



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Green

'A place to rest and pray'

Jeremiah 23:3-6 Psalm 23 Mark 6: 30-34



In last week's Gospel, Jesus sent his apostles out on their mission to preach, cast out evil spirits and cure the sick. Their mission was a great success, but now after their return they are weary. Jesus is aware of their needs and insists they have a quiet place to rest. Perhaps this Gospel calls us to evaluate the balance in our lives between work and the need to take a break from the demands of life. Where does prayer fit into the pattern of our day?

Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 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 6: 30-34

After the apostles returned to Jesus, they told him everything they had done and taught. But so many people were coming and going that Jesus and the apostles did not even have a chance to eat.

Then Jesus said: "Let's go to a place where we can be alone and get some rest." They left in a boat for a place where they could be alone. But many people saw them leave and figured out where they were going. So people from every town ran on ahead and got there first.

When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw the large crowd that was like sheep without a shepherd. He felt sorry for the people and started teaching them many things.

I, the Lord, will bring the rest of my people back from the lands where I have scattered them. I will bring them home, and they will grow into a mighty nation. I will choose leaders who will take care of them. Every one of my people will be there, and they will never again be frightened or terrified. I, the Lord, have spoken!

I promise that the time will come when I will choose a king from the family of David. He will be wise and will rule the land with justice and fairness. As long as he is king, Judah will be safe, and Israel will live in peace. The name of this king will be, "The Lord is our Protector!"

PSALM

Response: **The Lord is my Shepherd; there is nothing I shall want**
 or Alleluia!

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 valley's as dark as death, but I won't be afraid.

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

Your kindness and love will always be with me, every day of my life,

And I will live forever in your house, O Lord. **R**



Background to the Readings for Leaders

Today's readings all focus on the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd — calling all people of whatever race or belief to lead them to God. In Israel the idea of shepherd and ruler, king and shepherd, were often related — as the shepherd bore responsibility for the needs of his flock so the king bore responsibility for the needs of the people. Jeremiah is writing in the last years of King Zedekiah, just before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587BC. He attacks the shepherds, the last kings of Judah, who have misled their flock by turning them away from God and scattering them. As the people are about to be dispersed into exile the Lord promises to bring them back and to give them good and faithful rulers.

The first sentence of today's Gospel links it with that of last week when the twelve were sent out on their mission. Jesus is now responding to their tiredness and need for a break. They set off for a lonely place, only to find it crowded. How often that happens for people in caring and protective roles! Stories like this one in Jesus' ministry reassure us that God never turns any of us away. This reality also needs to be balanced with the need to "care for ourselves as caregivers". Burnout is no fun and no help to ourselves or others, whatever our ministry may be!

Images from the Readings

- Rest
- Large crowd
- Live in peace
- Sheep without a shepherd
- The Lord is our protector

Reflection for Leaders

In today's Gospel Jesus shows the apostles the extent of their ministry to people. They too are shepherds of the flock, feeding and protecting them, reassuring them of Jesus' continued presence through word and deed. Jesus demonstrates the truth of his teaching "Ask and you will receive. Seek and you will find."

God's loving care for everyone is expressed in the picture of the good shepherd. Jesus' life is to be taken by his followers as an example to them. The feeding of the hungry, the spreading of the Gospel to those who are without hope and care for those who search and hunger for God is to be their first concern. Jesus draws people to himself like a magnet. Everyone who hears of him is drawn to him. Why did Jesus want to find a quiet, peaceful spot? Do you ever have trouble finding some peace and quiet or getting away by yourself? What do you do?

The promise God makes through Jeremiah his prophet to the people is for a gentle leader — one who will guide and shepherd them. When Jesus comes he is just such a shepherd but he is a shepherd for the poor, the lost and the outcasts. Are the qualities that Jeremiah promised for the Messiah the same qualities that we find in Jesus of the Gospels? Are these the same qualities that we ourselves are to strive for? Have we been called to be shepherds of God's people?

The children relate well to the caring qualities of God. They see people in our own community whose vocation it is to care for and nurture others and often these very people are the ones children are in daily contact with. School teachers, nurses, loving parents, and grandparents who put the welfare and well-being of others before themselves. The children may already be able to identify brothers or sisters, class leaders, monitors or team leaders of their own age or a little older who already show signs of these caring qualities. All these people give children a taste and a feeling for a caring God who looks after his people like the shepherds of old who cared for their sheep to the extent of being willing to lay down their lives for them if the need arose. Who provides this example for you? Who looks to you as an example of God's loving care and protection?

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

Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle, picture of a flock of sheep OR a sign that says,

"I am the Good Shepherd"



LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

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 sent Jesus into the world that we might know how to live as you want us to live. Help us to always care for others as we would like them to care for us.

R Amen.

First Reading: Jeremiah 23:3-6

(if used)

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

Psalms 23

Response:
or

**The Lord is my Shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Alleluia!**

D G Bm A D G Asus⁴ A

General: Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Fill us O Lord with your word.____

Bm G D A G A D

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Your word is life for our souls.

Gospel: Mark 6: 30-34

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 Whakāaro

8-12 year olds:

Suggested Beginning: A good place to begin is with the question: What did you hear? Allow children the opportunity to respond in their own words to hearing the Word of God. When each has had an opportunity to speak you might begin general discussion by building on to their responses. Help the children to focus on the “feelings” in this particular Gospel reading by using some prepared questions like the following:

- Ask the children what they know about sheep and shepherds.
- Have you ever felt like a sheep without a shepherd? A little lost or unsure about what to do next or which way to go?
- In today’s Gospel, Jesus is spoken of as a shepherd who looks after his sheep. Can you remember any other Bible stories that describe Jesus as a Shepherd? (Jesus searches for the lost sheep) Why might a shepherd be a good image to use for Jesus? What sort of things does a shepherd do for sheep? What sort of things did Jesus do for his apostles? The people were described as sheep without a shepherd. What did Jesus do for the people who followed them to the quiet place?

- If you used the first reading, help the children to find the signs of God’s love for his people through the kind of leaders that he chooses to look after them. It is just that kind of leadership that we see in the way Jesus cared for the apostles and people.
- Invite the children to list the people who care for them and teach them about God in our time and place – in what ways are they like the leaders God chooses? In what ways are they like Jesus who cared for his apostles and taught the people who followed him to a quiet place?
- Why do you think Jesus wanted to find a quiet, peaceful spot? Do you ever have trouble finding some peace and quiet or getting away by yourself? Invite the children to share some of their quiet places where they rest and pray.

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 enter into a quiet place in their hearts. (pause) Invite them to listen to the words of Psalm 23 while you read it and create in their hearts and minds a picture of the quiet peaceful place that the psalm describes. (pause) At the end of the psalm, invite them to stay quiet a little longer and imagine Jesus coming to meet them in this quiet place. (pause) After some moments, ask: What is Jesus saying to you? Then

a little later: What do you want to say to Jesus? (long pause) When it is time to end the prayer, invite the children to say thank you to Jesus for caring for them and gently bring their attention back to the place where you are gathered.

You may wish to remind the children that they can use this way of going into their heart room whenever they need a quiet place to be with Jesus.



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 Inoīnga 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 the readings we have heard today in our hearts let us call upon our loving God for our needs:

- For the Church, may the Church be a place where all outsiders are welcomed and that everyone will be invited to come inside. Let us pray to the Lord

R Lord hear our prayer **or** **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For leaders everywhere, may they govern all people with generous hearts. Let us pray to the Lord

R Lord hear our prayer **or** **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For the leaders of Aotearoa New Zealand, may they care for our own people as they govern. Let us pray to the Lord

R Lord hear our prayer **or** **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For ourselves, may we show kindness to the people we meet at school and in our family at home. Let us pray to the Lord

R Lord hear our prayer **or** **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: O God you care for your people, hear the prayers we your children make to you through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

The children re-join the assembly before the Prayer over the Gifts.

