



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

4th Sunday of Advent - Year C

Violet

'Rejoicing together in the life we are given'

Micah 5:1-3 Psalm 80 Luke 1:39-45



When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that her cousin Elizabeth was expecting a baby, Mary would have been surprised because Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah had never been able to have children and were quite old.

Mary set off to visit Elizabeth. Both of them were expecting their first child, and both knew that they had been chosen by God and that their children would be blessed by God in a very special way.

What do you think they would have talked about together?

Leader's Preparation

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

Luke 1:39-45

Mary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah's home, where she greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby moved within her. The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth. Then in a loud voice she said to Mary: "God has blessed you more than any other woman! He has also blessed the child you will have. Why should the mother of my Lord come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, my baby became happy and moved within me. The Lord has blessed you because you believed that he will keep his promise."

Town of Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest in the nation of Judah. But I will choose one of your people to rule the nation. And his family goes back to ancient times.

The Lord will abandon Israel only until this ruler is born and the rest of his family come back to join Israel.

He will stand like a shepherd feeding his sheep by the power and glorious name of the Lord his God. His people will live in peace, and everyone on earth will know how great the Lord is.

PSALM

Response: Rouse your power, O Lord, and come to save us

Shepherd of Israel, you sit on your throne above the winged creatures.

Listen to our prayer and let your light shine.

Save us by your power. **R**

God All-Powerful, please do something!

Look down from heaven and see what's happening to this vine.

With your own hands you planted its roots. **R**



Background to the Readings for Leaders

Out of the defeat and ruin of an oppressed people, Micah promises hope from the hands of a faithful God. The hope of peace. Bethlehem was considered fairly insignificant for the Jews, so much like the comment "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46) this promise may not have been considered of great importance. In worldly terms, even the places associated with the life of the Saviour are small and insignificant.

The Gospel today describes what is commonly called 'The Visitation' – the coming together of two women to acknowledge the action of God in their lives. Mary, a young girl from an obscure village in Palestine, becomes the mother of God. Elizabeth's words of greeting to Mary remind us that faith is firstly a gift of God. Elizabeth knew by an intuition from God about her cousin and the child she was bearing – no person had explained the circumstances to her. This is symbolised by the leaping of her own unborn child inside her. God uses those who are small and powerless to bring about salvation. Luke's Gospel pays a great deal of attention to the role of women in the story of salvation.

Images from the Readings

- *Like a shepherd feeding his sheep*
- *Live in peace*
- *Believing that God will keep his promise*
- *Rejoicing together in the life we are given*

Reflection for Leaders

Mary has a unique and integral place in the Christian tradition. Catholics honour her because she was chosen by God to bring to flesh Jesus the Son of God. Yet this was not forced on her - God waited on her acceptance. Mary's simplicity and faith is a model for all those who believe. Can you remember a time when you 'knew' the action of God in your life without any explanation being necessary? In today's Gospel, Mary and Elizabeth are completely 'tuned in' to God's action in their lives. How tuned in are you? Do you have a sense of how 'blessed' you are, and can you recognise goodness in others?

What do you believe God promises you?

As Christmas fast approaches, we all become very busy. Try to find time this week to visit someone who would particularly appreciate it at this time.

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, the Advent Wreath, cards for each child with a copy of the 'Hail Mary' printed on it.



LEADER'S Liturgy Outline

4th Sunday of Advent - Year C

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 many gifts, and the greatest of these is your Son, Jesus.
Help us to always remember your goodness.

R Amen.

First Reading: Micah 5:1-3

(if used)

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

Psalms 80 **Response:** Rouse your power, O Lord, and come to save us
(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: Luke 1:39-45

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke
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.

- Has anyone helped or watched as the family prepared for the birth of a younger brother or sister? What sort of things do we need to do when a new baby is coming? How would Mary have had to prepare for the coming of Jesus?
- Mary did something else that was quite unusual. We read about it in the Gospel today. What happened when Mary and Elizabeth met? What did Elizabeth say? How did Mary respond?
- What does this Gospel show us about Mary and about her child?
- Can you think of something that God has done for you? Many of the gifts that God has given us we take for granted. Can we make a list of some of these things? (home, family, clothing, friends, teachers, creation, etc.)

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 all the candles on the advent wreath.

“If we keep our eyes on the light, we need never feel afraid. Jesus will walk before us, guiding us through life towards the kingdom of heaven. Amen”

Give each child a copy of the “Hail Mary”. Read it together.



Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with you
Blessed are you among women
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary Mother of God pray for us sinners
Now, and at the hour of our death.
Amen

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: Inspired by the Word of God, we ask for all our needs.

- For the Church, that those who shepherd the church will be filled with wisdom and strength and be a light for the world
Let us pray to the Lord
Lord, hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For those who govern us, that they will do so with justice and integrity
Let us pray to the Lord
Lord, hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For all those who are lonely at this time of year, the sick and those who need encouragement
Let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For ourselves and our families, that we will have the courage to obey the will of God in our decisions
Let us pray to the Lord
Lord, hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God of peace, shelter in your arms those for whom we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: **Amen**

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

4th Sunday of Advent, Year C

Chorus Play

Luke 1:39-45

Mary visits Elizabeth

People required: Reader 1, Reader 2

Reader 1: Mary went to visit her cousin.

Reader 2: Her cousin Elizabeth.

Chorus: Elizabeth.

Reader 1: Elizabeth lived in Judah with her husband.

Reader 2: Her husband Zechariah.

Chorus: Zechariah.

Reader 1: Although she was quite old, Elizabeth was going to have a baby.

Reader 2: Elizabeth was very happy.

Chorus: Very happy!

Reader 1: Mary and Elizabeth were delighted to see one another.

Reader 2: Mary and Elizabeth were both very happy.

Chorus: Very happy!



From 'Just Imagine 4, Many Creative ways of presenting Scripture' written by Rina Wintour, Mountjoy Enterprises, www.mountjoyenterprises.com.au. Available from the Liturgy Centre.