

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Year C

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First Sunday of Advent

Violet



No-one is sure what Jesus meant when he spoke of the strange signs in the sky, but we know that Jesus will come again and we know that God loves us dearly. Just as we spend a lot of time getting ready for Christmas, so too we must spend some time to be ready for the time when Jesus comes again. Advent is a special time the church sets aside for us to prepare. The Advent wreath is a good way of seeing the weeks passing – a circle of evergreen branches, with three purple and one pink candle. One candle is lit each week of Advent, with the pink candle lit on the third

Sunday. We know that Jesus came to share love, forgiveness and peace with the world. If we share these gifts of his love each day by small acts of kindness then we will be ready to enjoy the celebrations of Christmas.

Gospel

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Strange things will happen to the sun, moon and stars. The nations on earth will be afraid of the roaring sea and tides, and they won’t know what to do. People will be so frightened that they will faint because of what is happening to the world. Every power in the sky will be shaken.

“Then the Son of Man will be seen, coming in a cloud with great power and glory. When all of this starts happening, stand up straight and be brave. You will soon be set free.

“Don’t spend all of your time thinking about eating or drinking or worrying about life. If you do, the final day will suddenly catch you like a trap. That day will surprise everyone on earth.

“Watch out and keep praying that you can escape all that is going to happen and that the Son of Man will be pleased with you.”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Jeremiah 33:14-16

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

I, the Lord, say this:

The time is coming when I will keep the promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

I will choose a ruler from the family of David,

And he will be completely fair to everyone.

Judah will be safe. Jerusalem will have peace, and it will be named,

“The Lord our Protector!”

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 25

Response: **TO YOU O LORD, I LIFT MY SOUL**

Show me your paths and teach me to follow;

guide me by your truth and instruct me.

You keep me safe, and I always trust you.

You are honest and merciful, and you teach sinners

how to follow your path.

You lead humble people to do what is right and to stay on your path.

Preparatory Material

SUGGESTED FOCUS

Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle and an Advent Wreath with three purple candles and one pink candle

IMAGES FROM THE READINGS

- God promises a ruler of integrity and justice
- Safety, peace and protection
- Following God's path
- The Son of Man coming in power and glory
- Watch out and keep praying

DISCUSSION POINTS

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Introduce the children to the Season of Advent, the four weeks before Christmas, which is the beginning of the church year. Point out the violet cloth and the Advent Wreath. Explain that the wreath is one way of celebrating this special time of preparation. Its circle of evergreen branches represents God's love which is without beginning or end; one candle is lit each week until Christmas. Some of the end-time images might be frightening for the children, but ensure that they are contained within the context of Jesus' coming and God's love for us

How do you prepare for Christmas? The church helps us to prepare by reminding us what will happen at the end of time.

What are the things that we can do to make our hearts ready inside for the new birth of Jesus this Christmas?

Just as we need to do special things to get ready for Christmas, we also need to be ready for the time when Jesus comes again, to welcome him into our hearts and lives today and every day. How can we do this?

ACT OF WORSHIP

Invite the children to join hands around the focus and together pray a blessing on the wreath and light the first purple candle.

"Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath. May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation. May he come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen" Children respond, "Come, Lord Jesus, Come"

BACKGROUND TO THE READINGS FOR LEADERS

Jesus speaks of the end of time in metaphorical language. He is reminding his listeners that our own lives and our own time on earth will not last forever. Despite the fact that his words describe some devastation, his message is positive, because all the readings point to the reality of peace and fulfilment. The promises made to a needy people who long for peace, are ones filled with hope, and tell us more about the God who makes them than those to whom they are made: a loving and provident God who offers second and third - numberless - chances.

REFLECTION FOR LEADERS

Some of the signs of turmoil and suffering described in the gospel of Luke are the same as the signs surrounding the death of Jesus: disturbances in the heavens, darkness and menace. These indicate the same type of distress that accompanies any major upheaval - times that shake us completely out of our complacency.

We are invited to stand before the Son of Man to receive the blessings promised by God. This is our invitation to take a watchful attitude in our lives, to keep our destination in mind, so that we don't become preoccupied solely with the things that distract us from what is really important. We need to spend time on the important things, prayer and the work that we are called to do, so that we can stand confidently before him.

What are your goals and the hopes and fears you have for your future? How are you preparing for the future?

What are the things that really matter to you?

What are the things that distract you from these important issues?

What are the things in your life that might hinder us from standing confidently before Christ?

Liturgy Outline

First Sunday of Advent

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, we thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus.
Help us to get ready to greet you at Christmas
and at the end of time. Amen

FIRST READING Jeremiah 33:14-16
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 25
 To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 21:25-28,34-36

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: With glad hearts let us pray to God for all our needs.

- For the church that it will be a place where truth and justice flourish
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For peace in the war-torn parts of the world
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That the land and seasons will bear plenty of food for all the people of the world
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That the sick and lonely amongst us will be comforted
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Saving God, shower your blessings and protection upon us and those
for whom we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Notes

Readings

Second Sunday of Advent

Violet

God sent John the Baptist to prepare the people for the coming of his Son, Jesus. John was filled with the Holy Spirit, and had the courage to stand before the crowds and preach to them. He told the people of Israel to turn back to God and ask for forgiveness for their sins so they were ready to listen to the words of Jesus when he came. Today we are asked to do the same thing.



Gospel

Luke 3:1a, 2-6

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

For fifteen years Emperor Tiberius had ruled that part of the world, and Annas and Caiaphas were the Jewish high priests. At that time God spoke to Zechariah's son John, who was living in the desert.

So John went along the Jordan Valley, telling the people, "Turn back to God and be baptised! Then your sins will be forgiven."

Isaiah the prophet wrote about John when he said, "In the desert someone is shouting, 'Get the road ready for the Lord! Make a straight path for him! Fill up every valley and level every mountain and hill. Straighten the crooked paths and smooth out the rough roads. Then everyone will see the saving power of God.'"

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Baruch 5:1-5,7

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET BARUCH

Jerusalem, exchange your robes of sorrow and suffering for those glorious garments God has given you forever. Dress in the saving power of the eternal God, and wear his glory like a crown on your head.

God will show everyone on earth how wonderful you are. And he has forever given you this name: "Justice Leads to Peace, Obeying God Brings Honour."

Jerusalem, climb to the peaks of the highest mountains and see your people coming from the east and the west, at the command of God. They are celebrating because they have been remembered by the Holy One.

God has commanded every tall and ancient mountain to be levelled to the ground and every valley filled in. Then Israel will safely walk in the glory of God.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 126

Response: **THE LORD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US;
WE ARE FILLED WITH JOY**

It seemed like a dream when the Lord brought us back to the city of Zion. We celebrated with laughter and joyful songs.

In foreign nations it was said, "The Lord has worked miracles for his people." And so we celebrated because the Lord had indeed worked miracles for us

Second Reading

Philippians 1:4-6

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Brothers and sisters: whenever I mention you in my prayers, it makes me happy. This is because you have taken part with me in spreading the good news from the first day you heard about it. God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.

The word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle, sandals and a walking stick and the Advent Wreath

Images from the Readings

- Justice leads to peace
- Obeying God brings honour
- Deepening our faith, love and gratitude for each other
- Preparing for God
- Straightening the crooked, smoothing the rough

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Dramatising with an adult dressed in hessian and carrying a stick might be an effective way to make John's message more real to the children.

How do you think John the Baptist felt about his job? How did he go about preparing the way for the Messiah?

When the people asked him what they were to do, what did he say to them? (He told the people that they had to change their ways – his message was of sharing, non-violence and simplicity)

What can children do?

What do we use water for? What did John do with water? (John baptised people with water when they were truly sorry, as a sign that they wanted to wash away their sin and begin a new life)

Act of Worship

Invite the children to join hands around the focus as you light the first two purple and the pink candles of the Advent wreath, praying:

“If we keep our eyes on the light,
we need never feel afraid.

Jesus will walk before us, guiding us through life
towards the kingdom of heaven. Amen.”

Children respond, “Come, Lord Jesus, Come”

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The Church sees John the Baptist as the last prophet of Israel who looked and yearned for the coming Messiah. John prepares the people for the coming of the Lord and announces him, and his spirit of expectation as displayed in today's Gospel is contagious. John lived in the desert, rejecting the prevailing culture of the day and instead proclaimed the possibility of freedom and holiness. Like a competent MC, John has stirred the people up into a storm of fervour and high expectation – the whole community, tax collectors, soldiers, everyone - putting their lives in order in a fizz of anticipation and preparation. The baptism he offered was a plunging into water to signify a person's repentance of sin. When asked what people had to do in response to his preaching, he advocated not praying and fasting but changing the way they treated others. His call was compelling - he called others into the desert, to leave the things that amuse and distract them, and come to meet the One who can satisfy them.

Reflection for Leaders

We too are being called by John to examine our ways, change our lives, and live as people who have been saved. As seekers of God we are to live justly and at peace with others according to our own calling. We should be people of joy, and that joy should be obvious to all. We must be people of prayer and thanksgiving, asking God for all our needs; people of confident and expectant faith. How, in our own circumstances, can we live justly and with integrity?

Who are the people you have met who have inspired or challenged you to be a better person?

The spirituality of the desert still has a place in the Church today. Leaving the things that amuse and distract us to spend time with God is the basis of having a retreat. In what ways can you make a 'desert place' in your day to day life?

What might John suggest to you if you were to ask him “What then should I do?”
Resolve to do something simple and concrete this week and do it.

Liturgy Outline

Second Sunday of Advent

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, fill us with your Spirit so that we may be brave enough to choose the right way no matter what others say and think. Amen

FIRST READING Baruch 5:1-5,7
 Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 126
 The Lord has done great things for us, we are filled with joy.
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* Philippians 1:4-6
 Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 3:1a, 2-6

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: With hopeful hearts let us ask our loving God for all our needs.

- For all God's family, that we may share the Good News with everyone Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who govern us, that they will show justice and mercy to all Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For people everywhere who are suffering Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we will live lives of service to others Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Saving God, shower your blessings and protection upon us and those for whom we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Notes

Readings

Third Sunday of Advent

Violet



The crowds wanted to be ready to welcome the Messiah. John told them what to do. His words are just as important for us today, so that we too will be ready for Jesus to come. Today's candle in the Advent wreath is pink – a symbol of joy as we look forward to Christmas. We might think of ways that we can bring some joy to someone else who might be sick or lonely at this time.

Gospel

Luke 3:10-16,18

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

The crowds asked John the Baptist, "What should we do?" John told them, "If you have two coats, give one to someone who doesn't have any. If you have food, share it with someone else. When tax collectors came to be baptised, they asked John, "Teacher, what should we do?" John told them, "Don't make people pay more than they owe." Some soldiers asked him, "And what about us? What do we have to do?" John told them, "Don't force people to pay money to make you leave them alone. Be satisfied with your pay."

Everyone became excited and wondered, "Could John be the Messiah?" John said, "I am just baptising with water. But someone more powerful is going to come, and I am not good enough even to untie his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire." In many different ways John preached the good news to the people.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Zephaniah 3:14-15

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ZEPHANIAH

Everyone in Jerusalem and Judah,
celebrate and shout with all your heart.
You won't be punished now.
The Lord has made your enemies retreat.
The Lord is the king of Israel,
and he is at your side.
You don't have to worry about any more troubles.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Isaiah 12

Response: **CRY OUT WITH JOY AND GLADNESS, FOR AMONG YOU
IS THE GREAT AND HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL**

I trust the Lord to save me, and I won't be afraid. My power and my strength come from the Lord God, and he has saved me.

Our Lord, we are thankful, and we worship only you. We will tell the nations how glorious you are and what you have done.

People of Jerusalem, celebrate and sing. The famous Lord God of Israel is here with you.

Second Reading

Philippians 4:4-7

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Brothers and sisters: always be glad because of the Lord! I will say it again: Be glad. Always be gentle with others. The Lord will soon be here. Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.

The word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a bowl of water and the Advent Wreath

Images from the Readings

- Celebrate and shout
- Thankful hearts
- Be glad
- The call to change our lives
- Someone more powerful is going to come

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Who was the man who appeared in the desert? Tell the children a little about how John was specially chosen by God (Luke 1:5-17), and about John's family relationship with Jesus. Mention Mary's visit to Elizabeth.

What did he tell the people to do?

Show a map of the places John began proclaiming his message. How did John travel?

What does John mean where he speaks about filling in valleys and straightening roads for the coming of the Lord?

What can children do?

Act of Worship

Invite the children to join hands around the focus and light the first two purple candles on the advent wreath while praying:

"If we keep our eyes on the light,
we need never feel afraid.

Jesus will walk before us, guiding us through life
towards the kingdom of heaven. Amen."

Children respond, "Come, Lord Jesus, Come"

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The readings today revisit the theme of promise and move it in a slightly different direction. They establish God's promise in a particular time and place. Then they characterise it as one of wondrous transformation.

To understand the prophecies of redemption in the Old Testament, it helps to imagine the Jewish people in captivity with little hope of seeing their homeland again. Baruch brings the good news of salvation to the people in exile in Babylon. He promises that they will return home to Jerusalem. The joy of the promise is linked with being clothed in God's own splendour at the end of time.

The gospel describes the word of God coming to John in a very specific place and time. It is this word that defines John's mission. It is John's voice which calls the people of his time to a change of heart; to a new understanding of who they are and who God is. The road being made straight and smooth is an important image for Luke. Jesus is often found on the road and the journey he makes to Jerusalem is at the heart of the gospel.

Reflection for Leaders

It is so easy to become distracted by all the fuss that goes on around us. The readings encourage us to try and not go away from God in our lives. Among all the things clamouring for your attention, how does God's word come to you?

Advent is a time of yearning for transformation, and of preparing for its arrival. It is a time to open ourselves so that God can accomplish much through ordinary human vessels. Transformation is often experienced by people who grieve. The fruit can be seen in our relationships with people whom our society marginalises.

The gospel speaks of filling in valleys, smoothing hills, straightening the paths of the Lord. What are some of the things – relationships, past experiences, social pressures, present difficulties – that block the path of God in your own life? Do you need to make some changes?

How might you go about smoothing out some of the things in your life that make it difficult for you to change?

What voice is leading you to a change of heart?

Liturgy Outline

Third Sunday of Advent

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, help us to remember anyone who is sick or lonely at this
time of year. May the joy and peace of Christmas touch their lives.
Amen

FIRST READING Zephaniah 3:14-15
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Isaiah 12:2-6
 Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the
great and Holy One of Israel.
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* Philippians 4:4-7
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 3:10-16,18

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: With confidence let us pray to God for all our needs.

- For the Church, that all will have life through her gentle guidance
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all who are lonely, sick or homeless
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the needs of our neighbours, the people of the South Pacific
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For ourselves and our families, that we will always respect each other
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of mercy and peace, you are our only hope. Bless and protect us
and those for whom we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Notes

Readings

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Violet

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that her cousin Elizabeth was expecting a baby, Mary would have been surprised because Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah had never been able to have children and were quite old. Mary set off to visit Elizabeth. Both of them were expecting their first child, and both knew that they had been chosen by God and that their children would be blessed by God in a very special way. What do you think they would have talked about together?



Gospel

Luke 1:39-45

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Mary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah's home, where she greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby moved within her. The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth. Then in a loud voice she said to Mary: "God has blessed you more than any other woman! He has also blessed the child you will have. Why should the mother of my Lord come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, my baby became happy and moved within me. The Lord has blessed you because you believed that he will keep his promise."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Micah 5:1-3

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET MICAH

Town of Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest in the nation of Judah. But I will choose one of your people to rule the nation. And his family goes back to ancient times.

The Lord will abandon Israel only until this ruler is born and the rest of his family come back to join Israel.

He will stand like a shepherd feeding his sheep by the power and glorious name of the Lord his God. His people will live in peace, and everyone on earth will know how great the Lord is.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 80

Response: **ROUSE YOUR POWER, O LORD, AND COME TO SAVE US**

Shepherd of Israel, you sit on your throne above the winged creatures. Listen to our prayer and let your light shine. Save us by your power.

God All-Powerful, please do something! Look down from heaven and see what's happening to this vine. With your own hands you planted its roots.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle, the Advent Wreath, cards for each child with a copy of the 'Hail Mary' printed on it.

Images from the Readings

- Like a shepherd feeding his sheep
- Live in peace
- Believing that God will keep his promise
- Rejoicing together in the life we are given

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Has anyone helped or watched as the family prepared for the birth of a younger brother or sister? What sort of things do we need to do when a new baby is coming? How would Mary have had to prepare for the coming of Jesus?

Mary did something else that was quite unusual. We read about it in the Gospel today. What happened when Mary and Elizabeth met? What did Elizabeth say? How did Mary respond?

What does this gospel show us about Mary and about her child?

Can you think of something that God has done for you? Many of the gifts that God has given us we take for granted. Can we make a list of some of these things? (home, family, clothing, friends, teachers, creation etc)

Act of Worship

Light all the candles on the advent wreath.

"If we keep our eyes on the light, we need never feel afraid. Jesus will walk before us, guiding us through life towards the kingdom of heaven. Amen"

Give each child a copy of the "Hail Mary". Read it together.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with you

Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary Mother of God pray for us sinners

Now, and at the hour of our death

Amen

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Out of the defeat and ruin of an oppressed people, Micah promises hope from the hands of a faithful God. The hope of peace. Bethlehem was considered fairly insignificant for the Jews, so much like the comment "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46) this promise may not have been considered of great importance. In worldly terms, even the places associated with the life of the Saviour are small and insignificant.

The Gospel today describes what is commonly called 'The Visitation' – the coming together of two women to acknowledge the action of God in their lives. Mary, a young girl from an obscure village in Palestine, becomes the mother of God. Elizabeth's words of greeting to Mary remind us that faith is firstly a gift of God. Elizabeth knew by an intuition from God about her cousin and the child she was bearing – no person had explained the circumstances to her. This is symbolised by the leaping of her own unborn child inside her. God uses those who are small and powerless to bring about salvation. Luke's gospel pays a great deal of attention to the role of women in the story of salvation.

Reflection for Leaders

Mary has a unique and integral place in the Christian tradition. Catholics honour her because she was chosen by God to bring to flesh Jesus the Son of God. Yet this was not forced on her - God waited on her acceptance. Mary's simplicity and faith is a model for all those who believe. Can you remember a time when you 'knew' the action of God in your life without any explanation being necessary? In today's Gospel, Mary and Elizabeth are completely 'tuned in' to God's action in their lives. How tuned in are you? Do you have a sense of how 'blessed' you are, and can you recognise goodness in others?

What do you believe God promises you?

As Christmas fast approaches, we all become very busy. Try to find time this week to visit someone who would particularly appreciate it at this time.

Liturgy Outline

Fourth Sunday of Advent

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God,
You have given us many gifts, and the greatest of these is your
Son, Jesus. Help us to always remember your goodness. Amen

FIRST READING Micah 5:1-3
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 80
 Rouse your power, O Lord, and come to save us
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 1:39-45
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Inspired by the Word of God, we ask for all our needs.

- For the Church, that those who shepherd the church will do it with wisdom and strength and be a light for the world
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who govern us, that they will do so with justice and integrity
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all those who are lonely at this time of year, the sick and those who need encouragement
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For ourselves and our families, that we will have the courage to obey the will of God in our decisions
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of peace, shelter in your arms those for whom we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord
All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Notes

The Birth of the Lord

No material has been given for Christmas as it is recommended that Children celebrate with the full community.



Readings

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

White



Joseph had to save his family from danger. Our families protect us from harm too. What else are families for? In what ways do they show love, caring and sharing? What roles do family members have? We are all part of a very large and special family – God's family. How is this family like our own family?

Gospel

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

An angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Get up! Hurry and take the child and his mother to Egypt! Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is looking for the child and wants to kill him."

That night Joseph got up and took his wife and the child to Egypt, where they stayed until Herod died. So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, "I called my son out of Egypt."

After King Herod died, an angel from the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph while he was still in Egypt. The angel said, "Get up and take the child and his mother back to Israel. The people who wanted to kill him are not dead."

Joseph got up and left with them for Israel. But when he heard that Herod's son Archelaus was now ruler of Judea, he was afraid to go there. Then in a dream he was told to go to Galilee, and they went to live there in the town of Nazareth.

So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, "He will be called a Nazarene."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Sirach 3:2-6

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET SIRACH

Children, the Lord expects you to honour your father, and has given your mother authority over you.

If you honour your father, your sins will be forgiven. If you praise your mother, treasure will be stored up in heaven for you.

If you honour your father, your own children will make you happy, and all of your prayers will be answered. If you respect your father, you will live a long life, and if you listen to the Lord, your mother can relax.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 128

Response: **HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO FEAR THE LORD AND WALK IN HIS WAYS**

The Lord will bless you if you respect him and obey his laws.

Your fields will produce, and you will be happy and all will go well.

Your wife will be as fruitful as a grapevine, and just as an olive tree is rich with olives, your home will be rich with healthy children.

That is how the Lord will bless everyone who respects him. I pray that the Lord will bless you from Zion and let Jerusalem prosper as long as you live.

Second Reading

Colossians 3:12-17

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

Brothers and sisters: God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient. Put up with each other, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you. Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything completely together.

Each one of you is part of the body of Christ, and you were chosen to live together in peace. So let the peace that comes from Christ control your thoughts. And be grateful.

Let the message about Christ completely fill your lives, while you use all your wisdom to teach and instruct each other. With thankful hearts, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of him.

The Word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a map and a sipper bottle

Images from the Readings

- Respect and honour your parents
- God loves you and has chosen you
- Love is more important than anything else
- Jesus is saved by Joseph's obedience
- God's promise came true

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Have you ever been on a long journey? What are some of the things that help as you travel?

Why did the angel tell Joseph to take the child and his mother to Egypt? What was the hurry?

Do you think Joseph might have been afraid? Why?

Did Joseph have time to pack the things that would have helped on the journey?

Why did Jesus need a loving and caring family to look after him and protect him as he grew up?

Can you think of a time when your family had to protect you from danger? What else are families for?

Do the people in your family have special 'jobs' or 'roles'?

When we were baptised we became a member of the family of God. Can you see any ways it is similar being in the special family of God with your own family situation?

Act of Worship

Invite the children to name the members of their family. Thank God for each one of them and ask God to bless them and keep them safe.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

All the readings today point to the support of loving relationships and protective families. Our baptism brings us into God's family, where we learn the advantages and the responsibilities of belonging.

Reflection for Leaders

The feast of the Holy Family, coming within the Christmastide celebrations, gives us a further opportunity to reflect on the miracle of the incarnation of Jesus into a human family. God provided this special family to protect and nurture his Son in his earthly This family, who were so faithful and instantly obedient to God's will, provides us with a model that show us how to be committed and caring for the responsibilities with which we have been blessed. Have you ever wondered about the instant obedience that Joseph displayed when he was warned that Jesus was in danger in a dream? How instant is our obedience when we recognise that God is asking us to do something that will be disruptive to our life?

Reflect on your own experience of family life. What is it that makes some relationships more special than others? Can you identify ways in which you have come to experience God's love in your family? Do you allow other members of you family to experience God's love through you?

As members of our own families we have certain responsibilities. We also have responsibilities as members of God's family. What are these responsibilities and how do we prioritise them? Are there times when there is conflict between these? How do you resolve this?

What ways does your faith community support families and help them to thrive?

What opportunities are there for families to grow in faith together?

Liturgy Outline

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

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to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, we are your children. Thank you for the gift of life. Help us
to live fully, using the gifts we have each been given, learning to use
these to help each other. Amen

FIRST READING Sirach 3:2-6
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 128
 Happy are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* Colossians 3:12-17
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Matthew
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Just as Jesus taught us, we turn to God for all our needs:

- For the Church, that it be a place where people can shelter in safety
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we teach others by our example to love one another
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we treat others with respect, dignity and kindness
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That families everywhere will be strong and supportive of each other
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Loving God, help us to live in peace with all your people, that we may
share in your life forever. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings
Mary the Mother of God

White



Gospel

Luke 2:16-21

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. Everyone listened and was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

Eight days later Jesus' parents did for him what the Law of Moses commands. And they named him Jesus, just as the angel had told Mary when he promised she would have a baby.

The gospel of the Lord

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

The Lord told Moses, "When Aaron and his sons bless the people of Israel, they must say: pray that the LORD will bless and protect you, and that he will show you mercy and kindness. May the LORD be good to you and give you peace."

Then the Lord said, "If Aaron and his sons ask me to bless the Israelites, I will give them my blessing."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 67

Response: **MAY GOD BLESS US IN HIS MERCY**

Our God, be kind and bless us!

Be pleased and smile.

Then everyone on earth will learn to follow you,
and all nations will see your power to save us.

Make everyone praise you and shout your praises.

Pray for his blessings to continue

and for everyone on earth to worship our God.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a statue or picture of Mary, a rose

Images from the Readings

- Hurried off and found them
- Mary kept thinking
- Just as the angel had said
- They named him Jesus
- Blessing

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Today we celebrate two important things. We honour Mary, Mother of God. But today is also International World Day of Peace.

Do you know who Mary was? (Mother of Jesus)

What sort of things would you expect a mother to do? Would Mary have had to do these sort of things? Would she have to change nappies, wash, cook and sew?

What are the more important things for a mother to do than just doing all those chores? (to love and care for their children, kiss hurts better, talk to them and listen to them, teach them prayers and manners and how to behave etc)

There is another thing that Mums and Dads have to do for their children. Do you know what it is? (name their children)

When it was time to name Jesus, Mary and Joseph did this. The angel had told them his name when he told Mary that she would have a baby.

How did the shepherds know about the baby? (angels told them)

Why do you think there were so many angels around then?

Why do you think Mary was so special?

1. She said 'yes' to God when asked to be the Mother of his Son
2. She knew Jesus better than anyone else ever
3. She always did what God wanted
4. Jesus gave Mary to us as our heavenly mother

What ways can we bring peace into our homes today?

Act of Worship

Pray the Hail Mary together, explaining to the children that the first part of the prayer come from the Christmas story, and the second part is a prayer for the Church. When we pray this we ask Mary to pray for us. 'Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen'

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The well-known verses from Numbers are familiar to us. Sometimes called the Aaronic or Priestly blessing, these beautiful words extend God's blessing to all the people – God's favour and grace, protection and peace. There is a progression from the material to the spiritual. Peace which is more than just the absence of war – summing up all God's good gifts it includes health, joy, prosperity and salvation. The Psalm was used as harvest thanksgiving and echoes the words of the first reading, recognising how dependent we are on God. It closes on the note that all people on earth will come to know God. The gospel brings the Christmas message from the babe back to the mother. The reaction of the shepherds is an awesome wonderment, and Mary reflects on all the events. The opening chapters of Luke's gospel are based on an Aramaic document but with this passage it is understood that the facts came directly from Mary's own reminiscences. This gospel, then, is her gift to us.

Reflection for Leaders

The church celebrates Mary's maternity, Mary as Theokos – God-bearer. It is thanks to her that Jesus is fully human. Mary is the bringer of Christ to all with whom she comes in contact. In what ways are you, like Mary, also a 'God-bearer' to others? How might you become more so? Mary spent time reflecting, pondering and thinking. In our busy world making time for reflection is a difficult ask, but during building reflection time into our daily routine can be a valuable exercise. Reflect on ways you can make peace a reality in your situation. Think of a recent time when you received a blessing. How did it feel? During this week look for opportunities to reach out to someone with a blessing.

Liturgy Outline

Mary the Mother of God

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you love us and ask us to be obedient and trust you. Help us to do your will even when it is hard and we are afraid, just as Mary did. Amen

FIRST READING Numbers 6:22-27
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 67
 May God bless us in his mercy
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 2:16-21
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: As Mary trusted God for all her needs, and knowing that God's blessings are freely available to us, let us now turn to God:

- That the Church will take every chance to bring justice and peace in the world
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we will bring God to all we meet
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For real peace, not just an absence of war, in our world
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That this community of faith will support mothers as they share the love of God with their families
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of blessing, let your face shine on us and all those we pray for today. We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son.

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Ephiphany of the Lord

White



Gospel

Matthew 2:1-12

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and said, "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. Herod brought together all the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them, "Where will the Messiah be born?"

They told him, "He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote, 'Bethlehem in the land of Judea, you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader, who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel.'"

Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. He told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too."

The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were thrilled and excited to see the star.

When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him. Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Isaiah 60:1-6

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

Jerusalem, stand up and shine! Your new day is dawning. And the glory of the Lord shines brightly on you. The earth and its people are covered with darkness, but the glory of the Lord is shining over you. Nations and kings will come to the light of your dawning day.

Open your eyes and look around! Crowds are on their way. Your sons are coming from distant lands, and your daughters are being carried like young children. When you see this, your faces will glow. Your hearts will beat fast and swell with pride.

Treasures from over the sea and the wealth of nations will be brought to you. Your country will be covered with caravans of young camels from Midian and Ephah. And the people of Sheba will bring gold and spices in praise of the Lord.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 72

Response: **LORD, EVERY NATION ON EARTH WILL ADORE YOU**

Our God, be kind and bless us!

Be pleased and smile.

Then everyone on earth will learn to follow you,
and all nations will see your power to save us.

Make everyone praise you and shout your praises.

Pray for his blessings to continue

and for everyone on earth to worship our God.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle and a nativity crib. Also have a map of Israel, a star and three wrapped presents to use.

Images from the Readings

- The glory of God shines brightly on you.
- Crowds are on their way
- We saw his star
- A shepherd for my people
- They took out their gifts

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. The wise men from the east came on a long journey to find the child that was born to be king of the Jews. How did they know where to go? Why did they go and talk to Herod?

Where did Herod tell them to go? (Show the map and indicate where Bethlehem and Jerusalem are on it)

What things did the wise men bring for the child? (Gold, precious and costly, was offered to kings; frankincense, a perfumed incense, was offered to God; and myrrh, a perfumed ointment used for burials, indicated the humanity of Jesus and his death)

When do we give or receive presents?

Why did the angel tell the wise men not to return to Herod?

Act of Worship

Dramatisation of the gospel by the children might be used as an act of worship this week. Use the star and let them mime following it towards the nativity crib. Let three children bring the presents.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The word 'epiphany' comes from a Greek word meaning revelation or manifestation. The birth of Christ is the sign that God is with us, that God's hand is everywhere at work in the world. The 'wise men' were probably astrologers, or magi, from Persia, and they represent all who seek God with a sincere heart. They were not Jews, yet they were the ones who recognised the signs that indicated something special was happening, and they travelled far to find and worship the new king. Naturally they headed towards the palace in Jerusalem in their search. Imagine their confusion when they were led to a simple house in a small town. However they were open to seeing the divine in the ordinary, and after encountering Jesus they returned home by a new road. Herod, on the other hand, and the very people who should have been aware of what was happening right under their noses, had the opposite response: when they understand what was happening, they were not open to the revelation of God in this child and sought to harm him.

Reflection for Leaders

This ancient feast celebrates the welcoming of all people who seek God with a sincere heart. It is not just the chosen people who are invited to faith in Jesus as Lord. He is significant to all who seek truth, and his light draws people into relationship with God. He is the sign of God's love for creation and through whom God's love is made known to all.

Today is a time to reflect on how far we have travelled in our own journey towards Jesus. What is leading you? How much progress have you made? What gifts do you bring? How open are you to the possibility of finding the divine in the ordinary?

As we think on the story of the wise men, and reflect on how thrilled and excited they were to see the star, we might reflect back on times of pure delight in our own life experience. Did they cause us to take a new road?

We might also think about how open we are to welcoming 'foreigners' who come to seek Jesus. What hospitality ministries are present in your faith community?

How important are they?

Liturgy Outline

The Epiphany of the Lord

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

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Celebration of the Word

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to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you revealed your Son to the world by the guidance of a
star. Lead us too, by the light of faith, that we may bring others to
you as well. Amen

FIRST READING Isaiah 60:1-6
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 72
 Lord, every nation on earth will adore you
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Matthew 2:1-12
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Matthew
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: Believing the promises of the Word we have just heard, let us call upon
God for all our needs:

- For the Church, that she be a welcoming beacon of light and truth and hope
to guide us all to know God
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we share the gifts that we have to help and support each other
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we have the courage to go where God leads us
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That people who do not know the gift of Jesus to the world will know true
peace in their hearts
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Loving God, help us to share your love and all that you have given us,
to make this world a place of welcome. We pray this through Jesus Christ our
Lord

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

The Baptism of the Lord

White

Jesus was baptised in order to receive the Holy Spirit for his work of teaching and healing, so that everyone would know he was the Son of God. Have you attended any baptisms? What are the special symbols used in the ceremony? – Promises, water, holy oil, white garment, lighted candle. What does our baptism mean to us?



Gospel

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Everyone became excited and wondered, "Could John be the Messiah?"

John said, "I am just baptising with water. But someone more powerful is going to come, and I am not good enough even to untie his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

After everyone else had been baptised, Jesus himself was baptised. Then as he prayed, the sky opened up, and the Holy Spirit came down upon him in the form of a dove. A voice from heaven said, "You are my own dear Son, and I am pleased with you."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Isaiah 42:1-2, 4, 6-7

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

Here is my servant! I have made him strong. He is my chosen one, and I am pleased with him.

I will give him my Spirit, and he will bring justice to the nations. He won't shout or yell or call out in the streets. He won't quit or give up until he brings justice to all the earth, and people in foreign lands long for his teaching.

I, the Lord, chose you because of my kindness, and I am here at your side. I created and appointed you to bring light and my promise of hope to the nations, and set prisoners free from dark dungeons.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 29

Response: **THE LORD WILL BLESS HIS PEOPLE WITH PEACE.**

The voice of the Lord echoes over the oceans. He thunders above the roar of the raging seas, and his voice is mighty and marvellous.

The glorious Lord God thunders above the roar of the raging seas, and the temple is filled with shouts of praise. The Lord rules on his throne, king of the flood forever.

Second Reading

Acts 10:34-38

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Peter said to Cornelius and his household: "Now I am certain that God treats all people alike. God is pleased with everyone who worships him and does right, no matter what nation they come from. This is the same message that God gave to the people of Israel, when he sent Jesus Christ, the Lord of all, to offer peace to them.

"You surely know what happened everywhere in Judea. It all began in Galilee after John had told everyone to be baptised. God gave the Holy Spirit and power to Jesus from Nazareth. He was with Jesus, as he went around doing good and healing everyone who was under the power of the devil."

The Word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a bowl of water, a white garment and a small bottle of oil

Images from the Readings

- Here is my servant
- Chosen and appointed
- The gift of the Holy Spirit and power
- Baptising with water
- I am pleased with you

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Have you ever been to a baptism? Can you remember what happened? What were the special symbols used? (white garment, holy oil, water, lighted candle, promises made)

When we are baptised we receive the Holy Spirit and power, just as Jesus did. Then we become 'beloved' sons and daughters of God, just as Jesus was.

When Jesus was baptised, this was the beginning of his work among the people. What was his work? (serve others and tell them of God's love)

Our baptism means that that same work. In what ways can we do this?

How can we be like Jesus at home, school, with our friends?

Act of Worship

Invite the children to come forward and use the water in the bowl to sign their foreheads. They could use their name and repeat the words that God spoke over Jesus when he was baptised: "N_____, you are my own dear child, I am pleased with you."

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The reading from Isaiah is the first of what are called the Servant Songs. We now see the servant as being Jesus, the Messiah, a leader who will bring justice, peace and healing. Before Jesus came, the Jews felt that God's Spirit was no longer alive in the world. God's communication with the people had ceased since the time of the Prophets. But the baptism of the Lord in the Jordan once again signals a renewal of the relationship between God and all the people, including Gentiles.

By Jewish law, Jesus was probably about thirty years old, the legal age for public teaching. He was baptised as a sign of his obedience and compliance with the will of God. In Jewish literature, a voice from heaven is the sign of a religious teacher, a prophet. The readings are full of symbolism about the renewed relationship God is instituting to end our separation.

The word baptism comes from a Greek word meaning 'to plunge'. The first Christians were baptised by being plunged into running streams or rivers, following the practice of John. Later, large fonts were built in churches and baptism of the faithful (usually adults) was by full immersion.

Reflection for Leaders

The feast of the Baptism of the Lord, ends the season of Christmas. Baptism is the first of the seven sacraments of the Church. Immersion in water symbolises not only death and purification, but also regeneration and renewal. The white garment represents the new life in Christ; the oil symbolises the anointing into the ministry of Jesus, King, priest and prophet. The lit candle represents the light of Christ in our lives.

The mainstream Christian churches recognise the same baptism, so a person baptised into one of these churches need not repeat the process if they change to another denomination. As we consider the privileges and responsibilities of our own baptism this week, let us reflect on our own sense of being set apart and chosen by God. What have been the consequences of our baptism, and how is our life different because of it? How strong is your sense of being 'beloved' and 'favoured' by God? How much time do you spend alone in prayer?

Liturgy Outline

The Baptism of the Lord

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, we became your children at our baptism. Help us to know
your love so we can share it freely with others. Amen

FIRST READING Isaiah 42:1-2, 4, 6-7

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 29
The Lord will bless his people with peace
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* Acts 10:34-38

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Let us bring all our needs to our loving God:

- For the Church, that it be a place where people are always welcome
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That the poor, the sick and the lonely will know how much God loves and
cares for them
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we treat people who are different from us with respect
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of acceptance in our lives
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Loving God, help us to know the depth of your love for us, that we may
share this with all we meet. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

First Sunday of Lent

Violet

Jesus went into the desert to think and to be close to God. Did he find it easy in the desert? Jesus showed us the importance of spending time reflecting on the things in our lives and drawing closer to God through prayer. We use these forty days of Lent to do this too. It is an opportunity for us to do something for God to show our love and how sorry we are for the mistakes that we make. It gives us the chance to have a fresh start.



Gospel

Luke 4:1-13

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

When Jesus returned from the Jordan River, the power of the Holy Spirit was with him, and the Spirit led him into the desert. For forty days Jesus was tested by the devil, and during that time he went without eating. When it was all over, he was hungry. The devil said to Jesus, "If you are God's Son, tell this stone to turn into bread." Jesus answered, "The Scriptures say, 'No one can live only on food.'"

Then the devil led Jesus up to a high place and quickly showed him all the nations on earth. The devil said, "I will give all this power and glory to you. It has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. Just worship me, and you can have it all." Jesus answered, "The Scriptures say: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only him!'"

Finally, the devil took Jesus to Jerusalem and had him stand on top of the temple. The devil said, "If you are God's Son, jump off. The Scriptures say: 'God will tell his angels to take care of you. They will catch you in their arms, and you will not hurt your feet on the stones.'" Jesus answered, "The Scriptures also say, 'Don't try to test the Lord your God!'"

After the devil had finished testing Jesus in every way possible, he left him for a while.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

Moses said to the people: "The priest will take the baskets of grain from your hands and put them in front of the altar of the Lord your God. And there, in the presence of the Lord your God, you must say, 'My ancestor was merely as homeless Aramean, who went to live in Egypt. Although his family was small, they became great and powerful, a nation of many people.

'The Egyptians showed no pity! They oppressed our people and were very cruel to us. Then we called out for help to you, the Lord God of our ancestors. You heard our cries and knew that we were in trouble, distressed and oppressed.

'You reached out your mighty arm and rescued us from Egypt. You did fearsome things, and you worked miracles and all kinds of wonders.

'You brought us here and gave us this land rich in milk and honey. Now, Lord, I bring to you the best part of the crops that you have given to me.' "Leave your baskets there in the presence of the Lord your God and bow down to worship him."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 91

Response: **BE WITH ME, LORD, WHEN I AM IN TROUBLE**

Live under the protection of God Most High and stay in the shadow of God All-Powerful. Then you will say to the Lord, "You are my fortress, my place of safety; you are my God, and I trust you."

No terrible disasters will strike you or your home. God will command his angels to protect you wherever you go.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a pair of sandals, a stone and a bun.

Images from the Readings

- I bring you the best part
- I trust you
- The power of the Holy Spirit was with him
- No one can live only on food
- The Scriptures say

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Does anyone know what this time of the Church's year is called? (Lent). It is the time that we are given an opportunity to look hard at our lives, work out what is really important to us and make a fresh start.

Why do you think Jesus went into the desert? (to spend time with God in prayer)

While he was there what happened to him? (the devil tested him)

How was Jesus able to resist the things that the devil was offering him? (He believed and trusted in God)

Can you think of any times when you feel as though you were being tested to choose the wrong things? Is it wrong to feel tempted by them? (No – temptations themselves are not wrong. As humans we all experience these from time to time. They are just invitations to make the wrong choices.)

What happens if we do choose the wrong thing? (We can turn back to God and show how sorry we are for the mistakes that we make)

Act of Worship

Invite the children to close their eyes as they think about the difficult things in their lives. Ask them to make this prayer their own: 'Do not be afraid, God will always love you. Whatever you have done, God will always love you and forgive you. God calls you back. Know that God's love lasts forever.'

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The reading from Deuteronomy indicates that the profession of faith was part of the Israelite celebration of the First Fruits, which acknowledged God's provision of the land and harvest. This celebration involved the action of offering the basket, and words which recounted God's saving acts. Today's gospel speaks of a period of forty days that Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying. Forty is a significant number in the Bible. It denotes an extended period, such as the duration of Noah's flood, the number of years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, and the preparation fasting time of both Elijah and Moses before encountering God. In Scripture, the desert or wilderness is a place of great deprivation and hardship. It is filled with danger – wild animals, bandits, outcasts from society and even demons. Yet it was the Spirit which led Jesus there. The temptations challenge Jesus to prove his divine sonship. Jesus counters each episode with a reference to Scripture. Unlike the Israelites, Jesus remains faithful and the devil departs for a time.

Reflection for Leaders

Lent, traditionally a time of fasting, prayer and giving, also runs for forty days. It is a special time of preparation, when we are invited to really examine our lives in detail. Our 'desert experiences' often lead us to a new faith experience and a new understanding of God. Which of the temptations of Jesus would you personally find most challenging? What are the great temptations in your life? In what ways have you been 'led by the Spirit' through the wilderness? Spend some time this week contemplating the difficult periods of your life, and how they lead you to new understandings of yourself, others and God.

Liturgy Outline

First Sunday of Lent

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
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God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, during the six weeks of Lent, help us to be strong even
when we find it most difficult. Amen

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM 91

Be with me Lord, when I am in trouble
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 4:1-13

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: With hearts full of hope let us pray to God for all our needs.

- For the Church, that all will find a deeper faith and trust in God
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we will turn to God more often in prayer as we begin our journey through
Lent this year
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That the people of our country will have the strength to do what is right
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For ourselves and our families, that we will know what is important in life
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of mercy and love, we are your children. Bless and protect us and
those for whom we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Second Sunday of Lent

Violet



Jesus took his friends Peter, James and John up a steep mountain where they could be alone to pray. As he prayed to God, Jesus appeared to change – his face and clothes shone brilliantly like the sun and dazzled his friends. These rays of light were a glimpse of God's glory and power. What did this show the disciples? Why is light so important to us?

Gospel

Luke 9:28-36

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus took Peter, John, and James with him and went up on a mountain to pray. While he was praying, his face changed, and his clothes became shining white. Suddenly Moses and Elijah were there speaking with him. They appeared in heavenly glory and talked about all that Jesus' death in Jerusalem would mean.

Peter and the other two disciples had been sound asleep. All at once they woke up and saw how glorious Jesus was. They also saw the two men who were with him.

Moses and Elijah were about to leave, when Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But Peter did not know what he was talking about.

While Peter was still speaking, a shadow from a cloud passed over them, and they were frightened as the cloud covered them. From the cloud a voice spoke, "This is my chosen Son. Listen to what he says!"

After the voice had spoken, Peter, John and James saw only Jesus. For some time they kept quiet and did not say anything about what they had seen.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Brothers and sisters:

We are citizens of heaven

and we are eagerly waiting for our Saviour to come from there.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has power over everything,

and he will make these poor bodies of ours

like his own glorious body.

Dear friends, I love you and long to see you.

Please keep on being faithful to the Lord.

You are my pride and joy.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 147

Response: **HAPPY ARE ALL WHO LONG FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD**

Shout praises to the Lord! Our God is kind, and it is right and good to sing praises to him.

He renews our hopes and heals our bodies. He decided how many stars there would be in the sky and gave each one a name.

Our Lord is great and powerful! He understands everything. Celebrate and sing! Play your harps for the Lord our God.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a white cloth

Images from the Readings

- Eagerly awaiting the Saviour
- Clothes became shining white
- They saw his glory
- From the cloud a voice spoke
- Listen to what he says

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Why did Jesus go up the mountain?

What happened while he was praying?

Why is light important to us? What did the light shining from Jesus' clothes and face show Peter, John and James?

Who did Peter, John and James see with Jesus?

What did Peter want to do?

What was the message that they heard from God? What did th

What things show us that God is around? (nature, people, Scripture, etc)

How do we hear Jesus? How do we come closer to God?

Act of Worship

Explain to the children that we need to be still and quiet to hear God speak to us. We often have times of silence in the Mass. Invite the children to close their eyes and silently pray asking Jesus to help them listen carefully to him. Make a short time of silence into your act of worship this week.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The event described in the Gospel reading today is traditionally known as 'the transfiguration'. Although the place it occurred is not mentioned in Scripture, it has long been associated with Mt Tabor in Galilee. The white robes and changed appearance of Jesus represented his glory and divinity, and this is what was being revealed to his most trusted disciples on this day. The cloud both symbolises the presence of God, and also conceals it, thereby protecting the witnesses from the full force of God's glory. In the same way Moses also had to be carefully shielded from seeing God's face in Exodus 24:15. Mountaintop experiences with God are well understood by the people of the day. The reference to Moses and Elijah links Jesus with two of the greatest people in Israel's history, both of whom had encounters with God on mountains. The meeting was a private experience for Jesus, as the disciples were asleep whilst it took place. Like Jesus, both these holy men lived lives for God and suffered rejection by their people. However the voice from the cloud, the hidden presence of God, reveals Jesus' divine identity and encourages the disciples to listen to him. All that the Law (represented by Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah) stood for will be accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Reflection for Leaders

This second Sunday of Lent celebrates ways that God's divine presence is revealed. Sometimes, like Peter, we can misunderstand our revelations. We have a need to withdraw at times for prayer and contemplation, yet it is not possible for us as Christians to remain forever on the mountain; we must come down and continue our journey. We are called to live our lives knowing that we are firstly citizens of heaven. We leave the place of worship to start again on the road of everyday life with all its cares and concerns, but to carry with it the hope that is only possible through faith. This week let us ponder on just how we are able to listen to Jesus in today's world? How important is it to have times of quiet contemplation in our journeys? What priority do you place on providing for this? What relevance do the sacraments have for you? In what ways do you balance prayer and action in living your faith in everyday life? Spend some extra time this week listening to Jesus through Scripture and prayer. What is he saying to you?

Liturgy Outline

Second Sunday of Lent

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

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to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, fill us with the light of your love and goodness. Help us to
be a light to touch the lives of others. Amen

FIRST READING Philippians 3:20-4:1
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM 147
 Happy are all who long for the coming of the Lord
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 9:28-36
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: Let us bring all our needs to our loving God.

- For the Church, that we may share the Good News with everyone
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we will delight in the presence of God
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That the people of our country will care about the sick and lonely in our
communities
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For ourselves and our families, that we follow the example of Jesus and make
time to pray and listen
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of transformations, fill us with delight in your presence and grant
what we need. Through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Third Sunday of Lent

Violet

Jesus taught the people using stories that they could understand. In today's story, Jesus tells us about giving one more chance to the fig tree to grow some fruit. What is Jesus trying to teach us with this story? Just as the gardener is willing to look after the tree very carefully so that it didn't need to be destroyed, so too God is willing to give us another chance, with Jesus' help, to change and grow the fruit of God's love.



Gospel

Luke 13:6-9

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus told the people this story:

“A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard. One day he went out to pick some figs, but he didn't find any. So he said to the gardener, ‘For three years I have come looking for figs on this tree, and I haven't found any yet. Chop it down! Why should it take up space?’

“The gardener answered, ‘Master, leave it for another year. I'll dig around it and put some manure on it to make it grow. Maybe it will have figs on it next year. If it doesn't, you can have it cut down.’”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF EXODUS

One day Moses was taking care of the sheep of Jethro his father-in-law, who was the priest of Midian. Moses led the sheep along the edge of the desert to Sinai, the mountain of God. Suddenly the Lord's angel appeared to him from a burning bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but it was not burning up. He said to himself, “This is strange! I'll go over and see why the bush is not burning up.”

When the Lord saw Moses coming near the bush, he called out to him. Moses answered, “Lord, here I am.”

God replied, “Don't come any closer. Take off your sandals, because the ground where you are standing is holy. I am God who was worshipped by your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

Moses was too afraid to look at God, and he hid his face. The Lord said, “I have seen how my people are suffering in Egypt, and I have heard them cry out to me because of those slave bosses. I am sorry for them, and so I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians. I will bring my people out of Egypt into a country where there is good land and plenty of milk and honey.”

Moses answered, “I will tell the people of Israel that the God of their ancestors has sent me to them. But what should I say, if they ask me who you are?”

God said to Moses, “I am who I am. So tell them that the one whose name is ‘I Am’ has sent you. Say that the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has sent you to them. This is my name forever, and it is the name that people must use from now on.”

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 103

Response: **THE LORD IS KIND AND MERCIFUL**

With all my heart I praise the Lord, and with all that I am I praise his holy name!
With all my heart I praise the Lord! I will never forget how kind he has been.

For all who are mistreated, the Lord brings justice. He taught his Law to Moses and showed all Israel what he could do.

The Lord is merciful! He is kind and patient and his love never fails. How great is God's love for all who worship him? Greater than the distance between heaven and earth!

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle, gardening implements – such as secateurs, a small axe or a pruning saw

Images from the Readings

- The bush was on fire
- Take off your sandals
- Holy ground
- Looking for fruit
- Leave it for another year

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. What do you think these gardening tools are for? (pruning, chopping off dead wood)

What do your parents do with plants that don't grow or produce the fruit that they should? (pull them up, cut them down)

Have you ever been ready to give up, but decided to give something one more chance, and then found that you have succeeded? What about when a friend has hurt you, do you decide not to be friends with them, or do you give them one more chance?

We often make wrong choices and mistakes, yet God always loves us and is ready to give us another chance. God is very caring and very patient with us. We are always given a chance to change or grow. Can you think of any ways that you could make changes to the way that you live your life to be better?

When Moses came to the burning bush, God told him to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. What do we do when we are in a holy place?

Act of Worship

Teach the children to make a profound bow, and talk about when it is appropriate to use this during the Mass

Background to the Readings for Leaders

At the time of this burning bush revelation of God, Moses is not a leader. Rather, he is tending sheep on a holy mountain. Moses asks for God's name, because a new revelation of God demands a new title – a personal name which reflects the continuing action of the God who was worshipped by their ancestors, and for whom geographical boundaries are no limit. It both tells us so much and so little. The people who are to be freed from captivity will have Moses' leadership authenticated by this new name.

In Scripture, the vineyard was often used as a symbol of Israel, God's people. The image of God is as the owner of the vineyard, who tends it with great care, planting, pruning, cultivating and feeding the plants to ensure they are fruitful and flourishing. Every means for fostering fruitfulness is offered to the barren fig tree, just as every opportunity is given to us to attend to our own need for repentance.

Reflection for Leaders

Today's readings lead us to reflect upon of the mystery of God. God reaches out to communicate with us in our burning bush experiences, at the same time is willing to cut off unfruitful branches. As we think about our personal encounters with God, we find the places of 'holy ground' in our life. Do we recognise the presence of God in the assembly gathered each week in His name? What about God's presence in the stuff of our everyday life? Do we see that the ground of our daily existence is holy because of our service of Christ to others as we live our lives?

When we consider the gospel, we are brought to consider the role of the gardener and how this impacts our lives during this time of Lenten preparation. Cultivation requires care and attention – and often pruning. Pruning in our lives is usually a painful experience, but out of it comes healthy, strong growth. Have you known people who have needed to be cultivated for a long time before they 'produced fruit'? Sometimes it takes time for our own fruit to be most abundant and lush. How fruitful has your life been? Your relationship with God? Are there areas of your life which are yet to bear fruit?

Liturgy Outline

Third Sunday of Lent

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

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Celebration of the Word

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God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, take our hand and show us the way you want us to live and
grow. Help us to bear the fruit of your love. Amen

FIRST READING Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15

Reader The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

PSALM 103

The Lord is kind and merciful
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 13:6-9

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Let us bring all our needs to our loving God.

- For the Church, that she bears much fruit
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a desire to please God
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That the people of our country will be tolerant and live in peace with each other
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For ourselves and our families, that we learn to be obedient to God
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of faithfulness, listen to the prayers that we, your children, make
to you through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Violet



What is Jesus trying to teach us with this story? He wants us to know and understand that whatever we do wrong, we can always come back to God and ask for forgiveness. God welcomes us back with open arms.

Gospel

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Tax collectors and sinners were all crowding around to listen to Jesus. So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses started grumbling, "This man is friendly with sinners. He even eats with them."

Then Jesus told them this story: "Once a man had two sons. The younger son said to his father, 'Give me my share of the property.' So the father divided his property between his two sons. Not long after that, the younger son packed up everything he owned and left for a foreign country, where he wasted all his money in wild living. He had spent everything, when a bad famine spread through that whole land. Soon he had nothing to eat. He went to work for a man in that country, and the man sent him out to take care of his pigs. He would have been glad to eat what the pigs were eating, but no one gave him a thing.

"Finally he came to his senses and said, 'My father's workers have plenty to eat, and here I am, starving to death! I will leave and go to my father and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son. Treat me like one of your workers."' The younger son got up and started back to his father. But when he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt sorry for him. He ran to his son and hugged and kissed him. The son said, 'Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son.'

"But his father said to the servants, 'Hurry and bring the best clothes and put them on him. Give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. Get the best calf and prepare it, so we can eat and celebrate. This son of mine was dead, but has now come back to life. He was lost and now has been found.' And they began to celebrate.

"The older son had been out in the field. But when he came near the house, he

heard the music and dancing. So he called one of the servants over and asked, 'What's going on here?'

"The servant answered, 'Your brother has come home safe and sound, and your father ordered us to kill the best calf.' The older brother got so mad that he would not even go into the house. His father came out and begged him to go in. But he said to his father, 'For years I have worked for you like a slave and have always obeyed you. But you have never even given me a little goat, so that I could give a dinner for my friends. This other son of yours wasted your money on bad women. And now that he has come home, you ordered the best calf to be killed for a feast.'

"His father replied, 'My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we should be glad and celebrate! Your brother was dead, but he is now alive. He was lost and has now been found.'"

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

Brothers and sisters:

Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new.

God has done it all! He sent Christ to make peace between himself and us, and he has given us the work of making peace between himself and others. What we mean is that God was in Christ, offering peace and forgiveness to the people of this world. And he has given us the work of sharing his message about peace.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 85

Response: **THE LORD SPEAKS OF PEACE TO HIS PEOPLE**

I will listen to you, Lord God, because you promise peace to those who are faithful and no longer foolish.

You are ready to rescue everyone who worships you, so that you will live with us in all of your glory.

Love and loyalty will come together; goodness and peace will unite.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle,

Images from the Readings

- The past is forgotten
- I have sinned
- He ran to his son
- Be glad and celebrate
- Everything I have is yours

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Jesus told us this story to show us how much God loves us.

Why did the younger son return home?

What was his father doing? How did he respond when he noticed his son in the distance?

How do you think the father and the son felt?

Who do you think the father in this story is meant to represent?

Sometimes we make bad choices in life, just like the son in this story. When we make mistakes, how can we say sorry to God?

What does this story tell us about God and ourselves when we come home and say we are sorry?

Why is the older son not happy about his brother coming back home? How does he show that he is unhappy about it?

Act of Worship

Lead the children through an examination of conscience:

Response: Forgive us Jesus, help us to be more like you

When we put our own needs first, before those of others. R.

When we are unappreciative R.

When we take advantage of our family and friends R.

When we hurt those who care for us R.

When we are selfishly or thoughtless R.

When we fail to take responsibility for ourselves R.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

By asking for his inheritance, the younger son was offering a huge insult to his father; it was akin to wishing his father dead. Working with pigs was the most degrading work for a Jew. Pigs were regarded as unclean – not only was eating their meat prohibited, but touching them would have rendered a person unclean as well. So Jesus showed just how low the son had sunk and set the scene for the astonishingly lavish forgiveness of the father. The religious understanding of the time was that there was no place in God's kingdom for sinners. This story gives us a graphic illustration of the radical new image of a God who is so forgiving, so good, so faithful and generous to his recalcitrant children. God so longs to be reconciled with us, that no limit is set on the celebration for the one who has been 'found'. The story reveals what is required of us if we are to 'be glad and celebrate' – we must realise that the source of rejoicing is in the goodness of God. We must take responsibility and acknowledge our failings and return to God. We must learn not to resent the good fortune of others who don't deserve it. Rejoicing for God's reasons can sometimes be confusing for us – it is not always easy.

Reflection for Leaders

It is only as we travel life's journey and have time to reflect upon the unwise choices that we have made that our life lessons become clear. Hunger is a great incentive to contemplation. The father's response to both sons is consistent – God never tires of seeking the lost and welcoming home those who repent and return. The resentment of the older son to his father's generosity gives us a challenge; his refusal to participate in the family celebration shows a lack of compassion and a meanness of spirit which is quite at odds with his father's response. Try putting yourself into each of the characters of this story in turn. Which one most resembles you and your responses at this time? Do you have a sense of God seeking you out? In what sense is the older son also 'lost'? Perhaps this week you might reach out to someone with a word of forgiveness.

Liturgy Outline

Fourth Sunday of Lent

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, You gave your love and peace to us. Help us to make our
world a happier place by sharing that love and peace with others.
Amen

FIRST READING 2 Corinthians 5:17-19
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM 85
 The Lord speaks of peace to his people
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: Let us turn to our loving God for all our needs.

- For the Church, that she always welcomes people with open arms
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a spirit of forgiveness between the people in our communities, schools
and families
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That the people of our country will welcome and be kind to those who have
come from places where they have been hungry and poor
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For ourselves and our families, that we learn to be generous
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of forgiveness, listen to the prayers that we, your children, make
to you through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Violet

Why did the Pharisees want to stone the woman? How did they mean to trick Jesus? They wanted to see if Jesus would disobey the law and show the woman mercy. Jesus understands that we are often weak and do things that are wrong. He was always willing to give people another chance to be better and to change. Sometimes it is easy for us to see what other people are doing wrong, and hard to see our own faults. Jesus wants us to learn to be more forgiving of other people just as he is.

Gospel

John 8:1-11

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

Jesus spent the night on the Mount of Olives. Then early the next morning he went to the temple. The people came to him, and he sat down and started teaching them.

The Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses brought in a woman who had been caught in bed with a man who was not her husband. They made her stand in the middle of the crowd. Then they said, "Teacher, this woman was caught sleeping with a man who is not her husband. The Law of Moses teaches that a woman like this should be stoned to death! What do you say?"

They asked Jesus this question, because they wanted to test him and bring some charge against him. But Jesus simply bent over and started writing on the ground with his finger. The crowd kept on asking Jesus about the woman. Finally, he stood up and said, "If any of you have never sinned, then go ahead and throw the first stone at her!"

Once again he bent over and began writing on the ground. The people left one by one, beginning with the oldest one in the crowd. Finally, Jesus and the woman were there alone. Jesus stood up and asked her, "Where is everyone? Isn't there anyone left to accuse you?"

"No, sir," the woman answered.

Then Jesus told her, "I am not going to accuse you either. You may go now, but don't sin anymore."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Isaiah 43:18-21

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

The Lord says this:

Forget what happened long ago! Don't think about the past. I am creating something new. There it is! Do you see it?

I have put a road in the desert and streams in thirsty land. Every wild animal honours me, even the jackals and owls.

I provide water in the desert and streams in a thirsty land for my chosen people.

I made them my own nation, so they would praise me.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 126

Response: **THE LORD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US;
WE ARE FILLED WITH JOY**

It seemed like a dream when the Lord brought us back to the city of Zion. We celebrated with laughter and joyful songs.

In foreign nations it was said, "The Lord has worked miracles for his people." And so we celebrated because the Lord had indeed worked miracles for us.

Second Reading

Philippians 3:12-14

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Brothers and sisters:

I have not yet reached my goal, and I am not perfect. But Christ has taken hold of me. So I keep on running and struggling to take hold of the prize. My friends, I don't feel that I have already arrived. But I forget what is behind, and I struggle for what is ahead. I run toward the goal, so that I can win the prize of being called to heaven.

This is the prize that God offers because of what Christ Jesus has done.

The Word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a stone for each child, and a cross

Images from the Readings

- A road in the desert
- Keep on running
- They wanted to test him
- Writing on the ground
- Where is everyone?

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. The seriousness of this woman's wrongdoing underpins the significance of Jesus' compassion and forgiveness in this story. Help the children to grasp this.

Why was the woman brought to Jesus?

How must she have felt? How did the crowd feel? How did Jesus respond?

Why do you think the people began to leave?

What did Jesus say to the woman when they were alone?

Would she have felt differently then, from how she felt before?

Do you think that feeling loved allow us to be free to change, rather than being judged harshly?

What does this tell us about how God feels about us when we make mistakes, even serious ones?

What does this mean for us and how Jesus expects us to treat other people?

Act of Worship

Invite the children to take a stone to hold as you lead them in a simple prayer, such as: 'Loving Jesus, we are sorry for the times we are mean to people who have done wrong things. We ask you to forgive us for being unloving and judgmental. Help us to be more like you. Amen.'

Invite the children to place their stone by the cross at the focus.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The goodness and mercy of God, and our need for repentance, continue to be illustrated all through the Lenten readings. The account of the woman caught in adultery is in reality a story of the conflict of Jesus and the religious authorities who were intent on putting him to the test. This event took place in the outer court of the Temple, a public place. Here the faithful are instructed in the observance of the Law. The dilemma for Jesus is whether he advocates the appropriate Mosaic sentence – death by stoning – or clings to his own teachings on mercy and compassion. In a society governed by honour and shame, they realise that Jesus has outwitted and humiliated them. Despite her obvious guilt, the woman herself is of minor significance to these authorities (her equally guilty partner has not be dragged forward), and Jesus does not even look at her or address her until they have all left in shame. With compassionate respect, Jesus neither condones nor condemns this stranger, as he invites her to a new life. Acceptance and love allow repentance and change to occur in others far more readily than harsh judgments and unacceptance.

The Mount of Olives, just outside the city gates, is in sight of the Temple, and pilgrims to the great festivals often stayed there. The Garden of Gethsemane, featured next week, is located here.

Reflection for Leaders

This whole encounter bristles with emotion and danger. Yet Jesus completely defuses the whole situation by refusing to play into their trap. He turns their test of his integrity into a test of their own. Jesus offers a new way to deal with wrongdoing and sin. He does not condemn the sinner, but invites her to leave her past behind and begin again. This leaves us open to reflect how it feels to be harshly judged by someone else. Have you had an experience of being unconditionally loved by someone, or a time when you have felt totally accepted? How does that feel? Who are the people in your life whom you love and accept unconditionally? Are their times or situations when you find yourself being judgmental or too hasty in your judgments? What steps can you take to correct this attitude?

Liturgy Outline

Fifth Sunday of Lent

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you always understand us and forgive us, even when we
have done wrong. Help us to be more like you. Amen

FIRST READING Isaiah 43:18-21
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 126
 Proclaim God's marvellous deeds to all the nations
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* Philippians 3:12-14
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL John 8:1-11
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to John
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: We know that God loves us, so let us pray for others and for
ourselves.

- For the Church, that we learn to be forgiving of ourselves and others
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a spirit of compassion towards all those who are different
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we reach out to those who are scared and lonely
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For ourselves and our families, that our homes are places of peace and
forgiveness
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of compassion, teach us your ways. Hear the prayers that we
make to you through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Passion (Palm) Sunday



Violet

Gospel

Luke 23:1-49

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO LUKE

Everyone in the council led Jesus off to Pilate. They started accusing him and said, "We caught this man trying to get our people to riot and stop paying taxes to the Emperor. He also claims that he is the Messiah, our king." Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Those are your words," Jesus answered. Pilate told the chief priests and the crowd, "I don't find him guilty of anything." But they kept on saying, "He has been teaching and causing trouble all over Judea. He started in Galilee and has now come all the way here." When Pilate heard this, he asked, "Is this man from Galilee?" After Pilate learned that Jesus came from the region ruled by Herod, he sent him to Herod, who was in Jerusalem at that time.

For a long time Herod had wanted to see Jesus and was very happy because he finally had his chance. He had heard many things about Jesus and hoped to see him work a miracle. Herod asked him a lot of questions, but Jesus did not answer. Then the chief priests and the teachers of the law of Moses stood up and accused him of all kinds of bad things. Herod and his soldiers made fun of Jesus and insulted him. They put a fine robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. That same day Herod and Pilate became friends, even though they had been enemies before this. Pilate called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people. He told them, "You brought Jesus to me and said he was a troublemaker. But I have questioned him here in front of you, and I have not found him guilty of anything that you say he has done. Herod didn't find him guilty either and sent him back. This man doesn't deserve to be put to death! I will just have him beaten with a whip and set free."

Pilate said this, because every Passover he was supposed to set one prisoner free for the Jewish people. But the whole crowd shouted, "Kill Jesus! Give us Barabbas!"

Now Barabbas was in jail because he had started a riot in the city and had murdered someone. Pilate wanted to set Jesus free, so he spoke again to the crowds. But they kept shouting, "Nail him to a cross! Nail him to a cross!" Pilate spoke to them a third time, "But what crime has he done? I have not found him guilty of anything for which he should be put to death. I will have him beaten with a whip and set free."

The people kept on shouting as loud as they could for Jesus to be put to death. Finally Pilate gave in. He freed the man who was in jail for rioting and murder, because he was the one the crowd wanted to be set free. Then Pilate handed Jesus over for them to do what they wanted with him.

As Jesus was being led away, some soldiers grabbed hold of a man from Cyrene named Simon. He was coming in from the fields, but they put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.

A large crowd was following Jesus, and in the crowd a lot of women were crying and weeping for him. Jesus turned to the women and said: "Women of Jerusalem, don't cry for me! Cry for yourselves and for your children. Someday people will say, 'Women who

never had children are really fortunate!' At that time everyone will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' They will say to the hills, 'Hide us!' If this can happen when the wood is green, what do you think will happen when it is dry?"

Two criminals were led out to be put to death with Jesus. When the soldiers came to a place called "The Skull" they nailed Jesus to a cross. They also nailed the two criminals to crosses, one on each side of Jesus. Jesus said, "Father, forgive these people! They don't know what they're doing." While the people stood there watching Jesus, the soldiers gambled for his clothes. The leaders insulted him by saying, "He saved others. Now he should save himself, if he really is God's chosen Messiah!"

The soldiers made fun of Jesus and brought him some wine. They said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!" Above him was a sign that said, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals hanging there also insulted Jesus by saying, "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and save us!" But the other criminal told the first one off, "Don't you fear God? Aren't you getting the same punishment as this man? We got what was coming to us, but he didn't do anything wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into power!" Jesus replied, "I promise that today you will be with me in paradise." Around noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until the middle of the afternoon. The sun stopped shining, and the curtain in the temple split down the middle. Jesus shouted, "Father, I put myself in your hands!"

Then he died.

When the Roman officer saw what had happened, he praised God and said, "Jesus must really have been a good man!"

A crowd had gathered to see the terrible sight. After they saw it, they felt brokenhearted and went home. All of Jesus' close friends and the women who had come with him from Galilee stood at a distance and watched.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Isaiah 50:6-7

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

I let them beat my back and pull out my beard. I didn't turn aside when they made fun of me and spit in my face. But the Lord God keeps me from being embarrassed. And I refuse to give up, because I know I will never be ashamed.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 22

Response: **MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU ABANDONED ME?**

Everyone who sees me makes fun and sneers. They shake their heads, and say, "Trust the Lord! If you are his favourite, let him protect you and keep you safe.

My enemies have tied up my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones! They took my clothes and gambled for them.

Don't stay far away, Lord! My strength comes from you, so hurry and help. And when your people meet, I will praise you, Lord.

Preparatory Material

We would encourage children to worship with the whole assembly today – if celebrating separately, allow for a lengthy session.

Processions

Processions are an integral part of the Easter feast and begin today with the procession of palms. They are signs of our willingness to live as pilgrims, like the Israelites in the desert, we only wander through this earthly life for a time and like Jesus we wander from place to place with the good news. In our processing this week we follow more meaningfully than at any other time of the year in the footsteps of Jesus, from his entry into Jerusalem to his last steps on Calvary and on to the road to Emmaus.

Mediaeval pilgrims who went on pilgrimages to shrines were called ‘palmer’ because they carried leafy branches from trees as a sign of their religious purpose and zeal. “The act of walking in procession is an important ritual that promotes active, bodily participation in the liturgy. Processions are essential to Christian worship, walking and singing in procession teaches us in our bones what it means to be human, it makes us human, unites us in an assembly and puts us on the road to the new Jerusalem. Processions are great opportunities to worship God with our bodies as well as our minds, with walking as well as with words.” (Liturgy 90 Feb/Mar 94)

Suggested Focus

Purple cloth (Lent), Lectionary, a crucifix and palms surrounded by small tea-light candles. A tray of objects related to the readings (eg palms, nails, a cross of sticks) may be close at hand as a visual prompt to focus the children on the readings. They can then be used to stimulate discussion.

Reading the Passion

It is a good idea to divide the reading of the Passion into sections so that three or four people can read it. You might enlist the help of two or three older children or adult readers. Do not make a play out of the reading of the Passion. This is an example of how it might be done:

Divide the shorter form of Luke 23:1-49 (CEV) into sections for reading so that the narration is interesting with changes in reader corresponding to changes of scene or in the pattern of the story. Reader A: 23:1-4; Reader B: 23:5; Reader A: 23:6-17; Reader B: 23:18-25; Reader C: 23:26; Reader D: 23:27-31; Reader C: 23:32-33; Reader A: 23:34-45; Reader B: 23:47; Reader D: 23:48

Images from the Readings

- Palms
- King of the Jews
- Beaten with a whip
- Nail him to a cross
- A good man

Discussion Points

Try to emphasise the resurrection – life that succeeds death, that we await the Alleluias of Easter Sunday morning. For now and the next five days, we follow the way of the Cross. Our procession today was the beginning, for the rest of the week we continue our pilgrimage to Easter.

Who was there?

Why did they want Jesus crucified?

What does the story tell us about God and suffering in the world?

Why was Jerusalem so busy at this time? (Passover)

Act of Worship

The procession with palms and percussion instruments will form the major act of worship in today’s liturgy.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The Jews had been longing for a great leader, like one of their Kings of old, who would lead them to victory against the Roman invaders. They thought that Jesus might be that leader. At this time of Passover many Jews gathered in Jerusalem to remember how God had saved them from slavery. But by his actions he shows everyone that he is no earthly king or soldier – he comes as the King of peace, love and forgiveness. This is why he chose to enter the city riding on a donkey, commonly used for carrying loads, rather than a battle horse.

Jesus’ dying words are used as the Psalm response. It is important at this time of focusing on the agony and desolation of the passion, that we also remember the fact of the resurrection, as described by the evangelists and witnesses who viewed it from the perspective of the risen Christ ascending into glory. Paul’s letter begins to draw out the implications of self-giving love of Jesus, who was obedient even to death, was raised up and glorified by God. Through giving his life he gained life.

Reflection on the Readings

Reflect on your feelings as you listened to the Passion being read. What does the passion of Jesus tell us about where God is in the suffering of the world and in our own personal suffering?

What does self-giving love imply for the way we live our lives? What does it ask of us personally?

Liturgy Outline

Passion (Palm) Sunday

It is recommended that children remain with the whole assembly today. If there is to be a Children's Liturgy the following outline is provided.

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, we thank you for making us your children. Help us to serve
others, especially those who are close to us.
Amen

FIRST READING

Isaiah 50:6-7

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 22

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 23:1 – 49

Minister of the Word: The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: With hearts full of hope let us pray to God our creator and redeemer
for our needs:

- For the Church, that it be a place that frightened people can shelter in
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For people who suffer for freedom
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we, the children of Aotearoa-New Zealand, will be an example to
others by our care for the poor, the sick and the unpopular
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of caring for others
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God our strength and hope, you heal the hurting and the broken-
hearted, bless us and those for whom we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Easter Sunday

No material has been given for Easter as it is recommended that children celebrate with the full community.



Readings

Second Sunday of Easter

White



When Jesus was arrested and put to death, the disciples were very afraid and had run away and left him. But Jesus forgave them and wanted them to know that he would always be with them. What did Jesus say that let them know this? Why did Thomas not believe the others when they said that they had seen Jesus? What did Jesus say to convince him? Jesus gave his friends power and authority and shared the Holy Spirit with them. How can we share Jesus' peace with others?

Gospel

John 20:19-29

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

The disciples were afraid of the Jewish leaders, and on the evening of that same Sunday they locked themselves in a room. Suddenly, Jesus appeared in the middle of the group. He greeted them and showed them his hands and his side. When the disciples saw the Lord, they became very happy.

After Jesus had greeted them again, he said, "I am sending you, just as the Father has sent me." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they will be forgiven. But if you don't forgive their sins, they will not be forgiven."

Although Thomas the Twin was one of the twelve disciples, he was not with the others when Jesus appeared to them. So they told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But Thomas said, "First I must see the nail scars in his hands and touch them with my finger. I must put my hand where the spear went into his side. I won't believe unless I do this!"

A week later the disciples were together again. This time Thomas was with them. Jesus came in while the doors were still locked and stood in the middle of the group. He greeted his disciples and said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at my hands! Put your hand into my side. Stop doubting and have faith!"

Thomas replied, "You are my Lord and my God!"

Jesus said, "Thomas, do you have faith because you have seen me? The people who have faith in me without seeing me are the ones who are really blessed!"

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Acts 5:12-16

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The apostles worked many miracles and wonders among the people. All of the Lord's followers often met in the part of the temple known as Solomon's Porch. No one outside their group dared join them, even though everyone liked them very much.

Many men and women started having faith in the Lord, Then sick people were brought out to the road and placed on cots and mats. It was hoped that Peter would walk by, and his shadow would fall on them and heal them. A lot of people living in the towns near Jerusalem brought those who were sick or troubled by evil spirits, and they were all healed..

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 118

Response: **GIVE THANKS FOR THE LORD IS GOOD.
GOD'S LOVE IS EVERLASTING**

Let Israel shout, "God is always merciful!"

Let every true worshipper of the Lord shout, "God is always merciful!"

The nations attacks were so fierce that I nearly fell, but the Lord helped me. My power and my strength come from the Lord, and he has saved me.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a cross

Images from the Readings

- All were healed
- Locked themselves in a room
- Receive the Holy Spirit
- I won't believe
- My Lord and my God

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Why had the disciples locked themselves in a room?

Why did Jesus appear in the middle of them? (He had forgiven them and didn't want them to be afraid any longer)

What did Jesus do and say when he had greeted them?

What does it mean to believe?

What about believing things that you can't see? What would make us believe something that we haven't seen?

Have you ever been told something that you found hard to believe, but found out later that it was true?

Why do you think Thomas did not believe his friends when they said that they had seen Jesus?

What did Jesus say to Thomas? What was his response?

What does this mean for us today?

How can we remember Jesus' words and bring peace into the places that we are in?

Act of Worship

Invite the children pray Thomas' words, "My Lord and my God", and then make sign of peace through a simple gesture of touch towards the person next to them - it might be a handshake or a hug.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Touch and belief seem to be connected through the person of Thomas. Absent on the occasion of the first appearance of Jesus on the day of the resurrection while the rest of the disciples quake in fear inside a locked room, Thomas is the central figure in the second. The first occasion is when the Holy Spirit is bestowed on the disciples and the commission given for them to be sent out with the authority to forgive sins. It is an experience of both total transformation and of responsibility. Thomas' absence requires him to believe on the testimony of others – a situation that he struggles with. His doubt is understandable, and Jesus does not judge him harshly. It is through the invitation to touch the wounds of Christ that Thomas' great acclamation of faith is born. This transformed early Christian community caused a furore in society. On the one hand, although they began to gather openly at the Temple, many people were frightened to join them. Yet miraculous signs and wonders accompanied the apostles wherever they went. The power of God was so strong that Peter did not even need to touch the sick for them to be healed. Despite the fear, many people did come to believe.

Reflection for Leaders

Being called to believe on the testimony of others requires a degree of faith that Jesus recognises in a special way. The doubt of Thomas is transformed by his encounter with Jesus and he is empowered to be sent out to share the good news, just as we all are at the end of each Mass. Tradition claims that Thomas went on to preach the Gospel as far east as India – he took up the responsibility to share the good news. Have we taken up this challenge? Have there been times of doubt in your life, where you have questioned yourself or your loved ones? What dispelled that doubt? The sense of touch is a powerful force, though many people are reluctant to reach out to others because of cultural restrictions or a fear of being too personal. Yet many people are starved of a touch that can bring healing, comfort, support and acknowledgment. Look for ways this week to convey a message of compassion or friendship.

Liturgy Outline

Second Sunday of Easter

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you desire our world to be filled with love and friendship. Help
us to share your peace with each other just as you shared it with us.
Amen

FIRST READING Acts 5:12-16
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 118
 Give thanks for the Lord is good. God's love is
everlasting
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL John 20:19-29
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to John
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: We turn to God with our needs full of confidence and joy this Easter
time.

- For the Church, that she is a faithful disciple of the teachings of Jesus..
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That our leaders be filled with a spirit of forgiveness in the way that they
govern our country...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That our homes, families and schools be filled with peace and tolerance...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For courage and strength to carry out the work that Jesus calls us to...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God, giver of life, fill us with your Spirit and grant what we need. We ask
this through Jesus Christ our Lord
All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Third Sunday of Easter

White

What made Peter recognise Jesus that day? Finding their net full of fish after a useless night's fishing was a miracle, and only the Son of God had the power to work such a miracle. Jesus prepared breakfast on the beach to share with his friends. Can you think of a time that we gather together for a special meal where Jesus comes to share himself with us? (The Mass)



Gospel

John 21:1-14

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

Jesus later appeared to his disciples along the shore of Lake Tiberias. Simon Peter, Thomas the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, and the two sons of Zebedee, were there, together with two other disciples. Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing!"

The others said, "We'll go with you." They went out in their boat. But they didn't catch a thing that night.

Early the next morning Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise who he was. Jesus shouted, "Friends, have you caught anything?"

"No!" they answered.

So he told them, "Let your net down on the right side of your boat, and you will catch some fish." They did, and the net was so full of fish that they could not drag it up into the boat.

Jesus' favourite disciple told Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon heard that it was the Lord, he put on the clothes that he had taken off while he was working. Then he jumped into the water. The boat was only about a hundred yards from shore. So the other disciples stayed in the boat and dragged in the net full of fish.

When the disciples got out of the boat, they saw some bread and a charcoal fire with fish on it. Jesus told his disciples, "Bring some of the fish you just caught."

Simon Peter got back into the boat and dragged the net to shore. In it were one hundred and fifty-three large fish, but still the net did not rip.

Jesus said, "Come and eat!" But none of the disciples dared ask who he was. They knew he was the Lord. Jesus took the bread in his hands and gave some of it to his disciples. He did the same with the fish.

This was the third time that Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from death.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Acts 5:27b-32, 40b-41

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The high priest said to the apostles, "We told you plainly not to teach in the name of Jesus. But look what you have done! You have been teaching all over Jerusalem, and you are trying to blame us for his death."

Peter and the apostles replied: "We don't obey people. We obey God. You killed Jesus by nailing him to a cross. But the God our ancestors worshipped raised him to life and make him our Leader and Saviour. Then God gave him a place at his right side, so that the people of Israel would turn back to him and be forgiven. We are here to tell you about all this, and so is the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to everyone who obeys God."

They had the apostles beaten with a whip and warned them not to speak in the name of Jesus. Then they let them go. The apostles left the council and were happy, because God had considered them worthy to suffer for the sake of Jesus

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 30

Response: **I WILL PRAISE YOU, LORD,
FOR YOU HAVE RESCUED ME**

I will praise you, Lord! You saved me from the grave.
I prayed to you, Lord God, and you healed me.
Your faithful people, Lord, will praise you with songs
and honour your holy name.

Have pity, Lord! Help! You have turned my sorrow into joyful dancing.
I will never stop singing your praises, my Lord and my God.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a net, bread, and sticks arranged like a campfire with a scrunch of red cellophane to indicate flames

Images from the Readings

- Let down your net
- So many fish
- Come and eat
- We obey God
- Gift of the Spirit to all who obey God

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. This story tells of Jesus' love and concern for his friends. Who went fishing?

Why do you think they decided to go fishing that night?

Did they catch anything?

Who called out to them? What did he tell them to do? Do you think they were happy to do it?

What happened then?

When did they recognise that it was Jesus?

What did Peter do when he heard that it was Jesus?

Why did Jesus make breakfast on the beach for his friends?

Can you think of a time that we share a meal with Jesus? (When we celebrate Mass, we gather together for a special meal where Jesus shares himself in a special way)

Act of Worship

Saying/singing a blessing at meals is an act of worship. This can be sung to the tune of 'Frere Jacques'

God, we thank you (x2)

For this food (x2)

All of us together (x2)

Thank you, God (x2)

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The Gospel account of a miraculous catch of fish coincides with the third appearance of the risen Christ to his disciples. These seven disciples had returned to Galilee and resumed their former occupations. Recognition of Jesus comes through his actions, not his words - although they still are tempted to ask who he was while somehow knowing his identity. A fruitless night's fishing yields the miraculous catch of 153 fish once they had obeyed Jesus' instructions. The Greek word for fish, 'ichthus', is an acronym of 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour'. The fish was an early symbol of Christianity, and is often seen today used as car ornaments. The boat is also an ancient image of the Church. The symbolism of the enormous catch indicates the success of the disciples in leading people to Christ. Peter again takes a primary role in this interchange - jumping into the water to rush to Jesus while the others stay to drag the net in. Jesus already has prepared bread and a charcoal fire grilling fish to feed his friends, obviously symbolic of Eucharist. Jesus still nourishes his disciples. The first reading presents to us the transformed disciples, courageously defending themselves after having been caught publicly preaching. Their fearless response earns them a flogging, yet leaves them elated - they rejoice in having suffered in Jesus' name.

Reflection for Leaders

The experience of the early church begs us to reflect upon our own experience of having the Lord active in our lives, and what we are able to achieve or stand up to that we were not able to before? Have there been times in our life when we have had the courage to 'go overboard' for Jesus? Have we had moments of recognition that Jesus has been with us all the time? What has prevented us being able to make that connection earlier? As the breakfast on the beach nourished the disciples, how does the Eucharist continue to nourish those who follow the risen Lord? How have we met the commitment that discipleship calls us to? How can we act on that this week?

Liturgy Outline

Third Sunday of Easter

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you are all around us in the world you have created. Help us to recognise you and to care for your creation. Amen

FIRST READING Acts 5:27b – 32, 40b-41

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 30

I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

John 21:1-14

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: This Easter time, encouraged by God's Word that we have just heard, we turn to our Creator for all our needs.

- For those who are leaders in the Church, that they exercise integrity and faith as they serve the people of God...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For strength and comfort for all those who suffer for their faith...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those ANZAC soldiers who lost their lives to protect our country...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we be filled with courage to live the way that Jesus showed us...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the openness to recognise Jesus in all situations and all people...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God, who is always present, renew our Easter joy and grant what we need. Through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Fourth Sunday of Easter

White



What does Jesus mean when he calls himself the 'Good Shepherd'? What does a shepherd do for his sheep? In Jesus' day, flocks of sheep were very small and the shepherd knew each sheep by its name. They were a bit like pets. If you have a pet, think about what they do when you call them? Why do they do this? Jesus is telling us that he will always be there for us when we need him, and that he watches over us and protects us always.

Gospel

John 10:27-30

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

Jesus said to his disciples:

"My sheep know my voice, and I know them.

They follow me, and I give them eternal life, so that they will never be lost. No one can snatch them out of my hand.

My Father gave them to me, and he is greater than all others.

No one can snatch them from his hands, and I am one with the Father."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Acts 13:43-44, 47-48

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

After the Sabbath service, many Jews and a lot of Gentiles who worshipped God went with Paul and Barnabas. They begged the people to remain faithful to God, who had been so kind to them.

The next Sabbath almost everyone in town came to hear the message about the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas told them, "The Lord has given this command, 'I have placed you here as a light for the Gentiles. You are to take the saving power of God to people everywhere on earth.'"

This message made the Gentiles glad, and they praised what they had heard about the Lord. Everyone who had been chosen for eternal life then put their faith in the Lord.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 100

Response: **WE ARE GOD'S PEOPLE, THE SHEEP OF HIS FLOCK**

Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth.

Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord!

You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture.

The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a picture of the Good Shepherd, and perhaps a picture of modern sheep-farming to compare it with.

Images from the Readings

- They know my voice
- They follow me
- No one can snatch them
- Light for the Gentiles
- Remain faithful

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

The idea of a good shepherd would have carried a different meaning for the people of Jesus' day – then shepherds had small flocks of sheep and knew them intimately. You might convey the idea of this by linking in to the children's experience of pets, and how they come when they are called for food, attention, walks, companionship etc. The shepherd would often carry a lamb on his shoulders if it was tired or hurt. The image of the Good Shepherd has stayed alive in the Church, and we are often called his 'flock'.

When we read the gospel today, how do you feel when you hear about how much Jesus loves and protects us?

How does this have an effect on our lives?

How can we act in the same way for one another?

Act of Worship

Options: Sing a version of 'The Lord is My Shepherd' that the children might know, or a similar one on the theme of being shepherded, (eg AOV #26, #33, #144, #160), say Psalm 23 together, or today's Psalm 100.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The image of a caring shepherd, which was formed within an ancient agricultural society, remains valid despite the change in farming practices of today. It still speaks of the intimate closeness and tenderness of Christ's relationship with each one of us individually. The shepherd knows his sheep, and the sheep their shepherd. Complete trust is implicit. The gospel today makes some sweeping claims – eternal life promised for his sheep, and total protection from anyone who would seek to snatch them away. It finishes up with the declaration that Jesus and God are one. The Latin root word for shepherd is pastor, and it is from this root that spring the church terminologies and concepts of pastoral care and roles within faith communities. These roles imply a duty of love and care. Besides that the Shepherd-King was an ancient image of God used by the Hebrew people. The first reading gives us insight into how the early church was struggling with the opening up of the good news to the Gentiles, leading to diversity in the make-up of the communities, much as we have in parishes today. Antioch, where Paul and Barnabas were preaching, was home to a military garrison, so conversion of the soldiers promoted the spread of the good news as they were stationed throughout the Roman Empire

Reflection for Leaders

Reflecting on how today's readings impact our own situation might lead us to looking more closely at who the people of our own 'flock' are? What characteristics does our community have? What are the things that make you feel that you belong? In what ways are you called to act as a 'shepherd', and to whom? Who are the people who act as shepherds to you? How do they carry out this role? As we place ourselves in the midst of this intimate relationship with Jesus, we might think about the ways in which we 'hear his voice'? Do you have a sense of being called by name? What are the other conflicting voices that try to drown him out, and where are they leading us?

During the week be attentive to the needs of people who are in your care.

Liturgy Outline

Fourth Sunday of Easter

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, we are your people and we want to follow wherever you lead
us. Help us to listen and recognise your voice. Amen

FIRST READING Acts 13:43-44, 47-48
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 100
 We are God's people, the sheep of his flock
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL John 13:31a, 33-35
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to John
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: We are followers of the Good Shepherd, who takes care of all our needs.
Let us bring these to God in confidence.

- For the Church, that she will care for the people of God in the same way
that the Good Shepherd took care of his flock ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we be filled with a desire to be attentive to the teachings of Jesus...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we have a sense of being a community of believers, the people of God
...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For confidence in knowing the safety and protection of Jesus so we can be
free to live as God wants...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of faithfulness, bless and protect us and those for whom we pray.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord
All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Fifth Sunday of Easter

White

Jesus told his apostles that he was going to leave them, he knew that his time had come, and that he would suffer and die before rising from the dead and returning to his father in heaven. Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment, to love one another as he had loved them. How do we show people that we are followers of Jesus? When we love and care for others as he taught us to people see Jesus in us and know that we are his followers.



Gospel

John 13:31a, 33-35

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

After Judas had gone, Jesus said:

“My children, I will be with you for a little while longer. Then you will look for me, but you won’t find me. I tell you just as I told the people, ‘You cannot go where I am going.’

But I am giving you a new command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples.”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Acts 14:21-27

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Paul and Barnabas preached the good news in Derbe and won some people to the Lord. Then they went back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia. They encouraged the followers and begged them to remain faithful. They told them, “We have to suffer a lot before we can get into God’s kingdom.” Paul and Barnabas chose some leaders for each of the churches. Then they went without eating and prayed that the Lord would take good care of these leaders. Paul and Barnabas went on through Pisidia to Pamphylia, where they preached in the town of Perga. Then they went down to Attalia and sailed to Antioch in Syria. It was there that they had been placed in God’s care for the work they had now completed. After arriving in Antioch, they called the church together. They told the people what God had helped them do and how he had made it possible for the Gentiles to believe.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 145

Response:

**I WILL PRAISE YOUR NAME FOREVER,
MY KING AND MY GOD**

You are merciful, Lord! You are kind and patient and always loving. You are good to everyone, and you take care of all your creation.

All creation will thank you, and your loyal people will praise you. Then everyone will know about the mighty things you do And your glorious kingdom

Second Reading

Revelation 21:1-4

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and so had the sea. Then I saw New Jerusalem, that holy city, coming down from God in heaven. It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown and ready to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice shout from the throne: God’s home is now with his people. He will live with them, and they will be his own. Yes, God will make his home among his people. He will wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death, suffering, crying, or pain. These things of the past are gone forever.

The word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a red heart

Images from the Readings

- After Judas had gone
- A new command
- My disciples
- Encouraged the followers
- God's home is with his people

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

What has Jesus told us to do? (Love one another)

How do we know that this is very important? (Jesus said it is "a command")

What did he mean when he said to "love one another as I have loved you"? (Jesus said this after he had washed the disciples feet – we show our love through service of others)

How did Jesus show his love for others? (you might wish to record some examples on a sheet of paper or whiteboard)

Why did Jesus say that people would know we were his disciples if we did this?

What does it mean to be a disciple? (a follower of Jesus)

Have you ever had a friend who has gone away to another country? How did you feel? How would his disciples have felt when Jesus told them that he was going away where they couldn't go?

Act of Worship

Teach the children the 'Glory Be' –

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen"

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas is continued in the first reading today. It has not been without difficulties, and they have had to endure suffering which is inescapable in life. The structure and organization of the churches that were being established was evidence of the growth of the Church, and this structure was already in evidence in Jerusalem, where elders were entrusted with oversight of worship, discipline, instruction and administration. The apostles were not independent missionaries – they had been sent forth by the Church, and they were returning to report what had been accomplished by God.

The Gospel today comes from a section of John's Gospel known as the 'farewell discourse' delivered by Jesus just prior to his arrest, when Judas has already left to betray him. Time has grown short for those who have not yet recognised Jesus as the Messiah. He had locked himself away with those who do believe, and is giving them instruction on how they are to continue his mission after he is gone. Jesus is telling his disciples not just that they must love one another, but that they must love as he had loved. The love that Jesus showed was totally unconditional and self-giving, expressed in service and fulfilled by the ultimate sacrifice of his death on the cross. It is this love which reveals the total love of a God who is Love. And it is this love that is the true mark of Christian discipleship – that sets us apart from others because it is so hard to attain.

Reflection for Leaders

No society can survive without tolerance, yet Jesus is demanding more than this for the new community that he has formed. There are times when to love is one of the most challenging things we are asked to do, especially when it is not deserved. Can you think of people who have displayed this selfless love? How would people be able to tell you were a follower of Christ even if you didn't say anything?

Jesus went on to say that this was to glorify God. In what ways do you glorify God in your life?

Perform some random acts of kindness and act with love towards all the people you encounter this week.

Liturgy Outline

Fifth Sunday of Easter

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you sent Jesus to show us how we should love one another.
May our love be a sign to bring others to know and love you too.
Amen

FIRST READING

Acts 14:21-27

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 145

I will praise your name forever, my king and my God
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* Revelation 21:1-4

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

John 13:31a, 33-35

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: We come to you, O God, encouraged by your Word, and bring to you all our needs.

- For the Church, that she always witness to the risen Jesus...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That the people of our country extend love and caring towards all who need it...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of encouragement in a world that can be very discouraging...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a spirit of generosity...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God, our encourager and our hope, fill us with joy this Easter time and grant the things we have asked for, through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Sixth Sunday of Easter

White



Before he died, Jesus told his followers not to be worried or afraid, because the Holy Spirit would be sent to them and they would receive his gift peace. Have you ever experienced a feeling of deep peace? Living like Jesus brings us peace.

Gospel

John 14:23-29

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

Jesus said: "If anyone loves me, they will obey me. Then my Father will love them, and we will come to them and live in them. But anyone who doesn't love me won't obey me. What they have heard me say doesn't really come from me, but from the Father who sent me. I have told you these things while I am still with you. But the Holy Spirit will come and help you, because the Father will send the Spirit to take my place. The Spirit will teach you everything and will remind you of what I said while I was with you. I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid. You have already heard me say that I am going and that I will also come back to you. If you really love me, you should be glad that I am going back to the Father, because he is greater than I am. I am telling you this before I leave, so that when it does happen, you will have faith in me. I cannot speak with you much longer, because the ruler of this world is coming. But he has no power over me. I obey my Father, so that everyone in the world might know that I love him. It is time for us to go now."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Some people came from Judea and started teaching the Lord's followers that they could not be saved, unless they were circumcised as Moses had taught. This caused trouble, and Paul and Barnabas argued with them about this teaching. So it was decided to send Paul and Barnabas and a few others to Jerusalem to discuss this problem with the apostles and the church leaders. The apostles, the leaders, and all the church members decided to send some men to Antioch along with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Silas and Judas Barsabbas, who were two leaders of the Lord's followers. They wrote a letter that said: We apostles and leaders send friendly greetings to all of you Gentiles who are followers of the Lord in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. We have heard that some people from here have terribly upset you by what they said. But we did not send them! So we met together and decided to choose some men and to send them to you along with our good friends Barnabas and Paul. These men have risked their lives for our Lord Jesus Christ. We are also sending Judas and Silas, who will tell you in person the same things that we are writing. The Holy Spirit has shown us that we should not place any extra burden on you. But you should not eat anything offered to idols. You should not eat any meat that still has the blood in it or any meat of any animal that has been strangled. You must also not commit any terrible sexual sins. If you follow these instructions, you will do well. We send our best wishes.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 67

Response: **O GOD, LET ALL THE NATIONS PRAISE YOU!**

Our God, be kind and bless us!
Be pleased and smile.
Then everyone on earth
Will learn to follow you,
And all nations will see Your power to save us.

Let the nations celebrate
With joyful songs,
Because you judge fairly
And guide all nations.

Make everyone praise you
And shout your praises.
Pray for his blessings to continue
And for everyone on earth to worship our God.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a picture depicting the Holy Spirit as a dove

Images from the Readings

- Obey me
- Holy Spirit will come and help you
- The Spirit will teach you
- I give you peace
- Don't be worried or afraid

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Jesus gave his followers the gift of peace. Do you know what peace is? (quietness, calmness, not having trouble)

The peace that Jesus gave to his followers was special. What was special about it? (It came from being filled with the Holy Spirit, this peace is better than a feeling we might try to make ourselves feel)

Jesus offers this peace to anybody who decides to follow him. How do we come to know this peace? (Pray)

When is a good time during the day to spend some peaceful time with God? (Encourage the children to share times that are peaceful in their day)

Why is it important to make time to spend peacefully with God?

When we spend time quietly with God, without distractions and noise, we can speak to him and listen to what he is saying in our hearts. Then we will know that special peace that Jesus offers to us, we will be filled with the spirit of God.

Act of Worship

Sing together, 'Let there be peace on earth', or 'The Prayer of St Francis' or another hymn known to the children that speaks of sharing God's peace.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Today's Gospel is taken from Jesus' discourse at the Last Supper and is dominated by his coming departure. The final gift that Jesus leaves for his disciples is the gift of peace 'a peace that the world cannot give.' Sometimes we mistake this peace for our idea of quietness or tranquillity, but the peace the Jesus gives is a peace that can be found even in the midst of turmoil, as Jesus illustrated in the days following this discourse at the Last Supper.

Shalom is the Hebrew word for peace found frequently in the bible. Our English word 'peace' doesn't adequately capture all that Shalom means. Shalom conveys a sense of completeness, an idea that nothing is lacking, Shalom is perfect wellbeing – perfect communion with God. This deep peace is a peace that we all desire, a peace that prevails even in times of stress and tension. How do we obtain this peace? Not by ordering our lives better, having a great diary system, looking after ourselves, or going for a massage. In the Gospel today Jesus tells us that this peace comes from God alone, it is his gift to us. If we are in relationship with God, if we are in union with him, then we will be blessed with the gift of peace, and as Jesus was able to offer this gift of peace to others because he possessed it, so also can we extend this gift to those around us, if we first receive this gift from God.

Reflection for Leaders

In the midst of our fast paced world it is easy to neglect our time with God. What prayer routines do you have in your life at this time? Do you give enough time to prayer each day? Would you like to make more time for prayer? How could you rearrange your schedule to find more time?

Often in our times of prayer we are tempted to do all the talking, our prayer time can become very 'active.' The gift of peace, along with all the gifts of the Spirit, are just that, gifts. We cannot earn them or obtain them. What are the ways of prayer that you find most helpful in allowing you to be open to receive the gifts God has for you?

This week try a new type of prayer, perhaps meditating in front of an icon, joining in on a time of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, or meditating on a passage of scripture (lectio divina). Try to refrain from too much 'active' prayer, but instead sit silently with the Lord with an attitude of openness, listen to what he has to say to you, allow him to bless you with the gifts he has for you.

Liturgy Outline

Sixth Sunday of Easter

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION *I invite the children to join in the procession for their Celebration of the Word*

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

*Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God*

R Blessed be God

*Leader: O God, you sent the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with your love and peace. Help us to bring that love and peace to the world.
Amen*

FIRST READING *Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23*

Reader The Word of the Lord

R Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 67

O God, let all the nations praise you!

(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

John 14:23-26

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

R Glory to you, Lord

At the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord

R Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: We come to you, O God, encouraged by your word, and bring to you all our needs.

- *For the leaders of the Church, that they may always carry out their work in a spirit of love*

Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer

- *For peace throughout the world, and an end to war*

Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer

- *For all those who are sick or suffering that they may know the peace of Christ*

Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer

- *That we might have hearts full of love, so that we can show Jesus to all we meet*

Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of love, bless us and all those we pray for, and help us to spread your message of peace this Easter season. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Ascension of the Lord

White

Jesus had his disciples with him when it was time for him to leave. What did Jesus do just before he left? Where was he going? Why did Jesus have to leave his disciples? How do you think they felt? What did they do after Jesus had gone? If we are disciples of Jesus too, what does this mean for us?



Gospel

Luke 24:50-58

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus led his disciples out to Bethany, where he raised his hands and blessed them. As he was doing this, he left and was taken up to heaven.

After his disciples had worshipped him, they returned to Jerusalem and were very happy. They spent their time in the temple, praising God.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Acts 1:8-11

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Jesus told his disciples: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and everywhere in the world."

After Jesus had said this and while they were watching, he was taken up into a cloud. They could not see him, but as he went up, they kept looking up into the sky.

Suddenly two men dressed in white clothes were standing there beside them. They said, "Why are you men from Galilee standing here and looking up into the sky? Jesus has been taken to heaven. But he will come back in the same way that you have seen him go."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 47

Response: **GOD MOUNTS THE THRONE TO SHOUTS OF JOY**

All of you nations, clap your hands and shout joyful praises to God. The Lord Most High is fearsome, the ruler of all the earth.

God goes up to his throne, as people shout and trumpets blast. Sing praises to God our King.

God is ruler of all the earth! Praise God with songs. God rules the nations from his sacred throne.

Second Reading

Ephesians 1:17-21

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS

Brothers and sisters:

I ask the glorious Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you his Spirit. The Spirit will make you wise and let you understand what it means to know God.

May prayer is that light will flood your heart and that you will understand the hope that was given to you when God chose you. Then you will discover the glorious blessings that will be yours together with all of God's people.

I want you to know about the great and mighty power that God has for us followers. It is the same wonderful power he used when he raised Christ from death and let him sit at his right side in heaven. There Christ rules over all forces, authorities, powers, and rulers. He rules over all beings in this world and will rule in the future world as well.

The Word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle,

Images from the Readings

- Understand the scriptures
- Power from on high
- Blessed them
- Carried up into heaven
- Worshiped him

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

How do you feel when someone you love very much has to go away? What did the disciples do when Jesus left them? (they worshiped Jesus, then returned to Jerusalem and were very happy, they praised God)

Why do you think the disciples were happy? (they knew that Jesus had returned to his Father and that he hadn't left them alone, he was going to give them power to do great things)

In the First Reading we heard about that power, it was the Holy Spirit, we also received the Holy Spirit when we were baptised, so we have the power to be witnesses for Jesus. How can we be a witness to Jesus this week? (by being welcoming and hospitable; avoiding hurting others by our words or actions; responding to other peoples needs; talking about what God means to you in your life)

The feast of the Ascension is a good opportunity to discuss with the children the legacy left to the disciples and the Church today by Jesus. You could quiz them on the teachings that Jesus has left, as we have encountered them through the Gospels of the Sundays since Easter in his farewell discourse to the disciples. You could talk about the practicalities of loving our neighbour as we love ourselves. Of how we are to celebrate Christ's presence with us and why we do so. Of Jesus' promise of life with him forever for those who keep his commandments and believe in him.

Act of Worship

Joyfully praise God with an appropriate song or dance today. Suggestion for simple dance: With instrumental music playing, let the children watch the candle and imitate the flicker of its flame. In pairs the children could mirror each other's actions.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The gospel of Luke is sometimes known as the gospel of joy, because joyfulness and rejoicing are constant references. Luke is the only writer who describes the event of the ascension, both briefly in his gospel, and in the Acts of the Apostles. The joyful response of the disciples to Jesus' ascension is a far cry from the fear with which they earlier reacted to his crucifixion. They do not lose the sense of his presence with them as they worship in the temple. The temple plays a crucial role in Luke's account of the public life of Jesus, so it is fitting that it closes with his disciples returning there to pray. There is rich symbolism in the numbers which are involved with this feast – forty days from Easter to the Ascension, then the nine days the disciples spent in prayer between Ascension Thursday and Pentecost, which have given rise to the 'novena', a devotional practice of praying for nine days in a focused way for particular intentions.

Reflection for Leaders

As we reflect on this gospel reading today, we are reminded that the ongoing task which Jesus left for his disciples after he had gone is an ongoing commission for us as believers today. The disciples were eye-witnesses to the things that Jesus said and did while he was on earth, but we too are called to be witnesses for Jesus. We have received the Holy Spirit through our Baptism and Confirmation, and Jesus has promised us that his Spirit will help us, stand alongside us and strengthen us as we share the Good news with others. In what ways today are you like the disciples, facing a new journey out into the world? In what ways can you give witness to your faith? Do you or does your community continually praise God? How might you incorporate continual praise into your days this week?

The joyful response by the disciples to Jesus' departure might be a challenge for us – is there anything worse than a sour Christian! Try to live joyfully in all the small actions of your life this week. Look for opportunities to bring joy to another person.

Liturgy Outline

Ascension of the Lord

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION *I invite the children to join in the procession for their Celebration of the Word*

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

*Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God*

R Blessed be God

*Leader: O God, fill us with faith and joy, that we may praise you forever.
Help us to remember that you are always with us and that we need never be afraid
Amen*

FIRST READING *Acts 1: 1 – 11*
Reader The Word of the Lord
R Thanks be to God

PSALM *Psalm 47*
God mounts the throne to shouts of joy
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *Ephesians 1: 17 – 21*
Reader The Word of the Lord
R Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL *Luke 24: 46 – 53*
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke
R Glory to you, Lord

At the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
R Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: With joyful hearts we come before our God with all our needs:

- For the Church, that it be a safe place where the weak grow strong
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer*
- Where there is division and fighting in the world, that understanding and forgiveness will grow
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer*
- For the sick, the poor and the lonely that they will find healing and wholeness
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer*
- For all those who suffer loss and grief, that they will find hope and comfort
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer*

Leader: O God, helper of those in need, look with kindness on us and those for whom we pray, we ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

Readings

Pentecost Sunday

Red



Why had the disciples locked themselves in a room? When Jesus appeared in the middle of the group, how did they feel? How did Jesus give them the Holy Spirit? What was the gift of the Holy Spirit going to enable them to do? When do we receive the Holy Spirit in a special way? – first at our baptism, and then his power is refreshed in us at confirmation. Pentecost is known as the Church's birthday. Why do you think this is so?

Gospel

John 20:19-23

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

The disciples were afraid of the Jewish leaders, and on the evening of that same Sunday they locked themselves in a room. Suddenly, Jesus appeared in the middle of the group. He greeted them and showed them his hands and his side. When the disciples saw the Lord, they became very happy.

After Jesus had greeted them again, he said, "I am sending you, just as the Father has sent me." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they will be forgiven. But if you don't forgive their sins, they will not be forgiven."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading Acts 2:1-11

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

On the day of Pentecost all the Lord's followers were together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from heaven like the sound of a mighty wind! It filled the house where they were meeting. Then they saw what looked like fiery tongues moving in all directions, and a tongue came and settled on each person there. The Holy Spirit took control of everyone, and they began speaking whatever languages the Spirit let them speak. Many religious Jews from every country in the world were living in Jerusalem. And when they heard this noise, a crowd gathered. But they were surprised, because they were hearing everything in their own languages. They were excited and amazed, and said: "Don't all these who are speaking come from Galilee? Then why do we each hear them speaking our very own languages? Some of us are from Parthia, Media, and Elam. Others are from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, parts of Libya near Cyrene, Rome, Crete, and Arabia. Some of us were born Jews, and others of us have chosen to be Jews. Yet we all hear them using our own languages to tell the wonderful things God has done."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 104

Response: **LORD, SEND OUT YOUR SPIRIT,
AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH**

I praise you, Lord God, with all my heart. You are glorious and majestic. Our Lord, by your wisdom you made so many things; the whole earth is covered with your living creatures.

You created all of them by your Spirit, and you give new life to the earth. Our Lord, we pray that your glory will last for ever and that you will be pleased with what you have done.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 12-13

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters: There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve the same God, and we can each do different things. Yet the same God works in all of us and helps us in everything we do. The Spirit has given each of us a special way of serving others. The body of Christ has many different parts, just as any other body does. Some of us are Jews, and others are Gentiles. Some of us are slaves, and others are free. But God's Spirit baptised each of us and made us part of the body of Christ. Now we each drink from that same Spirit.

The Word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Red cloth, Lectionary, seven red candles on a tray or in a menorah

Images from the Readings

- Locked in a room, afraid
- Jesus breathed on them
- Sound of a mighty wind
- Holy Spirit took control of everyone
- Different ways to serve

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. How do you suppose the disciples were feeling on this day of Pentecost when they were locked in a room? How did they feel when Jesus suddenly appeared among them?

What did Jesus want them to do?

This is the same message we heard a little while ago.

How did Jesus give the Holy Spirit to the disciples? (he breathed on them) Why do you think he did this? (we need breath to live; wind, or the breath of God, is one of the images of the Holy Spirit)

Can you think of any other images of the Holy Spirit? (flame, dove, wind ...)

What do you think these tell us about the Holy Spirit?

How do we receive the Holy Spirit today? (in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation)

What does the Holy Spirit do in us, or allow us to do? (speak of the empowering and enlivening of our lives and faith, the gifts of the Spirit (wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and the fear of the Lord) and the fruit of the Spirit Gal 5:22)

Why does Jesus talk to his friends about forgiveness?

What do you think Jesus wants us to do?

Act of Worship

Sing a simple "Spirit" song, like "Holy Spirit come".

When rejoining the assembly, process the children in with the menorah or the tray of seven candles and place before the altar

(NB check this out with the priest beforehand)

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Pentecost was a Jewish feast day celebrated fifty days after Passover. This is why so many were in Jerusalem at the time that the Holy Spirit was manifested in the lives of the disciples. It might be expected that the absence of Jesus would have relegated the newly formed gathering of believers to collapse and dissipate, and we know from Scripture that at least some of them had left Jerusalem to return to their homes. But despite their anxiety and sense of having been left behind, a group of about one hundred and twenty believers had gathered to pray in the upper room together. Jesus appears among them offering his greeting of peace and the opportunity to confirm his presence by examining his wounds. The conferring of the Holy Spirit is as intimate as a hongi, as Jesus breathes life back into his fearful disciples. The effect of this gentle action is nevertheless powerful, and in fact reverses the story of the tower of Babel from Hebrew Scriptures, when the languages of people were confused. Filled with courage and fervour the disciples are to go out and continue Jesus' work of forgiveness, judgement and witness in the world. The Spirit will not teach them new things, but will lead them deeper into the mystery of Jesus and help them to understand the things to come as they take up the challenges that lie ahead.

Reflection for Leaders

Coming to faith is a journey for most of us as we discover God's existence within the realities of our life experiences. This happens mainly through prayer and reflection. Just as the disciples gathered together to pray when they were anxious, so it is important for us to gather with our faith community to share the highs and the lows of our journey. Regular time to pray alone, to pray in community and time to reflect will pay dividends for us. Fear had caused the believers to lock themselves away. Can you recall a time when you have felt 'closed in' with a problem? What helped to free you from this? When Jesus appeared and breathed the Holy Spirit into his friends, this experience was totally life changing for them. Have you ever had an experience that was totally life changing for you? How do you use the Spiritual gifts you have been given in service of others? What fruit of the Spirit are manifest most in those closest to you? This week work on those that are most neglected in yourself.

Liturgy Outline

Pentecost Sunday

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Blessed
be God

Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you give us the gift of your Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with
your love. Help us to bring Jesus to those who do not know him,
and share this love with them. Amen

FIRST READING

Acts 2:1-11

Reader The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 104

Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the
earth.

(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 12-13

Reader The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

John 20:19-24

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: God you gave us the gift of your Spirit. Look kindly on us, your
children, and those for whom we pray:

- That the Spirit of God will fill and set fire to the Church and all who work to
spread the Gospel of Jesus
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That the fruit of the Spirit - love, peace, joy, patience, kindness, goodness,
gentleness, faithfulness, and self control is seen at work in us
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For peace in our families, our school rooms, our communities
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all who are alone and hopeless, the sick and those who are hurting, that
they will be comforted and empowered
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of hope and healing, we know that you care for us and we bring
our prayers to you in confidence through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

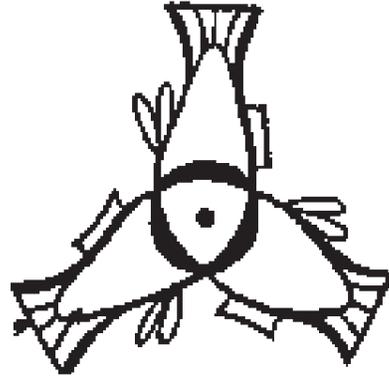
*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Trinity Sunday

White

“Trinity” means something made up of three, and today we celebrate the special relationship of the three persons of God who make up the Holy Trinity. These are: a) The Father, who created heaven and earth and everything in it. His love for us is so great that he sent his only son, Jesus, to save us from sin. b) Jesus, the only Son of God, born as a human being. Jesus tells us that when we know him we know the Father. He taught us how we should live. He loved us so much that he died on the cross and rose from the dead to save us from our sin. c) The Holy Spirit takes many forms – wind, fire, a dove. The Spirit fills us with God’s life and warms our hearts with the fire of God’s love and courage. Each of these three persons are distinct, yet there is only one God. The Trinity is a mystery which we cannot really understand, and we believe because this is part of our faith.



Gospel

John 16:12-15

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

Jesus said to his disciples:

“I have much more to say to you, but right now it would be more than your could understand. The Spirit shows what is true and will come and guide you into the full truth.

“The Spirit does not speak on his own. He will tell you only what he has heard from me, and he will let you know what is going to happen.

“The Spirit will bring glory to me by taking my message and telling it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine. That is why I have said that the Spirit takes my message and tells it to you.”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

From the very beginning, I was with the Lord. I was there before he began to create the earth. At the very first, the Lord gave life to me.

When I was born, there were no oceans or springs of water.

My birth was before mountains were formed or hills were put in place.

It happened long before God had made the earth or any of its fields or even the dust.

I was there when the Lord put the heavens in place and stretched the sky over the surface of the sea.

I was with him when he placed the clouds in the sky and created the springs that fill the ocean.

I was there when he set boundaries for the sea to make it obey him,

and when he laid foundations to support the earth.

I was right beside the Lord, helping him plan and build.

I made him happy each day,

and I was happy at his side.

I was pleased with his world and pleased with its people.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 8

Response: **O LORD, OUR GOD,
HOW WONDERFUL YOUR NAME IN ALL THE EARTH!**

I often think of the heavens your hands have made, and of the moon and stars you put in place. Then I ask, “Why do you care about us humans! Why are you concerned for us weaklings?”

You made us a little lower than you yourself, and have crowned us with glory and honour. You let us rule everything your hands have made. And you put all of it under our power –

The sheep and the cattle, and every wild animal, the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and all ocean creatures.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a wreath of greenery with three candles, a ribbon flowing from each candle labelled 'Father', 'Son', 'Holy Spirit'

Images from the Readings

- Wisdom in Creation
- Playfulness of God
- Wonders of creation
- Jesus promises the Spirit of truth
- Unity between Father and Son in the Spirit

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Do you know what the special feast today is? (Trinity Sunday)

'Trinity' means something made up of three, and today we give thanks for the three persons of God – the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is a mystery that we cannot really understand, but Jesus tells us that he is the clearest picture of what God is like, and the same Spirit that was in him is available for us today.

Do you know anything about your great-great-grandparents? People often forget what their ancestors were like. Old photos might help, and old letters and diaries and family stories help us to remember who they were and what they did.

Jesus lived and taught much longer ago than our great-great-grandparents, yet we remember him and what he taught us. How? (Holy Spirit has been given to the church to help us remember, we read Scriptures and say prayers which include Father, Son and Spirit)

Act of Worship

Teach the children the Sign of the Cross, and the Glory Be:

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen”

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Each of the readings casts a particular light on the mystery of God. The first invites us to marvel at the creation of God and consider the eternity of the Godhead before creation existed. The identification of Wisdom with Christ leads us to understand that from all ages Christ is, and the loving plan that God had for all creation was in place from the very beginning. The Holy Spirit, according to Jesus' promise in the gospel, will teach his disciples everything they were unable to grasp during his time with them. The love of God binds us through Jesus and in the Holy Spirit. Belief in the Trinity - one God, Father, Son and Spirit – is one of the most basic foundations of Christian faith. The experience of the one God was inherited from the Jewish tradition, yet in Jesus the early Christians had experienced God present with them in the flesh. As the church grew, the actions of the Holy Spirit were recognised. It took many centuries for the mystery to be formulated into words, and these are still totally inadequate to convey such a concept. St Augustine's image of the Trinity as a communion of love (the Lover, the Beloved and the Love which exists between them) is a rich analogy.

Reflection for Leaders

Words are wholly inadequate to explain the mystery of the Trinity, yet our experience of God as Father, Son and Spirit has enabled us to have access to God in a personal way that would otherwise be denied us. What were your earliest ideas about God, and how have these developed as your life has unfolded? What have been significant moments of new understanding and closeness to God for you – turning points in your life? In what ways can you open yourself to God more fully, to develop your personal relationship with the Trinity? How does Jesus embody the love of God for you? Is the Holy Spirit still active in the Church today, to lead us all to new understandings and truth, as was experienced by the early Christians? How have you recognised God acting in your life? How can this reflection on the experience of God be transformed into reality in your relationships with the people who are close to you this week?

Liturgy Outline

Trinity Sunday

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you gave us your Son, Jesus Christ, and your Holy Spirit to
show us how to live as your children. Help us today to do what is
right. Amen

FIRST READING Proverbs 8:22-31
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 8
 O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the
earth!
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL John 16:12-15
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to John
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: God's love has been poured into our hearts as we have listened to his
Word, so we turn to our God for what we need:

- For the gift of wisdom, so that we may discern what is just in life ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of truth, that the Spirit may guide all those in power in our country
to know the truth and act on it ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That God's message reaches all those in our homes, schools and communities
who are hungry to know of God ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who are sick and lonely ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of the Trinity, may your kingdom come. Listen to the prayers of
your children, through Jesus Christ our Lord
All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Liturgy Outline

The Body & Blood of Christ

White



Jesus and his disciples were looking after all the people who crowded round to be healed and learn. They were a long way from the town, and they had no food. The disciples wanted Jesus to send the people home. But Jesus knew that God would provide all that they needed to sustain them. We share a special meal together when we gather at Mass. We believe that, through the power of God, the bread and wine that we share at Communion become the body and blood of Jesus, who gives himself to each of us in a very special way. We

Gospel

Luke 9:11b-17

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus welcomed the people. He spoke to them about God's kingdom and healed everyone who was sick.

Late in the afternoon the twelve apostles came to Jesus and said, "Send the crowd to the villages and farms around here. They need to find a place to stay and something to eat. There is nothing in this place. It is like a desert!"

Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat."

But they replied, "We have only five small loaves of bread and two fish. If we are going to feed all these people, we will have to go and buy food." There were about five thousand men in the crowd.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Have the people sit in groups of fifty."

They did this, and all the people sat down. Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up toward heaven and blessed the food. Then he broke the bread and fish and handed them to his disciples to give to the people.

Everyone ate all they wanted. What was left over filled twelve baskets.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS

King Melchizedek of Salem brought out some bread and wine.

He was a priest of God Most High, and he said to Abraham,

"I give you the blessings of God Most High,

Creator of heaven and of the earth.

All praise belongs to God Most High,

who let you defeat your enemies."

Then Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 110

Response:

**YOU ARE A PRIEST FOR EVER,
IN THE LINE OF MELCHIZEDEK**

The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right side, until I make your enemies into a footstool for you."

Your glorious power will be seen on the day you begin to rule. You will wear the sacred robes and shine like the morning sun in all of your strength.

The Lord has made a promise that will never be broken: "You will be a priest forever, just like Melchizedek."

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

Brothers and sisters: I have already told you what the Lord Jesus did on the night he was betrayed. And it came from the Lord himself.

He took some bread in his hands. Then after he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Eat this and remember me."

After the meal, Jesus took a cup of wine in his hands and said, "This is my blood, and with it God makes his new agreement with you. Drink this and remember me."

The Lord meant that when you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you tell about his death until he comes.

The Word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, candle, crucifix, the gifts of bread and wine that will be brought forward by the children in the offertory procession placed on a small table covered with a white tablecloth.

Images from the Readings

- Eat this and remember me
- Tell about his death until he comes
- Looked up toward heaven and blessed the food
- Everyone ate all they wanted

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Speak to the children about how Jesus knew he was going to die, but wanted to enable his disciples to realise that he would always be among them, loving them, helping them, strengthening them. Are there times in our lives when we celebrate an event with a special meal? When? What do you eat on those occasions? (Help the children see that certain foods become symbols of what we are celebrating, these special things make the event real and remind us of past celebrations, as the Passover did for the Jews)

Show the children the gifts of bread and wine, which will become the body and blood of Christ. Help them make the connection between Mass and Jesus' words, "Do this in memory of me." What happens at Mass? At our celebration of the Eucharist we remember the meal that Jesus shared with his friends the night before he died; and we share in his death and resurrection. We believe that through the power of God the bread and wine truly become Jesus' body and blood. This is a mystery to us, but we believe it because we have faith.

Act of Worship

Teach the children the Third Memorial Acclamation to a tune regularly sung at your parish

“When we eat this bread,
and drink this cup
we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,
until you come in glory”

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The first reading describes an encounter between Abram, ancestor of the Israelites, and a priest named Melchizedek. Abram initiated tithing as a response to the religious practice that has taken place. The words pronounced by Melchizedek are both a blessing for Abram and an exclamation of praise of God Most High. The second reading is an account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, faithful to Jewish etiquette, and with a charge to repeat among themselves the actions demonstrated by Jesus himself. In the gospel reading, Jesus' healing and teaching ministry is in full swing. The place was somewhat isolated, but close enough to be able to procure food from more populated areas should this be necessary. Jesus' actions over the food are in thanksgiving, and the actions of the apostles are the ones through whom the crowd experiences the abundance of provision. This indicates that Jesus provides for his people through the agency of the Church. The feast celebrates the living presence of Christ, which we know in the gift of his body and blood in the Eucharist.

Reflection for Leaders

Jesus, his disciples and the crowd are away in 'a lonely place'. We are all in a lonely place in a sense, as we long for food and refuge and place to belong. As Catholics, the Eucharist is the place that satisfies these needs on our life journey. We understand the gospel, in the context of the Eucharist, as being the way throughout history in which Jesus feeds the people who hunger and thirst for real 'food' and real 'drink'. What parallels do you recognise between the purpose of daily meals and the Eucharist itself? As you approach Jesus in his church, what kinds of things do you hunger for, and how does Jesus satisfy these hungers? Can you share the task of satisfying the hungers of others? What resources do you have to offer to accomplish this? During this week be aware of your responsibility to feed others, within your family and outside. Find a way to give practical help and support to someone in need.

Liturgy Outline

The Body & Blood of Christ

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God

R Blessed be God

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, you gave us the Eucharist as a remembrance of you suffering and death. May we discover more today how these events bring us salvation and peace.
Amen

FIRST READING Genesis 14: 18 - 20
Reader The Word of the Lord
R Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 110
You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 11: 23 - 26
Reader The Word of the Lord
R Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 9: 11b - 17
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke
R Glory to you, Lord

At the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
R Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: With trust in our hearts we call upon our loving God for all our needs:

- For the Church throughout the world, the body of Christ, that each of its members will be cherished
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
- For peace where there is trouble in the world
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
- That we, the children of Aotearoa-New Zealand, will lead our people to live in peace with each other
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of understanding that with cheerful hearts we will love each other
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God our hope and peace, gather us and those for whom we pray to you through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



Jesus performed his first miracle by changing the water into wine. Most of the people at the wedding did not know what had happened, but the disciples and the servants saw the amazing power that Jesus had. Mary had seen the problem and had turned to Jesus for help. We too must be ready to care about others.

Gospel

John 2:1-12

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was at a wedding feast in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited and were there.

When the wine was all gone, Mary said to Jesus, "They don't have any more wine."

Jesus replied, "Mother, my time has not yet come! You must not tell me what to do."

Mary then said to the servants, "Do whatever Jesus tells you to do"

At the feast there were six stone water jars that were used by the people for washing themselves in the way that their religion said they must. Each jar held about twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus told the servants to fill them to the top with water. Then after the jars had been filled, he said, "Now take some water and give it to the man in charge of the feast."

The servants did as Jesus told them, and the man in charge drank some of the water that had now turned into wine. He did not know where the wine had come from, but the servants did. He called the bridegroom over and said, "The best wine is always served first. Then after the guests have had plenty, the other wine is served. But you have kept the best until last!"

This was Jesus' first miracle, and he did it in the village of Cana in Galilee. There Jesus showed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him. After this, he went with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples to the town of Capernaum, where they stayed for a few days.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Isaiah 62:1-3

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

Jerusalem, I will speak up for your good. I will never be silent till you are safe and secure, sparkling like a flame. Your great victory will be seen by every nation and king, and the Lord will give you a new name. You will be a glorious crown and a royal headband in the hands of the Lord your God.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 96

Response: **PROCLAIM GOD'S MARVELLOUS DEEDS TO ALL THE NATIONS**

Sing a new song to the Lord! Everyone on this earth, sing praises to the Lord, sing and praise his name.

Day after day announce, "The Lord has saved us!" Tell every nation on earth, "The Lord is wonderful and does marvellous things!"

Tell everyone of every nation, "Praise the glorious power of the Lord." He is wonderful! Praise him!

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

Brothers and sisters: There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve the same Lord, and we can each do different things. Yet the same God works in all of us and helps us in everything we do.

The Spirit has given each of us a special way of serving others. Some of us can speak with wisdom, while others can speak with knowledge, but these gifts come from the same Spirit.

To others the Spirit has given great faith or the power to heal the sick or the power to work mighty miracles.

Some of us are prophets, and some of us recognise when God's Spirit is present. Others can speak different kinds of languages, and still others can tell what these languages mean.

But it is the Spirit who does all this and decides which gifts to give to each of us.

The Word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a wedding photo, and a jug of water.

Images from the Readings

- A new name
- Share the joy
- Different spiritual gifts
- Six empty water jars
- The best wine

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

The people in this photo are getting married. A wedding is a very happy occasion – it is a time to celebrate and rejoice with eating and drinking. Has anyone been to a wedding? What happens? Who is there?

Who is at the wedding in the gospel today? How would the people have felt if the wine at the wedding in Cana had run out?

Mary noticed that there was a problem. What did she do? She turned to Jesus, and even when he didn't seem to be keen to help, she told the servants to do whatever he told them to do.

We need to be like Mary - we need to notice and be concerned about others, and then turn to Jesus with complete trust.

Who knew about this miracle? This was the first time the disciples saw the power that Jesus had.

Why do you think Jesus performed this miracle?

Jesus always responds to those who trust in him – even if it is in unexpected ways.

Act of Worship

Teach the children the Glory Be prayer: “Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen”

Background to the Readings for Leaders

All three readings today have the theme of marriage and union, particularly between God and the chosen people. This relationship between God, the land, and the people of Israel is woven into words by Isaiah in the first reading. The second reading speaks of the union of gifts given by the Spirit to serve others, and the gospel records the first public miracle that Jesus performs as his mother draws his attention to the problem at the wedding feast. A wedding, the most intimate celebration of human love and commitment, is a worthy setting for this first miracle, as it symbolises the self-giving love of Christ for the church. In Jewish culture both water and wine are essential elements in marriage celebrations: water for purification and preparation, and wine for happy fulfilment. This was the first time the disciples were given a glimpse of Jesus' power and glory – the indication that he was no ordinary rabbi. The lives of these disciple witnesses are forever transformed.

Reflection for Leaders

As in a human marriage the relationship of the chosen people with their God is often stormy – it suffers the ups and downs of any human relationship. But it is enduring because once God had given a pledge it is forever. This story at the beginning of the public life of Jesus mirrors the banquet of eternal life. The glory of God in Jesus makes all things new – Jesus can and does change things. The durability of God's love in a changing world is appealing. While human love can be fickle, the unearned and unchanging dependability of God's love is characteristic. Just as Mary placed the whole situation into Jesus' hands, we are called to do this in our own lives. Are you able to do this?

The fact that you are listening to the words of Jesus means that he is inviting you to belief in him. How do you respond? Where in your own life do you sense that you are 'running out of wine'? What can replace it? How do you respond to other people's expectations of you? What are the personal gifts that you bring to service? Make an opportunity this week to offer hospitality to someone in need.

Liturgy Outline

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, we thank you for the gifts you have given each of us. Help us in the first days of this new year to begin again and bring your love to those around us. Let us serve with gladness. Amen

FIRST READING Isaiah 62:1-3
 Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 96
 Proclaim God's marvellous deeds to all the nations
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
 Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

John 2:1-12

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: We know that God loves us, so let us pray for others and for ourselves.

- For the Church, that we may welcome everyone to share the Good News
 Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all those who are different, on the outside, or who feel lonely
 Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we begin this new year by helping someone who needs us
 Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For ourselves and our families, that we will care for all God's creation
 Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of love and peace. Hear the prayers that we make to you through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

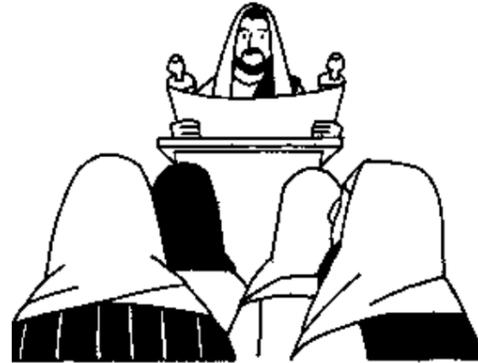
The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green

Jesus announces what he is about to do to the people of Nazareth, and his plan of action to them by quoting the prophet Isaiah. Jesus was always faithful to worship and reading Scripture. We also treat our book of Scripture with reverence and respect. We have a special place for it beside a lighted candle, we process with it, the priest kisses the book and handles it with reverence. Just as Jesus did we know it is the Word of God for us today and always.



Gospel

Luke 4:14-21

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus returned to Galilee with the power of the Spirit. News about him spread everywhere. He taught in the Jewish meeting places, and everyone praised him.

Jesus went back to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as usual he went to the meeting place on the Sabbath. When he stood up to read from the Scriptures, he was given the book of Isaiah the prophet. He opened it and read,

“The Lord’s Spirit has come to me, because he has chosen me to tell the good news to the poor. The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers, and to say, “This is the year the Lord has chosen.”

Jesus closed the book, then handed it back to the man in charge and sat down.

Everyone in the meeting place looked straight at Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, “What you have just heard me read has come true today.”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Nehemiah 8:1-4a, 5-6, 8-10

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET NEHEMIAH

All the people came together and stood in the open area in front of the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the teacher to read to them from the Law of Moses that the Lord had given for his people.

So on the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the priest came with the Law and stood before the crowd of men and women. Everyone who was able to understand was there. From early morning till noon Ezra read the Law of Moses aloud in front of the Water Gate. They all listened carefully, as Ezra stood and read from the wooden platform that had been built for him.

The platform was very high, and everyone could see Ezra as he opened the Book of the Law. And when he opened it, they all stood up. Ezra praised the wonderful Lord God, and the people shouted, “Amen! Amen!” They bowed low to the ground and worshipped the Lord.

The men who were on the platform with him translated what he read and explained to the people what it meant.

Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher, and the Levites who had been teaching the people all said, “Don’t be sad or cry! This is a special day for the Lord your God.” They said this because the people cried when God’s Law was read to them.

Nehemiah told the people, “Enjoy your good food and wine and share what you have with everyone who didn’t have any to bring. Don’t be sad! This is a special day for the Lord, and he will make you happy and strong.”

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 19

Response: **YOUR WORDS LORD, ARE SPIRIT AND LIFE**

The Law of the Lord is perfect; it gives us new life.
His teachings last forever, and they give wisdom to ordinary people.

The Lord’s instruction is right; it makes our hearts glad.
His commands shine brightly, and they give us light.

Let my words and my thoughts be pleasing to you, Lord, because you are my mighty rock and my protector.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a scroll with the words of Isaiah written on it.

Images from the Readings

- Don't be sad or cry!
- God's words are spirit and life
- Unity - together we are the body of Christ
- Jesus taught in the meeting places
- Jesus announces his mission

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Where was Jesus when this event took place? (The meeting place or synagogue in Nazareth, the town where he grew up) What was he doing there? (Jesus was always faithful to worship wherever he went. He went there to proclaim the scriptures and teach the people)

How did Jesus do this? (He unrolled the scroll and read from Isaiah. He told the people that God had chosen him and given him the Spirit of the Lord to empower him to fulfil Isaiah's prophecy)

Tell the children about the Lectionary with its special text for proclaiming aloud, about how we treat this special book in the Liturgy – how we process with it and have a special place for it in the Church, how we place a lighted candle next to it to remind us that the Word of God is the light for our path. Talk about how the priest kisses the book, and handles it with reverence and respect.

Act of Worship

Show the children how to sign their forehead, lips and breast with a cross when the gospel is announced. Teach them this prayer: "May the word of God be in my mind, on my lips and in my heart"

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Both the first reading and the gospel today speak of the public proclamation of the scriptures. Nehemiah the governor, and Ezra the priest, played a central role in the restoration of Jerusalem after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon. Ezra had been sent to reconstruct the religious traditions of the people according to the Law of Moses. The public proclamation of the Scriptures once again in the holy city is attended to by the people who are open to listen. The words touch them to their hearts. When Jesus stands to speak to the people of his hometown in the synagogue must also have been compelling for his audience, especially when he announces himself as the fulfilment of the prophecy. This announcement points to the focus of Jesus' mission to the lowly, the infirm and the marginalized of society. The Acts of the Apostles continues Luke's gospel, which is written as a 'history' - the story of the events witnessed and then recorded in an orderly fashion.

Luke's gospel is the most explicit and frequent in its reference to the work of the Holy Spirit that Jesus opens his preaching by acknowledging.

Reflection for Leaders

The public proclamation of Scripture outlined in our readings today describe a formal liturgy. How does our liturgy of today compare with that of ancient times? How does our response to the Word of God compare with those who listened in those days? Do we recognise that when we listen to scripture being read to us we are listening to God speaking to us through the words we hear? Perhaps we might try to read a passage slowly and reflectively two or three times, allowing time for particular words or phrases to touch us, and spending time with these words. Allow them to connect with our personal situations, relationships, decisions.

Jesus told his listeners that his mission was to bring the good news to the poor, set the captives free, give sight to the blind, and freedom to those who suffer. In what practical way can I bring good news to someone who is going through a tough time today?

Liturgy Outline

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, help us to remember anyone who is sick or lonely at this
time of year. May the joy and peace of Christmas touch their lives.
Amen

FIRST READING Nehemiah 8:1-4a, 5-6, 8-10

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 96
Your words, Lord, are spirit and life
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 27

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 4:14-21
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Filled with confidence let us pray to our loving God for all our needs.

- For the Church, that her leaders and people will be wise and caring
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all those who need our help will receive it
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we, the people of Aotearoa New Zealand, will live together in harmony
and peace
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For ourselves and our families, that we will always care for each other
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Ever faithful God, hear the prayers of your children. Bless and protect
us, and those for whom we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



Jesus was well known to many of the people in the crowd the day that he announced that he would fulfil Isaiah's prophecy. Why did the crowd become upset when Jesus told them this? How would Jesus have felt at their reaction? Jesus brought the message of God's love to all people, and we need to be ready to do this too.

Gospel

Luke 4:20b-24, 28-30

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Everyone in the Jewish meeting place looked straight at Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, "What you have just heard me read has come true today."

All the people started talking about Jesus and were amazed at the wonderful things he said. They kept on asking, "Isn't he Joseph's son?"

Jesus answered: "You will certainly want to tell me this saying, 'Doctor, first make yourself well.' You will tell me to do the same things here in my own hometown that you heard I did in Capernaum. But you can be sure that no prophets are liked by the people of their own hometown."

When the people in the meeting place heard Jesus say this, they became so angry that they got up and threw him out of town. They dragged him to the edge of the cliff on which the town was built, because they wanted to throw him down from there. But Jesus slipped through the crowd and got away.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17ab, 18-19

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

The Lord said to Jeremiah, "Before I gave you life and before you were born, I chose you to be a prophet to the nations.

"Jeremiah, get ready! Go and tell those people everything I command you. Don't be afraid of them.

"Today my power will make you as strong as a fortress or a tall column of iron or a wall of bronze. You will be against everyone in Judah, its kings, leaders, priests, and all the common people. They will fight against you, but they won't win, because I will be with you to protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 71

Response: **I will sing of your salvation.**

I run to you, Lord, for protection. Don't disappoint me. You do what is right, so come to my rescue. Listen to my prayer and keep me safe.

Be my mighty rock, the place where I can always run for protection.
Save me by your command!

You are my mighty rock and my fortress. I depend on you.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, 11-13

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

Brothers and sisters: Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. Love never fails!

When we were children, we thought and reasoned as children do. But when we grew up, we quit our childish ways. Now all we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see him face to face. We don't know everything, but then we will, just as God completely understands us. For now there are faith, hope and love. But of these three, the greatest is love.

The Word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary and a candle

Images from the Readings

- Before I gave you life I chose you
- I will be with you
- The greatest is love
- Joseph's son
- Hometown rejection

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Do you know what a prophet is? (a person who clearly understood what God wanted and reminded people to be faithful to God)

People don't always want to listen to a prophet because their message challenges people and makes them uncomfortable.

How did the people react to Jesus' message? What did they do?

Why did the people not accept Jesus?

Have you ever felt rejected by people? How would Jesus have felt when his hometown people rejected him?

Was the message he brought hard to do?

Is this message different for us today than it was for the people of his hometown all that long time ago?

What happens when we fail to live the way Jesus taught us?

Who do you know who brings 'good news' to others? Write a list and place it by the prayer focus.

Who or what helps you keep trying?

Act of Worship

Invite the children to pray for the people they have named who bring good news to others.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Both Jeremiah and Jesus have been commissioned by God to be prophets and messengers. They both speak about tearing down the old ways to prepare for the new. For people who are inflexible this new way comes as a threat, and reception of their message is met with anger and opposition. The gospel today continues the story from last week where Jesus announces to his hometown his mission of bringing hope to the hopeless. The people do not welcome his message; their initial approval quickly turns into rejection and this leads to physical violence, which eventually finds full expression in Jerusalem at the crucifixion. This event marks the first of many rejections that Jesus experiences. But rejection doesn't deter Jesus from his mission. He simply slips away and leaves Nazareth to search for others to call to a new way of life – he never returns.

Reflection for Leaders

Have you ever had your ideas or opinions publicly ridiculed? Rejection is one of the most painful experiences that we can suffer. Rejection from those we expect to be supportive is doubly wounding. This is the scenario that faces Jesus, yet he is not daunted in his resolve. He slips away from the violence of his former neighbours. How do we react when what we say is not what people want to hear, and we have to face their anger? Do we hold our ground? The message Jesus came to give is for today and for all. But some of his teachings are not easy to live with – they mean change for many people, especially those who are comfortable and complacent. Do we let public pressure prevent us from sharing the Christian message with everyone?

Have we been in a situation where we observed someone else experience rejection and humiliation?

Are there things within you that are in need of healing?

Are you challenged by social justice issues in the world today? In what practical ways are you responding to these?

In what ways does your faith community work to bring hope to the hopeless?

Perhaps during this week you might reach out to someone who is marginalized or in need of healing.

Liturgy Outline

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you have blessed us with all the gifts and talents we have.
May we serve you with every part of our beings and share your love
with others . Amen

FIRST READING Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17ab, 18-19

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 71
I will sing of your salvation
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, 11-13

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 4:20b-24, 28-30

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Let us bring all our needs in confidence to our loving God:

- For the Church, that the love of God will flow from it in practical ways
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That governments around the world rule with justice and mercy, especially
those where oppression is now active
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all families that they be places of safety, love and nurturing
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That people will be open to seeing God in unexpected places
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Loving God, look with favour on us, and those for whom we pray,
through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green

Because of the crowds, Jesus climbed into Simon's boat to teach. Later he told Peter to go out deeper and put his nets into the sea. Why did Peter not think this was a good idea? Despite being tired and disappointed he trusted Jesus enough to do as Jesus asked. Did Peter and his friends manage to catch any fish that day? How would they have felt? What would this have told them about Jesus? What did they do when Jesus invited them to follow him?



Gospel

Luke 5:1-11

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus was standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, teaching the people as they crowded around him to hear God's message. Near the shore he saw two boats left there by some fishermen who had gone to wash their nets. Jesus got into the boat that belonged to Simon and asked him to row it out a little way from the shore. Then Jesus sat down in the boat to teach the crowd. When Jesus had finished speaking, he told Simon, 'Row the boat out into the deep water and let your nets down to catch some fish.' "Master," Simon answered, "we have worked hard all night long and have not caught a thing. But if you tell me to, I will let the nets down."

They did it and caught so many fish that their nets began ripping apart. Then they signalled for their partners in the other boat to come and help them. The men came, and together they filled the two boats so full that they both began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this happen, he knelt down in front of Jesus and said, "Lord, don't come near me! I am a sinner."

Peter and everyone with him were completely surprised at all the fish they had caught. His partners James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were surprised too. Jesus told Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you will bring in people instead of fish." The men pulled their boats up on the shore. Then they left everything and went with Jesus

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

In the year that King Uzziah died, I had a vision of the Lord. He was on his throne high above and his robe filled the temple. Flaming creatures with six wings each were flying over him and shouted to each other, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord All-Powerful! The earth is filled with your glory." As they shouted, the door of the temple shook, and the temple was filled with smoke. Then I cried out, "I'm doomed! Everything I say is sinful, and everyone around me is sinful too. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord All-Powerful."

One of the flaming creatures flew over to me with a burning coal that it had taken from the altar with a pair of metal tongs. It touched my lips with the hot coal and said, "This has touched your lips. Your sins are forgiven, and you are no longer guilty." After this, I heard the Lord ask, "Is there anyone I can send? Will someone go for us?" I replied, "Here I am! Send me."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 138

Response: **IN THE SIGHT OF THE ANGELS,
I WILL SING YOUR PRAISES LORD**

With all my heart and in the presence of angels I sing your praises.
I worship at your holy temple.

All kings on this earth have heard your promises, Lord, and they will praise you.
You are so famous that they will sing about the things you have done.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:3-8,11

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

Brothers and sisters: I told you the most important part of the message, and you believed it. That part is: Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say. He was buried, and three days later he was raised to life, as the Scriptures say. Christ appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After this, he appeared to more than five hundred other followers. Most of them are still alive, but some have died. He also appeared to James, and then to all of the apostles. Finally, he appeared to me, even though I am like someone who was born at the wrong time. But it doesn't matter if I preached or if they preached. All of you believed the message just the same.

The Word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a deep bowl of water, and a fishing net

Images from the Readings

- Holy, holy, holy Lord
- Send me
- You believed the message
- Row out into the deep
- They left everything and went with Jesus

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Have you ever been fishing? Simon Peter was a fisherman. He worked on a boat, catching fish in a net in the lake of Galilee. Do you think it is hard work fishing? How would the fishermen have felt after they had been fishing all night and returned to shore in the morning without catching even one fish?

Why do you think Simon Peter tried again when Jesus told him to row back out into deep water and put his nets down again?

What did it mean when they caught so many fish that their nets began to rip apart?

What did Jesus mean when Jesus told him that from now on he would be bringing in people instead of fish?

We know that Jesus came so that all people can know and love God. Just as he called Simon Peter to follow him, Jesus wants us to help him in his mission. How can we do this?

Act of Worship

You might invite the children to sing a familiar song, such as 'The Galilee Song' or 'Here I am, Lord' today.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

In today's readings the question is asked of both Isaiah and Simon, "Who will go for me?" When called, coming face to face with God, both Isaiah and Simon Peter see themselves as never before. They were afraid. But they were told to have courage; that they were not to fear. Both went.

It is likely that Jesus already knew Simon, since he had cured his mother-in-law previously. Jesus had spent time in Capernaum, preaching and healing the sick. The large crowd who had followed him had also witnessed these things. Despite his misgivings, Simon's compliance results in a supernatural catch of fish. Simon Peter's response is to confess his sinfulness and to address Jesus as 'Lord'. It is after this response that Jesus reveals the mission of the disciple. Several of Simon Peter's companions also accept Jesus' call.

The images in the readings are symbolic – that of the Church as a boat (the barque of Peter), and as a net (in which Christ catches his followers in order to give them life). The huge haul of fish is symbolic of the overabundance of blessing, which is promised to those who believe in and follow Jesus. It signals the abundance of the messianic banquet, which Jesus brings.

Lake Gennesaret and the Sea of Tiberias are other names for the Sea of Galilee. This event probably took place on the north-west corner of the lake, near the village of Capernaum, where Simon Peter lived.

Reflection for Leaders

Spend some time reflecting on what 'putting out into the deep' may have meant for Simon Peter and his companions. Just as Jesus asked Simon Peter to take a risk by going back out into deep water, so he asks us to take a risk for him too. Our deep water may be way over our heads. Jesus asks us to have faith in him. Courage and boldness are what we require to answer 'yes' to the call to be Christian today. What is our response to the call of God to leave everything and follow him? Are there ways in which you are already sharing in the task of being a 'fisher' of people? In what ways are you being asked to put out into deep water today?

Liturgy Outline

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you call each one of us to follow you. Give us the courage
and the boldness to respond and bring others to know and follow
you too. Amen

FIRST READING Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 71
In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 1 Corinthians 15:3-8,11

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 5:1-11

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Let us bring all our needs in confidence to our loving God:

- For the Church, that she brings God's message to the world
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That those who hear the message of Jesus believe it
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all those whom God has called, that they have the courage to leave
everything and go where God sends them
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That people who are marginalised and rejected will find welcome
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God, giver of our gifts, hear the prayers we your children make to you
through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



The crowds had followed Jesus to listen to him teach and to be healed if they were sick. When Jesus sat down and began to teach beside the Sea of Galilee, the people gathered on the hillside around him. This is why today's reading is often called 'The sermon on the Mount'. Jesus gave four examples of happiness that do not match what society believes. So what was Jesus telling us in this sermon? If we open our hearts and lives to God's faithful love we will know the true happiness that Jesus spoke of.

Gospel

Luke 6:17,20-23

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus and his apostles went down from the mountain and came to some flat, level ground. Many other disciples were there to meet him. Large crowds of people from all over Judea, Jerusalem, and the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon were there too.

Jesus looked at his disciples and said: 'God will bless you people who are poor. His kingdom belongs to you! God will bless you hungry people. You will have plenty to eat! God will bless you people who are crying. You will laugh!

'God will bless you when others hate you and won't have anything to do with you. God will bless you when people insult you and say cruel things about you, all because you are a follower of the Son of Man! Long ago your own people did these same things to the prophets.

'So when this happens to you, be happy and jump for joy! You will have a great reward in heaven.'

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Jeremiah 17:7-8

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

The Lord blesses everyone who honestly trusts him. They are like trees growing beside a stream, trees with roots that reach down to the water and have leaves that are always green.

They always bear fruit and they don't worry about the lack of rain.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 40

Response: **HAPPY ARE THEY WHO HOPE IN THE LORD**

I patiently waited, Lord, for you to hear my prayer. You listened, and you let me stand on a rock with my feet firm.

You gave me a new song, a song of praise to you. Many will see this, and they will honour and trust you, the Lord God.

I am poor and needy, but, Lord God, you care about me, and you come to my rescue. Please hurry and help.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:12,16-20

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

Brothers and sisters: If we preach that Christ was raised from death, how can some of you say that the dead will not be raised to life? If the dead won't be raised to life, Christ was not raised to life.

Unless Christ was raised to life, your faith is useless, and you are still living in your sins. And those people who died after putting their faith in him are completely lost.

If our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are worse off than anyone else. But Christ has been raised to life! And he makes us certain that others will also be raised to life.

The Word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a globe or a map of the world

Images from the Readings

- Trees beside a stream
- Fruit bearing
- Certainty of resurrection
- God will bless you
- Be happy and jump for joy!

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

What are the things that make us happy? Are these the same things that Jesus was teaching about in the gospel today?

Who were the people that Jesus was speaking to?

Where was he when he gave this teaching? We call it 'the sermon on the Mount' because the people had gathered on the hillside.

What Jesus was telling his disciples was opposite what people believe, even today. Jesus does not say that it is wrong to own nice things, have plenty to eat and a comfortable home. What is important is that this mustn't be our primary goal in life.

If we have these things, what do you think Jesus wants us to do with them? (Share with others who don't have enough)

Is it easy to share our things?

What does this tell us about God and the way we are to live?

Act of Worship

Invite the children to think of places in the world where people are poor, hungry or suffering in some way. Pray for them

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Jeremiah's verses present the image of the flourishing tree planted beside the stream, bearing green leaves and fruit. Luke also presents an image – one that is opposed to that which the world teaches: that it is the poor and needy who are truly blessed. Luke tells us who is present at this gathering; the newly formed twelve apostles as well as many other disciples who had witnessed the miracles and healings Jesus had performed. With them were many who were simply curious. Luke is interested in the lived experience of those who are present: those who are physically poor, hungry, suffering. It is they who are marginalized by the society of the day, and they to whom this sermon brings very specific good news. Those people in power are however threatened by Jesus' message, which challenges the very things that society regards as essential to happiness. Luke proposes that material poverty leads us to greater detachment from the things of this world, thereby allowing us to attach ourselves to spiritual values.

Reflection for Leaders

The beatitudes confront us with choices concerning temporal or earthly possessions. They challenge us to purify our hearts, to embrace the values of God that are completely opposed to those of the world. The things that we think we need to be happy and successful are exposed as being of no value at all in God's economy. The beatitudes provide us with the heart of the Christian way of life. It takes complete trust to live the beatitudes. Jesus is asking us for that complete trust in God, no matter what our condition in life.

What does the church teach us about worldly wealth and the responsibilities required of those who have an abundance of it? Social justice teachings of the church have been consistently forthcoming in the past hundred years – they remind us that the teachings of Jesus were not just for that time, but for all time. Jesus is addressing us with the challenge of his teaching. How does this make you feel?

Jesus did not say that it was wrong to own things, have enough to eat or a comfortable home, but his sermon reminds us that this should not be our sole focus in life. What steps might you take this week to focus more attention on spiritual values?

Liturgy Outline

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, your ways lead us to happiness. Help us to bring your
hope and happiness to a hopeless world. Amen

FIRST READING Jeremiah 17:7-8
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 40
 Happy are they who hope in the Lord
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 6:17, 20-23
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: With confidence and faith we bring all our needs to our compassionate
God:

- For the Church - Pope John Paul II, bishops, priests and lay people – who
work towards bringing the good news to all
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who suffer from war, famine and sickness
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That those who are poor, hungry, sad or rejected will find your lasting
happiness
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we will have the perseverance to withstand insults and cruel words
because of our faith
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of love, bless your children and hear the prayers we make to you
through Jesus Christ our Lord
All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



Today's reading continues the story of Jesus teaching the people that we began last Sunday. In it Jesus tells us to love our enemies and do good to those who are cruel to us. Why does he tell us to do this? What does this tell us about what God is like, and what God expects of us?

Gospel

Luke 6:27-37

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus said to the disciples: "This is what I say to all who will listen to me: Love your enemies, and be good to everyone who hates you. Ask God to bless anyone who curses you, and pray for everyone who is cruel to you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, don't stop that person from slapping you on the other cheek. If someone wants to take your coat, don't try to keep back your shirt. Give to everyone who asks and don't ask people to return what they have taken from you. Treat others just as you want to be treated.

"If you love only someone who loves you, will God praise you for that? Even sinners love people who love them. If you are kind only to someone who is kind to you, will God be pleased with you for that? Even sinners are kind to people who are kind to them. If you lend money only to someone you think will pay you back, will God be pleased with you for that? Even sinners lend to sinners because they think they will get it all back. But love your enemies and be good to them. Lend without expecting to be paid back. Then you will get a great reward, and you will be the true children of God in heaven. He is good even to people who are unthankful and cruel.

"Have pity on others, just as your Father has pity on you. Don't judge others, and God will not judge you. Don't be hard on others, and God will not be hard on you. Forgive others, and God will forgive you."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

1 Samuel 26:2,7-9,12-13,22-23

A READING FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

One day Saul took three thousand of his best soldiers and went to look for David in the desert near Zith. That night David and Abishai went into the camp. Saul was sleeping with his spear stuck in the ground near his head, while Abner and the soldiers were sleeping all around him.

Abishai whispered to David, "This time God has given you the chance to kill your enemy. I'll pin him to the ground with his own sword, and I won't have to try but once."

David whispered back, "Don't kill him! The Lord will punish anyone who kills his chosen king." David took the spear and the water jar, and then the two men left. None of Saul's soldiers knew what had happened or even woke up, because the Lord had made them all fall sound asleep.

David and Abishai crossed the valley and went to the top of the hill, where they were at a safe distance. David said, "Your Majesty, here is your spear. Have one of your young men come and get it. The Lord put you in my power today. But you are his chosen king, and I refused to harm you, because the Lord rewards people who are honest and faithful."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 103

Response: **THE LORD IS KIND AND MERCIFUL**

With all my heart I praise the Lord,
and with all that I am I praise his holy name!
With all my heart I praise the Lord!
I will never forget how kind he has been.

The Lord forgives our sins, heals us when we are sick.
Just as parents are kind to their children,
the Lord is kind to all who worship him.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a globe or a map of the world

Images from the Readings

- The Lord put you in my power
- The Lord rewards the honest and faithful
- Love your enemies
- Even sinners do that
- True children of God

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

If someone hits you, what do you feel like doing to them? What does Jesus say we should do?

What about if someone takes something that belongs to you?

If someone says horrible things about you, how do you want to treat them?

What does Jesus say to do?

Often it is people who are hurting themselves who can be really mean to us. We know that God loves everyone, and sometimes we have to be the people who are good and show God's love to those who may never see that love anywhere else.

God doesn't only love nice people. What kind of people does Jesus want us to be kind to?

Sometimes it can be really hard to live the way Jesus wants us to. But we can ask God for help when we need it. Explain how the 'Our Father' prayer gives us a good model for forgiveness. We can reaffirm the action God wants each time we say it.

Act of Worship

Teach the children the Our Father:

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. Amen

Background to the Readings for Leaders

King Saul is jealous of David, who is young and popular, and in his determination to kill David, he pursues him relentlessly. David spends many years on the run in the desert and wilderness regions of Zith. It is during this time that he writes many of the Psalms we are so familiar with. In our first reading today Saul is delivered into David's hands. However David opts to be merciful to his sworn enemy and allows God to mete out the justice to Saul. David is seen as a prefiguration of Jesus.

Today's Gospel continues on from that of last week. By providing practical details of how we are to behave, it contains the most challenging and difficult concept of Christian living for us to live out – love for those who are against us, and forgiveness of those who hurt us. The Beatitudes call us to a radical reversal of response to situations in our life – a response that turns our human nature upside down. God's way is a complete reverse to the world's way.

Reflection for Leaders

For David to act in an unforgiving way would have been to act against the ways of God. At times the ways of God seem to be diametrically opposed to human nature, so we must choose to act as God teaches us. It is the same measure that we give that will be given back to us, no matter how hard this might seem. However what Jesus is suggesting is no mere passive inaction – it is a demanding and radical action. Jesus is the self-revelation of God, and God's actions in and for the world. Followers of Jesus must act in these ways precisely because they are the ways of God.

Can you think of an experience you had of being misjudged or wronged? How did you feel? How did your attitude affect your response to the situation?

What activities do you participate in which promote harmony, tolerance and understanding in your community?

What is the most challenging aspect of today's gospel for you?

In what ways have you experienced God's mercy yourself?

During the week, reflect on the words of the 'Our Father' and pray for someone who has mistreated you in some way.

Liturgy Outline

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

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to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you treat us with kindness and compassion. Help us to love
each other and be forgiving even when we are hurt. Amen

FIRST READING 1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 40
The Lord is kind and merciful
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 6:27-37

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: With hope and faith we come to our compassionate God for all our
needs:

- For the Church in Aotearoa-New Zealand and our own parish, that her
leaders always act with integrity, honesty and generosity
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who suffer from cruelty and violence
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we treat other people with kindness and forgiveness
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we learn to share what we have with those who have less
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of love, teach us your ways so we can treat others as you have
shown us. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**Green**

In the Gospel today Jesus reminds us that just as we can recognise a peach tree because of the fruit that grows on it, people will recognise us as followers of Jesus by the way we live our lives, by the things we say and the things we do.



Gospel

Luke 6:39-45

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus used some sayings as he spoke to the people. He said: "Can one blind person lead another blind person? Won't they both fall into a ditch?"

"Are students better than their teacher? But when they are fully trained, they will be like their teacher.

"You can see the speck in your friend's eye. But you don't notice the log in your own eye. How can you say, 'My friend, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you don't see the log in your own eye? you showoffs! First, get the log out of your own eye. Then you can see how to take the speck out of your friend's eye.

"A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. You can tell what a tree is like by the fruit it produces. You cannot pick figs or grapes from thorn bushes. Good people do good things because of the good in their hearts. Bad people do bad things because of the evil in their hearts. Your words show what is in your hearts."

The gospel of the Lord**A READING FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF SIRACH**

You know what a tree is like by its fruit. You know what people are like by their words. Words are a true test of character. So never praise anyone before they speak.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 92

Response:

LORD IT IS GOOD TO GIVE THANKS TO YOU

It is wonderful to be grateful and to sing your praises, Lord Most High!
It is wonderful each morning to tell about your love
and at night to announce how faithful you are.

Good people will prosper like palm trees,
and they will grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon.
They will take root in your house Lord God,
and they will do well.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle, two pieces of fruit, one healthy and fresh the other spotty and diseased.

Images from the Readings

- Words, the true test of character
- Blind leading the blind
- Good tree produces good fruit
- Your words show what is in your hearts

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Show the children the two pieces of fruit, ask them why they think one looks healthy and good to eat and the other one diseased and would be no good for eating. Encourage the children to think about the plants that each of the fruit came from - the healthy plant no doubt came from a tree that was well looked after, watered, fed and pruned. The other piece of fruit likely came from a tree that was left to itself and received very little care. Help the children make the connection with the Gospel - the tree that was watered, fed and pruned produced good fruit - in what ways can we be watered, fed and pruned in our faith so that we produce good fruit? (drink from (read) the Word of God, be fed by the Eucharist, allow God to prune us by admitting our faults in Reconciliation and trying hard not to do wrong again)

Ask children to think of what kind of “fruit” someone who is “watered, fed and pruned” might bear. (eg. kindness, patience, self control)

Act of Worship

Invite the children to sing the Prayer of St Francis or a song they may know about the fruits of the Spirit.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The three readings this week speak of what it is to be and to act as a true disciple of Jesus at the very core of one's being, and as a member of the community. We learnt that a true disciple is someone without duplicity, whose speech is pure, who is clear sighted, humble, and acts in imitation of his/her master Jesus Christ. A true disciple is a person of integrity.

The gospel this week is bound up with this issue of discipleship but can be divided into three distinct sections dealing with different aspects of this topic. The first section Luke 6:39-41 deals with those who guide others, exhorting them to honesty and humility. Verses 41 and 42 then move directly on to dealing with relations among members of the community, and is a clear continuation of the message of last week's gospel not to judge. The third section beginning at verse 43 explains how a true disciple can be recognised, and clearly proclaims that the source of all words and deeds can be found in the condition of one's heart.

Reflection for Leaders

If it is the heart that determines the fruit that a person bears, it is with the heart we must listen, meditate and treasure the word of God. Lectio Divina is an ancient form of prayer with the scriptures, that helps us do just that. Below is a short outline of how to practice Lectio Divina. During this week take this gospel or another favourite piece of scripture and meditate on it using the method below.

1. Read the scripture slowly. Watch for a key phrase or word that jumps out at you or promises to have special meaning for you. It is better to dwell profoundly on one word or phrase than to skim the surface of several chapters. Read with your own life and choices in mind.

2. Reflect on a word or phrase. Let the special word or phrase that you discovered in the first phase sink into your heart. Bring mind, will and emotions to the task. Be like Mary, Jesus' mother, who heard of the angel's announcement and “treasured” and “pondered” what she had heard (Luke 2:19).

3. Respond to what you have read. Form a prayer that expresses your response to the idea, then “pray it back to God.” What you have read is woven through what you tell God.

4. Rest in God's word. Let the text soak into your deepest being, savoring an encounter with God and truth. When ready, move toward the moment in which you ask God to show you how to live out what you have experienced.

Liturgy Outline

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

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to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you show us great love. Help us to show the world your
love by our actions and our words.
Amen

FIRST READING Sirach 27:6-7
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 92
 Lord, it is good to give thanks to you
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 6:39-45
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: As God's children, we are fed by the teaching that Jesus gave us.
We now turn to God for what we need and pray together

- For the leaders of the Church who care for us and help us to bear good fruit
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who suffer because of fighting or division in their countries,
communities or families
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all Christians, that we may take time to feed and nourish our faith
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who are ill or dying
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of love, help us always to find nourishment in your word and in
the sacraments, so that we can shine your light to the world. We pray through
Jesus Christ our Lord
All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**Green**

Today we hear of the great faith of the Roman Centurion. This story reminds us that Jesus came for all people. We realise that we do not deserve the good gifts Jesus gives us, but we have faith that he will come into our lives just as he came into the life of the Centurion's servant and healed him.

Gospel

Luke 7:1-10

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

After Jesus had finished teaching the people, he went to Capernaum. In that town an army officer's servant was sick and about to die. The officer liked this servant very much, and when he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish leaders to ask him to come and heal the servant.

The leaders went to Jesus and begged him to do something. They said, "This man deserves your help! He loves our nation and even built us a meeting place." So Jesus went with them.

When Jesus was not far from the house, the officer sent some friends to tell him, "Lord, don't go to any trouble for me! I am not good enough for you to come into my house. And I am certainly not worthy to come to you. Just say the word, and my servant will get well. I have officers who give orders to me, and I have soldiers who take orders from me. I can say to one of them, 'God!' and he goes. I can say to another, 'Come!' and he comes. I can say to my servant, 'Do this!' and he will do it."

When Jesus heard this, he was so surprised that he turned and said to the crowd following him, "In all of Israel I've never found anyone with this much faith!" The officer's friends returned and found the servant well.

The gospel of the Lord**A READING FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS**

Solomon prayed to God and said: "People who live in foreign lands will hear about you and your mighty power, and they will come here to pray toward your temple. When they do, please answer their prayers from your home in heaven, so that everyone on earth will know about you and worship you, just as your people Israel do. Then they will know that this temple I have built belongs to you."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 117

Response: **GO OUT TO ALL THE WORLD
AND TELL THE GOOD NEWS**

All of you nations,
come praise the Lord!
Let everyone praise him.

His love for us is wonderful,
his faithfulness never ends.
Shout praises to the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle.

Images from the Readings

- Everyone on earth will know about you
- His love for us is wonderful
- I am not good enough
- Say the word
- This much faith

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. What would it have been like to be the sick servant that day? How would you have felt if you were the officer? Did the officer believe he deserved Jesus' help?

Sometimes we ask Jesus for things, just like the Roman officer did, have you ever asked Jesus for something and he has done what you asked? Share a time when this has happened...

Sometimes when we ask Jesus for things, the thing we asked for doesn't happen... Has this ever happened to anyone? Why do you think this might be?

This is a good opportunity to explain to the children that Jesus always wants what is best for us and so when we pray there are three different response we might get - Yes, Wait, or No. A way to explain this might be to give a simple example from everyday. If you were to ask your Mum if you could have an apple for afternoon tea she might say **yes**. If you were to ask just before dinner, she might say **wait** till after dinner and if you're still hungry you can have one then. If you were to ask here if you could have a kingsize block of chocolate she would probably say **no**. Sometimes it is hard to understand the answer we get when we pray to Jesus, we think the thing we're praying for is good, but sometimes Jesus allows some suffering in our lives because it helps us in other ways. We need to trust in Jesus, that he knows what is best for us.

Act of Worship

Go around the circle and invite the children to pray a short prayer asking Jesus to do something for someone else. eg. "Jesus please help Dad to get a job".

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The first reading from 1 Kings is part of a prayer that Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple he had built. We see the beginnings here of Israel's realisation that she had a mission to the nations. The first reading flows well into this week's gospel. Here we see Jesus responding to the prayer of a gentile. Here, as in other gospel accounts, a healing takes place, but in this account the focus is different, it is not on the healing as much as on the faith of the centurion. Jesus particularly highlights this by contrasting the faith of the centurion with that of the people of Israel. This missionary focus is typical of the Gospel of Luke - while remaining clear that the message of salvation was brought to the gentiles through the mediation of the Jews ("the [centurion] sent some Jewish leaders to ask [Jesus] to come and heal his servant") time and again Luke proclaims the universality of the gospel.

Reflection for Leaders

The centurion's act of humility "Lord I am not worthy...but only say the word..." is repeated daily all over the world at the celebration of the Mass.

How often have we recited these words without stopping to think what they mean?

How often do we fall into the trap of thinking "if I just pray more, or give more money, or volunteer more time, then God will be able to love me, then I will be worthy of his love"? Our salvation is not something we can earn, but a free gift offered us by God.

Take some time this week to meditate on these words.

*Lord I am not worthy to receive you
but only say the word and I shall be healed.*

When you go to Mass this week really make an effort to concentrate when you say these words before receiving the Eucharist. Praise God for his wonderful generosity, mercy and compassion.

Liturgy Outline

Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you are kind and loving. Help us always to turn to you in our
times of need.
Amen.

FIRST READING 1 Kings 8:41-43
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 117
 Go out to all the world and tell the good news
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 7:1-10
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: We have listened to God's Word. Let us now bring our needs to God
with faith and trust:

- That the Church will always be open to the requests of those most in need
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all those who doubt, that their gift of faith may be increased
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all those who are sick, suffering, that they will find hope in God
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we may have faith like the army officer and always turn to God in times
of need
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Look kindly on your children and those we pray for. you are a God
of love and in faith we ask these prayers through our Lord Jesus
Christ.

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green

Today we hear two stories where a man who has died has been brought back to life. These stories remind us of the power of God at work in the prophets of old, and in Jesus. In the second reading we also hear how the power of God has come to Paul the apostle.



Gospel

Luke 7:11-17

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus and his disciples were on their way to the town of Nain, and a big crowd was going along with them. As they came near the gate of the town, they saw people carrying out the body of a widow's only son. Many people from the town were walking along with her.

When the Lord saw the woman, he felt sorry for her and said, "Don't cry!" Jesus went over and touched the stretcher on which the people were carrying the dead boy. They stopped, and Jesus said, "Young man, get up!" The man sat up and began to speak. Jesus then gave him back to his mother.

Everyone was frightened and praised God. They said, "A great prophet is here with us! God has come to his people."

News about Jesus spread all over Judea and everywhere else in that part of the country.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

1 Kings 17:17-24

A READING FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

After Elijah had stayed in the woman's house for a while, her son got sick. The boy kept getting worse and finally died. The woman said to Elijah, "You prophet of God, what have I done to you? Why did you come here to remind me of my sins by taking the life of my son?"

"Bring the boy to me," he replied.

Elijah took the boy from her arms. Then he carried him upstairs to the room where he was staying and laid him on the bed. Elijah prayed, "My Lord and God, why have you done such a terrible thing to this widow in whose home I am staying? Why did you take the life of her son?" Elijah stretched out over the little boy three times and prayed, "My Lord and God, bring the boy back to life!"

The Lord answered Elijah's prayer, and the boy began breathing again. Elijah picked him up and took him downstairs. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"

The woman told Elijah, "Now I am sure that you are God's prophet and that you really do speak for him."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 30

Response: **I WILL PRAISE YOU LORD, FOR YOU HAVE RESCUED ME**

Your faithful people, Lord, will praise you with songs and honour your name. At night we may cry, but when morning comes we will celebrate.

Have pity, Lord! Help! You have turned my sorrow into joyful dancing. I will never stop singing your praises, my Lord and my God.

Second Reading

Galatians 1:11-12, 15-19

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

My friends, I want you to know that no one made up the message I preach. It was not given or taught to me by some mere human. My message came directly from Jesus Christ when he appeared to me.

But even before I was born, God had chosen me. He was kind and had decided to show me his Son, so that I would announce his message to the Gentiles.

I didn't talk this over with anyone. I didn't say a word, not even to the men in Jerusalem who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went at once to Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus.

Three years later I went to visit Peter in Jerusalem and stayed with him for fifteen days. The only other apostle I saw was James, the Lord's brother.

The Word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle.

Images from the Readings

- My Lord and God
- You son is alive!
- Get up
- God has come
- News about Jesus spread

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Imagine you were the mother who had just lost her son. How would you be feeling? How would you have felt when Jesus said “Don’t cry”?

Imagine you were in the crowd when Jesus said to the young man “Get up!” and you then saw him sit up and speak, what would you be thinking?

Can you remember other stories from the Gospels when Jesus was especially kind to someone, or did something miraculous?

Is it normal for someone to come back to life who has died? No - this was a miracle that Jesus performed and it shows us that he is very powerful. Can you remember what the reaction of the people in the crowd was after Jesus performed this miracle? Everyone was frightened (perhaps filled with awe might be a better description) and they praised God saying “God has come to his people”. When we think about Jesus and remember the wonderful things he has done in our life (for a start he has given us life!), we should be filled with awe and amazement and we should praise and thank God.

Act of Worship

Teach the children the well known song “Thank You, Lord” by Diane Davis *Young People’s Glory & Praise*.

Thank you Lord for giving us life (x3)

Right where we are

Alleluia praise the Lord (x3)

Right where we are

Background to the Readings for Leaders

This week, as with last week (curing of the centurion’s servant) we see Jesus performing a miracle. Of particular note in Luke’s treatment of these miracles is that he gives very few details about those who Jesus helped. The woman and her son are not named, nor is any mention made of their reaction, or of what they did after the miracle took place. It is obvious that for Luke the focus is Jesus, and rather than giving a mere historical account of event, he is using these stories as moments of teaching. The widow is a ‘type’ of person, a representative of the weak, afflicted and defenseless - the very people whom the Son of God has come for. Luke exhorts us to treat the weak, afflicted and defenseless in the same manner Jesus did. There is also a message to be found in the language Jesus uses. “Rise up”, the command Jesus gives to the young man is a verb normally associated with the resurrection of Christ and of the elect at the end of time. Its use here evokes the pledge of the resurrection of the dead on the last day. It is clear there is more involved here than an extraordinary miracle - it is also a sign of what is to come.

Reflection for Leaders

It is reported that those who were present were frightened (or in awe) and praised God. Can you remember a time when you were awe struck by something of God - a promise given in scripture, a beautiful sunset, an answered prayer? What was your response? Was your response like the crowd in the gospel account, one of praise?

How often does something positive, even amazing happen in our life, and we forget to acknowledge God’s presence in that moment?

Take some time this week to share with a friend some of the ways God has touched your life and invite them to share with you. Perhaps you might like to share a time of prayer together afterwards, praising God for all he has done.

Liturgy Outline

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you treat us with kindness and compassion. Help us to turn
to you in our sorrow and praise you in times of joy. Amen

FIRST READING 1 Kings 17:17-24
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 30
 I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING Galatians 1:11-12, 15-19
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 7:11-17
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Loving God, you invite us to bring all our needs to you in prayer.
Listen to the prayers of your children:

- That the Church will always be the voice of hope in a hopeless world
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That those who have suffered the loss of a loved one will find peace and
consolation in God's love
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That all those who have died will find eternal rest with God
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we will grow in kindness and compassion so that we can care for those
in need
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of compassion, look with kindness on all your people,
especially those for whom we have prayed, we ask this through
our Lord Jesus Christ

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green

Simon, felt embarrassed and annoyed to have a sinful woman in his house. He couldn't understand why Jesus let her stay and treated her with kindness and compassion instead of sending her away. No matter what we have done, God is ready to forgive us if we are truly sorry. Jesus came to save us and bring us back to God's love.



Gospel

Luke 7:36 – 8:3

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

A Pharisee invited Jesus to have dinner with him. So Jesus went to the Pharisee's home and got ready to eat. When a sinful woman in that town found out that Jesus was there, she bought an expensive bottle of perfume. Then she came and stood behind Jesus. She cried and started washing his feet with her tears and drying them with her hair. The woman kissed his feet and poured the perfume on them. The Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this and said to himself, "If this man really were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him! He would know that she is a sinner." Jesus said to the Pharisee, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher, what is it?" Simon replied. Jesus told him, "Two people were in debt to a moneylender. One of them owed him five hundred silver coins, and the other owed him fifty. Since neither of them could pay him back, the moneylender said that they didn't have to pay him anything. Which one of them will like him more?" Simon answered, "I suppose it would be the one who had owed more and didn't have to pay it back." "You are right," Jesus said. He turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Have you noticed this woman? When I came into your home, you didn't give me any water so I could wash my feet. But she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. You didn't even pour olive oil on my head, but she has poured expensive perfume on my feet. So I tell you that all her sins are forgiven, and that is why she has shown great love. But anyone who has been forgiven for only a little will show only a little love." Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven." Some other guests started saying to one another, "Who is this who dares to forgive sins?" But Jesus told the woman, "Because of your faith,

you are now saved. May God give you peace!" Soon after this, Jesus was going through towns and villages, telling the good news about God's kingdom. His twelve apostles were with him, and so were some women who had been healed of evil spirits and all sorts of diseases. One of the women was Mary Magdalene, who once had seven demons in her. Joanna, Susanna, and many others had also used what they owned to help Jesus and his disciples. Joanna's husband Chuza was one of Herod's officials.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

2 Samuel 12:7-10,13

A READING FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

Nathan the prophet told David: You are that rich man! Now listen to what the LORD God of Israel says to you: "I chose you to be the king of Israel. I kept you safe from Saul and even gave you his house and his wives. I let you rule Israel and Judah, and if that had not been enough, I would have given you much more. Why did you disobey me and do such a horrible thing? You murdered Uriah the Hittite by having the Ammonites kill him, so you could take his wife. "Because you wouldn't obey me and took Uriah's wife for yourself, your family will never live in peace. David said, "I have disobeyed the Lord." "Yes, you have!" Nathan answered. "You showed you didn't care what the Lord wanted. He has forgiven you, and you won't die. But your son will."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 32

Response: **LORD, FORGIVE THE WRONG I HAVE DONE**

Our God, you bless everyone
Whose sins you forgive
And wipe away.
So I confessed my sins
And told them all to you.

You are my hiding place!
You protect me from trouble,
And you put songs in my heart
because you have saved me.
And so your good people
Should celebrate and shout.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle.

Images from the Readings

- She cried and washed his feet with her tears
- Poured expensive perfume on my feet
- Your sins are forgiven
- Because of your faith, you are now saved
- Peace

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Ask the children to recall what they heard in the Gospel today. Who was there? What did they say and do? Allow the children some time for all the details of the story to come out. Now spend some time concentrating on the character Simon. What was his attitude towards the woman who came to Jesus? Are there times when we are like Simon, and reject those who we don't like, who are different from us, who have done something wrong?

Now focus on the woman in the story. What did she do? Why do you think she did these things?

Finally focus on Jesus. What did he say to Simon? (You didn't give me any water... you didn't greet me with a kiss... you didn't even pour oil on my head)

Explain to the children that these were the customary gestures of hospitality when a visitor came to the house. What did Jesus say to the woman? (Your sins are forgiven) Explain to the children how Simon's actions showed his underlying attitude which lacked gratitude and took for granted Jesus friendship. The woman's actions showed that she realised her mistakes, was deeply sorry, and realised she didn't deserve Jesus' forgiveness. However Jesus is always swift to forgive those who are sorry for their sins. We don't ever have to be afraid to admit that we have done something wrong because Jesus always says, "your sins are forgiven. God in peace"

Act of Worship

Teach the children an Act of Contrition

"O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you,
Because you are so good, and with your help,
I'll try not to sin again
Amen"

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Both readings this week focus on God's forgiveness. David, a man who had been highly favoured by God, committed adultery with Bathsheba and then organised for her husband to be killed so that he could marry her. He had fallen badly from grace, but to his credit, when he was confronted by Nathan with his sin, he immediately confessed it and repented. Nathan was quick to assure his that God had forgiven him.

In the Gospel we meet another sinner, a woman, who though uninvited, sought out Jesus at the house of Simon the Pharisee. Simon was shocked that Jesus not only allowed this woman to approach him, but also to touch him. The Pharisees kept a strict observance of the law, and thus Simon was well aware that by letter this sinful woman touch him, Jesus was rendered ritually unclean. However Jesus was quick to observe Simon's reaction, and highlighted the stark contrast in attitude between Simon and the sinful woman. Where Simon failed to provide even basic hospitality to Jesus, the sinful woman humbly and graciously attended him.

At times, we to can be ungrateful like Simon, forgetting that we do not deserve the promise of eternal life that we have been given. We can take Christ's redemptive sacrifice for granted, especially if we have been Christians our whole life. As Jesus points out in the Gospel parable, the one who has been forgiven much is often more aware of the goodness of the one who saves him, and more gracious and loving in return.

However, what is also clear in today's readings is that regardless of what we have done, if we repent, God will be quick to forgive.

Reflection for Leaders

As you think back over your Christian journey, recall the times when you have experienced the loving forgiveness of God? Does your experience reflect the point made in the parable – at the times when you were forgiven much, were you more aware of God's loving forgiveness?

Jesus criticised Simon for his lack of hospitality and his judgement of others. Are there times when you lack an attitude of hospitality, or when you are quick to judge? Are all members of your parish welcomed equally, or are some excluded, because they don't fit the parish mould? Think of ways that you could make your home or parish a more hospitable place to visit. In what ways could you extend the love and forgiveness of Christ to those around you?

This week take some time to read and reflect on Psalm 32 where David talks of admitting his guilt and the forgiveness he received. Pray in your own words thanking God for his great mercy and forgiveness.

Liturgy Outline

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION *I invite the children to join in the procession for their Celebration of the Word*

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

*Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God*

R Blessed be God

*Leader: O God, you forgave the sinful woman, forgive us our sins, and help us to forgive those who have hurt us.
Amen*

FIRST READING *2 Samuel 12:7-10, 13*

Reader The Word of the Lord

R Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 32

*Lord, forgive the wrong I have done
(or another suitable response known by the children)*

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 7:36 - 8:3

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

R Glory to you, Lord

At the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord

R Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: We have listened to God's word. Now let us pray to God with confidence:

- That the Church will always be merciful and compassionate to those in need
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
- For the pope, our Bishops and our priests, that others will be willing to help them in the work that they do
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
- That those who are suffering and ill will find healing
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
- That we will understand what it means to have Jesus as our friend and have the courage to share this with others
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Loving and merciful God, listen to the prayers of your children, through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

Readings

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



If someone said to you, “Who are you?”, what would you say? You might tell them your name, or you might tell them about the family you belong to. When Jesus asked the disciples what people had said about him and who he might be, they all seemed to be a bit confused. The disciples knew he was just a carpenter from Nazareth, but they also knew that there was something very special about him – they had heard him teaching and seen him perform many miracles. How did Peter know that Jesus was God’s own son? If someone asked you today, “Who is Jesus?”, what would you say?

Gospel

Luke 9:18-24

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

When Jesus was alone praying, his disciples came to him, and he asked them, “What do people say about me?”

They answered, “Some say that you are John the Baptist or Elijah or a prophet from long ago who has come back to life.”

Jesus then asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah sent from God.”

Jesus strictly warned his disciples not to tell anyone what had happened.

Jesus told his disciples, “The nation’s leaders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law of Moses will make the Son of Man suffer terribly. They will reject him and kill him, but three days later he will rise to life.”

Then Jesus said to all the people:

”If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross each day and follow me. If you want to save your life, you will destroy it. But if you give up your life for me, you will save it.”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Galatians 3:26-29

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

Brothers and sisters:

All of you are God’s children because of your faith in Christ Jesus.

And when you were baptised, it was as though you had put on Christ in the same way you put on new clothes.

Faith in Christ Jesus is what makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or Greek, a slave or a free person, a man or a woman.

So if you belong to Christ, you are now part of Abraham’s family, and you will be given what God has promised.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 100

Response: **WE ARE HIS PEOPLE, THE SHEEP OF HIS FLOCK**

Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth.

Be joyful and sing as you come to worship the Lord!

You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, cards with names of Jesus, such as “Lamb of God”, “Son of God”, “Good Shepherd”, “True Vine”, “Bread of Life”, “Living Water”, “Light of the World” etc

Images from the Readings

- Clothed in Christ
- God’s children
- What do people say about me?
- Who do you say I am?
- Take up your cross each day and follow me

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Have a picture of a well-known person to show the children, and ask the children what they have heard people say about him/her, and what they themselves think.

When someone asks us who we are, how do we respond.? Do we tell our name, our family, where we live or go to school?

When Jesus asked Peter ‘Who do you say I am?’, he also asks us. Names can often tell a lot about people. They can tell which family you belong to. Some people are given names of saints that are particularly admired, or they can be chosen for special characteristics that name means.

Can you remember any of the ‘Names’ that Jesus is called in the Bible? There are some written on these cards. Which of these names do you like to think of Jesus as? (give time for reflection) What does Jesus ask of those who want to follow him? Why do we still want to follow him?

Act of Worship

Pray a litany with the names you have on the cards, such as:

Jesus, Light of the World	Be with us
Jesus, Bread of Life	Be with us
Jesus, the Good Shepherd	Be with us ...etc

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Paul has redefined the relationships that exist among all the baptised, linking into the ancient Jewish belief that they were God’s chosen people through Abraham’s covenant. Paul insists that through baptism the Galatians have entered into a new form of life, in Christ, as symbolised in the baptismal ceremony by the new white robes. In this new life former social distinctions are reinterpreted, so that they no longer disadvantage anyone. A unity with the other baptised, in and through Christ, was implicit in Paul’s writing – the Christian community is an inclusive group, embracing even those people that society in general has marginalised. In the gospel today, Jesus asks who the crowd thinks he is, and then who the disciples think he is, before revealing something of his true identity. Jesus expects his disciples to have a deeper understanding than the others, and Peter shows that they do recognise Jesus to be the long awaited one, anointed by God. Jesus predicted his coming suffering and death, and that the rejection and crucifixion he was facing were part of God’s plan. The instruction for followers was that they, like him, must deny themselves in order to ultimately save themselves.

Reflection for Leaders

The reflection for us as disciples must come back to our own personal challenge from the gospel today – we have to expect nothing less than to face the same sort of rejection and discrimination that Jesus himself did. The invitation to follow Jesus is always underpinned with the understanding that Jesus’ way is the way of the cross. Why, then, do we still wish to follow him? The call to unity is one that has been a constant struggle throughout the Church’s history. How do you experience this unity in the Church today? Are any distinctions made in your own community? In what practical ways can you help heal some of the divisions you recognise? If Jesus asked you today who YOU say that he is, what would be your response? Has your image of Jesus changed or developed in recent years? This week look for opportunities to build bridges in relationships.

Liturgy Outline

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION *I invite the children to join in the procession for their Celebration of the Word*

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

*Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God*

R Blessed be God

Leader: O God, You showed Peter that Jesus was your Son. Help us to know and understand him too. Amen

FIRST READING *Galatians 3:26-29*

Reader The Word of the Lord

R Thanks be to God

PSALM *Psalms 100*

We are his people, the sheep of his flock.

(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL *Luke 9:18-24*

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

R Glory to you, Lord

At the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord

R Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

*Leader: As God's children, we are fed by the teaching that Jesus gave us.
We now turn to God for what we need:*

- *For unity in the church and in the community...
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer*
- *For the gift of faith, accepting Jesus as God's chosen one who teaches us about the ways of God...
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer*
- *That we reach out to others who are lonely and afraid, and help them to know what it means to be God's children...
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer*
- *For the strength to carry our cross as we follow Jesus...
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer*

Leader: Loving God, giver of all good things, listen to the prayers of your children, through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

Readings

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green

Has anyone ever promised that they will come with you and then they have gone and done something else instead? How did that make you feel? Jesus wants to share his love and his message with anyone who makes him welcome. He knew that he would need help to take this message of God's love to people throughout the world, and he needed people who would be reliable. Jesus doesn't punish anyone who does not receive him, but he wants them to know exactly what he is asking of them. When people say they wish to follow him, he wants them to do it with their whole hearts and not look back. What is Jesus saying to us today about the place that he holds in our lives?



Gospel

Luke 9:57-62

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Along the way to Jerusalem someone said to Jesus, "I'll go anywhere with you!"

Jesus said, "Foxes have dens, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man doesn't have a place to call his own."

Jesus told someone else to come with him. But the man said, "Lord, let me wait until I bury my father."

Jesus answered, "Let the dead take care of the dead, while you go and tell about God's kingdom."

Then someone said to Jesus, "I want to go with you, Lord, but first let me go back and take care of things at home."

Jesus answered, "Anyone who starts plowing and keeps looking back isn't worth a thing in God's kingdom!"

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21

A READING FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

God told Elijah the prophet: "Choose Elisha, the son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah, to take your place as a prophet."

Elijah left and found Elisha plowing in a field with a pair of oxen. There were eleven other men in front of him in the field, and each of them was also plowing with a pair of oxen. Elijah went over to Elisha and put his robe on him. Elisha left his oxen and ran after Elijah. Then he said, "Let me go and tell my father and mother good-bye, and I will go with you." Elijah answered, "Go back! Did I tell you to do this?"

Elisha left him and went back. He killed his two oxen and boiled them by making a fire with the wood from the plow and the yoke. He gave the meat to the people, and they ate it. Then he left with Elijah and became his servant.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 16

Response: **YOU ARE MY INHERITANCE, O LORD**

Protect me, Lord God! I run to you for safety, and I have said, "Only you are my Lord!" You, Lord are all I want! You are my choice, and you keep me safe.

I praise you, Lord, for being my guide. Even in the darkest night, your teachings fill my mind. I will always look to you, as you stand beside me and protect me from fear.

You have shown me the path to life, and you make me glad by being near to me. Sitting at your right side, I will always be joyful.

Second Reading

Galatians 5:1, 13-15

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

Brothers and sisters: Christ has set us free! This means we are really free. Now hold on to your freedom and don't ever become slaves of the Law again. My friends, you were chosen to be free. So don't use your freedom as an excuse to do anything you want. Use it as an opportunity to serve each other with love. All that the Law says can be summed up in the command to love others as much as you love yourself. But if you keep attacking each other like wild animals, you had better watch out or you will destroy yourselves.

The word of the Lord.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle,

Images from the Readings

- Wholehearted response to the call from God
- Christ has set us free
- Use your freedom to serve
- Simple lifestyle
- Worth in God's kingdom

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Have you ever had someone say they were going to do something and then not done it? How did that feel?

They may have intended to do it, but sometimes other things happen to sidetrack us.

Many people wanted to follow Jesus because it was exciting to see people being healed, and watching the crowds gather round wherever he went. But Jesus wanted people to be very serious about being his followers. Some of the people in the gospel today wanted to take care of things at home. What sort of things do you think they had to do there? \

Were they putting God's work first?

Was Jesus angry with them? How did he react?

How do we know what things are most important to people, even when they say otherwise?

Sometimes we have to make choices about God. How can we put God's work first in our own lives - at home, at school, with our friends?

Act of Worship

Sing 'I say "Yes", My Lord' (AOV 155, GA 445) or another suitable song.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Elisha's rapid response to the call that Elijah made on him gives us the pattern of the desired response to God's call to discipleship in any age. The implication for Elisha to the call as a prophet commissioned by God, is to make a radical break from his past. Paul addresses the freedom brought by Christ is an opportunity to be servants to one another in love. Christianity does not exchange one form of bondage for another – the invitation is to be guided by the Spirit in order to be freed from the demands of the law. In the gospel today Jesus is journeying to Jerusalem. On the way he meets people, teaches and preaches. All the while he is forming his disciples. The journey will culminate in the cross for Jesus. Jesus wants willing disciples, and the three brief exchanges in the gospel today point out the demands of discipleship: it will not necessarily be comfortable; it has a sense of urgency; and it demands wholeheartedness. Jesus is not demanding us to leave all our responsibilities and obligations but does demand that we prioritise them behind Christ himself.

Reflection for Leaders

There is a cost to discipleship for each person, but just as the resurrection followed for Jesus, out of our crosses flows life for us as well. Jesus waits for our free response to him. There is no compulsion in our call – always it is an invitation. We need to explore our excuses and hesitations honestly. What are some of the difficulties you have encountered in your Christian journey? Often we need to let go of the old in order to be free to move on with the new things that we are called to. What are the things that you have needed to let go of in order to move on with Jesus? What are the things that make you want to delay commitment today? What kinds of things have you been committed to in your life? How do you prioritise the calls on your life? Commitment is a difficult concept for many in our world today. Why is this? What can you do this week to reassess the priorities and commitments you have made, let go what is past and reaffirm the ones that are important?

Liturgy Outline

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, help us to listen to your message of love and peace which
Jesus brought to share with us. May we be people of commitment
and faithfulness. Amen

FIRST READING 1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 16
You are my inheritance, O Lord
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* Galatians 5:1, 13-15

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 9:57-62

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke

Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Strengthened and encouraged by God's word, we turn to God for all
we need:

- That the leaders of our Church be faithful to the teaching of Jesus ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we may be strong in our commitment to be true disciples, and make it
our first priority ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the courage to respond to the challenge Jesus calls us to each day
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all the sick, the lonely and the rejected in our community ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Faithful God, you sent Jesus to be the way, the truth and the life. Help
us to follow him in all that we do, through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



Jesus knew that he would need help to take the message of God's love to people throughout the world. He prepared his disciples to be sent out to prepare the people for him to come into their lives. If you were being sent on a journey by Jesus, what things do you think you might need? What did Jesus tell the disciples to take? Jesus wanted them to share the love and peace of God through their actions and words rather than taking a lot of belongings. As followers of Jesus, what is Jesus asking us to take to the people we meet today?

Gospel

Luke 10:1-9

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

The Lord chose seventy-two other followers and sent them out two by two to every town and village where he was about to go.

He said to them: "A large crop is in the fields, but there are only a few workers. Ask the Lord in charge of the harvest to send out workers to bring it in. Now go, but remember, I am sending you like lambs into a pack of wolves. Don't take along a money bag or a travelling bag or sandals. And don't waste time greeting people on the road.

"As soon as you enter a home, say, 'God bless this home with peace.'

If the people living there are peace-loving, your prayer for peace will bless them. But if they are not peace-loving, your prayer will return to you.

"Stay with the same family, eating and drinking whatever they give you, because workers are worth what they earn. Don't move around from house to house.

"If the people of a town welcome you, eat whatever they offer you. Heal their sick and say, 'God's kingdom will soon be here!'"

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Isaiah 66:10-14c

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

If you love Jerusalem, be glad and celebrate. If you were in sorrow because of the city, you can now rejoice. She will nurse and comfort you, just like your own mother, until you are satisfied. And you will fully enjoy her wonderful glory.

The Lord has promised, "I will flood Jerusalem with the wealth of nations and make the city prosper. Jerusalem will nurse you at her breast, carry you in her arms, and hold you in her lap. I will comfort you there like a mother comforting her child.

"When you see this happen, you will celebrate. And your strength will return faster than grass can sprout. Then everyone will know the Lord is with you."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 66

Response: **LET ALL THE EARTH CRY OUT TO GOD WITH JOY**

Tell everyone on this earth to shout praises to God!

Sing about his glorious name.

Honour him with praises.

Say to God, "Everything you do is fearsome!"

When God made the sea dry up, our people walked across, and because of him we celebrated there.

His mighty power rules forever.

All who worship God, come here and listen;

I will tell you everything God has done for me.

Let's praise God!

He listened when I prayed, and he is always kind.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, a purse, a backpack, sandals

Images from the Readings

- Rejoice and celebrate
- God's mother-like comfort
- The sending out of seventy-two
- A large crop, few workers
- Travel light
- Blessing of peace

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. If you had to go on a journey, what sort of things do you think you might need to take with you?

Is it better to do jobs alone or with a friend?

What did Jesus mean when he said that a large crop was in the fields but there were only a few workers?

Jesus knew that he needed help to do the work that God had sent him to do, so he chose some trusted disciples to help prepare the people before he came. Why did he send them out in pairs? Why do you think he told them not to take a money bag or a travelling bag or sandals?

Is it the same for us today - do you think that we need all the stuff that we have to share the good news with other people?

How do you think the disciples felt as they travelled? What might they have talked about?

What were the disciples to do when they came to a home that welcomed them?

Act of Worship

Jesus shared his gift of peace with each one of us as a sign of his love. Let us share a sign of peace with each other. When we go home today we can say 'God bless this home with peace'.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The tender image of motherhood is utilised in the first reading to characterise the relationship between Jerusalem and her people, and this is a fitting metaphor for God's self-giving nature. God's abundant blessings are promised to Jerusalem as she is transformed and restored and God's people will rejoice.

In the gospel today, the mission of the seventy-two is symbolic of the great commission which all Christians are called to: that of announcing the gospel to others. It explores the manner of life lived by missionaries while on their mission. By comparing the mission to bringing in the harvest, Jesus is implying that the planting and nurturing have been successfully completed and all is ready for the ministry of the missionaries. However, the harvesting itself is a dangerous occupation, and the missionaries are as vulnerable as lambs among wolves. Jesus directs them to take only the bare essentials – travel light. They are to trust God and depend on the hospitality of those who welcome them in. Jesus has not waited until the disciples are fully formed to send them on this mission – they will learn on the job. The Jewish greeting of Peace! is transformed into a deeper meaning of salvation, to be accepted or rejected by those to whom it was given. Those open to the message were blessed.

Reflection for Leaders

The work of evangelisation is the main task of the Church, and each of us is responsible for this task. Do you feel ready and prepared to share this mission? As with the disciples, we need to learn on the job, and there are advantages and disadvantages to learning this way. What experiences of learning this way have you had? In what ways are you being drawn into active participation in the life and work of the church? Jesus directive for his disciples to travel light cuts hard at our materialistic lifestyle. What non-necessities can be pruned out of your life to simplify the task of taking up mission? We are to go to others offering peace - if accepted, peace is shared to the advantage of others. No matter what the response is of others we do not lose it ourselves. During this week respond to awkward or difficult situations with forgiveness and peace.

Liturgy Outline

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you want all people to know how much you love them. Help
us to understand your message, and to share it with others. Amen

FIRST READING Isaiah 66:10-14c
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 66
 Let all the earth cry out to God with joy
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 10:1-9
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: With confidence and faith we bring all our needs to our compassionate
God:

- For the Church - Pope John Paul II, bishops, priests and lay people – who
work towards bringing the good news to all ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of peace in our homes, our schools, our friendships and our
community ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a right attitude towards possessions, and a desire to live with simplicity,
trusting God for what we need ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of hospitality and generosity ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of love, bless your children and hear the prayers we make to you
through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green

The Samaritans and the Jews had a long history of being enemies. But the Samaritan in the story that Jesus told today did not worry about religions or differences – he just saw someone who needed help and was filled with pity for him. Many people today hurry past hurting people, so what is Jesus telling us in this story about how we should treat each other?



Gospel

Luke 10:25-37

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

An expert in the Law of Moses stood up and asked Jesus a question to see what he would say. “Teacher,” he asked, “What must I do to have eternal life?” Jesus answered, “What is written in the Scriptures? How do you understand them?” The man replied, “The Scriptures say, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind.’ They also say, ‘Love your neighbours as much as you love yourself.’” Jesus said, “You have given the right answer. If you do this, you will have eternal life.”

But the man wanted to show that he knew what he was talking about. So he asked Jesus, “Who are my neighbours?” Jesus replied:

“As a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, robbers attacked him and grabbed everything he had. They beat him up and ran off, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road. But when he saw the man, he walked by on the other side. Later a temple helper came to the same place. But when he saw the man who had been beaten up, he also went by on the other side. A man from Samaria then came travelling along that road. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him and went over to him. He treated his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put him on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.

“The next morning he gave the innkeeper two silver coins and said, ‘Please take care of the man. If you spend more than this on him, I will pay you when I return.’”

Then Jesus asked, “Which of these three people was a real neighbour to the man who was beaten up by robbers?” The teacher answered, “The one who showed pity.” Jesus said, “Go and do the same!”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Deuteronomy 30:10-14

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

Moses said to the people: “You must obey the Lord your God and follow all the laws and commands that are in the book of the Law. You must trust him with all your heart and soul.

“What I am commanding you today is not too hard. It isn’t out of your reach somewhere up in the sky. You don’t have to ask yourselves, ‘Who will go up to the sky and get it for us? Who will bring it down and tell us what we must do?’ “What I am commanding you is not on the other side of the sea. You don’t have to ask yourselves, ‘Who will bring it here and tell us what to do?’ No! What I am commanding is as near as your mouth or your heart. All you have to do is obey.”

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 69

Response: **TURN TO THE LORD IN YOUR NEED, AND YOU WILL LIVE**

I pray to you, Lord. So when the time is right, answer me and help me with your wonderful love.

I am mistreated and in pain. Protect me, God, and keep me safe! I will praise the Lord God with a song and a thankful heart.

Second Reading

Colossians 1:18-20

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

Brothers and sisters:

Christ is the head of his body, which is the church. He is the very beginning, the first to be raised from death, so that he would be above all others.

God himself was pleased to live fully in his Son. And God was pleased for him to make peace by sacrificing his blood on the cross, so that all things in heaven and on earth would be brought back to God.

The word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, bandage, ointment and a bottle of oil. Use an echo-mime with appropriate actions for the Gospel today.

Images from the Readings

- As near as your mouth or heart
- Obey and trust
- Love God with all your heart
- Love your neighbour
- Do the same!

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Some of Jesus' stories were told to shock the people who were listening. Do you know why this story might have shocked them? The Samaritans and the Jews had been enemies for generations, so it would have been awful for the listeners to think that the temple worker and the priest (their 'holy' people) had walked past the injured man and their enemy had been the one to stop and help him. Do you know why the priest and temple worker didn't stop? Because the Law of Moses said that if they touched a dead body they would not have been able to carry out their duties in the temple for a week. They were in a hurry. Is it harder for us to be helpful and kind when we are in a hurry? Why is this? Perhaps we don't notice people who need us then, or think we could help them later.

Why did the Samaritan put olive oil and wine on the wounds? (In those days this was how wounds were treated)

Who is Jesus expecting to help people in trouble? (all of us)

Have there been times when you might have helped someone and didn't? What can you do this week to help someone else?

Act of Worship

Sing "The Servant Song" together (GA487)

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Jesus tells this parable to an expert in the Law. The priest and the temple helper whom Jesus mentions in this gospel were religious professionals whose preoccupation with their roles made them blind to the obvious need of another. The Law of Moses decreed that touching a dead or bleeding person would bar them from their sacred temple duties until ritual cleansing could be completed. By exposing the practice of using ritual law to justify ignoring the spirit of the Law, Jesus challenges both the Lawyer he was speaking with, and all of us to examine our areas of legalism. The parable would have shocked the listeners, who had a long history of enmity with the Samaritans because of intermarriage with pagans. So casting a Samaritan as the hero of the story would have been horrifying to the Jews. The silver coins with which the Samaritan paid the innkeeper would have been a Roman denarii, equivalent to a day's pay, so the payment itself was extravagantly generous as well.

Reflection for Leaders

Reflect on a time of being helped or attended to by someone you least expected. How did you feel being dependent on someone you ordinarily would not have association with? Did you consider yourself being in debt to them? What are some of the times you have left your own comfort zone to act with compassion for another person? Were there times when you have chosen to ignore their need, or have you ever helped someone you disliked? Was anything changed in your attitude or your relationship as a result?

Consider some of the barriers that exist within our society. Who are the people for us who could be considered to be 'Samaritans'? What are the ways that you or others in your parish working to break down some of these barriers and build bridges between people?

Perhaps this week you could go out of your way to be of service to someone, or respond to someone in need with generosity.

Liturgy Outline

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
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God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you know that we each need a good Samaritan sometimes.
Give each of us the courage to stop and help others when they need
us, just as Jesus did. Amen

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 30:10-14
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 69
 Turn to the Lord in your need, and you will live
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* Colossians 1:18-20
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 10:25-37

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Having listened to God's Word, let us turn with confidence to God for
the needs of our church and community:

- That the leaders of our Church be faithful to keep God's commandments ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we deepen our devotion to Jesus, who is the image of God ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those in need in society, that we be generous to helping them ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we learn to be loving towards each other, especially those who are
hard to love ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of all kindness, help us to be generous in our love for others. We
ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



Jesus and his disciples were hungry and thirsty after travelling, and Martha had invited them for a meal. She was very busy cooking and organising for the crowd, and was angry when her sister, Mary, left her to work while she sat at Jesus' feet and listened to him. What might have made Martha feel so angry? What did Jesus say when she complained to him? Many people today are very busy and very stressed. What does this story tell us about what Jesus thinks is the most important thing for us today?

Gospel

Luke 10:38-42

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

The Lord and his disciples were travelling along and came to a village. When they got there, a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat down in front of the Lord and was listening to what he said.

Martha was worried about all that had to be done. Finally, she went to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it bother you that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!"

The Lord answered, "Martha, Martha! You are worried and upset about so many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best, and it will not be taken away from her."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Genesis 18:1-10a

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS

One hot summer afternoon Abraham was sitting by the entrance to his tent near the sacred trees of Mamre, when the Lord appeared to him. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. He quickly ran to meet them and bowed with his face to the ground. He said, "Please come to my home where I can serve you. I will have some water brought, so you can wash your feet, and then you can rest under the tree. Let me get you some food to give you strength before you leave. I would be honoured to serve you."

They answered, "Thank you very much. We accept your offer."

Abraham hurried to his tent and said to Sarah, "Hurry! Get a large sack of fine flour. Then mix it and make some bread."

After saying this, he hurried off to his herd of cattle and picked out one of the best calves, which his servant quickly prepared. He served his guests some yoghurt and milk, together with the meat. While they were eating, he stood near them under the trees.

They asked him, "Where is your wife Sarah?"

He answered, "She is right there in the tent."

One of the guests was the Lord, and he said, "I will come back next spring, and when I do, Sarah will already have a son."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 15

Response: **THE JUST WILL LIVE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD**

Who may stay in God's temple or live on the holy mountain of the Lord?

Only those who obey God and do as they should. They speak the truth and don't spread gossip.

They treat others fairly and don't say cruel things. Those who do these things will always stand firm.

Second Reading

Colossians 1:27-28

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

Brothers and sisters:

God did this because he wanted you Gentiles to understand his wonderful and glorious mystery. And the mystery is that Christ lives in you, and he is your hope of sharing in God's glory.

We announce the message about Christ, and we use all our wisdom to warn and teach everyone, so that all Christ's followers will grow and become mature.

The word of the Lord

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, a dustpan and brush & a clock

Images from the Readings

- Listening to Jesus
- You are worried and upset
- Chosen what is best
- Come to my home where I can serve you
- Sharing in God's glory

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Martha, Mary and their brother Lazarus were good friends of Jesus'. He used to visit them at their house in Bethany whenever he was passing. Do you have a friend that you like to visit? Why do you like being in their home? (they make you feel welcome and are nice to you)

Martha showed kindness and love to Jesus by getting the food ready for him and his disciples. Would she have needed to get a lot of food ready? How do you think Martha felt when she saw Mary was leaving her to do all the work by herself?

Mary showed love by listening to Jesus.

Martha spoilt it by complaining. Do you ever moan and complain when you have to do some jobs at home?

Do you think Jesus was fair? Why? Jesus always goes beyond fairness, and calls us to even greater love.

Is there a right time be still, to pray and listen to Jesus? What is the best time of day for you to pray?

Act of Worship

Jesus invites us all to sit at his feet, just as Mary has done. Today, as our act of worship, let us sit in silence as we quietly think about the Gospel reading and pray that we will have time to sit quietly with Jesus every day.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Martha, Mary and their brother Lazarus lived in the village of Bethany just outside Jerusalem. As friends of Jesus they would have been ready to welcome him and his friends into their home as they travelled around. This is particularly true of Martha. Yet she becomes so preoccupied with the fuss of getting food ready that she is failing to do exactly what she had originally set out to do – offer hospitality. Mary, attentive to the words and teaching of Jesus, paying full attention to the guest, offers the true welcome. The attitude of Mary is one of discipleship. To sit at the feet of the Master and listen is what the followers or students did. This position was often only given to men, so in praising Mary, Jesus is encouraging women to move out of their cultural place and into discipleship roles. Jesus is not rebuking Martha because of her acts of service, rather he is pointing out that by concentrating too much on the trivial she has denied herself a more important role. While we initially may feel empathy for Martha's plight, deeper reflection lets us recognise the balance which is needed: not just selfless love and service, but also to prioritise the need to be attentive and listen to the word of God.

Reflection for Leaders

It is common today for us to respond to any greeting with an acknowledgement of our 'busy-ness', as though if we were not busy we would have no value. Worry, anxiety and stress are common symptoms of our modern life-style. We are all so busy and so stressed that to find time to be still and to be quiet, to "sit at Jesus' feet", is almost beyond what we are able to manage. With which of the two women in the gospel today do you more readily identify? How might you balance your life by cultivating the other side more fully? When was the last time that you gave your undivided attention to someone important in your life? Do you find your little daily anxieties distract you from God? What happens when you take time out, perhaps a retreat day, to be still and attentive to the voice of God?

Make time this week to spend regular time reading Scripture and praying, maybe without words, fixing your heart on Jesus.

Liturgy Outline

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, we pray that we will always make you welcome and be ready
to spend time listening to your word. Amen

FIRST READING Genesis 18:1-10a

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 15

The just will live in the presence of the Lord
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* Colossians 1:27-28

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 10:38-42

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Having listened and heard the word of God, we approach our God with
our needs:

- For the Church that it can truly be a place where strangers are welcomed
and made to feel at home ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of hospitality in our homes, open to all who come to us in need
...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the wisdom to recognise what is important in life, and which things take
priority ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of really listening, both to our God and to each other ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of all goodness, you are so generous to us. Hear the prayers we
offer through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

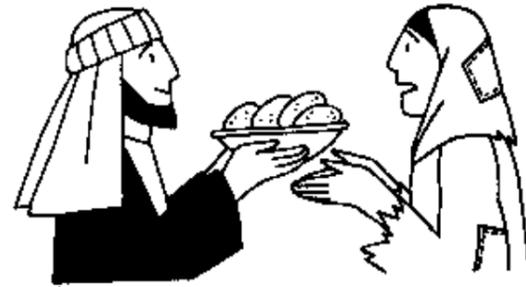
The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the

Readings

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green

Jesus gave us a special prayer which we call 'The Lord's Prayer' or the 'Our Father'. This prayer was very different from anything that the Jews had heard before, because it taught the disciples to approach God as a loving and protective parent rather than someone all-powerful and far away from us. Jesus tells us to be persistent in asking God for what we need. God always answers our prayers, though not necessarily the way we expect or want. What sort of things do you pray for?



Gospel

Luke 11:1-10

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

When Jesus had finished praying, one of his disciples said to him. "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his followers to pray." So Jesus told them, "Pray in this way: 'Father, help us to honour your name. Come and set up your kingdom. Give us each day the food we need. Forgive our sins, as we forgive everyone who has done wrong to us. And keep us from being tempted.'"

Then Jesus went on to say: "Suppose one of you goes to a friend in the middle of the night and days, 'Let me borrow three loaves of bread. A friend of mine has dropped in, and I don't have a thing for him to eat.' And suppose your friend answers, 'Don't bother me! The door is bolted, and my children and I are in bed. I cannot get up to give you something.'

"He may not get up and give you the bread, just because you are his friend. But he will get up and give you as much as you need, simply because you are not ashamed to keep on asking.

"So I tell you to ask and you will receive, search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who asks will receive, everyone who searches will find, and the door will be opened for everyone who knocks."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS

The Lord said to Abraham, "I have heard that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are doing all kinds of evil things. Now I am going down to see if those people are really that bad. If they aren't, I want to know about it."

The men turned and started toward Sodom. But the Lord stayed with Abraham, who asked, "Lord, when you destroy the wicked people, are you also going to destroy the good ones? Would you spare the city if there are fifty good people in it? Surely, you wouldn't let the good ones be killed when you destroy the bad ones. You are the judge of the earth, and you do what is right." The Lord replied, "If I find fifty good people in Sodom, I will save the city to keep them from being killed." Abraham answered, "Lord, I am nothing more than the dust of the earth. Please forgive me for daring to speak to you like this. But supposing there are only forty-five good people in Sodom. Would you still wipe out the whole city?" The Lord replied, "If I find forty-five good people, I won't destroy the city."

Abraham asked the Lord, "Suppose there are just forty good people?" The Lord replied, "Just for them, I won't destroy the city."

Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry, if I ask you what you would do if there are only thirty good people in the city." The Lord replied, "If I find thirty, I still won't destroy it."

Then Abraham said, "Lord, I don't have any right to ask. But what would you do if you find only twenty?"

The Lord replied, "Because of them, I won't destroy the city."

Finally, Abraham said, "Lord, please don't become angry, if I speak just once more. Suppose you find only ten good people there."

The Lord then replied, "For the sake of ten good people, I still won't destroy the city."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 138

Response: **LORD, ON THE DAY I CALLED FOR HELP,
YOU ANSWERED ME**

With all my heart I praise you, Lord. In the presence of angels I sing your praises. I worship at your holy temple.

I praise you for your love and your faithfulness. You were true to your word and made yourself more famous than ever before. When I asked for your help, you answered my prayer and gave me courage.

I am surrounded by trouble, but you protect me. With your own powerful arm you keep me safe. You, Lord, will always treat me with kindness. Your love never fails.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, a picture of Jesus, a prayer book and a copy of the 'Our Father' each.

Images from the Readings

- Teach us to pray
- Not ashamed to keep asking
- Ask ... search ... knock
- The door will be opened
- I will spare the city
- You answered me

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. When do you pray? What do you pray for? Have your prayers changed since you were little? What does Jesus tell us today about praying? Jesus taught his disciples a very special prayer that we say each time we come to Mass. Do you know what it is called? (the 'Our Father' or the 'Lord's Prayer')

People in those days often thought God was very powerful and far away, so this prayer meant that we are able to speak to God in a very close and personal way, just as if we were speaking to our parents.

(Take the children through the prayer in sections and reflect on the meaning of each part with them)

Act of Worship

Recite together the 'Lord's Prayer':

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven,
give us today our daily bread
and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from
the time of trial and deliver us from evil. Amen"

Background to the Readings for Leaders

In Jesus' time, many teachers offered their disciples a spiritual path. In the gospel today, Jesus' followers are looking to Jesus to teach them his 'way' to God. Although there are many images of God in the Hebrew Scriptures, most people understood a vague 'All powerful' and 'Almighty' distant God. Jesus shows us the intimate loving relationship that he experiences with God as a parent - more gracious, more generous and more loving than our human ones. The reluctance exhibited by the neighbour in the gospel can be understood in light of the living arrangements of the time. Animals were housed on the ground floor at night, and the family spread their sleeping mats on the floor above. To open the door in the night would mean disturbing the entire household and flock.

Reflection for Leaders

consider the circumstances of a time when you had to refuse a request for help that someone made of you. Did it alter your relationship with that person? How did you feel? Persistence is encouraged in the readings today. Have there been times when you have felt like giving up on your journey? what has helped you to persevere? Spend some time reflecting on your prayer life. How do you pray? Do you ever abuse the privilege of asking God for needs? What is it that you are searching for? Prayer doesn't always change our circumstances, but it can change us. This week, spend time meditating on the 'Our Father'. Pray it line by line, thinking about the meaning of each part.

Liturgy Outline

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

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to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you know us and love us so much and take care of all our
needs. Help us to always turn to you in prayer whenever we need
help. Amen

FIRST READING Genesis 18:20-32
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 138
 Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 11:1-10
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: Loving God, you invite us to bring all our needs to you in prayer. Listen
to the prayers of your children:

- That our church always teaches her people to pray, to trust God, and not give
up ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we are learn to notice and think of other people and pray for their
needs...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a good attitude to God even when we don't understand everything, that
our prayers will be pleasing to God and help our faith to grow ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we learn to be persistent and confident in our prayer...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of surprises, fill us with your Spirit, and give us all that we need.
We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings
Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



Why did the rich man need to build bigger and better barns? If he had been a kind and generous man, what do you think he could have done with all the extra crops that he had produced? Jesus is telling us today that money and possessions do not make us rich in the eyes of God. What do you think are the riches that God recognises?

Gospel

Luke 12:16-21

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus told the crowd this story:

“A rich man’s farm produced a big crop, and he said to himself, ‘What can I do? I don’t have a place large enough to store everything.’

“Later, he said, ‘Now I know what I’ll do. I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones, where I can store all my grain and other goods.

Then I’ll say to myself, “You have stored up enough good things to last for years to come. Live it up! Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.” ’

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! Tonight you will die. Then who will get what you have stored up?’

“This is what happens to people who store up everything for themselves, but are poor in the sight of God.”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

Brothers and sisters:

You have been raised to life with Christ.
 Now set your heart on what is in heaven,
 where Christ rules at God’s right side.
 Think about what is up there,
 not about what is here on earth.

You died, which means that your life is hidden with Christ,
 who sits beside God;
 Christ gives meaning to your life,
 and when he appears,
 you will also appear with him in glory.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 147

Response:

HAPPY ARE ALL**WHO LONG FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD**

Shout praises to the Lord!
 Our God is kind,
 and it is right and good
 to sing praises to him.

He renews our hopes
 and heals our bodies.
 He decided how many stars
 there would be in the sky
 and gave each one a name.

Our Lord is great and powerful!
 He understands everything.
 Celebrate and sing!
 Play your harps
 for the Lord our God.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle

Images from the Readings

- What am I to do?
- Build bigger barns
- Poor in the sight of God
- Set your heart on heaven
- Christ gives meaning

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Have you ever desperately wanted a new toy, and when you have got it, found that you weren't all that interested in it any more? Many times when we see things advertised on television they look really exciting, but sometimes when we get them they aren't really as exciting as we thought they would be.

When we listen to the gospel today, what does it tell us about why the rich man needed to build bigger and better barns? What was he planning to do with them?

What else do you think he might have done with all the extra crops that his farm was producing?

Is Jesus telling us that it is wrong to have possessions? (No - just that they don't make us happy, we cannot take them with us when we die and that we should be generous and not greedy)

What does Jesus mean when he talks about being 'poor in the sight of God'?

What do you think we can do that will make us 'rich in the sight of God'?

Act of Worship

Invite the children to choose one thing that they can personally do this week that will make them 'rich in the sight of God'. Write it on a card and place at the prayer focus.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The Jewish people had long held the requirement to share their excess with those in need, acknowledging that everything belongs to God. In the early Christian church, members shared their wealth so that everyone's needs could be met. A major underlying theme of Luke is the right use of wealth and money. The underlying issue behind today's gospel is greed, and Jesus teaches a lesson about the futility of a life spent amassing material possessions. The goods of the earth are essential to our survival, but they do not satisfy the deepest longings of the human spirit. Wealth in and of itself is not seen as wrong, and the selfishness in not sharing is likewise not addressed. But amassing wealth and the underlying issue of greed is explored. Possessions do not last, and at death they are passed on to another, with no knowing how they will be used. Jesus has come to establish a new situation where people are more interested in the kingdom of God and using our time here in this life in preparation for that. In our commitment to Christ we discover that we can transform what is transitory in life by giving it away in love.

Reflection for Leaders

We often hear stories of the rich and famous being desperately unhappy despite their abundant wealth. Material comfort cannot really protect us against suffering, and many people in the poorest circumstances can be happier than those who live in affluence and comfort. The questions raised for us in the readings today focus on our priorities - where do we find our true fulfillment and to what do we commit ourselves? Consider an example of a time you experienced great happiness that didn't involve money or possessions. How important is the acquisition of material possessions to you? Sometimes the drive to material security can distract us from what is truly important. Does your faith community provide opportunities to share and care for other people? What values and attitudes need to be adjusted this week? Find an avenue to share some of your possessions and wealth with those who are in need.

Liturgy Outline

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

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to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, all good things come from you. Help us to store up our riches
in heaven and not just on earth. Amen

FIRST READING Colossians 3:1-4
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 147
 Happy are all who long for the coming of the Lord
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 12:16-21
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: :

- That our church always helps us recognise our true treasure...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a desire to live as God wants, and be rich in God's sight...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a right attitude to possessions, and the generosity to share what we have
with others in our family, our school and our community...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we learn what really makes us secure in life and let go of greed and
selfishness...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of all goodness, you are generous in what you give us. help us
to recognise what is important and lasting in this life. We ask this through Our
Lord Jesus Christ

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green

Have you ever had a thief break into your house? We can't really stay awake all night making sure that no-one breaks in, so what things do we do to prevent thieves from getting in to our homes when we are asleep or out? Jesus is preparing his disciples to be on the alert and watchful for when he was to come again. He was trusting them to carry out his orders while he was away. They were to live their lives as he had shown them and be prepared at all times. Jesus tells us that God will reward all those who are faithful and trustworthy in their service, even if it is hard to do. Who are the people who are to be faithful today?



Gospel

Luke 12:35-40

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Be ready and keep your lamps burning just like those servants who wait up for their master to return from a wedding feast. As soon as he comes and knocks, they open the door for him.

“Servants are fortunate if their master finds them awake and ready when he come! I promise you that he will get ready and have his servants sit down so he can serve them. Those servants are really fortunate if their master finds them ready, even though he comes late at night or early in the morning.

“You would surely not let a thief break into your home, if you knew when the thief was coming. So always be ready! You don't know when the Son of Man will come.”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-12

A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

Brothers and sisters:

Faith makes us sure of what we hope for and gives us proof of what we cannot see. It was their faith that made our ancestors pleasing to God.

Abraham had faith and obeyed God. He was told to go to the land that God had said would be his, and he left for a country he had never seen.

Because Abraham had faith, he lived as a stranger in the promised land. There he lived in a tent, and so did Isaac and Jacob, who were later given the same promise.

Abraham did this, because he was waiting for the eternal city that God had planned and built.

Even when Sarah was too old to have children, she had faith that God would do what he had promised, and she had a son.

Her husband Abraham was almost dead, but he became the ancestor of many people. In fact, there are as many of them as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand along the beach.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 143

Response:

O LORD, HEAR MY PRAYER

Listen, Lord, as I pray!
You are faithful and honest,
and will answer my prayer.

Each morning let me learn
more about your love because I trust you.
I come to you in prayer,
asking for your guidance.

You are my God. Show me
what you want me to do,
and let your gentle Spirit
lead me in the right path.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle

Images from the Readings

- Be ready
- Keep your lamps burning
- Proof of what we cannot see
- Faith made them pleasing to God
- I trust you

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Do you think Jesus really wants us to stay awake all night to make sure that thieves don't break into our houses?

What are the things that we use to keep burglars and thieves out of our homes? (locks, burglar alarms, window-stays etc)

So what is Jesus trying to tell his disciples in this gospel story? (that as followers of Jesus we should always be prepared, and live our lives the way that he showed us)

Why? (because this will help us to be ready for anything that Jesus asks of us, especially when we are faced with really difficult decisions. Also God will reward those who are faithful and trustworthy in their service)

Who are the people that Jesus is trusting to be faithful to his work today?

How do you think we can do this?

Act of Worship

Have the children come forward and light their tea-light candle as you read the first part of the gospel again "Be ready and keep your lamps burning".

Then together pray: "Dear Jesus, help me always to be ready for you. Amen" or you might like to sing a song about light, such as: "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine"

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The tradition about the faith of Abraham is used as the illustration in the first reading, that faith is about an openness of mind to God's promises. Jesus, in the gospel, is teaching his disciples about watchfulness. Instructing them to light their lamps implies that they need to be watchful even into the night in anticipation of the return of the master. Just like today, Roman custom reckoned a day to be from midnight to midnight. The nights were divided into four watches. Jewish custom measured a day from sunset to sunset, with the night divided into three watches. At a Jewish wedding, the groom goes in procession to the home of the bride, where the wedding takes place and a feast is held. After this celebration the groom brings his bride back to his own home to begin their life together. The introduction of the wedding feast is a favourite image of the end-time. The reference to guarding a house against thieves is a second, unconnected example of the need for constant vigilance, although he does not specify the reason for this.

Reflection for Leaders

Jesus always promised that he would return at the end of the age, and the exhortation is for us to be ready because none of us knows when that will be. However, while we are waiting we are called upon to live lives of discipleship and faithful stewardship. It is our responsibility to respond to the demands that Jesus makes of us – to live simply and with integrity, detached from possessions, to be alert and ready, attentive to whatever the Master wants of us. Can you recall an incidence when you were totally unprepared? What was the situation? How did you handle it? What happened?

In what specific ways can you make yourself ready for the Lord? Do you know what the Master wants but find it difficult to carry out? Spend time each day this week reflecting on how well you have lived out the gospel call. Pray for openness to God and the courage to respond to God's call.

Liturgy Outline

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

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to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you sent your Son Jesus to show us how to live. Help us to
carry on the work that you have trusted to us. Amen

FIRST READING Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-12
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 143
 O Lord, hear my prayer
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 12:35-40
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: As God's children, we gather to share the good news of Jesus Christ.
We now bring our prayers to our faithful God:

- That the leaders of our Church always are faithful to the work trusted to them
by Jesus...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we develop a greater faith and trust in God when we are undergoing
times of trouble...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we learn to be alert and prepared at all times, ready to respond to God's
call...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who are sick and lonely in our community...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ
All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



In the gospel today Jesus tells us that we have to be prepared for difficult times. Following him won't always be easy and sometimes people will question us or even tease us for living the way Jesus asks.

Gospel

Luke 12:49-53

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I came to set fire to the earth, and I surely wish it were already on fire!

"I am going to be put to a hard test. And I will have to suffer a lot of pain until it is over.

"Do you think that I came to bring peace to earth? No indeed! I came to make people choose sides. A family of five will be divided, with two of them against the other three. Fathers and sons will turn against one another, and mothers and daughters will do the same. Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law will also turn against each other."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah

The nation's leaders said to King Zedekiah, "Jeremiah should be put to death! He's saying things that are upsetting every soldier left in the city and everyone else as well. He isn't trying to help anyone. He just wants to cause trouble."

"Do what you want with him!" Zedekiah replied. "I can't stop you."

So they took Jeremiah to the open courtyard where prisoners were kept. Then they let him down with ropes into the cistern that belonged to Malchiah, the king's son. There was no water in the cistern, and Jeremiah sank down in the mud.

Jeremiah's friend Ebedmelech went out of the palace and reported to the king, "Your Majesty, those men were wrong to put Jeremiah the prophet down in a cistern. There's no more food in the city, and he will starve to death."

The king then told Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, "Take thirty men and pull Jeremiah out before he dies."

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 40

Response: **LORD, COME TO MY AID!**

I patiently waited, Lord, for you to hear my prayer

You listened and pulled me from a lonely pit full of mud and mire.
You let me stand on a rock with my feet firm.

I am poor and needy, but, Lord God, you care about me,
and you come to my rescue. Please hurry and help.

Second Reading

Hebrews 12:1-4

A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

Brothers and sisters:

Such a large crowd of witnesses is all around us! So we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially the sin that just won't let go. And we must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us.

We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete. He endured the shame of being nailed to a cross, because he knew that later on he would be glad he did. Now he is seated at the right side of God's throne!

So keep your mind on Jesus, who put up with many insults from sinners. Then you won't get discouraged and give up.

None of you have yet been hurt in your battle against sin.

The word of the Lord.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle

Images from the Readings

- *The unpopularity of the prophet*
- *Accepting humiliation*
- *Being rescued*
- *Throwing off what hinders us*
- *Keeping our eyes on Jesus*
- *Division as a result of commitment to Christ*

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Has anyone ever laughed at you because you have done what you know is right? Have you ever been hassled by others because you wouldn't join in on name-calling? In today's readings we hear that it is not always easy to be a follower of Jesus. In the first reading we hear that Jeremiah was thrown down the well for doing what God asked him, and telling the people of Jerusalem that trouble was coming. Jeremiah suffered, but in the end everything happened as he had said, and the people realised they needed God. Through Jeremiah, God invited them to come back to him and live his way of love.

The second reading tells us that living our life the way Jesus asks us to, is a bit like a race. Who's been in a running race before? Who's been in a sack race before? Which one is easier? In which one can you get to the finish line quicker? The sack slows us down. In our life there are things that can slow us down, or keep us from being a really good follower of Jesus? What are some things that keep us from being a good follower of Jesus?

Our second reading tells us we should get rid of these things and keep our eyes on Jesus. To help you do this, next time you're not sure what to do you might like to ask yourself... What would Jesus do?

Act of Worship

Invite the children to join in this prayer

*“Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in us the fire of your love
send forth your Spirit and we shall be re-created
and you will renew the face of the earth”*

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Jeremiah, like most prophets, brought an unpopular message, to the people of Jerusalem he proclaimed destruction if they would not repent. In choosing to be faithful to the mission God had given him he was thrown into a pit. Scholars have long believed Jeremiah to be a 'figure' of Christ, his sufferings reminding us of Jesus' sufferings and his escape from the pit reminding us of Jesus' resurrection from the tomb. The theme of persecution, suffering and struggle is continued in this Gospel reading. Luke's gospel can strike us as rather surprising, Jesus' words seem harsh, and in contrast to our image of him as the Prince of Peace. However if we read the Gospel in light of the situation in which it was written we can begin to understand. Luke was writing to members of the early Church, for whom the decision to become a Christian generally meant turning away from either their Jewish heritage or the religious cult of the Roman Empire – either decision would have caused anguish and difficulty whether from within their families, or from neighbours, friends or Roman Officials. In this context Jesus' words brought comfort and encouragement – it is worth sacrificing and suffering for the sake of the Kingdom. As it was for Jeremiah and the early Christians, so it can be for us. While we may not face physical suffering today we may still experience emotional 'sufferings' and divisions because of our Christian faith. When we choose to take a lower paid job because it allows us to spend more time with our family, we might be told we're crazy and we'll never get ahead. When we choose not to go with friends to a movie because we don't believe the content appropriate, we may be laughed at or called a 'prude'. When we don't let our child go away with friends over Easter because they won't be able to get to the Easter services, we may face anger and resentment. Christianity is not for the faint hearted, in choosing to follow the call of Christ in our life, we will face moments of persecution and anguish, but if we remain faithful as Jeremiah did, we will receive the promise of eternal life.

Reflection for Leaders

As you reflect back on your own faith journey, has the decision to follow Christ caused you any anguish, division or isolation? If you have experienced any of these things, how has it affected your faith?

This gospel passage began with Jesus say 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!' Fire has both negative and positive connotations. We often think of fire purely in terms of destruction, but it can also be purifying and be used to describe great zeal 'I'm all fired up'. Is there any 'fire' in your Christian life at this time? How could you get yourself and others 'fired up' about your faith?

Liturgy Outline

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God

R Blessed be God

Leader: God of goodness, help us to share your goodness and love with all we meet. Amen

FIRST READING Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

Reader The Word of the Lord

R Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 40

Lord come to my aid.

(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING Hebrews 12:1-4

Reader The Word of the Lord

R Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Sing)

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 12:49-53

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

R Glory to you, Lord

At the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord

R Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: As God's children, we are fed by the teaching that Jesus gave us.
We now turn to God for what we need and pray together

- That our Church will always be first in helping to lift the burdens from people who suffer

Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer

- For strength for all people who want to be followers of Jesus

Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer

- For people who suffer because of their faith

Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer

- That those who serve God will do everything that is good and will please God

Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of love, sometimes it is hard to be your followers. Give us, and those we pray for, the strength to do the right thing always.
We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time**Green**

How did Jesus show us the way to God's kingdom? The things that he said and did helped us to see the way that God wanted us to live. It is not easy to live this way. Can anyone belong to the kingdom of God? What must each of us do today and everyday to please God and be ready when Jesus comes again?



Gospel

Luke 13:22-30

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

As Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, he taught the people in the towns and villages. Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?"

Jesus answered: "Do all you can to go in by the narrow door! A lot of people will try to get in, but will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and locks the door, you will be left standing outside. You will knock on the door and say, 'Sir, open the door for us!'

"But the owner will answer, 'I don't know a thing about you!'

"Then you will start saying, 'We dined with you, and you taught in our streets.'

"But he will say, 'I really don't know who you are! Get away from me, all you evil people!'

"Then when you have been thrown outside, you will weep and grit your teeth because you will see Abraham and Isaac and all the prophets in God's kingdom. People will come from all directions and sit down to feast in God's kingdom. There the ones who are now least important will be the most important, and those who are now most important will be least important."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Hebrews 12:5a. 6-7, 11

A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

Brothers and sister:

You have forgotten that the Scriptures say to God's children,

"When the Lord punishes you, don't make light of it.

The Lord corrects the people he loves and disciplines those he calls his own."

Be patient when you are being corrected! This is how the Lord treats his children.

Don't all parents correct their children?

It is never fun to be corrected. In fact, at the time it is always painful. But if we learn to obey by being corrected, we will do right and live at peace.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 119

Response: **O LORD, GREAT PEACE HAVE THEY
WHO LOVE YOUR LAW**

Lord, you give peace of mind to all who love your Law.

Nothing can make them fail.

You know everything I do. You know I respect every law you have given.

If you will teach me your laws, I will praise you.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle

Images from the Readings

- Narrow door
- Left standing outside
- Feast in God's kingdom
- Least become most important
- Obey by being corrected

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Have you ever missed out on something special because you were too slow? What did that teach you? (Don't miss your chances and opportunities)

Lots of people asked Jesus questions while he was travelling. Often he answered them by telling stories that made people think really hard.

Who can belong to God's kingdom? (we are all invited to be God's children. God doesn't exclude anyone whatever their colour or language or standing in society)

Are you glad that everyone can belong to God's kingdom?

What is Jesus saying to us with this story? (don't miss your chance, it takes some effort)

How do we have to live? (That we must try to live in a way that is pleasing to God. That we have to stay in relationship with God, and to work on keeping that relationship healthy even when we make mistakes)

What does Jesus mean when he says that the ones who are now least important will be the most important?

Act of Worship

Ask the children to think of someone they think is 'least' and pray for them.

Pray for all people who try to live God's way.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

In the first reading, the community to whom the letter was addressed was evidently going through some suffering, for which sinful behaviour was apparently not the cause. Viewing suffering as a form of discipline or instruction, such as is intrinsic in a loving parent/child relationship, allows the community to learn from it and be prepared and strengthened for what is ahead. In the gospel the Jewish people had always considered themselves to be the Chosen People, so they were in a privileged relationship with God. This story that Jesus told in response to the question about entry to the kingdom of God would have shattered their confidence. Jesus is warning that it is not enough to have shared a meal and heard the word, they must make a response to that word and act on it. To enter by the narrow door requires some effort, and just belonging to the chosen people is not enough to ensure salvation. Luke writes this gospel to a mostly Gentile community, those who have been gathered for a place at the feast. The teaching assures them of the universality of God's love, and that redemption is open to all who respond positively.

Reflection for Leaders

We must encourage each other in our common efforts to be faithful to the responsibility to share the good news. The gospel today gives us a picture of being 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Think about an experience you have had when you felt like an 'outsider'. Who are the people in our society who are treated as 'outsiders'? Is there anything that you personally can do for them? Jesus talks about going in by the narrow door, and we recognise that this is difficult and takes some effort. Have there been times when you have avoided the narrow door? Is there a narrow door in your life at the moment that you would rather go around than through? Do you make the most of the opportunities you have to enhance the relationship you have with God through your prayer, service and the way you live your life? Think about those people around you who are the last to receive your attention or support. Try to make them first this week.

Liturgy Outline

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: God of love and forgiveness, you have called us to be your children.
Help us to live in your way and be always ready to greet you. Amen

FIRST READING Hebrews 12:5a, 6-7,11
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 119
 O Lord, great peace have they who love your law
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 13:22-30
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: We have listened to the gospel and come in faith to our God with our
prayers and our needs:

- That the leaders of our Church understand and imitate God's faithful love for all people ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we develop a deep sense of being God's children and being obedient ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a greater awareness that God's ways are not our ways, that the first will be last and the last, first ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For great peace amongst all who love God and God's law ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of love and compassion, look kindly on those for whom we pray
and grant us what we ask you in faith. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus
Christ

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



Have you ever rushed to get the best seat before someone else? Jesus understands us, and wants us to realise that when we do this we think we are more important than other people. What does Jesus tell us to do instead? When we do something nice for other people who can't repay us, God will reward us. How can we practice doing what Jesus teaches us?

Gospel

Luke 14:1, 7-14

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

One Sabbath Jesus was having dinner in the home of an important Pharisee, and everyone was carefully watching Jesus.

Jesus saw how the guests had tried to take the best seats. So he told them: "When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the best place. Someone more important may have been invited. Then the one who invited you will come and say, 'Give your place to this other guest!'

You will be embarrassed and will have to sit in the worst place.

"When you are invited to be a guest, go and sit in the worst place. Then the one who invited you may come and say, 'My friend, take a better seat!' You will then be honoured in front of all the other guests. If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you humble yourself, you will be honoured."

Then Jesus said to the man who had invited him: "When you give a dinner or a banquet, don't invite your friends and family and relatives and rich neighbours. If you do, they will invite you in return, and you will be paid back. When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. They cannot pay you back. But God will bless you and reward you when his people rise from death."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Sirach 3:17-18, 20

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF SIRACH

My child, always be humble, and all of God's people will love you. The more important you are, the more humble you should be. This will please the Lord. The Lord has great power, and it is praised by those who are humble.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 68

Response:

**GOD, IN YOUR GOODNESS,
YOU HAVE MADE A HOME FOR THE POOR**

Our God, let your people be happy and celebrate because of you. Our God, you are the one and we praise you. Your name is the Lord, and we celebrate as we worship you.

Our God, from your sacred home you take care of orphans and protect widows. You find families for those who are lonely. You set prisoners free and let them prosper.

When your land was thirsty, you sent showers to refresh it. Your people settled there, and you were generous to everyone in need.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, a table place setting – placemat, knife, fork and spoon, serviette.

Images from the Readings

- The best place
- Embarrassed
- Honoured in front of others
- Invite the poor
- Be humble

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Have you ever had a special celebration in your family? What was it? Who was invited and why?

What do you think makes someone important?

What does being humble mean?

Why did Jesus talk about taking the best seats? (he saw the people doing this)

Is he just talking about parties? What else might he mean?

What is Jesus telling us to do instead?

How do you feel when someone tries to push in ahead of you?

What is Jesus saying to us today? (look out for others who are not popular and make sure they feel welcome. Think of others who don't have as much and share with them)

Act of Worship

Retell the gospel in a simple 'liquid picture' drama:

Divide the story into five or six main sections. Select one or two short phrases for each section with a simple action for each. Choose a child for each section. Have these five or six children stand with their backs to the rest of the group. The leader makes a simple introduction to the story. The first child turns to face the group, repeats his/her phrase three times as they do the action, then freezes. The second child does likewise and the process continues until the last child. The leader concludes with a simple statement. Finish with a short prayer for those with whom you share your meals.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The overarching theme for today is generosity in giving, particularly in the invitation to share a meal that celebrates community. Meals are always significant in human interaction and celebration. In Jesus' day, society was structured along fairly strong hierarchical lines, and people were very sensitive to their place and treatment in society. Jesus upset many people by sharing meals with those considered inappropriate companions, and this story encouraging them to invite those people whom society had forgotten would have been quite outrageous. Only the humble can receive graciously the gifts of God, so the idea that we 'repay' is a very human response. These readings call us to become humble receivers who can therefore give generously in the same manner. Again, the wedding feast is used as a traditional image of the kingdom of God.

Reflection for Leaders

If you have never studied the social justice documents of the church, this is a good time to look at them. Just as Jesus challenged the people of his day with his reverse thinking, so our church challenges our society with specific statements that echo these themes today. Reflect this week on way that your faith community welcomes those who are 'the least' in society? Is it a place where all are made to feel welcome or are some excluded from the Eucharist table? We almost have an inbuilt need to repay kindnesses done to us, sometimes missing the idea that being welcoming and hospitable is a very welcome gift for those who are on the 'outside' of our circle of friends. How do you usually repay the kindnesses done to you? During this week offer a meal to someone who would appreciate your company.

Liturgy Outline

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
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To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: God of compassion, you care for those who are least in our world.
Help us to be humble and care for others first. Amen

FIRST READING Sirach 3:17-18,20
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 68
 God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the
poor
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 14:1, 7-14
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: We are gathered here to remember God's many blessings. Let us now
place our prayers before God in confidence and trust:

- That the Church will always be a place where the least in our society find a
place of welcome and honour...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For an understanding of how much God loves us, that we don't need to push
ourselves forward before other people ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For humble hearts that always look to putting others first ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a spirit of generosity when dealing with those who are less popular and
less well-off than we are ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Generous God, shower your blessing and protection upon us and
those for whom we pray. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**Green**

Jesus knows that it is not easy being of follower of his, and to live as he wants us to. There is a cost involved. Jesus wants us to think carefully about what is expected of us if we are to be his disciples. We have to love him totally and be really committed to living the way he has taught us – to love one another, to be forgiving and kind. Why do we want to be Jesus' followers when it can be such a difficult thing for us to do? This is the place where we belong to God and can find true happiness and peace. The benefits make all the cost worthwhile.



Gospel

Luke 14:25-27

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Large crowds were walking along with Jesus, when he turned and said:

“You cannot be my disciple unless you love me more than you love your father and mother, your wife and children, and your brothers and sisters. You cannot come with me unless you love me more than you love your own life.

“You cannot be my disciple unless you carry your own cross and come with me.”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF WISDOM

No one really knows what is in the heavens. And, Lord, we cannot know what you have planned, unless you send down Wisdom and your Holy Spirit. Wisdom makes straight paths for those who live on earth. She teaches us what pleases you, and by Wisdom we are saved.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 90

Response:

**IN EVERY AGE, O LORD,
YOU HAVE BEEN OUR REFUGE**

Our Lord, teach us to use wisely all the time we have. Help us, Lord! Don't wait! Pity your servants.

When morning comes, let your love satisfy all our needs. Our Lord and our God, treat us with kindness and let all go well for us. Please let all go well!

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, a crucifix and a cross shape for each child to write on.

Images from the Readings

- Large crowds accompanied Jesus
- Love me more than your own life
- Cost of discipleship
- Knowing God's plans
- Wisdom makes straight paths

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Is it easy to learn new things, like how to ride a bike or swim?

What do you have to do? (Keep practicing, keep trying)

How long did it take?

If something is really easy to do or to get, do you think we value it as much?

Jesus is telling us today that we are going to have to work hard to be his followers as well. Most of the time we can't do what he has asked of us. What do you think is the hardest thing?

Can you think of any ways that you have found following Jesus difficult? (maybe giving up sport to go to Church)

When it gets really hard, what do you think we can do? (pray, help each other, share)

Act of Worship

Practice making the sign of the cross. Explain to the children that the cross is the most common visual symbol of Christianity. Using the small cross shapes, ask the children to write their names on and place them under the crucifix at the prayer focus, as a sign of their willingness to follow Jesus even when it is hard to do.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The rhetorical question posed in the first reading invites us to acknowledge that of course no-one can know God's mind and intentions. We are called to realise our human limitations. We must prioritise and make choices about the opportunities that come our way. Jesus uses the strong figurative language of Aramaic to explain to the disciples, and the crowd, the cost of following him. He invites all those who choose to be his followers to put him first, even if it means upsetting family members and friends. Discipleship may be demanding but it is not impossible, for we are given grace to sustain us and community to support our efforts. If we make the right choices and have the courage to put our lives on the line for them, then God promises us enriched lives. This call for single-hearted commitment and intimacy eventually led to the development within the church of orders of religious men and women who renounce possessions and choose not to marry.

Reflection for Leaders

Jesus' call to the crowd to a greater commitment to discipleship must reach out to envelop us today as well. The choices that today's readings call us to make seem harsh and extreme, but often it is our attitude which needs to be right. There is always a cost of discipleship, and the concept of commitment seems difficult for many people today. Most people, however have had an experience of making a great sacrifice out of love for someone else at some point in their lives. Choosing to follow Jesus can often cost us some difficulties in our family and social lives. If this is so, how have you dealt with this? Is there anything that is holding you back from a more wholehearted response? While most of us are not called to renounce all our worldly goods, we are expected to hold lightly onto our possessions. Reflect on which of your possessions mean the most to you, and for what would you relinquish them? Do you find it hard to admit that what you have in excess rightly belongs to those who have nothing? What can you do this week to share some of your abundance with someone in need?

Liturgy Outline

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you are patient with us when we struggle to live your way.
Give us the strength we need to always put you first. Amen

FIRST READING Wisdom 9:16c-18
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 90
 In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 14:25-27

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: We have listened to God's Word. Let us now bring our needs to God
with faith and trust:

- That our Church leaders will remain true disciples ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the courage to make a deeper commitment to follow Jesus even when it
is difficult for us ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a spirit of generosity in sharing what we have with those who are in need
...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For our families, our schools and our faith community, that they be
strengthened to support all who belong to them ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Generous God, shower your blessing and protection upon us and
those for whom we pray. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



Have you ever lost anything that was really important to you? How did you feel? What did you do? Jesus tells us a story about a father who thought he had lost his son forever, but he came home. God is like the father, always ready to forgive us and bring us back home to him when we recognise that we have done wrong.

Gospel

Luke 15:11-32

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus told the people this story:

“Once a man had two sons. The younger son said to his father, ‘Give me my share of the property.’ So the father divided his property between his two sons.

“Not long after that, the younger son packed up everything he owned and left for a foreign country, where he wasted all his money in wild living. He had spent everything, when a bad famine spread through that whole land. Soon he had nothing to eat.

“He went to work for a man in that country, and the man sent him out to take care of his pigs. He would have been glad to eat what the pigs were eating, but no one gave him a thing.

“Finally, he came to his senses and said, ‘My father’s workers have plenty to eat, and here I am, starving to death! I will leave and go to my father and say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son. Treat me like one of your workers.’”

“The younger son got up and started back to his father. But when he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt sorry for him. He ran to his son and hugged and kissed him.

“The son said, ‘Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son.

“But his father said to the servants, ‘Hurry and bring the best clothes and put them on him. Give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. Get the best calf and prepare it, so we can eat and celebrate. His son of mine was dead, but has now come back to life. He was lost and has now been found.’ And they began to celebrate.

“The older son had been out in the field. But when he came near the house, he heard the music and dancing. So he called one of the servants over and asked,

‘What’s going on here?’

“The servant answered, “Your brother has come home safe and sound, and your father ordered us to kill the best calf.’ The older brother got so mad that he would not even go into the house.

“His father came out and begged him to go in. But he said to his father, ‘For years I have worked for you like a slave and have always obeyed you. But you have never even given me a little goat, so that I could give a dinner for my friends. This other son of yours wasted your money on bad women. And now that he has come home, you ordered the best calf to be killed for a feast.’

“His father replied, ‘My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we should be glad and celebrate! Your brother was dead, and he is now alive. He was lost and has now been found.’”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

1 Timothy 1:12-15b

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord. He has given me the strength for my work because he knew that he could trust me.

I used to say terrible and insulting things about him, and I was cruel. But he had mercy on me because I didn’t know what I was doing, and I had not yet put my faith in him.

Christ Jesus our Lord was very kind to me. He has greatly blessed my life with faith and love just like his own.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and I was the worst sinner of all!

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 111

Response: **YOUR WORKS, O LORD, ARE JUSTICE AND TRUTH**

Shout praises to the Lord!

With all my heart I will thank the Lord when his people meet.

The Lord has done many wonderful things! Everyone who is pleased with God’s marvellous deeds will keep them in mind.

Everything the Lord does is glorious and majestic, and his power to bring justice will never end. The Lord God is famous for his wonderful deeds, and he is kind and merciful.

God is always honest and fair, and his laws can be trusted. They are true and right and will stand forever.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle

Images from the Readings

- Give me my share
- Came to his senses
- He ran to his son
- Everything I have is yours
- Kindness and mercy

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Do you know what this story is called? It is usually called The Prodigal Son, but many people think that it is more about the father. Who do you think Jesus was trying to teach us about when he tells us about this father? (God)

How do you think the father felt when his son wanted to take his share and leave? Why did the son return home?

What do you think the father felt when he saw his son return home? What did he do?

In what ways can we be like the sons? We too make mistakes and have to come back and say sorry. How do we do this?

What do you think about the older son? Why is he so unhappy that his brother has come home and been welcomed back? How do you think the father would have felt about his reaction?

Did the older son's reaction stop the father from having a celebration?

Does God expect us to be perfect? What does God want of us? (to be with him)

Act of Worship

Teach the children an act of contrition, such as "Oh my God, I am so sorry that I have sinned against you, and with your help I will not sin again."

Background to the Readings for Leaders

By demanding his inheritance, the younger son offered his father an enormous insult. His 'high-life' didn't last for long – the wealth that his family had amassed, probably over generations, was gone in a surprisingly short space of time. Feeding pigs was possibly the most degrading task for a Jew, who were prohibited from eating their flesh, but just touching the animals would have rendered a person unclean. It was from the depths of this condition that the son decided to return to his father's house to take his place amongst the servants. But the father's response was immediate and effusive – the son's place in the household was reinstated. Jewish understanding of the day was that there was no place in God's kingdom for sinners, so this concept was a radical departure from the accepted image of God. In fact the image painted by Jesus is of lavish forgiveness - one who always runs to meet us when we return home, whatever that is for us.

Reflection for Leaders

Recall some instances of rebellion, or jealousy; of receiving forgiveness and generosity. Can you identify with either or both the sons in this story? It is often hard to understand the mercy that God lavishes on the most undeserving people, and our human nature makes it difficult for us to rejoice over the good fortune of others who have made poor choices. Attitudes and motives are often the biggest challenges for us to examine in ourselves – there is nothing like an empty stomach to encourage us to re-examine our situation in life! Perhaps our biggest challenge is with the response of the older son who was so jealous and resentful of the mercy and forgiveness shown to his brother that he was unwilling to join in the celebration of welcome. Our wrong choices only keep us from enjoying God's presence for as long as we refuse to return home; our attitudes can also prevent us from enjoying our Christian life. Lack of forgiveness, lack of hospitality and generosity are all characteristics which are alien to the father that Jesus shows us. This week try to model your attitudes and meetings with others on those demonstrated by the father in this parable.

Liturgy Outline

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

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to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, we are your children. Help us always to turn back to you with
confidence and trust when we have done wrong. Amen

FIRST READING 1 Timothy 1:12-15b
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 111
 Your works, O Lord, are justice and truth.
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 15:11-32

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Loving God, we know that you care for us. We bring our needs to you
now with confidence:

- That the Church will always be willing to reach out to those who long to come home to God ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For an openness to God's abundant love, forgiveness and mercy ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of hospitality and willingness to forgive those who have hurt or rejected us ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who have made poor choices in their lives for the courage to make changes ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of great forgiveness, you are always ready to welcome back those who recognise that they have made wrong choices. Teach us to be like you. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

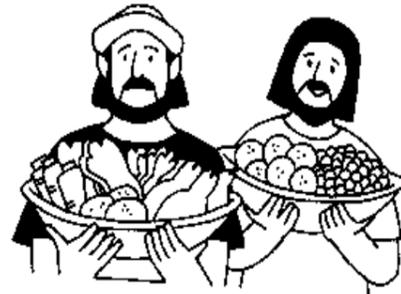
All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**Green**

If someone in a shop gave you too much change, what would you do? Jesus knew that we would be often be tested about being honest in our everyday lives. Being honest is a choice we make every day. God wants to be sure that we can be trusted with the most precious treasure of all when we serve God.



Gospel

Luke 16:10-13

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Anyone who can be trusted in little matters can also be trusted in important matters. But anyone who is dishonest in little matters will be dishonest in important matters.

“If you cannot be trusted with this wicked wealth, who will trust you with true wealth?

“And if you cannot be trusted with what belongs to someone else, who will give you something that will be your own?

“You cannot be the slave of two masters. You will like one more than the other or be more loyal to one than the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Romans 12:9-12

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS

Brothers and sisters:

Be sincere in your love for others. Hate everything that is evil and hold tight to everything that is good. Love each other as brothers and sisters and honour others more than you do yourself.

Never give up. Eagerly follow the Holy Spirit and serve the Lord. Let your hope make you glad. Be patient in time of trouble and never stop praying.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 25

Response:

TEACH ME YOUR WAYS, O LORD

Show me your paths and teach me to follow;

Guide me by your truth and instruct me.

You keep me safe, and I always trust you.

Please, Lord, remember, you have always been patient and kind.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, a crucifix or cross with money on a plate in front of it.

Images from the Readings

- Trusted in little matters
- True wealth
- Slave of two masters
- Never give up
- Hold tight to good

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Why do you think there is money at the prayer focus today? What do you do with your pocket money? Is Jesus telling us to do without money? (No – but it can't become more important than God) What are the two qualities that Jesus identifies in our gospel today? (honesty and greed)

Are people who are dishonest or greedy good people to know?

How do we know how to behave and what values are good? In the gospels Jesus shows us how to live God's way. We make choices about what is important to us and how we behave. Sometimes these can be difficult choices, especially when they are about little things. Jesus warns us that the little things do matter to God. Looking after something for someone else is called 'stewardship'. All things really belong to God and we are just trusted to look after them for a while.

Have you ever cheated or lied and then found that other people don't trust you after that? It can take a long time to earn trust back after it has been broken. Jesus tells us that God won't trust us with important things until we can be trusted with little things, and we must make a choice whether money is more important to us than God is.

Act of Worship

Invite the children to sit in silence for a few moments, thinking about how they can best make choices about being honest and sharing their resources so they can help someone in need. At the end of this time, stand in a circle and hold hands while you pray, "Jesus, help us to make right choices about being honest and teach us to be happy and content with what we have. Amen"

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Business practice of the day meant that stewards had a great deal of responsibility in administering their master's property. Money in and of itself is not bad, despite the implications in the gospel reading – but it does wield power to create or break down barriers between people. Wealth was thought to be a sign of God's favour and blessing, so Jesus' words would have been challenging to his hearers. What is the message Jesus is conveying to us with these words? We must recognise that we are stewards trusted to use and administer God-given resources and talents with wisdom and integrity. Jesus' teaching gives insight into the ways of God and ultimately the choice that we each have to make regarding our priorities. The honesty and integrity with which we deal with money and material possessions will determine the level to which we will be trusted in greater matters.

Reflection for Leaders

Today's reading is an invitation for us to consider our priorities in a new light. How we use our money has implications for us as Christians and for others. How has your attitude to money affected your decisions and the way you live your life? How does it affect or reflect your attitude to God? What do you spend your money on? What are the things that you cannot do without? What are the things, other than material possessions, of which you have been given stewardship in your life? Are your priorities ones that Jesus would approve of? During this week make a conscious effort to make use of a resource you have – time, money or talent – to make life better for someone in need.

Liturgy Outline

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

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PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, your goodness is always our ideal. Help us to be honest and
truthful with each other and have integrity in all our dealings. Amen

FIRST READING Romans 12:9-12
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 25
 Teach me your ways, O Lord
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 16:10-13

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: God of goodness, we have listened to your words, and now bring our
needs before you:

- That the leaders of our Church and country will treat all people and issues
with integrity and honesty ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That in a world which is full of dishonesty, our goodness will shine like a
beacon of hope ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the courage to do the right thing even when no-one is looking ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a right attitude to money and possessions ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Generous and faithful God, you give us all things. Teach us to be
content with what we have and generous towards those who need our help. We
ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



Jesus tells us the story about the rich man who was so self-absorbed, that he did nothing to help Lazarus. What do you think the rich man could have done? What do you think Jesus is saying to us with this story?

Gospel

Luke 16:19-31

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus told his disciples this story:

“There was once a rich man who wore expensive clothes and every day ate the best food.

But a poor beggar named Lazarus was brought to the gate of the rich man’s house. He was happy just to eat the scraps that fell from the rich man’s table.

“His body was covered with sores, and dogs kept coming up to lick them. The poor man died, and angels took him to the place of honour next to Abraham.

“The rich man also died and was buried. He went to hell and was suffering terribly. When he looked up and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side, he said to Abraham, ‘Have pity on me! Send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and touch my tongue. I’m suffering terribly in this fire.’

“Abraham answered, ‘My friend, remember that while you lived, you had everything good, and Lazarus had everything bad. Now he is happy, and you are in pain. And besides, there is a deep ditch between us, and no one from either side can cross over.’

“But the rich man said, ‘Abraham, then please send Lazarus to my father’s home. Let him warn my five brothers, so they won’t come to this horrible place.’

“Abraham answered, ‘Your brothers can read what Moses and the prophets wrote. They should pay attention to that.’

“Then the rich man said, ‘No, that’s not enough! If only someone from the dead would go to them, they would listen and turn to God.’

“So Abraham said, ‘If they won’t pay attention to Moses and the prophets, they won’t listen even to someone who comes back from the dead.’”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

1 Timothy 6:11b-12a

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

Try your best to please God and to be like him. Be faithful, loving, dependable, and gentle.

Fight a good fight for the faith.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 25

Response: **Teach me your ways, O Lord.**

Show me your paths and teach me to follow;
guide me by your truth and instruct me.
You keep me safe.

Please, Lord, remember, you have always been patient and kind.
Show how truly kind you are and remember me.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle,

Images from the Readings

- Juxtaposition of abundance beside need
- Warn my brothers
- Read what the prophets wrote
- if they won't pay attention...
- teach me your ways

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

What kind of life would you like to have when you grow up?

What kind of life would you NOT like to have?

How do you feel when you see poor and hungry people on TV?

Jesus gives us a story that makes us think. Do you think Lazarus wanted the kind of life he had?

What might the rich man have done while he was alive? Why do you think that he didn't do this? What makes people selfish?

What do you think Jesus is trying to teach us with this story? (more than just giving money to the poor, more an attitude-shift towards our possessions, to be more content with what we have, to notice others around us and to share our resources more equitably)

Do you think there might be someone like Lazarus living in your street?

What does this story tell us about God? (God's ways are often the reverse of the usual ways of the world)

Act of Worship

Invite the children to share a sign of peace with each other, but ask them to ensure that they really notice the person they are with, look into their face as they share a prayer of peace together.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The exhortation in the first reading is a responsibility we all need to assume - to pursue right conduct in imitation of God's virtues. In the gospel, Jesus goes to great lengths to contrast the lives of the two men. In an unusual reversal of human nature it is only the poor man who is named - Lazarus means 'my God helps'. Jesus casts no moral judgment on the rich man, who has not physically wronged Lazarus. He is just completely indifferent to his plight. Moses and the prophets taught the need for justice and mercy and traditionally there is a reciprocal responsibility that these men share through the covenant of Abraham, which particularly calls the wealthy to meet the needs of the poor. By ignoring and being indifferent to this responsibility, being blind to Lazarus' obvious need, the rich man in his complacency was inattentive to this responsibility despite the fact that by naming Lazarus when he asked Abraham to send him refreshing water indicates that he was not totally unaware of him. The call from the rich man to send warning to his brothers indicates that he is still only concerned with people like himself. The lack of attention for a resurrected Lazarus prefigures the same unwillingness by the complacent even to believe the message of the risen Christ.

Reflection for Leaders

The wealth of the Church raises questions for many when considering scriptures like this one. From very early on people have been anxious to donate money towards the works of the Church: care of the sick, education, worship. The Church has traditionally been the provider of care, and the beauty of church buildings, belonging to the whole community, gives testimony to the desire of people to offer their best to God. Does the church have a legitimate right to property and money when there is such need in our world? Television often projects right into our homes images of people in desperate need, yet how do we choose to respond? What is it that makes people selfish and self-absorbed? Can you think of a time when you have not noticed the needs of another? How important is your comfort? This week keep your eyes open for someone in difficulty.

Liturgy Outline

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, giver of all that is good. Help us to see the needs of others
and give us the courage and generosity to help them. Amen

FIRST READING 1 Timothy 6:11b-12a
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 25
 Teach me your ways, O Lord
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 16:19-31

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: Generous and loving God, help us to see you in the people we meet.
We bring our needs to you in prayer:

- For all God's family, the Church, so that we may share the good news with
everyone we meet ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all, like Lazarus, who are hungry and sick and lonely ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the people in our families, our schools, our community, that we have a
heart for justice and concern for others ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the poor in our society, that we learn to notice their need and be
generous in our help ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of compassion, you have a special love for the poor and the sick.
Hear the prayers that we make for ourselves and others. We ask this through
Our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**Green**

How would you describe what the word 'faith' means? Faith is to have complete trust and belief in some person or thing. Who are the people who you see as having great faith in God? There are many things that we don't know or understand about God, but faith is a gift from God that helps us to pray and to believe what we cannot see.



Gospel

Luke 17:5-10

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

The apostles said to the Lord, "Make our faith stronger!"

Jesus replied: "If you had faith no bigger than a tiny mustard seed, you could tell this mulberry tree to pull itself up, roots and all, and to plant itself in the ocean. And it would!"

"If your servant comes in from ploughing or from taking care of the sheep, would you say, 'Welcome! Come in and have something to eat.'? No, you wouldn't say that. You would say, 'Fix me something to eat. Get ready to serve me, so I can have my meal. Then later on you can eat and drink.'

"Servants don't deserve special thanks for doing what they are supposed to do. And that's how it should be with you. When you've done all you should, then say, 'We are merely servants, and we have simply done our duty.' "

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Habakkuk 1:2-3, 2:2-4

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET HABAKKUK

This was my prayer to God:

"Our Lord, how long must I beg for your help before you listen? You won't help when I tell you about all of the violence. Why do you make me watch such terrible injustice? Violence and destruction, crime and cruelty are spreading everywhere."

Then the Lord told me,

"I will give you my message in the form of a vision. Write it on a big clay tablet and make it easy to read. At the time I have chosen, these things will happen. You can trust what I say about the future. It may take a long time, but keep on waiting, because it will happen. I don't like a proud people, but everyone who is faithful will please me and live."

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 95

Response:

**IF TODAY YOU HEAR GOD'S VOICE,
HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS**

Sing joyful songs to the Lord! Praise the mighty rock where we are safe. Come to worship him with thankful hearts and songs of praise.

Bow down and worship the Lord our Creator! The Lord is our God, and we are his people, the sheep he takes care of in his own pasture.

Listen to God's voice today! Don't be stubborn and rebel as your ancestors did at Meribah and at Massah out in the desert. For forty years they tested God and saw the things he did.

Second Reading

2 Timothy 1:6-8

A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

I ask you to make full use of the gift that God gave you when I placed my hands on you. Use it well. God's Spirit does not make cowards out of us. The Spirit gives us power, love and self-control.

Don't be ashamed to speak for our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, just because I am in jail for serving him. Use the power that comes from God and join with me in suffering for telling the good news.

The word of the Lord.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, a tiny bowl of mustard seeds

Images from the Readings

- Make our faith stronger
- Tiny mustard seed
- The duty of servants
- Terrible injustice
- Use the power that comes from God

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Not long ago we had the Olympic Games on. Athletes there did some pretty amazing things, breaking records in all sorts of sports. Has anyone here done something really amazing?

What do you think Jesus' friends meant when they asked him to 'make our faith stronger'? Were they extraordinary people?

Have you ever seen a mustard seed? (show them) Do you think Jesus was exaggerating when he told this story? Why? (it can be an effective way of conveying a truth)

What was Jesus trying to say? (faith is not something to be measured out, but something given by God. Having faith makes the difference; it enables us to do extraordinary things for God)

Do you know what faith is? (believing in something even when we can't understand or see it) What sort of things can faith help you to do? (pray, trust God, face something that is difficult or frightening) What do you think Jesus means when he said 'servants don't deserve special thanks for what they are supposed to do'? (we ought not to expect to be rewarded for what we do for God, but act out of gratitude)

Act of Worship

Teach the children the prayer "Lord I believe; help my unbelief"

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The readings for today call us to faith - a gift from God which is mediated through the community. Contrary to the appearances outlined in the prophet's lament in the first reading, God is in charge of the events of life. God's vision indicates that we must wait patiently until the appointed time for events to unfold. Paul encourages Timothy to be brave in proclaiming the gospel and rekindle the gift given with his ministry, despite the perilous political situation of the day. When the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith, he counters with a change in perspective. They are interested in quantity and Jesus in quality - his metaphorical use of the tiny mustard seed and the mulberry tree with its very deep and extensive root system, very difficult to uproot, is indicating that a tiny amount of genuine faith is able to realise the impossible. The social convention of the day held that servants were effectively slaves, beholden to the householder for the provision of everything needed by the servant and his family in return for his labour. The household described would have been small, with a wide range of duties performed by the servant. The analogy is for the follower of Christ, who has been called to service and should do so out of a profound sense of gratitude rather than a desire to be rewarded.

Reflection for Leaders

Think of someone you know who has been committed to their faith or ministry for a long time. What do you think keeps them going? Have they struggled to maintain their enthusiasm? We have been told of faith as a gift from God mediated through our community - handed down in families, sharing about God and Jesus by teachers, families, preaching, those with whom we talk. In what ways has your community fostered the faith given by God? How are you willing to nurture your own seed of faith? How is God calling you to serve? Think about a time when you felt as though you had done your duty. How did this feel? During this week stretch your faith by handing a problem over to God, and doing something that seems beyond you.

Liturgy Outline

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, we trust you and your love for us. Increase our faith in you
and your goodness. Amen

FIRST READING Habakkuk 1:2-3, 2:2-4

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 95

If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 2 Timothy 1:6-8

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 17:5-10

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Gracious God, we trust in your goodness and so we are not afraid to
bring our needs to you:

- For all our leaders, that they be unafraid to admit mistakes and ask forgiveness...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all who doubt, that the gift of faith be increased ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the people in our families, our schools, our community, who are faithful and serve others with a good attitude ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the sick, the lonely and the poor, that they be comforted...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Look kindly on your children and those we pray for. You are a God of love and in faith we ask these prayers through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**Green**

Leprosy is a disease which is still around today. It causes deformity, loss of limbs and sometimes blindness. Lepers also suffer because they are cast out from their homes and communities, and sent off to live quite miserable lives away from healthy people. Jesus took pity on all who came to him for healing. Do you think he was pleased that only one person came back to say 'thank you' when ten had been healed? What is Jesus telling us about being thankful today?

Gospel

Luke 17:11-19

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus went along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men with leprosy came toward him. They stood at a distance and shouted, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

Jesus looked at them and said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." On their way they were healed. When one of them discovered that he was healed, he came back, shouting praises to God. He bowed down at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was from the country of Samaria.

Jesus asked, "Weren't ten men healed? Where are the other nine? Why was this foreigner the only one who came back to thank God?"

Then Jesus told the man, "You may get up and go. Your faith has made you well,"

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

A READING FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS

Naaman, the Syrian, did what God's prophet Elisha had told him to do. He went down to the Jordan River and dipped in the water seven times. Then he was well, and his skin looked as healthy as that of a young child.

Naaman and everyone with him went back to the prophet Elisha. Naaman said, "Elisha, now I know that the only God in all the world is in Israel. Please, sir, let me give you a gift."

Elisha replied, "I serve the living God, and I swear by him that I will not take a thing from you!"

Naaman kept begging him to accept something, but Elisha refused.

Naaman said, "Sir, if you won't accept a gift, then let me take back as much of Israel's soil as two mules can carry. From now on I will give sacrifices and offerings only to the Lord."

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 98

Response:

**THE LORD HAS REVEALED TO THE NATIONS
HIS SAVING POWER**

Sing a new song to the Lord! He has worked miracles, and with his own powerful arm, he has won the victory.

The Lord has shown the nations that he has the power to save and to bring justice. God has been faithful in his love for Israel.

His saving power is seen everywhere on earth. Tell everyone on this earth to sing happy songs in praise of the Lord.

Second Reading

2 Timothy 2:11-13

A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

Here is a true message:

"If we died with Christ, we will live with him.

If we don't give up, we will rule with him.

If we deny that we know him, he will deny that he knows us.

If we are not faithful, he will still be faithful.

Christ cannot deny who he is."

The word of the Lord.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, a 'thank you' card

Images from the Readings

- Have pity on us!
- Bowed down and thanked Jesus
- Where are the other nine?
- Your faith has made you well
- Being thankful

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Have you ever had a contagious illness where you had to keep away from other children so that they didn't catch it too? Who looked after you till you got better? Did you get lonely?

Leprosy is a disease that is still around today, although medicine and surgery can do a lot to help lepers now. But in Jesus' time lepers were sent outside the towns to live away from other people. They had to ring a bell and warn people that they were 'unclean' so that others didn't come near and catch the disease from them. Most of them never got better. How do you think the lepers in the story might have felt?

How did they show that they believed Jesus could help them?

Why do you think that only one came back to say thanks?

What would make someone forget to say thank you? Have you every taken someone else for granted?

How does it feel when people forget to thank you for something special you have done for them?

Act of Worship

Thanksgiving itself is an act of worship. Let the children sit in silence and think of things that they can be thankful for. Say some thank-you prayers to God. 'For _____, thank you God'

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Lepers suffered a two-fold alienation, physical and spiritual. Because of their threat to public health, they were ostracised and forced to live outside the city walls. But leprosy was also considered to be a punishment for sin. Samaritans, too, were despised by the Jews for their history of religious practices contaminated by paganism – yet the stigma of leprosy superseded any racial differences. In these readings it is interesting that while many suffered from leprosy in Israel, in both instances God chose to heal foreigners – their recognition of God's power (which in the gospel reading works through Jesus) prefigures the understanding that it is this very power that extends over the entire world. God's love and concern is for all people, Jew and non-Jew alike. The Samaritan was not the only one who had faith, but his gratitude sets him apart from the others, and Jesus upholds him as an example. This gospel tells of Jesus going along the border between Galilee and Samaria. Borders were often places where disputes took place, with barriers often erected against those who are outside accepted norms of society on each side.

Reflection for Leaders

God's grace and healing does not confine itself to social, gender, class, ethnic or racial constraints. Sometimes we must cross boundaries to obtain healing; and healing brings new life, which is completely dependent on faith. But the underlying message is that our response must be gratitude and this must not be forgotten in the excitement of the moment. Review your own life: what have been the turning points for you, and what impact have these had on you? Have you experienced the pain of being excluded or treated as an outsider? Identify what God has done for you. What is your response? What should you do next? What are the things you can thank God for?

During this week, reflect on where the barriers are in your own life, the things that cut you off from others. Work towards breaking down one barrier this week.

Liturgy Outline

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: God who restores and heals us, we know that you want us to be
healthy and whole. Help us to have an attitude of gratitude for all
your gifts. Amen

FIRST READING 2 Kings 5:14-17
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 98
 The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 2 Timothy 2:11-13
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 17:11-19
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Let us turn to our loving God in expectant faith with all our needs:

- For the Church, that it be a safe and healing place for all who are sick and oppressed ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For sick people everywhere, for healing and wholeness ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For an attitude of thankfulness towards God ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all those who are excluded and treated as outsiders ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of hope and healing, we know you love us and want us to be whole. We bring our prayers to you knowing that you care for us and those for whom we pray, through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**Green**

What do you call someone who gives up when things don't go right? Have you ever pestered someone when you really want something badly? What happened? In the story that Jesus tells us today, he is showing us that we should not give up when we pray. We need to be persistent in our prayers for what we need. Even when it seems that God is not answering or giving us what we want, we must trust God and not give up praying.



Gospel

Luke 18:1-8

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus told his disciples a story about how they should keep on praying and never give up:

“In a town there was once a judge who didn't fear God or care about people. In that same town there was a widow who kept going to the judge and saying, ‘Make sure that I get fair treatment in court.’

“For a while the judge refused to do anything. Finally, he said to himself, ‘Even though I don't fear God or care about people, I will help this widow because she keeps on bothering me. If I don't help her, she will wear me out.’ ”

The Lord said: “Think about what that crooked judge said. Won't God protect his chosen ones who pray to him day and night? Won't he be concerned for them? He will surely hurry and help them. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find on this earth anyone with faith?”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

2 Timothy 4:1-2

A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

When Christ Jesus comes as king, he will be the judge of everyone, whether they are living or dead.

So with God and Christ as witnesses, I command you to preach God's message. Do it willingly, even if it is not the popular thing to do.

You must correct people and point out their sins. But also cheer them up, and when you instruct them, always be patient.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 96

Response:

**PROCLAIM GOD'S MARVELLOUS DEEDS
TO ALL THE NATIONS**

Sing a new song to the Lord! Everyone on this earth, sing praises to the Lord, sing and praise his name.

Day after day announce, “The Lord has saved us!” Tell every nation on earth, “The Lord is wonderful and does marvellous things!”

The Lord is great and deserves our greatest praise! He is the only God worthy of our worship. Other nations worship idols, but the Lord created the heavens.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, a taper or tea-light candle for each child.

Images from the Readings

- Keep on praying
- Never give up
- Persistence reaps rewards
- God's protection for his chosen ones
- Instruct with patience

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Do you know what a widow is? (a woman whose husband is dead) Why do you think this widow needed fair treatment? (widows had no-one to bring in any income and so depended on other people's generosity to support them – no social welfare benefits in those days)

What do you think about this woman? Do you think she might have ever got tired and wanted to give up?

Why do you think she didn't?

Is there anything you have ever given up on?

If you had another chance would you try again?

What do they call people who keep asking and asking for things that they want?

How do you pray?

What do you think Jesus is trying to teach us with this story?

Act of Worship

Ask the children to think of something that is going on in the world, at home or school that they would like to pray for. Use their prayers as General Intercessions this week. Let them light a taper and say, "Let us pray for _____ ; Lord hear us"

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Faithfulness in carrying out responsibilities and persistence are the common themes of the readings today. Jesus often used the image of widows and orphans to represent the most defenceless and needy members of society. Without their traditional means of support they were the most dependent on the charity of others. The widow in the parable would have been unusual in that day for having to speak up for herself in looking for justice, which implies that she must have been quite alone in the world with no male relative to intercede for her. At the time this gospel was written, the early church was suffering and its members were questioning whether God really did hear their prayers. Persistence in prayer is a sign of genuine commitment and a pre-requisite for a flourishing faith-life. Refusal to give in to discouragement in the face of difficulties and disappointments is an aspect of discipline in our lives, and the widow's persistence becomes a model of resoluteness for God's chosen ones who have to wait on God's timing. God will answer in God's time, and we are being asked to trust in God's concern for us. Perhaps what is really being asked here is not just 'will Jesus find anyone on this earth with faith?' so much as 'will there be people who persevere in prayer?' Jesus' unanswered question begs his disciples to ponder the issue, and we can do no less today.

Reflection for Leaders

Around the world at any given moment, there is a Mass being said, morning and evening prayers in churches and monasteries, individuals praying. Prayer is a regular part of the church's life. Is this so with you? How do you pray? What are the things that make you 'lose heart' about prayer? Have you had an experience of waiting for something? Has there been any value or benefit in the waiting time for you? If you look at the things in your life that you persistently pay attention to, what does that show you about your commitments and priorities? Do you feel that you cannot put your needs before God in prayer? Why? During this week make a particular effort to bring your needs before God with simplicity and persistence.

Liturgy Outline

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: Faithful God, you care for all your children with tender love. Help us
to trust you more and never give up even when the going gets tough.
Amen

FIRST READING 2 Timothy 4:1-2
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 96
 Proclaim God's marvellous deeds to all the nations
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 18:1-8
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: God of faithfulness, having listened to your words we bring our needs
to you in prayer:

- For our leaders in the Church and society, that they have a desire for justice
in our world ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For perseverance in prayer, even when we don't understand God's purposes
...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For persistence in not giving up what is right and good even when things
don't seem to be going our way ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a deepening of the gift of faith ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of justice, we know that you desire that we never lose heart or
trust in your goodness. We bring these prayers to you in faith through Our Lord
Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



The story this week is one that Jesus meant for the Pharisees, who thought that they were much better than other people who did not live by the same high standards that they did. They looked down on tax collectors and other people that they considered to be dishonest and sinners. Why do you think was the tax collector's prayer more pleasing to God than the Pharisee's? What is Jesus teaching us about our attitudes and pride this week?

Gospel

Luke 18:9-14

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus told a story to some people who thought they were better than others and who looked down on everyone else:

“Two men went into the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

“The Pharisee stood over by himself and prayed, ‘God, I thank you that I am not greedy, dishonest, and unfaithful in marriage like other people. And I am really glad that I am not like that tax collector over there. I go without eating for two days a week, and I give you one tenth of all I earn.’

“The tax collector stood off at a distance and did not think he was good enough even to look up toward heaven. He was so sorry for what he had done that he pounded his chest and prayed, “God, have pity on me! I am such a sinner.’ ”

Then Jesus said, “When the two men went home, it was the tax collector and not the Pharisee who was pleasing to God. If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you humble yourself, you will be honoured.”

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Sirach 35:12b-14, 16-17

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF SIRACH

The Lord doesn't have favourites, and you can't bribe him to cheat the poor. But he hears the prayers of all who have been mistreated. The Lord listens carefully to the prayers of orphans and the concerns of widows.

If you gladly obey God, your prayers will reach beyond the clouds. The prayers of the humble go right through the clouds, and they are never satisfied till their prayers reach God.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 34

Response:

THE LORD HEARS THE CRY OF THE POOR

I will always praise the Lord.

With all my heart, I will praise the Lord.

Let all who are helpless listen and be glad.

When his people pray for help, he listens and he rescues them from their troubles. The Lord is there to rescue all who are discouraged and have given up hope.

Second Reading

2 Timothy 4:6-8

A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

Now the time has come for me to die. My life is like a drink offering being poured out on the altar. I have fought well. I finished the race, and I have been faithful.

So a crown will be given to me for pleasing the Lord.

He judges fairly, and on the day of judgment he will give a crown to me and to everyone else who wants him to appear with power.

The word of the Lord.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle

Images from the Readings

- Thought they were better than others
- I am not greedy ...
- Have pity on me!
- Prayers of the humble reach God
- Finished the race

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

What does boasting mean? (bragging, showing off, skiting)

How do people behave when they are boasting?

How do you feel when you have to listen to someone who boasts all the time?

Can you believe what they say? Is it good to be around them?

Jesus told this story of a tax collector and a Pharisee. Tax collectors collected money for the Roman rulers, often became rich because they cheated people. Most people despised them. Can you think of any other tax collectors that Jesus knew or became friends with? (the apostle Matthew – sometimes called Levi - and Zacchaeus)

Pharisees were holy people who kept lots of rules and laws and expected everyone else to keep them too. Did they impress Jesus? What do you think is wrong with the first prayer, and what is better about the second?

Which of the men in this story pleased God? How do you know?

What are the things that really matter to God?

Can you think of any situations in your own life like this? Is it difficult to stop finding fault with other people?

Act of Worship

Invite the children to kneel and pray a sorry prayer, like: “Lord, forgive me because I often do and say things that are wrong and hurt other people.”

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Jesus addressed the parable today to those who thought more highly of themselves than others, who believed that by following their stringent life of rules virtuously they would be assured of being acceptable to God. Pharisees were groups of very religious lay people who scrupulously observed the law and met regularly for prayer and fellowship. Tax collectors were despised in that day because of their widespread corruption. In Israel they carried the double stigma of also being in collusion with gentiles, the occupying Roman rulers, which made them ritually unclean. Jesus told parables that would connect his hearers with their own stories and knock them out of their complacency. All of us at some stage do and say things which turn us away from God or harm others. The self-congratulatory pride and arrogance shown by the Pharisee is contrasted with the humility of the tax collector who recognised his need for reconciliation with God. The setting for this story is the Temple in Jerusalem, the most sacred of places to the Jewish people where they could experience the presence of God. The ‘holy of holies’ at its centre could only be entered one day a year by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. Christian churches today are designed as meeting places to house the assembly of the people of God.

Reflection for Leaders

Are there ways that you consider yourself better than others? Impatience in queues can indicate an attitude of superiority. Recall some times when you have felt judged and also perhaps times that you have judged others. Our self-centred human condition causes us to turn from God. The place where we are able to connect again with God is in the humble recognition of our need for God’s forgiving and restoring love. What are some places where you experience the presence of God most profoundly? Where about you do you experience forgiveness and restoration? During this week you could make an effort to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation or go to your holy place and pray in the spirit of the tax collector, “God be merciful to me, a sinner”.

Liturgy Outline

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, we know that you have great love for us. Help us to admit our
mistakes and turn to your love and forgiveness. Amen

FIRST READING Sirach 35:12b-14, 16-17

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM

Psalm 34
The Lord hears the cry of the poor
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 18:9-14

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Let us bring our needs to God, strengthened by the teachings and filled
with faith and confidence:

- For the Church, that the prayers of all God's family around the world be united
as one voice ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a spirit of humility, seeing our worth in God's eyes not our own ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the people in our families, our schools, our community, that the choices
they make will be pleasing to God ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That people who are excluded or different from the norm are not made
victims of prejudice and judgment ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Merciful God, bless us and those for whom we pray, through Jesus
Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time**Green**

Jesus had a special love for people who turned from their lives of sin to repent and live the way that God wants them to. In today's reading Jesus meets a tax collector called Zacchaeus. Why are the people so shocked when Jesus says he wants to stay with him? Why do you think Jesus does this? Jesus is full of forgiveness and his love always helps us to make a fresh start.



Gospel

Luke 19:1-10

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus was going through Jericho, where a man named Zacchaeus lived. He was in charge of collecting taxes and was very rich.

Jesus was heading his way, and Zacchaeus wanted to see what he was like. But Zacchaeus was a short man and could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree. When Jesus got there, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, hurry down! I want to stay with you today."

Zacchaeus hurried down and gladly welcomed Jesus.

Everyone who saw this started grumbling, "This man Zacchaeus is a sinner! And Jesus is going home to eat with him."

Later that day Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "I will give half of my property to the poor. And I will now pay back four times as much to everyone I have ever cheated."

Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "Today you and your family have been saved, because you are a true son of Abraham. The Son of Man came to look for and to save people who are lost."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Wisdom 11:22-12:1

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF WISDOM

Our Lord, compared with you, the world is a speck of dust too light for the scales. And it quickly disappears like drops of morning dew.

You show mercy to everyone, and your power is absolute. You overlook our sins, so that we will turn to you.

You created everything, and you love it all. You would never make anything that you did not like.

Nothing would have lasted, unless you had wanted it to. Only what you commanded to last could have endured. Master, you love all who live, and you have pity on all of us, because everything is yours. Your eternal Spirit is in everything.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 145

Response:

**I WILL PRAISE YOUR NAME FOR EVER,
MY KING AND MY GOD.**

I will praise you, my God and King, and always honour your name.

I will praise you each day and always honour your name.

You are merciful, Lord! You are kind and patient and always loving.

You are good to everyone, and you take care of all your creation.

Our Lord, you keep your word and do everything you say.

When someone stumbles or falls, you give a helping hand.

Second Reading

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS

Brothers and sisters:

God chose you, and we keep praying that God will make you worthy of being his people. We pray for God's power to help you do all the good things that you hope to do and that your faith makes you want to do.

Then, because God and our Lord Jesus Christ are so kind, you will bring honour to the name of our Lord Jesus, and he will bring honour to you.

The word of the Lord.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle

Images from the Readings

- He wanted to see what Jesus was like
- People grumbled
- Seeking the lost
- God's great mercy and power
- God chose you

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Do you remember last week we talked about tax collectors and how they got rich by overcharging and cheating people? What can you tell me about Zacchaeus? (Chief tax collector in Jericho, rich, short man, heard about Jesus, wanted to see him)

Have you ever been too small to see something interesting? What did you do? What did Zacchaeus do to see above the crowd? How did the people show they were annoyed when Jesus greeted Zacchaeus and went home to his house? Why were they annoyed?

Do you think Jesus should have gone to his house? Why?

Zacchaeus didn't seem to care about cheating people at the beginning. Did he care at the end of the story?

What made the difference? (Jesus' love and acceptance caused Zacchaeus to turn back to God)

How did Zacchaeus show that he had changed? (he'd give half his property to the poor and pay back four times as much to those he cheated)

Have there been times in your life when you didn't care anymore? Did anything happen to change your mind?

Act of Worship

Just as Jesus reached out a hand of friendship and acceptance to Zacchaeus, we too can reach out and touch each others hand as our act of worship this week.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Zacchaeus was a person of considerable wealth and influence in Jericho, despite being looked down on by the religious leaders and disliked by the general population because of the dishonest practices of tax collectors. Zacchaeus' enthusiasm to see Jesus caused him to run ahead of the crowd and climb a tree – both actions rather undignified for someone of his status. So, although it is Jesus' initiative to invite himself to dinner, Zacchaeus has already prepared himself for public ridicule out of his desire to meet with him, and this enables his response to be immediate and joyful. Zacchaeus' offer to give half his wealth to the poor, and repay four-fold those he has cheated, shows the depth of his commitment to Jesus, and underlines the importance the early church placed on sharing possessions. Sharing a meal with someone established a relationship of mutual equality and respect. It was by doing this, and by calling Zacchaeus a 'son of Abraham' (a term reserved for holy people – those chosen by God) that Jesus gives a public declaration of Zacchaeus' worth.

Reflection for Leaders

The children might well be able to identify with Zacchaeus' lack of stature, but feeling insignificant can affect any one of us. Can you recall a time when you felt left out and overlooked? Have you ever considered why Zacchaeus wasn't reprimanded by Jesus for his dishonesty and greed? Have you ever been singled out for an unexpected acknowledgement or treat? How might a sense of acceptance change your attitudes? Zacchaeus' response to Jesus' invitation was immediate, joyful and completely life-changing. Have you ever felt that enthusiastic about an unexpected invitation? How did it change your relationship with the person who extended it? It can be hard to be enthusiastic when you are tired and jaded. Acknowledging and appreciating God's gift to ourselves can be challenging at these times. Take some quiet time to think about what gift God gives you and what your response to that could be. Try to be a bit extravagant and perhaps offer an unexpected invitation to someone who might be lonely or overlooked this week.

Liturgy Outline

Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you have chosen each one of us to be your children. Make
our hearts more loving and ready to forgive others just as you forgive
us. Amen

FIRST READING Wisdom 11:22 - 12:1
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 145
 I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 19:1-10
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: God of mercy and love, help be like you to the people we meet. We
bring our needs to you in prayer:

- For the Church, that it be a place of welcome, acceptance and fellowship for
all people no matter what they have been before ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all, like Zacchaeus, who have a real desire to meet Jesus, that they have
the courage to change their lives ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For an attitude of hospitality and welcome in our families, our schools, our
community ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the sick and insignificant in our community ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God you accept each of us just where we are. Shower your love on us
and all for whom we pray. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



In today's gospel the Sadducees wanted to trick Jesus with a difficult question. They were a group of priests who held the most important positions in the Jewish synagogue. They disagreed with most of Jesus' teachings and were annoyed that so many people were listening to him and believing what he told them.

Gospel

Luke 20:27-38

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

The Sadducees did not believe that people would rise to life after death. So some of them came to Jesus and said:

"Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and has no children, his brother should marry the widow. Their first son would then be thought of as the son of the dead brother. There were once seven brothers. The first one married, but died without having any children. The second one married his brother's widow, and he also died without having any children. The same thing happened to the third one. Finally, all seven brothers married that woman and died without having any children. At last the woman died. When God raises people from death, whose wife will this woman be? All seven brothers had married her."

Jesus answered, "The people in this world get married. But in the future world no one who is worthy to rise from death will either marry or die. They will be like the angels and will be God's children, because they have been raised to life.

"In the story about the burning bush, Moses clearly shows that people will live again. He said, 'The Lord is the God worshipped by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' So the Lord is not the God of the dead, but of the living. This means that anyone is alive as far as God is concerned."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14

A READING FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF MACCABEES

King Antiochus arrested seven Jewish brothers and their mother. He had them beaten with heavy whips and tried to make them eat the meat of pigs, which was against their religion. But one of them spoke up and said, "Why are you torturing us like this? We will die before we disobey the laws of our ancestors!" When the second brother was almost dead, he said to the king, "You're cruel! You can kill us, but the King of this world will raise us back to life. And then we will live forever, because we died, rather than disobey his laws." When he died, they started torturing the third brother. They told him, "Stick out your tongue!" Right away he stuck out his tongue and bravely stretched out his arms as well. He had a lot of courage and said, "God in heaven gave these to me. But I will give them up to obey his laws. I know that he will give them back." The king and all his troops were amazed at the young man's courage. Here was someone willing to suffer. After he was dead, the king's troops beat and tortured the fourth brother in the same way. But just before he died, he said, "We are willing for you to kill us, because God has promised to raise us to life. But you have no hope of being raised to life."

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 17

Response:

**LORD, WHEN YOUR GLORY APPEARS,
MY JOY WILL BE FULL**

I am innocent, Lord! Won't you listen as I pray and beg for help? I am honest! Please hear my prayer.

I have followed you without ever stumbling. I pray to you, God, because you will help me. Listen, and answer my prayer!

Protect me as you would your very own eyes; hide me in the shadow of your wings. I am innocent, Lord, and I will see your face! When I awake, all I want is to see you are you are.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, two candles, cross or crucifix, small book to record the names of relatives or friends who have died.

Images from the Readings

- Did not believe in eternal life
- Future world
- God of the living
- Prepared to die rather than sin
- Wonderful hope

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Are there any questions that you have never found the answer to? (let children state their questions without answering them – maybe ask some of your own as well)

There were some very clever men in Jesus' time who did not believe in eternal life with God. They were annoyed that the people were listening to and believing what Jesus was saying. So they asked him a trick question to catch him out. Have you ever been embarrassed in class when you haven't been able to answer a question?

Jesus explained about death to them. He said that after we die our life with God is different from our life here, death doesn't separate us from God.

Have you ever had someone you care about die? Do you miss them? If you had an opportunity is there anything you would like to say to them?

Today in our act of worship we will pray for them.

Act of Worship

Get children to record the name(s) of those family and friends who have died, in the book. Light a candle and say this prayer for them, "Loving God, we pray for our family and friends who have died. We miss them, but know that they will be very happy with you. May they rest in peace. Amen"

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The first reading detailing the grisly martyrdom of the Jewish brothers shows the intensity of their commitment to the law and their faith in the life to come. This reading might be difficult for some children, although the message of resurrection faith is the important link with the gospel. The Sadducees were a group of conservative priestly Jews who held the highest positions in the synagogue. They held to the teachings of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible) and rejected the idea of resurrection and eternal life. The hypothetical question they were asking Jesus about marital status in the afterlife was designed to embarrass him in front of his followers rather than being a sincere question expecting a genuine response. Jesus' answer turns the theological contest in a different direction – God is God of the living, not the dead; this implies that the ancestors are somehow still alive. Death does not sever the union that covenant forges. We are invited into the future with the question of resurrection and the way we are to live in anticipation of it.

Reflection for Leaders

The end of the liturgical year is a time the Church traditionally remembers those who have died. Christians believe that death is not the end, and does not break the bonds forged in life. Christian funerals look back to baptism and forward to the resurrection. What experiences of the deaths of family members or friends have you had? What emotions or questions arise in you when you think of death, particularly your own death? Does your faith in Jesus Christ have a bearing on this? What hope does Jesus offer you in the gospel today?

You can leave a record of the readings and hymns you would like at your funeral, and other details or decisions that might need to be known or dealt with by those left behind.

If there is someone in your own life who has died leaving unresolved conflict or hurt, there is an opportunity for you to resolve these through prayer. We can pray for anyone in the family of God, alive or dead.

What images do you have of the life of the world to come?

This week make a gesture of reconciliation towards someone.

Liturgy Outline

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

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To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, Amen

FIRST READING 2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 17

Lord, when your glory appears, my joy will be full
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 2 Thessalonians 1:16 – 3:5

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 20:27-38

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: God of the living, we have heard your words and now turn to you in faith
with all our needs:

- For all God's family, the Church, that she continues to have the courage to witness to the truth ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For thanksgiving for God's gifts ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the people in our families, our schools, our community, that we have a sure hope in God's promises ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all those who have lost someone close to them and are grieving, that they find comfort ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: Eternal God, to you all people are alive. Console us with your truth and your comfort. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Green



Jesus expects each of us to share his message with others. He gives us the Holy Spirit to give us strength, courage and wisdom so that we can do this. What does Jesus mean when he talks about the stones being knocked down? Jesus is talking about the end of time, but he tells us not to be afraid. He will remember our faithfulness and reward us at the end of time.

Gospel

Luke 21:5-19

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Some people were talking about the beautiful stones used to build the temple and about the gifts that had been placed in it. Jesus said, "Do you see these stones? The time is coming when not one of them will be left in place. They will all be knocked down."

Some people asked, "Teacher, when will all this happen? How can we know when these things are about to take place?"

Jesus replied, "Don't be fooled by all those men who will come and claim to be me. They will say, 'I am Christ!' and 'Now is the time!' But don't follow them. When you hear about wars and riots, don't be afraid. These things will have to happen first, but that is not the end. "Nations will go to war against one another, and kingdoms will attack each other. There will be great earthquakes, and in many places people will starve to death and suffer terrible diseases. All sorts of frightening things will be seen in the sky.

"Before all this happens, you will be arrested and punished. You will be tried in the Jewish meeting places and put in jail. Because of me you will be placed on trial before kings and governors. But this will be your chance to tell about your faith.

"Don't worry about what you will say to defend yourselves. I will give you the wisdom to know what to say. None of your enemies will be able to oppose you or to say that you are wrong.

"You will be betrayed by your own parents, brothers, family, and friends. Some of you will even be killed. Because of me you will be hated by everyone. But don't worry! You will be saved by being faithful to me."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Malachi 3:19-20

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET MALACHI

The Lord says this: "That day will surely come! It will be like a red-hot furnace, and its flames will burn up proud and evil people, as though they were straw. The Lord All-Powerful has promised that not a branch or root will be left.

"But if you honour my name, justice will shine like the sun, and its rays will bring healing."

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 98

Response: **THE LORD COMES TO RULE THE EARTH WITH JUSTICE**

Make music for him on harps. Play beautiful melodies!

Sound the trumpets and horns and celebrate with joyful songs for our Lord and King!

Command the ocean to roar with all of its creatures, and the earth to shout with all of its people. Order the rivers to clap their hands, and all of the hills to sing together.

Let them worship the Lord! He is coming to judge everyone on the earth, and he will be honest and fair.

Second Reading

2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS

Brothers and sisters:

You surely know that you should follow our example. We didn't waste our time loafing, and we didn't accept food from anyone without paying for it. We didn't want to be a burden to any of you, so night and day we worked as hard as we could

We had the right not to work, but we wanted to set an example for you. We also gave you the rule that if you don't work, you don't eat.

Now we learn that some of you just loaf around and won't do any work, except the work of a busybody. So, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, we ask and beg these people to settle down and start working for a living.

The word of the Lord.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Green cloth, Lectionary, candle, a stone for each child

Images from the Readings

- Beautiful stones knocked down
- Wars, riots, earthquakes, diseases
- Don't be afraid
- Saved by being faithful to Jesus
- Don't be a burden on others

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. some things only last for a short time. Can you think about things that might only last for a day, or a week, or a year? what might last longer? Will anything last forever? What sort of things would you like to last forever? Have you ever wanted something to be over quickly?

Jesus tells us today that no matter what happens to us we will never be abandoned. There is a special time that Jesus is talking about, do you know what it is called? (The time of his return in glory, the 'second coming', end times)

Do we know when this will be? (No-one know the day or the hour) But Jesus expects us to live faithfully every day until that time comes.

Is it easy to live faithfully like this when we are suffering?

do you know of anyone who lived faithfully in really difficult times? (Martyrs and saints) Why do we remember them? (Their example is an inspiration to us to follow)

What things would you like to be remembered for?

Act of Worship

Invite each child to take a stone from the prayer focus to take home and remember how to be strong in hard times. Teach them the Serenity Prayer: "Lord give me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things that I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Background to the Readings for Leaders

This gospel was written after the destruction of the Temple in AD70. at this time the early Christians were being forced to leave the synagogues, and would have been very anxious about what lay ahead for them. There were amazing reports at this time of ordinary people, fishermen and other workmen, who were preaching with great power. Despite not being educated in theology, philosophy or rhetoric, they were speaking with irresistible wisdom and eloquence.

Many people over the years have made specific predictions about the end of the world. Jesus warns that they are not to be trusted. Today's gospel uses symbolic 'apocalyptic' language to describe the end of time. This language is not meant to be taken literally but to express the insight that life is characterised by struggle and conflict. It models a way of coming to terms with the powerlessness, suffering and death which are an inevitable part of our existence but which were especially apparent during the persecution of the early church. In our struggle to deal with the pressures and difficulties of life we can draw on the promise of Jesus and experience his peace.

Reflection for Leaders

Many times Jesus promises the gift of his peace to his faithful followers. This peace does not avoid challenge or conflict, or seek its own comfort, but responds to the demands of the gospel - endurance in faith and sharing the good news. Can you reflect on some of the upheavals in your life? Have there been times during which all you have been able to do is endure? What are the things that have supported you through times of struggle and difficulty? The gospel today calls us to a very specific response. In what ways have you begun to join in the building up of the Kingdom of God? Have you faced opposition over your faith? during this coming week be aware of being cheerful as you face the tedious tasks in your life with greater faith - particularly those things that you cannot change.

Liturgy Outline

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, we thank you for the gift of faith. Help us to share it with
everyone we meet. Amen

FIRST READING Malachi 3:19-20

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 98

The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 21:5-19

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Having listened to God's word, let us confidently turn to God for what
we need in the church and the community:

- For all God's family, the Church, so that we may cheerfully share the good
news with everyone we meet ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of endurance in all our sufferings ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the people in our families, our schools, our community, for patience and
perseverance in living God's way every day ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the gift of discernment, to believe Jesus and not be afraid when people
try to scare us with stories of the end of the world ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of all ages. May your kingdom come. Help us to be faithful always
to the teachings of your Son. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Christ the King

White

This is the last Sunday of the Liturgical year, and we celebrate the special feast of Christ the King. When Jesus was on the cross many people mocked and jeered him, and a sign was put up saying that he was the 'King of the Jews'. We know that Jesus was not a king the way that people expected a king to be because his kingdom is not of this world. What does this mean to us as his followers?



Gospel

Luke 23:35-43

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

While the crowd stood there watching Jesus, the leaders insulted him by saying, "He saved others. Now he should save himself, if he really is God's chosen Messiah!"

The soldiers made fun of Jesus and brought him some wine. They said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!"

Above him was a sign that said, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals hanging there also insulted Jesus by saying, "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and save us!"

But the other criminal told the first one off, "Don't you fear God? Aren't you getting the same punishment as this man? We got what was coming to us, but he didn't do anything wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into power!"

Jesus replied, "I promise that today you will be with me in paradise."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

2 Samuel 5:1-3

A READING FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

Israel's leaders met with David at Hebron and said, "We are your close relatives. Even when Saul was king, you led our nation in battle. And the Lord promised that someday you would rule Israel and take care of us like a shepherd."

During the meeting, David made an agreement with the leaders, and asked the Lord to be their witness. Then the leaders poured olive oil on David's head to show that he was now the king of Israel.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 47

Response:

GOD IS KING OF ALL THE EARTH

All of you nations, clap your hands and shout joyful praises to God. The Lord Most High is fearsome, the ruler of all the earth.

God is ruler of all the earth! Praise God with songs. God rules the nations from his sacred throne.

Second Reading

Colossians 1:15-18

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

Brothers and sisters:

Christ is exactly like God, who cannot be seen. He is the first-born Son, superior to all creation. Everything was created by him, everything in heaven and on earth, everything seen and unseen, including all forces and powers, and all rulers and authorities. All things were created by God's Son, and everything was made for him.

God's Son was before all else, and by him everything is held together.

He is the head of his body, which is the church. He is the very beginning, the first to be raised from death, so that he would be above all others.

The word of the Lord.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White and gold cloths intertwined, Lectionary, candle, crucifix with a gold paper crown, decorate with flowers and ribbons.

Images from the Readings

- Death on the cross
- Mocking by soldiers
- The King of the Jews
- The promise of paradise
- Shepherd King
- First to be raised

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. What do you know about Kings and royalty? How are kings usually treated? Why was Jesus treated so differently from a usual king? What was his throne; his crown? Have you ever seen a crucifix with the little inscription INRI above the figure? That stands for the Latin words which say “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” These are the words Pontius Pilate wrote.

Who recognised that he really was a king?

What did Jesus promise the good criminal? This is what he promises all those who believe in him.

So what does it mean to us to be followers of Jesus?

This feast today is a very special day in the church’s year. It is the last Sunday of the Liturgical year (if you have a liturgical calendar you could show the children the different seasons and colours and show them where this feast is, just before Advent)

What are some of the jobs that Jesus has given us this year? (love people who hate us; be generous with what we have; saying sorry; helping others; not always taking the best of everything; not wanting to be first – any others?)

Act of Worship

Invite the children to pledge their allegiance to Christ the King.

“Jesus, you are our brother and our King. With your help we promise to follow you, to listen to your words and to build up your kingdom”

Background to the Readings for Leaders

This final scene of Luke’s gospel for the Liturgical year, Jesus forgives those who have rejected and punished him. Doing so, his mercy transcends time and his forgiveness extends to all who have rejected him throughout the ages. The inscription INRI posted by Pilate on the cross stands for the Latin ‘Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews’. Pilate is not the only one to acknowledge his sovereignty. At the moment of crucifixion, one of the criminals he is being executed with recognises that he does have a kingdom to enter and begs to be remembered. The promise of that remembrance is offered at that very moment and the kingship of Christ is revealed to all. Paradise was literally a beautiful enclosed garden, filled with fountains and lush with vegetation. It became an image of the joy and delight of Eden, and an image of heaven. Jesus as King is symbolic. Jesus himself, although announcing the kingdom of God, rejected all attempts to make himself an ordinary king, but the followers of Jesus acknowledge the ultimate authority over all his followers. The throne of Christ the King is a cross, and his crown, thorns.

Reflection for Leaders

The fascination of people for royalty is endemic in our society. Why do the stories of the royal family hold such a fascination for us? You might like to look at some representations of Christ as King - Eastern tradition icons, art books, internet, etc have many such depictions. Do you find the image of Jesus as a king to be helpful for you? As you reflect on the readings today, who among those surrounding Jesus in this gospel do you identify with? Where have you seen or experienced Jesus’ forgiveness? Watch ‘The Passion’ or sing the Taize chant, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” this week. In the spirit of the gospel, forgive a wrong done to you during the week.

Liturgy Outline

Christ the King

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, you sent your son Jesus to share the good news of your
kingdom with all the world. May your love reign in our hearts always.
Amen

FIRST READING 2 Samuel 5:1-3
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 47
 God is king of all the earth
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(if included)* Colossians 1:15-18
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 23:35-43
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel
according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: Let us bring our prayers to God, knowing that God loves to hear the
prayers of children:

- That the Church will be a true shepherd to all God's people, caring and loving
in her leadership, and faithful to the teachings of Jesus ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who have done wrong, that they have the gift of repentance and
come to recognise Jesus as King and Saviour ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For the people in our families, our schools, our community, that we may treat
each other with respect and dignity ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who are close to death, that they may be comforted by the
promise of paradise for those who love Jesus and acknowledge his kingship
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of love and mercy, you sent Jesus to be our King. We bring our
prayers to you through Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Saviour, our King.
All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul

Red



This Sunday we celebrate the special feast of Saints Peter and Paul. It was through them that the Church first received the faith, by Peter's witness and Paul's preaching. Together they were the greatest leaders of the early Church.

Gospel

Matthew 16:13-19

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

When Jesus and his disciples were near the town of Caesarea Philippi, he asked them, "What do people say about the Son of Man?"

The disciples answered, "some people say you are John the Baptist or maybe Elijah or Jeremiah or some other prophet."

Then Jesus asked them, "But who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter spoke up, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus told him: "Simon, son of Johan, you are blessed! You didn't discover this on your own. It was shown to you by my Father in heaven. So I will call you Peter, which means 'a rock.' On this rock I will build my Church, and death itself will not have any power over it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and God in heaven will allow whatever you allow on earth. But he will not allow anything that you don't allow."

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

King Herod caused terrible suffering for some members of the church. he ordered soldiers to cut off the head of James, the brother of John. When Herod saw that this pleased the Jewish people, he had Peter arrested during the Feast of Thin Bread. He put Peter in jail and ordered four squads of soldiers to guard him. herod planned to put him on trial in public after the feast.

While Peter was being kept in jail, the church never stopped praying to God for him.

The night before Peter was to be put on trial, he was asleep and bound by two chains. A soldier was guarding him on each side, and two other soldiers were guarding the entrance to the jail. Suddenly an angel from the Lord appeared, and light flashed around in the cell. The angel poked Peter in the side and woke him up. Then he said, "Quick! Get up!"

The chains fell off his hands, and the angel said, "get dressed and put on your sandals." Peter did what he was told. Then the angel said, "Now put on your coat and follow me." Peter left with the angel, but he thought everything was only a dream. They went past the two groups of soldiers, and when they came to the iron gate to the city, it opened by itself. They went out and were going along the street, when all at once the angel disappeared.

Peter now realised wht had happened, and he said, "I am certain that the Lord sent his angel to rescue me from Herod and from everything the Jewish leaders planned to do to me."

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 34

Response:

THE LORD SET ME FREE FROM ALL MY FEARS

Honour the Lord with me! Celebrate his great name.

I asked the Lord for help, and he saved me from all my fears

Keep your eyes on the Lord!

You will shine like the sun and never blush with shame.

I was a nobody, but I prayed, and the Lord saved me from all my troubles.

If you honour the Lord, his angel will protect you.

Discover for yourself that the Lord is kind.

Come to him for protection, and you will be glad.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

Red cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a statue or an image of St Peter and St Paul.

Images from the Readings

- Honour the Lord
- His angel will protect you
- On this rock I will build my Church
- Keys to the kingdom of heaven

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. It is a good opportunity this week to teach about St Peter and St Paul, their lives and their example. You may like to use some of the following questions.

Before Peter became a great leader in the Church what did he do? (He was a fisherman). Did Peter always do the right thing? (No - sometimes he made mistakes - Peter's faith failed him after he began to walk on the water, he denied Jesus three times before Jesus was put to trial). What does this tell us about who God chooses to use to achieve great things for him.... He doesn't always choose people powerful by human standards, nor does he choose perfect people who've never done anything wrong (we've all made mistakes) but he does choose people who truly desire to do the will of God and he gives these people all they need.

Who knows what St Paul did before he became an apostle? (He was a religious leader who hated the Christians and persecuted them). What was it that made Paul change his life so drastically? (If the children are unfamiliar with the story of Paul's conversion recount it briefly now). What does this tell us about how God treats those who have done serious wrong? (He is willing to forgive anyone who is sorry for what they have done wrong and he will even lead them on to do great things for him).

We may never be great and powerful by the world's standards, we might never become the Prime Minister, or the boss of a big company, but if we listen to God and do what he asks, we, like St Peter and St Paul can achieve great things for God. Without St Peter and St Paul the Church never would have grown as it has, maybe one day you will be a leader in the Church or take the message of Jesus to people in foreign lands like St Peter and St Paul.

Act of Worship

Ask the children to write a prayer asking St Peter or St Paul to pray for a special intention. eg St Peter please pray for my Mum that she will get better soon. Encourage them to pray this prayer every night this coming week.

Background to the Solemnity for Leaders

A solemnity is a principal day in the life of the Church, and holds the highest rank in the liturgical calendar. A solemnity eclipses all other feasts and memorials, and when a solemnity falls on a Sunday it replaces the ordinary celebration of the day.

The earliest "Roman" calendar we have, dates back to 354AD and mentions the feast of Saints Peter and Paul being celebrated on 29 June. It appears this feast spread rapidly, firstly in the churches of Africa and then throughout Christendom becoming a universal feast. For hundreds of years then the feast of Sts Peter and Paul has been celebrated, numerous churches have been built in their honour, and yet in their life and ministry the two saints were not involved that closely. Why then are their memorials celebrated together? It is because Peter and Paul are considered the two pillars of the Church. Peter - the shepherd of the flock who governed from his 'chair' in Rome, & Paul the missionary and 'Apostle to the nations' who travelled all over the world founding communities of faith and continuing to encourage them by his letters and visits. These two men were the greatest leaders of the early church.

Reflection for Leaders

This solemnity reminds us that the diversity of vocations and ministries found in the Church need not impede our communion, but in fact serve to strengthen it. Peter and Paul had contrasting charisms, but both were at the service of the same gospel, and they illustrate to us the nature of the Church, at the same time diverse, and yet unified.

Spend some time this week reflecting on your different gifts and talents.

How are you using these in the service of the Church?

Is God challenging you to use your gifts in some new or different way at this time?

Spend some time in prayer asking for the faith of St Peter and the courage of St Paul, that you may be faithful to God's call on your life.

Liturgy Outline

Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, today you give us the joy of celebrating the feast of the apostles
Peter and Paul. Through them your Church first received the faith.
Keep us true to their teaching. Amen

FIRST READING Acts 12:1-11
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 34
 The Lord set me free from all my fears
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Matthew 16:13-19
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: With hope and faith we come to our compassionate God with all our
needs

- That the Church, built on Peter's faith and formed by Paul's preaching may
be a light to all people and show them the way to God.
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That those who take the Gospel to foreign lands may have courage and
strength.
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That those who help the poor, the grieving and the lonely may be encouraged
and persevere.
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who have died, that they may have eternal life with Christ.
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of compassion, give us the faith and courage of Peter
and Paul and help us in our own way to carry the word of God
to others. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

*The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the
gifts.*

Readings

Feast of the Transfiguration

White

Today we celebrate the Transfiguration, the moment when Peter James and John saw Jesus' glory. It left them amazed, and was a sign to help them through the upcoming days when Jesus was to be crucified.



Gospel

Luke 9:28b-36

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Jesus took Peter, John, and James with him and went up on a mountain to pray.

While he was praying, his face changed, and his clothes became shining white. Suddenly Moses and Elijah were there speaking with him. They appeared in heavenly glory and talked about all that Jesus' death in Jerusalem would mean.

Peter and the other two disciples had been sound asleep. All at once they woke up and saw how glorious Jesus was. They also saw the two men who were with him.

Moses and Elijah were about to leave, when Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But Peter did not know what he was talking about.

While Peter was still speaking, a shadow from a cloud passed over them, and they were frightened as the cloud covered them. From the cloud a voice spoke, "This is my chosen Son. Listen to what he says!"

After the voice had spoken, Peter, John and James saw only Jesus. For some time they kept quiet and did not say anything about what they had seen.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

2 Peter 1:16-19

A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF PETER

Brothers and sisters: When we told you about the power and the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, we were not telling clever stories that someone had made up. But with our own eyes we saw his true greatness.

God, our great and wonderful Father, truly honoured him by saying, "This is my own dear Son, and I am pleased with him." We were there with Jesus on the holy mountain and heard this voice speak from heaven.

All of this makes us even more certain that what the prophets said is true. So you should pay close attention to their message, as you would to a lamp shining in some dark place. You must keep on paying attention until daylight comes and the morning star rises in your hearts.

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 97

Response:

THE LORD IS KING

THE MOST HIGH OVER ALL THE EARTH

The Lord is King!

Tell the earth to celebrate
and all islands to shout.

Dark clouds surround him,
and his throne is supported
by justice and fairness.

Mountains melt away like wax
in the presence of the Lord
of all the earth.

The heavens announce,
"The Lord brings justice!"
Everyone sees God's glory.

The Lord rules the whole earth,
and he is more glorious
than all the false gods.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a picture depicting the transfiguration.

Images from the Readings

- Alone
- So frightened
- Listen to him
- Son of Man
- The Beloved

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.

Who went up to the top of the mountain with Jesus?

What happened while they were there? What happens when the sun shines in our eyes? (We're dazzled - this is a bit like the experience the disciples had).

What was it that God said to Peter, James and John?

Help the children to see that in this story Jesus is showing the disciples (as well as us) something of who he really is, and sharing an important message with us. "This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him."

Ask the children some of the things that Jesus has said to us - try to help them remember specific teachings rather than generalisations eg. Pray for those who are cruel to you (Lk 6:28); Treat others as you want to be treated (Luke 6:31); Forgive others (Mk 11:25-26); Give generously not because you'll be paid back (Lk 14:12-14); Love each other as Christ loved us (Jn 15:12).

If we really think about who Jesus is - the Son of God - then we will realise that what he asks us to do is very important, we should listen to him and live our lives in the way he asks us to.

Act of Worship

Ask the children to close their eyes and sit quietly. Once they have settled read the following slowly and deliberately: "Imagine you are going for a walk up in the mountains... its a beautiful day... as you approach the top of the mountain you see a tree... as you get closer to the tree you realise there is a man sitting under the tree looking out over the countryside... as you approach the man, he invites you to sit down beside him, he introduces himself, his name is Jesus... Quietly, in you mind, have a conversation with Jesus, tell him what is on your mind, perhaps what you are excited about at the moment, or anxious about. PAUSE Listen now to what Jesus wants to say to you. PAUSE. Quietly, when you are ready, open your eyes.

Background to the Feast of the Transfiguration for Leaders

In the Hebrew scriptures high mountains are seen as holy places, we remember the Ten Commandments were given to Moses on Mt Sinai, and that Elijah heard the voice of God on Mt Horeb. So the fact that it was on a high mountain that the transfiguration occurred marks it as a moment of significance. The presence of Moses - often associated with the law - and Elijah - a prophet, can be seen to signal that part of the revelation to the disciples was that Jesus was the fulfilment of both the law and the prophets. It also revealed to the disciples something of the experience of the Lord, come into his glory at the end of his Easter journey. This fleeting moment of revelation leaves the three disciples amazed and in awe, yet they are still unable to grasp the full significance of what they have seen. These three disciples are also the three that witness Jesus' agony in the garden before his arrest and crucifixion, yet despite all that Jesus had told them, and all they had seen, they still did not understand. It is not until after the resurrection that they remember what happened on the mountain, and it is only then that they are able to fearlessly bear witness to the truth that was revealed to them.

Reflection for Leaders

In his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI writes "being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction". That person is Jesus Christ who is placed before us on this Feast of the Transfiguration.

Take some time to reflect on your Christian journey.

What have been some times of significant encounter for you?

Was there ever a time when moved by an experience of prayer, a reading from scripture, or an experience of the sacraments, you felt drawn to make a change in your life, to move in a new direction?

In the difficult moments of your life what scriptures or faith experiences sustain you and give you hope?

Liturgy Outline

Feast of the Transfiguration

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, as we listen to the account of the transfiguration today, help
us to see the glory of your Son and help us to give him a special place
in our lives. Amen

FIRST READING 2 Peter 1:16-19
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 97
 The Lord is King, the Most High over all the earth
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Luke 9:28b-36
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: Let us bring our prayers to God.

- For the Church, that it will always be a place where people can experience the power and love of Jesus.
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For people who have experienced the devastation of a natural disaster, that their sadness be transformed into joy through the generosity of others.
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For those who help the poor, may their love and justice transform the lives of those they meet.
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For all of us who have heard the message of Jesus, that through living out what he has taught us, we might be a light to the world.
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of power and might, we ask you to hear and answer our
prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**White**

God chose Mary to be the mother of his son Jesus. What was so special about Mary that she was chosen above all others to give birth to Jesus? How did Mary show that she had such great faith? She was always ready and willing to do whatever God wanted. Because she was so special and sinless she was taken up body and soul to be with Jesus in heaven – this is what 'Assumption' means. What qualities of Mary would we like to grow in ourselves?



Gospel

Luke 1:39-56

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

"He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

"He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

And Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home.

The gospel of the Lord.

First Reading

Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The door to God's temple in heaven was then opened, and the sacred chest could be seen inside the temple. Something important appeared in the sky. It was a woman whose clothes were the sun. The moon was under her feet, and a crown made of twelve stars was on her head. She was about to give birth, and she was crying because of the great pain.

Something else appeared in the sky. It was a huge red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and a crown on each of its seven heads. With its tail, it dragged a third of the stars from the sky and threw them down to the earth. Then the dragon turned towards the woman, because it wanted to eat her child as soon as it was born.

The woman gave birth to a son, who would rule all nations with an iron rod. The boy was snatched away. He was taken to God and placed on his throne. The woman ran into the desert to a place that God had prepared for her.

Then I heard a voice from heaven shout, "Our God has shown his saving power, and his kingdom has come! God's own Chosen One has shown his authority.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 45

Response:

**THE QUEEN STANDS AT YOUR RIGHT HAND
ARRAYED IN GOLD**

The daughters of kings are among your loved ones.
On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir.
Listen, O daughter, give ear to my words:
forget your own people and your father's house.

So will the king desire your beauty:
He is your lord, pay homage to him
They are escorted amid gladness and joy:
they pass within the palace of the king.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, candle, a statue or picture of Mary

Images from the Readings

- Mary set out with haste
- Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit
- My soul magnifies the Lord
- All generations will call me blessed
- Mary remained three months

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. What does this story tell us about Mary? (that she was blessed and a woman of faith, that she cared for and helped other people even when that meant she had to go out of her way)

What other special qualities do we know about Mary?

Knowing these things, what should we do about them (imitate them)

Mary teaches each of us how to be a follower of Jesus, and we know that she is in heaven because she was a true person of faith, the mother of Jesus. This feast, the Assumption, is a special day in our Church year, called a Holy Day of Obligation. Our Church teaches that because Mary was so holy and sinless, that she was taken up into heaven body and soul to be with Jesus forever.

What special prayer or song do you know that recalls this gospel today? (Hail Mary, The Rosary, The Magnificat)

Act of Worship

Sing “The Magnificat” or teach the children the “Hail Mary”

“Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen”

Background to the Readings for Leaders

God has already been active in the lives of the two women who meet in today’s gospel. Elizabeth, a kinswoman of Mary, has conceived a child in her old age by the grace of God. The journey that Mary undertakes to go to her would have been arduous and difficult, from Nazareth in the north, to the hills of Judea in the south. Both women are carrying children who are destined to play important roles in God’s plan of salvation. Elizabeth already knows the greater role that Mary plays, and her greeting affirms this. Mary’s prayer, known as the Magnificat, points away from herself towards God for whom nothing is impossible. The feast of the Assumption was declared dogma in 1950, but belief in this action of God has been part of Church tradition since around 500AD. The way that the Church has honoured and revered Mary has changed over the years.

Reflection for Leaders

Mary has always been upheld by the Church as the first model of discipleship. By her heartfelt ‘Yes’ to God, she perfectly co-operated with God’s plan. What qualities do you see in Mary that speak to you of discipleship? What Marian devotions are expressed today? Do you know some of the official Titles given to Mary by the Church? What image do they present to you of who Mary was? In today’s gospel, both Mary and Elizabeth have conceived as a result of the promise of God. Promises can carry power. Reflect on the promises that have been made to you in your life. How have these been kept or broken? What about promises you have made to others?

Do you recognise ways God has honoured you with promises made to you? In what ways in your life do you proclaim the greatness of God? This week reflect on some of the things that God has done for you, and find someone who would appreciate a visit from you.

Liturgy Outline

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
Celebration of the Word

To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: Loving God, you chose Mary to be mother of your Son, Jesus. Help
us to say yes to what you ask of us, just as Mary did.
Amen

FIRST READING Revelation 11:19; 12:1-6a, 10ab

PSALM Psalm 45
 The Queen stands at your right hand, arrayed in gold
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL

Luke 1:39-56

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:

Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose your own according to the age and experience of the children)

Leader: With hopeful hearts, let us come to God with all our needs:

- That our church always teaches her people to pray, to trust God, and not give up ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we are learn to notice and think of other people and pray for their needs...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- For a good attitude to God even when we don't understand everything, that our prayers will be pleasing to God and help our faith to grow ...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That we learn to be persistent and confident in our prayer...
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer

Leader: God of love, look with kindness on us and hear our prayers.
We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ

All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

Readings

Solemnity of All Saints

White



The feast of All Saints is a remembrance of all those men and women who have lived heroic gospel-inspired lives and who have been recognised by the Church. This feast reminds us of our ultimate goal - to be with God.

Gospel

Matthew 5:1-12b

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the side of a mountain and sat down.

Jesus' disciples gathered around him, and he taught them:

"God blesses those people who depend only on him. They belong to the kingdom of heaven!

God blesses those people who grieve. They will find comfort!

God blesses those people who are humble. The earth will belong to them!

God blesses those people who want to obey him more than to eat or drink. They will be given what they want!

God blesses those people who are merciful. They will be treated with mercy!

God blesses those people whose hearts are pure. They will see him!

God blesses those people who make peace. They will be called his children!

God blesses those people who are treated badly for doing right. They belong to the kingdom of heaven.

God will bless you when people insult you, mistreat you, and tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of me.

Be happy and excited! You will have a great reward in heaven.

The gospel of the Lord

First Reading

Revelation 7:9-10

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION

I, John, saw a large crowd with more people than could be counted. They were from every race, tribe, nation, and language, and they stood before the throne and before the Lamb. They wore white robes and held palm branches in their hands, as they shouted, "Our God, who sits upon the throne, has the power to save his people, and so does the Lamb."

The word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 24

Response:

**LORD, THIS IS THE PEOPLE
THAT LONGS TO SEE YOUR FACE**

The earth and everything on it
belong to the Lord.

The world and its people belong to him.

The Lord placed it all
on the oceans and the rivers.

Who may climb the Lord's hill
or stand in his holy temple.

Only those who do right for the right reasons,
and don't worship idols
or tell lies under oath.

The Lord God, who saves them,
will bless and reward them,
because they worship and serve
the God of Jacob.

Preparatory Material

Suggested Focus

White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a statue or picture of your parish saint if you have one, or of any other saints important to your parish or area.

Images from the Readings

- Large crowd before the throne
- God blesses
- They belong to the kingdom of heaven
- They will be treated with mercy
- They will be called his children

Discussion Points

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow each child the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. Then begin a general discussion, building on these responses, perhaps using some prepared questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas. Jesus gave his followers the gift of peace. Do you know what peace is? (quietness, calmness, not having trouble)

The peace that Jesus gave to his followers was special. What was special about it? (It came from being filled with the Holy Spirit, this peace is better than a feeling we might try to make ourselves feel)

Jesus offers this peace to anybody who decides to follow him. How do we come to know this peace? (Pray)

When is a good time during the day to spend some peaceful time with God? (Encourage the children to share times that are peaceful in their day)

Why is it important to make time to spend peacefully with God?

When we spend time quietly with God, without distractions and noise, we can speak to him and listen to what he is saying in our hearts. Then we will know that special peace that Jesus offers to us, we will be filled with the spirit of God.

Act of Worship

The Litany of the Saints is a prayer asking many particular saints to pray for us. It is most commonly heard at the Easter Vigil and at Ordination Ceremonies, but can also be used at other times. Pray a this shortened version with the Children.

<i>Leader</i>	<i>Children</i>
Lord Have Mercy	<i>Lord Have Mercy</i>
Christ Have Mercy	<i>Christ Have Mercy</i>
Lord Have Mercy	<i>Lord Have Mercy</i>
Holy Mary	<i>Pray for us</i>

St Michael	<i>Pray for us</i>
St John the Baptist	<i>Pray for us</i>
St Peter	<i>Pray for us</i>
St Vincent de Paul	<i>Pray for us</i>
St Dominic	<i>Pray for us</i>
St Agnes	<i>Pray for us</i>
St Therese	<i>Pray for us</i>
St Maximilian Kolbe	<i>Pray for us</i>
Blessed Mary MacKillop	<i>Pray for us</i>
All holy men and women	<i>Pray for us</i>

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Communion with Mary and the Saints is an important part of today's liturgy. As early as the fourth century the saints were commemorated in the Eucharistic Prayer. At first there was commemoration of Martyrs from the local area and others who were particularly famous. Later, after the time of persecutions had ended Saints who were not martyrs were added to the list. Catalogues of these saints were drawn up and were intended to be universal. These catalogues were called martyrologies, and included names, dates and details of the saints' lives. Some monasteries today, still read daily from the martyrologies.

The first record of a feast of All Saints is found in the fifth century in some Eastern Churches. It has been celebrated on three different dates, but was fixed on 1 November by Pope Gregory IV in the ninth century. From that time on it spread rapidly. Although at times there has been confusion about the Catholic devotion to the saints, this feast actually centres on the adoration of God. As depicted in this week's reading from the Book of Revelation while we celebrate the liturgy of All Saints here on earth, the saints themselves participate in the heavenly liturgy and point us towards God, the true object of our adoration.

Reflection for Leaders

Take time this week to read an account of the life of a saint and let yourself be inspired. You may choose to obtain a novel length biography or autobiography such as *Story of a Soul*, which tells of the life of St Therese of Lisieux, or read several short excerpts from a book such as *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, or access one of the many online resources available.

Liturgy Outline

Solemnity of All Saints

After the Introductory Rites, at the conclusion of the Opening Prayer but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are sent, with their ministers, to the place where they will celebrate their own Liturgy of the Word, with words of dismissal such as the following:

INVITATION I invite the children to join in the procession for their
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To the Minister of the Word: Receive this Book of Readings and proclaim
God's Word faithfully to the children entrusted
to your care.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS

WELCOME

Leader: We have come together, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Blessed be God
 Blessed be God

Leader: O God, today we rejoice in the holy men and women of every time
and place. May their prayers bring us your forgiveness and love.
Amen

FIRST READING Revelation 7:9-10
Reader The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

PSALM Psalm 24
 Lord, This is the people that longs to see your face
(or another suitable response known by the children)

SECOND READING *(not included this week)*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*
 Glory and praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

GOSPEL Matthew 5:1-12b
Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew
 Glory to you, Lord

at the end of the Gospel:
Minister of the Word: The Gospel of the Lord
 Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS
(Refer to end notes for reflection ideas.)

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL
*(Here are some suggested intercessions; you are encouraged to compose
your own according to the age and experience of the children)*

Leader: Let us bring all our prayers in confidence to our loving God:

- That realising our dependance on God, we may truly belong to God's kingdom.
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That those who mourn may be comforted by God's compassion are cared for by God's people.
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That imitating God's mercy in the way we deal with other people, we ourselves may receive God's mercy.
Let us pray to the Lord Lord hear our prayer
- That those who are treated badly for doing right may receive strength and courage.

Leader: God of goodness, your pour out your blessings on your
children, may we always turn to you in our need, and rejoice
with you in our joy. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All: Amen

The children rejoin the assembly before the completion of the prayers over the gifts.

