



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 Lent - Year C

Violet

'Welcome back!!'

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 Psalm 85 Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32



What is Jesus trying to teach us with this story?

*He wants us to know and understand that
whatever we do wrong,
we can always come back to God
and ask for forgiveness.*

God welcomes us back with open arms.

Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Fourth 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 15:1-3, 11-32

Tax collectors and sinners were all crowding around to listen to Jesus. So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses started grumbling, "This man is friendly with sinners. He even eats with them."

Then Jesus told them this story: "Once a man had two sons. The younger son said to his father, 'Give me my share of the property.' So the father divided his property between his two sons. Not long after that, the younger son packed up everything he owned and left for a foreign country, where he wasted all his money in wild living. He had spent everything, when a bad famine spread through that whole land. Soon he had nothing to eat. He went to work for a man in that country, and the man sent him out to take care of his pigs. He would have been glad to eat what the pigs were eating, but no one gave him a thing.

"Finally he came to his senses and said, 'My father's workers have plenty to eat, and here I am, starving to death! I will leave and go to my father and say to him, "Father, I have sinned against

God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son. Treat me like one of your workers.” The younger son got up and started back to his father. But when he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt sorry for him. He ran to his son and hugged and kissed him. The son said, ‘Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son.’

“But his father said to the servants, ‘Hurry and bring the best clothes and put them on him. Give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. Get the best calf and prepare it, so we can eat and celebrate. This son of mine was dead, but has now come back to life. He was lost and now has been found.’ And they began to celebrate.

“The older son had been out in the field. But when he came near the house, he heard the music and dancing. So he called one of the servants over and asked, ‘What’s going on here?’

“The servant answered, ‘your brother has come home safe and sound, and your father ordered us to kill the best calf.’ The older brother got so mad that he would not even go into the house. His father came out and begged him to go in. But he said to his father, ‘For years I have worked for you like a slave and have always obeyed you. But you have never even given me a little goat, so that I could give a dinner for my friends. This other son of yours wasted your money on bad women. And now that he has come home, you ordered the best calf to be killed for a feast.’

“His father replied, ‘My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we should be glad and celebrate! Your brother was dead, but he is now alive. He was lost and has now been found.’”

FIRST READING

2 Corinthians 5;17-19

Brothers and sisters:

Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new. God has done it all! He sent Christ to make peace between himself and us, and he has given us the work of making peace between himself and others. What we mean is that God was in Christ, offering peace and forgiveness to the people of this world. And he has given us the work of sharing his message about peace.

PSALM

Psalms 85

Response: The Lord speaks of peace to his people

I will listen to you, Lord God,
because you promise peace to those who are faithful and no longer foolish. **R.**

You are ready to rescue everyone who worships you,
so that you will live with us in all of your glory. **R.**

Love and loyalty will come together;
goodness and peace will unite. **R.**

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

By asking for his inheritance, the younger son was offering a huge insult to his father; it was akin to wishing his father dead. Working with pigs was the most degrading work for a Jew. Pigs were regarded as unclean – not only was eating their meat prohibited, but touching them would have rendered a person unclean as well. So Jesus showed just how low the son had sunk and set the scene for the astonishingly lavish forgiveness of the father. The religious understanding of the time was that there was no place in God's kingdom for sinners. This story gives us a graphic illustration of the radical new image of a God who is so forgiving, so good, so faithful and generous to his recalcitrant children. God so longs to be reconciled with us, that no limit is set on the celebration for the one who has been 'found'. The story reveals what is required of us if we are to 'be glad and celebrate' – we must realise that the source of rejoicing is in the goodness of God. We must take responsibility and acknowledge our failings and return to God. We must learn not to resent the good fortune of others who don't deserve it. Rejoicing for God's reasons can sometimes be confusing for us – it is not always easy.

Images from the Readings

- *The past is forgotten*
- *I have sinned*
- *He ran to his son*
- *Be glad and celebrate*
- *Everything I have is yours*

Reflection for Leaders

It is only as we travel life's journey and have time to reflect upon the unwise choices that we have made that our life lessons become clear. Hunger is a great incentive to contemplation. The father's response to both sons is consistent – God never tires of seeking the lost and welcoming home those who repent and return. The resentment of the older son to his father's generosity gives us a challenge; his refusal to participate in the family celebration shows a lack of compassion and a meanness of spirit which is quite at odds with his father's response. Try putting yourself into each of the characters of this story in turn. Which one most resembles you and your responses at this time? Do you have a sense of God seeking you out? In what sense is the older son also 'lost'? Perhaps this week you might reach out to someone with a word of forgiveness.

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,



LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

4th 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, You gave your love and peace to us. Help us to make our world a happier place by sharing that love and peace with others.

R Amen.

First Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-19

(if used)

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

Psalms 85

Response: The Lord speaks of peace to his people

(or another suitable response known by the children)

D G A D Bm A D A

Praise the God of all com- pas- sion, Lord of hea - ven, Lord of earth.

D G A/C# D G A A7 D

He is king of all cre - a- tion, he is mer - cy, he is love.

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

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.*

- Jesus told us this story to show us how much God loves us.
- Why did the younger son return home?
- What was his father doing? How did he respond when he noticed his son in the distance?
- How do you think the father and the son felt?
- Who do you think the father in this story is meant to represent?
- Sometimes we make bad choices in life, just like the son in this story. When we make mistakes, how can we say sorry to God?
- What does this story tell us about God and ourselves when we come home and say we are sorry?
- Why is the older son not happy about his brother coming back home? How does he show that he is unhappy about it?

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

Lead the children through an examination of conscience:

Response: Forgive us Jesus, help us to be more like you

When we put our own needs first, before those of others.

When we are unappreciative

When we take advantage of our family and friends

When we hurt those who care for us

When we are selfishly or thoughtless

When we fail to take responsibility for ourselves

R.

R.

R.

R.

R.

R.



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 Īnoīnga 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 turn to our loving God for all our needs.

- For the Church, that she always welcomes people with open arms
Let us pray to the Lord
R Lord hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For a spirit of forgiveness between the people in our communities, schools and families
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 welcome and be kind to those who have come from places where they have been hungry and poor
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 generous
Let us pray to the Lord
R Lord hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God of forgiveness, 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.



4th Sunday of Lent, Year C

Liquid Picture

Luke 15:11-24

Welcome back!

Note to leaders: The following **liquid picture** is appropriate to use with children of any age but especially suitable for **younger children**.

How to do liquid pictures:

Liquid Pictures is a form of drama which allows a story to be presented in a flowing or liquid manner. The process follows this pattern:

- Divide the story or Scriptural passage into five or six main statements.
- Accompany each statement with a simple action that can be held in a freeze frame position.
- Choose one child to say each statement and do a simple action. These children form a straight line facing the audience.
- A leader introduces the story.
- The first child steps forward, repeats the statement two or three times (once is not enough for children to remember!) then freezes.
- The second child steps forward, repeats the statement and freezes.
- The process continues until the last child finishes.
- The leader concludes with a simple statement.

Leader: One day the Pharisees and teachers of the Law started grumbling because Jesus welcomed sinners and outcasts and even ate with them. To quieten them down, he told this parable:

Give me half NOW!

Here it is. Now go!

Fun! Joy! Laughter!

Hunger! Sorrow! Misery!

There's food back home! I'm off!

My son! WELCOME!! It's SO GOOD to have you back!

You ARE my Son, you will always be welcome!



Leader: And this is how God love us and ALWAYS welcomes us home!

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.