



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

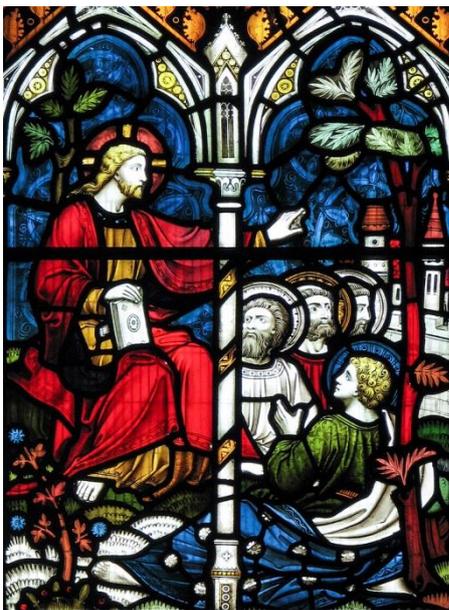
Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

3rd Sunday of Lent - Year C

Violet

'Leave it for another year'

Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15 Psalm 103 Luke 13:6-9



*Jesus taught the people using stories
that they could understand.*

In today's story,

*Jesus tells us about giving one more chance
to the fig tree to grow some fruit.*

*What is Jesus trying to teach us with this story?
Just as the gardener is willing to look after the tree very
carefully so that it didn't need to be destroyed,
so too God is willing to give us another chance, with Jesus'
help, to change and grow the fruit of God's love.*

Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Third Sunday of Lent, 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 13: 6-9

Jesus told the people this story:

"A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard. One day he went out to pick some figs, but he didn't find any. So he said to the gardener, 'For three years I have come looking for figs on this tree, and I haven't found any yet. Chop it down! Why should it take up space?'

"The gardener answered, 'Master, leave it for another year. I'll dig around it and put some manure on it to make it grow. Maybe it will have figs on it next year. If it doesn't, you can have it cut down.'"



One day Moses was taking care of the sheep of Jethro his father-in-law, who was the priest of Midian. Moses led the sheep along the edge of the desert to Sinai, the mountain of God.



Suddenly the Lord's angel appeared to him from a burning bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but it was not burning up. He said to himself, "This is strange! I'll go over and see why the bush is not burning up."

When the Lord saw Moses coming near the bush, he called out to him. Moses answered, "Lord, here I am."

God replied, "Don't come any closer. Take off your sandals, because the ground where you are standing is holy. I am God who was worshipped by your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Moses was too afraid to look at God, and he hid his face. The Lord said, "I have seen how my people are suffering in Egypt, and I have heard them cry out to me because of those slave bosses. I am sorry for them, and so I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians. I will bring my people out of Egypt into a country where there is good land and plenty of milk and honey."

Moses answered, "I will tell the people of Israel that the God of their ancestors has sent me to them. But what should I say, if they ask me who you are?"

God said to Moses, "I am who I am. So tell them that the one whose name is 'I Am' has sent you. Say that the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has sent you to them. This is my name forever, and it is the name that people must use from now on."

PSALM

Psalm 103

Response: The Lord is kind and merciful

With all my heart I praise the Lord, and with all that I am I praise his holy name!

With all my heart I praise the Lord! I will never forget how kind he has been. **R**

For all who are mistreated, the Lord brings justice.

He taught his Law to Moses and showed all Israel what he could do. **R**

The Lord is merciful! He is kind and patient and his love never fails.

How great is God's love for all who worship him?

Greater than the distance between heaven and earth! **R**

Background to the Readings for Leaders

At the time of this burning bush revelation of God, Moses is not a leader. Rather, he is tending sheep on a holy mountain. Moses asks for God's name, because a new revelation of God demands a new title – a personal name which reflects the continuing action of the God who was worshipped by their ancestors, and for whom geographical boundaries are no limit. It both tells us so much and so little. The people who are to be freed from captivity will have Moses' leadership authenticated by this new name.

In Scripture, the vineyard was often used as a symbol of Israel, God's people. The image of God is as the owner of the vineyard, who tends it with great care, planting, pruning, cultivating and feeding the plants to ensure they are fruitful and flourishing. Every means for fostering fruitfulness is offered to the barren fig tree, just as every opportunity is given to us to attend to our own need for repentance.

Images from the Readings

- *The bush was on fire*
- *Take off your sandals*
- *Holy ground*
- *Looking for fruit*
- *Leave it for another year*

Reflection for Leaders

Today's readings lead us to reflect upon of the mystery of God. God reaches out to communicate with us in our burning bush experiences, at the same time is willing to cut off unfruitful branches. As we think about our personal encounters with God, we find the places of 'holy ground' in our life. Do we recognise the presence of God in the assembly gathered each week in His name? What about God's presence in the stuff of our everyday life? Do we see that the ground of our daily existence is holy because of our service of Christ to others as we live our lives?

When we consider the Gospel, we are brought to consider the role of the gardener and how this impacts our lives during this time of Lenten preparation. Cultivation requires care and attention – and often pruning. Pruning in our lives is usually a painful experience, but out of it comes healthy, strong growth. Have you known people who have needed to be cultivated for a long time before they 'produced fruit'? Sometimes it takes time for our own fruit to be most abundant and lush. How fruitful has your life been? Your relationship with God? Are there areas of your life which are yet to bear fruit?



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

Violet cloth, Lectionary, a candle

Gardening implements – such as secateurs, a small axe or a pruning saw



LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

3rd Sunday of Lent - 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, take our hand and show us the way you want us to live and grow. Help us to bear the fruit of your love. Amen

R Amen.

First Reading: Exodus 3:1-8

(if used)

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

Psalms 103

Response: **The Lord is kind and merciful**
(or another suitable response known by the children)



Gospel: Luke 13:6-9

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.

- What do you think these gardening tools are for? (pruning, chopping off dead wood)
- What do your parents do with plants that don't grow or produce the fruit that they should? (pull them up, cut them down)
- Have you ever been ready to give up, but decided to give something one more chance, and then found that you have succeeded? What about when a friend has hurt you, do you decide not to be friends with them, or do you give them one more chance?
- We often make wrong choices and mistakes, yet God always loves us and is ready to give us another chance. God is very caring and very patient with us. We are always given a chance to change or grow. Can you think of any ways that you could make changes to the way that you live your life to be better?
- When Moses came to the burning bush, God told him to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. What do we do when we are in a holy place?

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

Teach the children to make a profound bow,

And talk about when it is appropriate to use this during the Mass e.g. the priest and other ministers make a profound bow when they arrive before the altar at the beginning of Mass and as they leave at the end of Mass. The people make a profound bow (bowing from the waist) during the Creed at the words 'and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man'. If we are not kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer we should make a profound bow when the Priest genuflects after the Consecration. We do not make a profound bow before receiving Communion. Our Bishops ask that we make a small bow of the head as an act of reverence before receiving Holy Communion.

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: Let us bring all our needs to our loving God.

- For the Church, that she bears much fruit
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For a desire to please God
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That the people of our country will be tolerant and live in peace with each other
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For ourselves and our families, that we learn to be obedient to God
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God of faithfulness, listen to the prayers that we, your children, make to you through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

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

