



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year A

Violet

“Lord, I put my faith in you!”

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a, Ps 23, Ephesians 5:1-2, 8-10, John 9:1, 6-12, 35-38

What do you think it might be like to be blind? Think about how you would do all the things you have already done today if you could not see. What do we know about the blind man in this story? How did Jesus give him back his sight? What new things would the man have been able to see and do after that? What happened to the man afterwards that was even better than getting his sight?



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, starting with the Gospel. (You may choose to use or focus on one reading only, but remember that the Gospel may not be omitted.) Then look through the preparatory material that follows and familiarise yourself with the Liturgy Outline.

GOSPEL

John 9:1, 6-12, 35-38

One day as Jesus walked along, he saw a man who had been blind since birth. Jesus spit on the ground. He made some mud and smeared it on the man's eyes. Then he said, "Go and wash off the mud in the Siloam Pool." The man went and washed in Siloam, which means 'One Who Is Sent.' When he had washed off the mud, he could see.

The man's neighbours and the people who had seen him begging wondered if he really could be the same man. Some of them said he was the same beggar, while others said he only looked like him. But he told them, "I am that man."

"Then how can you see?" they asked.

He answered, "Someone named Jesus made some mud and smeared it on my eyes. He told me to go and wash it off in Siloam Pool. When I did, I could see."

"Where is he now?" they asked.

"I don't know," he answered.

When Jesus heard what had happened, he went and found the man.

Then Jesus asked, "Do you have faith in the Son of Man?"

He replied, "Sir, if you will tell me who he is, I will put my faith in him."

"You have already seen him," Jesus answered, "and right now he is talking with you."

The man said, "Lord, I put my faith in you!"

Then he worshipped Jesus.

FIRST READING

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

The Lord said to Samuel: "Take some olive oil with you and go to a man named Jesse who lives in Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

When Jesse and his sons got there, Samuel saw Jesse's oldest son, Eliab, and thought, "He must be the one the Lord has chosen."

But the Lord told Samuel, "Don't choose him just because he is tall and handsome. He isn't the one I have chosen. People judge others by what they look like, but I don't. I judge by what is in a person's heart."

Jesse sent seven of his sons to Samuel, but each time Samuel would say, "The Lord has not chosen him." Finally, Samuel asked Jesse, "Do you have any more sons?" Jesse answered, "Yes, my youngest son David is out taking care of the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him. We won't start until he gets here." Jesse sent for David, and he came. He was a healthy, good-looking boy with a sparkle in his eyes. The Lord told Samuel, "This is the one. Pour the olive oil on his head." Samuel poured the oil on David's head while his brothers watched. At that moment the Lord's Spirit took control of David and stayed with him from then on.

PSALM

Psalm 23

Response: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

You, Lord, are my shepherd. I will never be in need;

You let me rest in fields of green grass.

You lead me to streams of peaceful water, and you refresh my life. **R**

You are true to your name, and you lead me along the right paths.

I may walk through valleys as dark as death, but I won't be afraid.

You are with me, and your shepherd's rod makes me feel safe. **R**

While my enemies watch, you honour me as your guest, and you fill my cup until it overflows. Your kindness and love will always be with me each day of my life. **R**

SECOND READING

Ephesians 5:1-2, 8-10

Brothers and sisters: Do as God does. After all, you are his dear children. Let love be your guide. Christ loved us and offered his life for us as a sacrifice that pleases God.

You used to be like people living in the dark, but now you are people of the light because you belong to the Lord. So act like people of the light and make your light shine. Be good and honest and truthful, as you try to please the Lord.

Scriptures from the Lectionary for Masses with Children (CEV)
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Background to the Readings for Leaders

In the first reading, in which Samuel anoints David as God's chosen King, and the Gospel, where Jesus anoints the blind man with spittle mud, we see the importance of anointing in both the Jewish and the Christian traditions. In general oil is used for this purpose within the Church, and anointing with oil is significant both at baptism and at confirmation particularly at the time of the Easter Vigil. In Jesus' time, blindness and other afflictions were viewed as punishment for sin, for those born blind the sin was assumed to be of the parents. The pool of Siloam was situated inside the city walls of Jerusalem, fed by the spring of Gihon outside the city by way of a tunnel, so in times of siege the city always had a water supply. The blind man's life was transformed step by step in today's Gospel. His journey towards faith contrasts his openness to receiving the knowledge of Jesus with the stubborn 'blindness' of the Pharisees who refuse to see or believe the truth of who Jesus is. The progression towards worship that the man travels eventually ends with his persecution, however his life is forever transformed by the encounter with Jesus and his willingness to leave the safety of his affliction for the uncertainty of a life of faith. Being children of the light has nothing to do with physical sight.

Images from the Readings

- *He could see*
- *Jesus found the man*
- *Lord, I put my faith in you!*
- *God judges the heart*
- *People of the light*

Reflection for Leaders

It is hard to believe that damaged people might prefer the security of their familiar afflictions to the opportunity to walk in fullness of health. Yet courage is often needed to respond to Jesus' invitation to wholeness. We can choose, like the Pharisees, to be closed to seeing God work in ways outside our own expectations. Have you had an experience of having your eyes opened, of seeing or coming to understand some new insight? What do you see now that you didn't see before? Has this experience had any impact on your life? As you reflect on areas of 'spiritual blindness', can you identify any blocks to your faith? What signs of God are visible in your life? During this week become aware of bringing light to the people you meet during the week.

Reflecting on the Readings with the children

Before Sunday read over the suggested discussion points given in the Leader's Liturgy Outline. With the 8-12 year olds: First, listen to the children's own responses to the Reading/s and then, if needed, use some of the discussion starters suggested. With the 5-7 year olds: Adapt some of the questions in the 8-12 material and then join with the older group for the 'Liturgical Action'.

Suggested Focus

Prepare a focus for the area where the children's Liturgy of the Word is to be held:
Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a bowl of water and some mud in a saucer

LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year A

At a suitable moment after the Opening Rites, but before the First Reading is proclaimed, the children are presented with the Children's Lectionary and a candle and 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 – Pōwhiri I invite the children to join in the procession for their celebration of the Liturgy 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.
Receive this candle as the light of Christ who is present in his Word.

PROCESSION WITH THE BOOK OF READINGS – Te Kapa o te Pukapuka Tapu

WELCOME – Ko te whakatau

Leader: O God, we see your goodness in all creation. Help us to live so that others can see the light of Jesus shine through us.

R Amen.

First Reading: 1 Samuel 16: 1b, 6-7, 10-13a

The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki
Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

Psalms 23

(if used) **Response:** The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Second Reading: Ephesians 5: 1-2, 8-10

The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki
Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

LITURGICAL ACTION – *Ko te Ritenga Karakia*

Using the bowl of water, invite the children to bless themselves and thank God for their gifts of life and sight.



PROFESSION OF FAITH – *Panui o te Whakapono*

We believe in God the Father,
who made the whole world.
We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
who was born in Bethlehem
and lived among us,
who died on the cross for us,
and rose from the dead.
We believe in the Holy Spirit
who brings life and love to us all.
We believe that the Church is one family,
and that one day
we will share everlasting life
with God in heaven.
Amen.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL – *Te Īnoinga o te Hunga Whakapono*

(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 and cares for us, so we ask that we will find all things working for our good in answer to these prayers:

- That the Church will be a light of justice and hope in our land
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For the strength and courage to answer God's call to be good and honest and truthful in all areas of our lives
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For wisdom to see clearly the way that God wants us to live
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That we see the good in each person
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God of compassion, hear and answer the prayers your children make to you through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: **Amen**

The children re-join the assembly before the prayers over the gifts.