



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

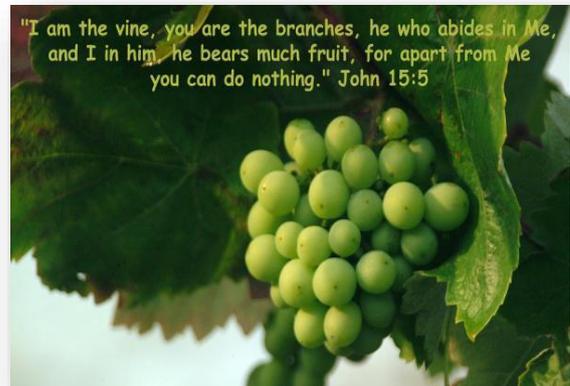
Fifth Sunday of Easter

White

'I am the True Vine'

Acts 9:26-28 Psalm 22 1 John 3:18 John 15:1-5, 7-8

Have you ever done any gardening and chopped branches of a plant or a tree because they were making the plant unhealthy? Today we read how Jesus compares himself to a vine and us to its branches. He tells us how we need to stay connected otherwise the branch could die.



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for The Fifth 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

John 15:1-5, 7-8

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts away every branch of mine that does not produce fruit. But he trims clean every branch that does produce fruit, so that it will produce even more fruit.

"You are already clean because of what I have said to you.

"Stay joined to me, and I will stay joined to you. Just as a branch cannot produce fruit unless it stays joined to the vine, you cannot produce fruit unless you stay joined to me.

"I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produce lots of fruit. But you cannot do anything without me.

“Stay joined to me and let my teachings become part of you. Then you can pray for whatever you want, and your prayer will be answered.

“When you become fruitful disciples of mine, my Father will be honoured.”

FIRST READING

Acts 9:26-28

When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to join the followers. But they were all afraid of him, because they did not believe he was a true follower.

Then Barnabas helped him by taking him to the apostles. He explained how on the road to Damascus, Saul had seen the Lord and how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Barnabas also said that when Saul was in Damascus, he had spoken bravely in the name of Jesus.

Saul moved about freely with the followers in Jerusalem and told everyone about the Lord.

PSALM

Psalm 22

Response: I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.

Everyone on this earth will remember you, Lord
People all over the world will turn and worship you.

In the future, everyone will worship and learn about you, our Lord.
People not yet born will be told, “The Lord has saved us!”

SECOND READING

1 John 3:18

Children, you show love for others by truly helping them, and not merely by talking about it.

Scriptures from the Lectionary for Masses with Children (CEV)
© Archdiocese of Chicago LTP. 1994 Used with permission

Background to the Readings for Leaders

When Saul had come to Jerusalem to join the disciples they were still very much on the defensive and were afraid of him and did not want to know him. But soon through the good interventions of Barnabas they allowed him to come and go amongst them preaching. Here is a picture of the young church finding its way. The community soon opened to Paul and when he got into trouble with the Greeks they closed ranks around him and moved him out of harm's way to Tarsus. The Gospel develops the theme of the believing community. A vine puts out many branches, and all these different branches exist only in their connection to the vine. They share the same source of life. That makes them close relatives. The vineyard was one of the ancient images of the people of Israel, God's chosen people and God is the vine-dresser. In John's Gospel the term 'I am' has a special significance. When Moses encountered God on Mt Sinai, God revealed himself as 'I am who am'. Jesus reveals himself as Son of God in the use of this term and tells something of his mission: I am the living water, I am the good shepherd, I am the way, the truth and the life, I am the light of the world, I am the bread of life.

Images from the Readings

- Branches
- Gardener
- Fruit
- Staying joined
- Vine

Reflection for Leaders

Jesus continues to speak to the disciples through imagery which they understood from their everyday experience and with symbols that come from their Jewish tradition. The vine is a staple part of Israel's agricultural life. It carries the idea of the life which flows into the branches from the thick stalk of the vine. Jesus becomes that giver of life and prosperity, but behind his life-giving presence is the Father. Like the vine-dresser, the Father must cut away anything which impedes that life or comes from a source that is not nourished from the 'true vine.' Jesus exists to make the Father known and so it must be with the disciples of Jesus. We must 'remain with Jesus and thus make the Father known.

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 vine or another kind of climber in a pot, a bowl of blessed water.



LITURGY OUTLINE

Fifth 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, you have given us the Church where we can grow as part of your body. Help us to understand and to grow to be as strong shoots attached to the Church's vine.

R Amen.

First Reading: Acts 9:26-28

(if used)

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

Psalms 22

Response: I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.
(or another suitable response known by the children)

the analogy between the circle and the body of the Church. When you are attached you feel the life of the whole body, the movement, the life, you feel strongly that you belong to the group. When you are no longer joined there is no ebb and flow of movement or life; you are cut off from it and cannot feel it or benefit from it.

Discuss the story of Jesus as the vine and ourselves as its branches.

- What do you think Jesus is trying to tell us in the story of the vineyard?
- Why did he call himself the vine and us the branches? What did he mean?
- What can you do to produce lots of fruit?
- How can we stay joined to Jesus?

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

Invite the children to bless themselves from a bowl of water that has been blessed.

Explain that every time we do this we remember that, through our Baptism, we are connected to Jesus as a branch to a vine.



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: Taking confidence from God's word in the readings we ask for our needs:

- For the Church, that it will be a place where people grow.
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That people who have power over others will have compassion grow in their hearts.
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For the sick, the hungry and those who are lonely.
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That we will be of the growing part of the Lord's vine.
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God, keeper of the vineyard, the One in whom we trust, hear the prayers we your children make to you. Through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

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



Fifth Sunday of Easter

Optional activity to reinforce today's Gospel message. Children may like to take this home to enact with their families.

Echo Mime

John 15:1-5, 7-8

I am the True Vine

Note to Leaders: This echo mime combines the use of SIGNS and SOUND EFFECTS. At various points 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:

The True Vine
Uh-oh!
Yeah!

Love all people
Stick with Jesus

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 True Vine

Sign: **The True Vine**

And God is the gardener

Digging action

Who cuts away branches

Slashing action

That bear NO fruit

Sign: **Uh-oh!**

And trims the branches

Use fingers to make a scissor-like action

So they can produce

Arms stretched widely

Even MORE fruit.

Sign: **Yeah!**

So if you are my disciple

Point to person

You will bear MUCH fruit

Arms stretched as widely as possible

You will LOVE all people

Sign: **Love all people**

Just as I love you!

Hands over heart.

Stick with me

Sign: **Stick with Jesus**

Stay close to me

Give yourself a hug

For I am the TRUE VINE!

Sign: **The True Vine**

THE true vine!

Sign: **Yeah !**

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.