



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

2nd Sunday of Advent - Year B

Violet

'Prepare the way'

Isaiah 40:3-5 Psalm 85 Mark 1:1-8

The readings of these first weeks of Advent stress over and over that our lives are in the hands of a merciful God, and echo the cry to prepare a way and a place for the Lord within our cluttered lives. In today's Gospel the coming of the Messiah is proclaimed by John.

Why do you think Advent is a good time to think about our lives, what we are doing right and what we can improve on?



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration, begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Second Sunday of Advent, 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

Mark 1:1-8

This is the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It began just as God had said in the book written by Isaiah the prophet, "I am sending my messenger to get the way ready for you. In the desert someone is shouting, 'Get the road ready for the Lord! Make a straight path for him.'"

So John the Baptist showed up in the desert and told everyone, "Turn back to God and be baptized! Then your sins will be forgiven."



From all Judea and from Jerusalem crowds of people went to John. They told how sorry they were for their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

John wore clothes made of camel's hair. He had a leather strap around his waist and ate grasshoppers and wild honey.

John also told the people,

"Someone more powerful is going to come. And I am not good enough even to stoop down and untie his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!"

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:3-5

A voice is shouting:

Clear a path in the desert for the Lord. Build a straight road there for our God.

Fill in the valleys and flatten the mountains and hills. Level the rough and rugged ground.

Then the glory of the Lord will appear for all to see. The Lord has promised this!

PSALM

Psalms 85

Response: Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation.

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.

Loyalty will sprout from the ground; justice will look down from the sky above.



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

Isaiah in the first reading today writes as the people of Israel are going back to their homelands after exile, so there is a feeling that something good and magnificent is about to happen and that the entire landscape will change to accommodate this coming. By placing the reading from Isaiah with the reading from Mark we are shown a picture of Jesus as the New Moses leading the people to a promised land. Fulfilling God's plan for his people. The desert features as a place of exile and preparation in both stories. John is described as being like the prophets of old in dress and life style, especially like Elijah and his baptism was similarly a preparation for the baptism of the Spirit expected to come with the Messiah. The images in the first reading of ground and landscape and making straight and level paths can be read as a metaphor for our hearts and our lives. We can use with the children the idea of the gardener preparing the soil for planting seed, the digging, the raking, making smooth, getting the soil ready. Similarly we must prepare ourselves for the seed of Jesus Word in our lives. How? By listening to the word with close attention. And once the plant of our faith and the love of God in us is growing, we must care for it. Not by locking it away. But by making it robust with exercise and practice and showing it to the world. Making it visible in our day to day dealings with people.

Images from the Readings

- clear a path
- a straight road
- mountains and hills
- rough and rugged ground
- the desert
- baptism with water
- the Holy Spirit

Reflection for Leaders

The Gospel for today begins by talking about good news, what is the good news it refers to? Jesus is the Good News, God's Son come into the world, God has visited the people. What do you know about John the Baptist? What does today's Gospel tell us about him? Ask the children about preparing for a birth in their family (those who have experienced this). Talk about the time of waiting and excited expectation. What does their mother do in preparation? What things need to be considered? We, as do mothers, need peace and quiet for preparation. We need help as new mothers need help. We need to ask for that help. Who do we ask. What do we ask for?

Discuss the idea of Advent as a journey towards a goal. To journey alone or with others is a question that can be considered.

You might talk with the children about John the Baptist, how his whole life was dedicated to one thing, "preparing the way of the Lord", now we are asked to prepare also. To make a space in our lives for God and the things of God by prayer and thinking about God and the great work of Jesus.

Discuss the idea that they might draw up a plan—make a list of the things in their lives that they plan to change in order to prepare a bigger place for God in their lives.



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'.

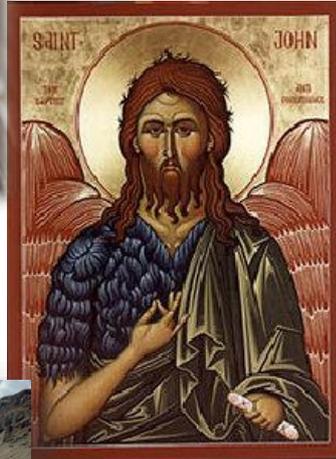
Suggested Focus

Prepare a focus for the area where the children's Liturgy of the Word is to be held:

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

Symbols of John the Baptist such as an icon, Hessian cloth wrapped in a leather belt, a stick, honey.

A map of the Holy Land and a picture of the wilderness where John lived could be helpful.



LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

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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, you are all goodness and mercy. We are trying to turn our lives back to you. Help us to make space in our lives for your love. Amen.

R Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 40:3-5

(if used)

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

Psalm 85 **Response:** Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation.

(or another suitable response known by the children)

D G Bm A D G Asus⁴ A

Advent: Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Make a straight path for the Lord._____

Bm G D A G A D

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. He is the hope for the world.

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark
Children: **Glory to you, O Lord / Korōria ki ā koe, e te Ariki**

At the end of the Gospel: The Gospel of the Lord
Children: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ / Kia whakanuia rā koe, e te Ariki, e Hēhu Karaiti.**

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH THE CHILDREN – Whai Whakaaro

8-12 year olds: 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 was the name of the prophet who had foretold the coming of John the Baptist? What is a prophet? A prophet is someone who speaks in the name of God and has been allowed by God to know and share a part of his plan for mankind.
- John was God's messenger; he was sent to tell the people to change their ways and to turn back to God. He told them to make a fresh start by asking forgiveness for their sins and trying to lead lives filled with goodness and love.
- John was sent to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus. Do we still need to prepare for Jesus' coming today? Jesus could return at any time (recall last week's discussion). We can prepare ourselves just as people did in the time of John the Baptist, by putting right what is wrong in our lives and living as Jesus taught us.
- Advent is a good time to look carefully at ourselves and to make a fresh start if we need to. When can we meet Jesus and ask for his forgiveness? Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation we can tell Jesus that we are sorry and receive his forgiveness. Through the priest, God allows us to hear that our sins are forgiven so we can start anew knowing that God loves us very much.
- Can you think of anything that needs to be put right in your life?

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'.

LITURGICAL ACTION – Ko te Ritenga Karakia

Light the first two purple candles of the Advent wreath and sing 'Prepare the Way' (GA 284) or similar.



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 Īnoīnga 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: With confidence let us now call upon God in prayer:

- For the Church where all people can find a welcome, that together we will prepare to live responsible Let us pray to the Lord
Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For the poor and outcasts of the world, that they will find a place and people to care for them. Let us pray to the Lord

Lord hear our prayer

or

E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou

- For peace and goodwill among the people of the South Pacific, that the strong will help the weak and poor. Let us pray to the Lord

Lord hear our prayer

or

E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou

- That we will help our family at home and our teachers and workmates at school even if we don't want. Let us pray to the Lord

Lord hear our prayer

or

E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou

Leader: O God you are our hope, fill our hearts and the hearts of those we pray for with your love so that we may better serve you and each other.

All: **Amen**

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

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Plays and Creative Conversations

Mark 1:1-8

Prepare the way

Characters required: Reader 1, Reader 2, Reader 3, Reader 4, Reader 5 and Chorus group

Reader 1: Jesus said to his disciples:

Reader 2: Be ready!

Reader 3: Be prepared!

Reader 4: Keep alert!

Reader 5: You just never know ...

Chorus: Know what? What's going to happen?

Reader 1: A messenger will come to you, a prophet.

Chorus: A prophet? What will s/he say?

Reader 2: Prepare the way of the Lord.

Reader 3: Turn away from sin.

Reader 4: Change your habits!

Reader 5: Follow God's Way.

Chorus: Follow God's Way. Who said that?

Reader 1: The prophet in the desert.

Reader 2: John, the Baptist.

Reader 3: The one who wore camel skins.

Reader 4: And ate locusts and wild honey.

Reader 5: The one who announced Jesus.

Chorus: Jesus the Messiah.

Reader 1: Jesus is here, all around, calling us to justice, to love, to truth.

Chorus: Come Lord Jesus, come and make a difference in our lives.



From 'Just Imagine 2, More Creative ways of presenting Scripture' written by Rina Wintour, Mountjoy Enterprises, www.mountjoyenterprises.com.au. Available from the Liturgy Centre.