



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 Easter

White

'I am the Good Shepherd'

Acts 4:8-12 Psalm 118 1 John 31:1-2 1 John 10:11-16

A shepherd's lonely job was to find food for his sheep and to protect them from wild animals. Today we hear how Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd.



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration, begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for The Fourth Sunday of Easter, 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

1 John 10:11-16

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd gives up his life for his sheep. "Hired workers are not like the shepherd. They don't own the sheep, and when they see a wolf coming, they run off and leave the sheep. Then the wolf attacks and scatters the flock. "Hired workers run away because they don't care about the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and they know me. Just as the Father knows me, I know the Father, and I give up my life for my sheep.

"I have other sheep that are not in this sheep pen. I must bring them together too, when they hear my voice. Then there will be one flock of sheep and one shepherd."

FIRST READING

Acts 4:8-12

Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and told the nation's leaders and the elders:

"You are questioning us today about a kind deed in which a crippled man was healed. But there is something we must tell you and everyone else in Israel. This man is standing here completely well because of the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth.

"You put Jesus to death on a cross, but God raised him to life. He is the stone that you builders thought was worthless, and now he is the most important stone of all. Only Jesus has the power to save! His name is the only one in all the world that can save anyone."

PSALM

Psalm 118

Response: **The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone.**

Tell the Lord how thankful you are,
because he is kind and always merciful.
I praise the Lord for answering my prayers and saving me.

The stone that the builders tossed aside
has now become the most important stone.
The Lord has done this, and it is amazing to us.

SECOND READING

1 John 3:1-2

Beloved: Think how much the Father loves us. He loves us so much that he lets us be called his children, as we truly are. But since the people of this world did not know who Christ is, they don't know who we are.

My dear friends, we are already God's children, though what we will be has not yet been seen. But we do know that when Christ returns, we will be like him, because we will see him as he truly is.

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

The image divine shepherd comes from the Hebrew Scriptures (Ezekiel34, Jeremiah23).

John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God, later the Lamb calls himself the Good Shepherd, he is both sheep and shepherd. In John's Gospel Jesus' condemnation to death comes at the exact time that the Passover lambs are being prepared for slaughter. John the Baptist says the lamb "takes away the sins of the world" Shepherds say that their sheep's safety lies in their ability to recognise and follow the voice of their shepherd and nobody else's.

Images from the Readings

- Shepherd
- Other sheep
- One flock
- Stone rejected
- Cornerstone

Reflection for Leaders

The idea of the wandering figure of the good shepherd, anxiously tending his sheep to the point where he is willing to surrender his life for them, is the image Jesus uses about himself in today's Gospel. That mixture of tenderness and toughness, care and self-sacrifice, is one that summarises his practice of leadership. To what sort of leadership do people respond best? Jesus' is not a leadership of detachment and defensiveness; rather it is a leadership of physical involvement and self-sacrificing love, in the good shepherd's love his own life matters less than that of his sheep. The good shepherd is not an image of religious authority that is eternally pleased with its own importance, which is blind to the useless pain it causes in those it leads. It can be compared to a mother's love for her young, something that is free and unquestioned both by the mother and the one she nurtures. The authority of the shepherd costs the shepherd, not the sheep. The image of the shepherd cannot be separated from how the shepherd actually cares for his own sheep. His concern is not untroubled; his courage not without bloodshed, his love is not detached. When we see how Jesus actually behaves as a leader, we see his tenderness and courage, he sorts out the lost and the least and the last. When he wanted to tell the people of a tender God he spoke of a shepherd who when he loses one of his sheep leaves the others and goes off in search of the lost one searching for it until he finds it and returning with it to the fold. We know that a search is not automatic after a loss. Many losses are not even registered. Where there is no love, there is no loss. Some people are regarded as "no great loss" others are told to "get lost" But all of us hope that when we are lost someone somewhere, like the good shepherd, will be looking for us. All of us know people who have wandered away from the church, people who have no sense of belonging, who are lost. The children too know of fellow pupils at their school, children they play with who suffer a sense of not belonging anywhere. Often children pick this feeling up from their parents. How will they know they are welcome back if no one tells them? We can encourage the children to reach out to others by inviting one or two lost friends along to Children's Liturgy on Sunday.



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:

White cloth, Lectionary, Candle,
a shepherd's crook or an image of a Bishop's crosier.



LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

Fourth Sunday of Easter

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 the care you have for us we try to have for others. Help us to be people who care for others, especially those who feel lost and alone.

R Amen.

First Reading: Acts 4:8-12

(if used)

The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki

Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

Psalm 118

Response: **The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone.**
(or another suitable response known by the children)

- What do you know about sheep and shepherds? Have you seen sheep with their shepherd?
- Jesus says that he wants us to listen to his voice: how do we listen to his voice today? Who tells you about the teachings and life of Jesus? Do you know who the shepherds in the Church are?

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

Sing together:

Like a shepherd you feed your flock
 And gather us lambs in your arms
 Holding us carefully close to your heart
 Leading us home.
 (As One Voice 160)



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.

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Echo Mime

1 John 10:11-16

I am the Good Shepherd

Note to Leaders: This echo mime combines the use of SIGNS and SOUND EFFECTS. At various points of the Echo Mime, a sign indicating either a **sound effect** or a **phrase** is held up and read by all children. As well as a leader, there would also need to be another child whose sole job is to hold up the signs at the appropriate time. Ensure signs are large enough for all children to read easily.

Signs required:	Good Shepherd Hired Workers Baa!	Oh no! Jesus knows us! Yeah!
A reading from God's Word		Hands open as in reading a book
Jesus told his disciples		Draw a large "J" in the air
I am the Good Shepherd		Good Shepherd (sign)
I love my sheep		Hands over heart
I would die		Fall to the ground
For MY sheep		Stand tall again and point to self
Hired workers have sheep		Hired Workers (sign)
But they don't care		Shake head
About their sheep.		Baa! (sign)
If a wolf came		Oh no! (sign)
And attacked the sheep		Claw-like hands
The hired workers		Hired Workers (sign)
Would run away		Run on the spot
They don't care		Shake head
About their sheep.		Baa! (sign)
But Jesus does!		Draw a large "J" in the air
Jesus is the Good Shepherd		Good Shepherd (sign)
Who loves his sheep		Hands over heart
And would die for them!		Fall to the ground
The Good Shepherd KNOWS his sheep		Jesus knows us! (sign)
And loves everyone!		Yeah! (sign)
A reading from God's word		Hands open as in reading a book

From 'Just Imagine 3, Even more Creative ways of presenting Scripture...' written by Rina Wintour, Mountjoy Enterprises, www.mountjoyenterprises.com.au. Available from the Liturgy Centre.