



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Sixth Sunday of Easter

'Love as Jesus loved'

White

Acts 10:25...48

Psalm 98

1 John 4:7-10

John 15:9-14



Jesus knew he would soon die and rise to new life – this was a sign of his love for everyone.

He also knew his disciples would not understand the things that would happen, so he told them how much he loved them and asked them to share this love with others.

Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration, begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for The Sixth 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 15:9-14

Jesus said to his disciples: "I have loved you, just as my Father has loved me. So make sure that I keep on loving you. If you obey me, I will keep loving you, just as my Father keeps loving me, because I have obeyed him.

"I have told you this to make you as completely happy as I am. Now I tell you to love each other, as I have loved you. The greatest way to show love for friends is to die for them. And you are my friends, if you obey me."

FIRST READING

Acts 10:25...48

When Peter arrived, Cornelius greeted him. Then he kneeled at Peter's feet and started worshipping him. But Peter took hold of him and said, "Stand up! I am nothing more than a human."

Peter then said, "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."

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit took control of everyone who was listening. Some Jewish followers of the Lord had come with Peter, and they were surprised that the Holy Spirit had been given to Gentiles. Now they were hearing Gentiles speaking unknown languages and praising God.

Peter said, "These Gentiles have been given the Holy Spirit, just as we have! I am certain that no one would dare stop us from baptizing them."

Peter ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and they asked him to stay on for a few days.

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's saving power is seen everywhere on earth.

Tell everyone on this earth to sing happy songs in praise of the Lord.

SECOND READING

1 John 4:7-10

My dear friends, we must love each other. Love comes from God, and when we love each other, it shows that we have been given new life.

We are now God's children, and we know him.

God is love, and anyone who doesn't love others has never known him.

God showed his love for us when he sent his only Son into the world to give us life.

Real love is not our love for God, but his love for us. God sent his Son to be the sacrifice by which our sins are forgiven.

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

In John's Gospel, there is no account of the last meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. Instead there is the account of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, an act of absolute service to others, and a long discourse of instruction on how they must conduct themselves in the future. This is known as the "Farewell Discourse" and today's reading is part of it.

Images from the Readings

- Friends – Servants
- Gift of the Holy Spirit
- Obey
- Complete
- God is love

Reflection for Leaders

In the reading from Acts we witness an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which doesn't even wait for Peter to finish speaking. Not surprisingly, when you look back to what he had just been saying, you find once again that powerful truth about forgiveness, which Jesus had commissioned his disciples to tell everyone about. "Tell them they can be forgiven," he had said straight after the Resurrection. As Peter proclaims this, the little crowd of people in Cornelius' house, who are searching single-mindedly for God's truth, suddenly experience the rush of God's forgiving love, and the freedom it brings.

And this is the kind of love we are given as an example to follow. So much of what we name of love is actually to do with self-gratification and possession. It is tied up with our own need for fulfilment. But the love that Jesus talks about in today's Gospel is about obedience, willing co-operation, and sacrifice which produce joy.

We could quite easily misinterpret what Jesus says here. He is not saying that his love will depend on whether we obey or not.

That would be a love that is conditional. Obedience in the mind of Jesus is that surrender of will that can only flow from the absolute security of knowing ourselves loved and cherished by a God who wants the best for us and for those around us. Such surrender brings joy and freedom and a delight in 'obeying' commands and living the loving way.

Reflecting on the Readings with the children

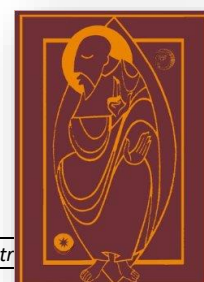
Before Sunday read over the suggested discussion points given in the Leader's Liturgy Outline. With the 8-12 year olds: First, listen to the children's own responses to the Reading/s and then, if needed, use some of the discussion starters suggested.

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, Candle, Lectionary



LITURGY OUTLINE

Sixth 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 – Powhiri 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 love us with everlasting love. We want to love others selflessly too because of your love for us. Help us to live lives that show others your love.

R Amen.

First Reading: Acts 10:25 - 48

(if used)

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

Psalms 98

Response: The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.
(or another suitable response known by the children)

Second Reading: 1 John 4:7-10 (

if used)

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

Easter: Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Je - sus is ri - sen from death.

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. He is the light of the world.

Gospel: John 15:9-14

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

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, to stimulate ideas:*

Begin with a discussion that brings out the difference between servants and friends. The kind of things which might come up are the sense of involvement and belonging which friendship gives, compared with the distance and lack of co-operation in servants; the difference in how they feel valued, and what response is acceptable.

In a reading from the Gospel of John that has many powerful phrases about the selfless love we are asked to have for each other the one that urges us to love as Jesus loved stands out as the most powerful.

- How did Jesus love? How does his life show how he loved?

Collect the children's ideas and write them down in a list. Some suggestions: as friends, with affection, treating us seriously, understanding us, with honesty, with forgiveness, ready to put himself out for us, with faithfulness, consistently.

- Is this how we are treating other people? Or is it how we treat the people we like?

As Christians we don't have the option to choose certain people to treat with God's love, while behaving how we feel with all the rest.

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

Pray the following prayer together:

In our homes, at work and at school

Help us to love one another

In what we think and say and do

Help us to love one another

When there are arguments and when we disagree

Help us to love one another

When we are tired and not feeling our best

Help us to love one another

Every moment of every day, whether it's easy or hard,

Help us to love one another



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: Trusting in the word and love of God, let us pray for our needs:

- For the spirit of love to fill the Church in every country.
Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For those who grieve for a loved one.
Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For people everywhere, that they will know us by our love for one another.
Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For ourselves, that we will care for the sick, the lonely and those without friends.
Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For the spirit of gentleness in our lives.
Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: Loving and Faithful God, our hope and our salvation, pour forth your love on us and on those for whom we pray. We ask this through Jesus our Lord.

All: **Amen**

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

