are with God: saints whose names we know and many faithful people whose names we may never know. The readings remind us that we belong to God's family and that Jesus shows us how to live.

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.)

Almighty God,
help us follow Jesus with kind and peaceful hearts,
and bring us one day
to rejoice with all your saints.
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

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

A reading from the book of Revelation.

I, John, saw an angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to damage earth and sea, saying, "Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads." And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the people of Israel. After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood around the throne, around the elders and the four living creatures; they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders addressed me, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "Sir, you are the one who knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

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:

John sees a huge crowd of people from every nation gathered with God. It reminds us that God's family is very big, and the saints are people who belong to him.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 24

R. Lord, this is the company of those who seek your face.

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it;
for he has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the river. R.

Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,
who do not lift up their souls to what is false. R.

They will receive blessing from the Lord,
and vindication from the God of their salvation.
Such is the company of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob. R.

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

Everything in the world belongs to God—including us. We can thank God for making and caring for the world.

Second Reading

1 John 3.1-3

A reading from the first letter of John.

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in God purify themselves, just as he is pure.

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 loves us so much that we are his children. We can trust that love as we keep learning to live like Jesus.

Gospel

Matthew 5:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven."

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Jesus sits with his disciples and teaches them what it means to be truly blessed—to live close to God and follow his way. Jesus says we are blessed when we are gentle, care about what is right, show mercy, and help people make peace. Following Jesus does not mean everything will always be easy or that we will feel happy every moment. It means trusting that God loves us and is with us, even when we are sad or having a hard time. Jesus' words show us how to bring God's love to others.

Ask the children:
What could you do to show mercy when someone makes a mistake?
How can you help make peace when friends are arguing?
What is one kind thing you can do today?
Small actions—like forgiving, sharing, including someone, or helping someone sad—are ways to live out Jesus' teaching every day.

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?

Today we celebrate All Saints' Day. The first reading gives us a picture of a crowd so huge that no one could count it. People from every nation are gathered with God. The saints remind us that God's family is very big.

Can you show with your arms how big you think God's family is? *Invite children to stretch their arms wide.*

The reading says the crowd is praising God. They are happy to be with him. And the second reading tells us something wonderful: God calls us his children. God loves us now, while we are still learning and growing.

What is one way someone shows you that they love you? Pause for a few answers.

Jesus teaches us how to live as God's children. He says that people are blessed when they show mercy, make peace, and care about what is right. Those things can happen in small ways: sharing, forgiving, inviting someone to join you, or helping when someone feels sad.

Let's try a few together. What could you do if someone is left out? Pause for a few answers.

What could you do after you have hurt someone's feelings? Pause for a few answers.

How could you help two friends make peace? Pause for a few answers.

These are ways we can follow Jesus. We do not have to do something huge to show his love. We can begin with a kind choice today. Let's each think quietly: **What is one loving thing I can do this week?** Pause for a few answers.

Leader: Jesus, thank you for loving us and for the saints who show us how to follow you. Help us be kind, forgive others, and make peace. Amen.

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: On this feast of All Saints, let us bring our prayers to God. Please respond, "Lord, hear our prayer."

1. For the Church, that we may follow Jesus and learn from the saints how to love, we pray to the Lord.
2. For people who are lonely, sad, or in need, that they may receive kindness and comfort, we pray to the Lord.
3. For peacemakers and all who work for justice, that God may strengthen them, we pray to the Lord.
4. For our families, friends, and all who have taught us to do good, we pray to the Lord.
5. For all who have died, that they may rejoice with God and all the saints in heaven, we pray to the Lord.

Leader: God of all the saints, hear our prayers and help us follow Jesus with loving hearts. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: 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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