



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

5th Sunday of Lent - Year C

Violet

'Be more forgiving'

Isaiah 43:18-21 Psalm 126 Philippians 3:12-14 John 8:1-11



Why did the Pharisees want to stone the woman? How did they mean to trick Jesus? They wanted to see if Jesus would disobey the law and show the woman mercy. Jesus understands that we are often weak and do things that are wrong. He was always willing to give people another chance to be better and to change. Sometimes it is easy for us to see what other people are doing wrong, and hard to see our own faults. Jesus wants us to learn to be more forgiving of other people just as he is.

Leader's Preparation

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

John 8:1-11

Jesus spent the night on the Mount of Olives. Then early the next morning he went to the temple. The people came to him, and he sat down and started teaching them. The Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses brought in a woman who had been caught in bed with a man who was not her husband. They made her stand in the middle of the crowd. Then they said, "Teacher, this woman was caught sleeping with a man who is not her husband. The Law of Moses teaches that a woman like this should be stoned to death! What do you say?" They asked Jesus this question, because they wanted to test him and bring some charge against him. But Jesus simply bent over and started writing on the ground with his finger. The crowd

kept on asking Jesus about the woman. Finally, he stood up and said, "If any of you have never sinned, then go ahead and throw the first stone at her!"

Once again he bent over and began writing on the ground. The people left one by one, beginning with the oldest one in the crowd. Finally, Jesus and the woman were there alone. Jesus stood up and asked her, "Where is everyone? Isn't there anyone left to accuse you?"

"No, sir," the woman answered.

Then Jesus told her, "I am not going to accuse you either. You may go now, but don't sin anymore."

FIRST READING

Isaiah 43:18-21

The Lord says this:

Forget what happened long ago! Don't think about the past. I am creating something new. There it is! Do you see it?

I have put a road in the desert and streams in thirsty land. Every wild animal honours me, even the jackals and owls.

I provide water in the desert and streams in a thirsty land for my chosen people. I made them my own nation, so they would praise me.

PSALM

Psalms 126

Response: The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

It seemed like a dream when the Lord brought us back to the city of Zion.
We celebrated with laughter and joyful songs. **R.**

In foreign nations it was said, "The Lord has worked miracles for his people."
And so we celebrated because the Lord had indeed worked miracles for us. **R.**

SECOND READING

Philippians 3:1-12

Brothers and sisters:

I have not yet reached my goal, and I am not perfect. But Christ has taken hold of me. So I keep on running and struggling to take hold of the prize. My friends, I don't feel that I have already arrived. But I forget what is behind, and I struggle for what is ahead. I run toward the goal, so that I can win the prize of being called to heaven.

This is the prize that God offers because of what Christ Jesus has done.

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

The goodness and mercy of God, and our need for repentance, continue to be illustrated all through the Lenten readings. The account of the woman caught in adultery is in reality a story of the conflict of Jesus and the religious authorities who were intent on putting him to the test. This event took place in the outer court of the Temple, a public place. Here the faithful are instructed in the observance of the Law. The dilemma for Jesus is whether he advocates the appropriate Mosaic sentence – death by stoning – or clings to his own teachings on mercy and compassion. In a society governed by honour and shame, they realise that Jesus has outwitted and humiliated them. Despite her obvious guilt, the woman herself is of minor significance to these authorities (her equally guilty partner has not been dragged forward), and Jesus does not even look at her or address her until they have all left in shame. With compassionate respect, Jesus neither condones nor condemns this stranger, as he invites her to a new life. Acceptance and love allow repentance and change to occur in others far more readily than harsh judgments and unacceptance.

The Mount of Olives, just outside the city gates, is in sight of the Temple, and pilgrims to the great festivals often stayed there. The Garden of Gethsemane, featured next week, is located here.

Images from the Readings

- *A road in the desert*
- *Keep on running*
- *They wanted to test him*
- *Writing on the ground*
- *Where is everyone?*

Reflection for Leaders

This whole encounter bristles with emotion and danger. Yet Jesus completely defuses the whole situation by refusing to play into their trap. He turns their test of his integrity into a test of their own. Jesus offers a new way to deal with wrongdoing and sin. He does not condemn the sinner, but invites her to leave her past behind and begin again. This leaves us open to reflect how it feels to be harshly judged by someone else. Have you had an experience of being unconditionally loved by someone, or a time when you have felt totally accepted? How does that feel? Who are the people in your life whom you love and accept unconditionally? Are there times or situations when you find yourself being judgmental or too hasty in your judgments? What steps can you take to correct this attitude?

For the Israelites the heart was the centre of human intelligence and will power. For Jeremiah sin had been second nature to the people of God, and the very absence of heart in the covenant explained why obedience to God was never realised. Only a conversion of heart will lead to an eternal covenant, one that cannot be broken.



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, a stone for each child,
and a cross*



LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

5th 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 always understand us and forgive us, even when we have done wrong. Help us to be more like you.

R Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 43:18-21

(if used)

The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki

Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

Psalm 126

Response: The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

(or another suitable response known by the children)

Second Reading: Philippians 3:12-14

(if used)

The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki

Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

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: John 8:1-11

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 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.*

- Why was the woman brought to Jesus?
- How must she have felt? How did the crowd feel? How did Jesus respond? Why do you think the people began to leave?
- What did Jesus say to the woman when they were alone?
- Would she have felt differently then, from how she felt before?
- Do you think that feeling loved allow us to be free to change, rather than being judged harshly?
- What does this tell us about how God feels about us when we make mistakes, even serious ones?
- What does this mean for us and how Jesus expects us to treat other people?

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 take a stone to hold as you lead them in a simple prayer, such as:

‘Loving Jesus,
we are sorry for the times we are mean
to people who have done wrong things.
We ask you to forgive us for being unloving and judgmental.
Help us to be more like you. Amen.’

Invite the children to place their stone by the cross at the focus.



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: We know that God loves us, so let us pray for others and for ourselves:

- For the Church, that we learn to be forgiving of ourselves and others
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 compassion towards all those who are different
Let us pray to the Lord
R Lord hear our prayer or E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou
- That we reach out to those who are scared and lonely
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 our homes are places of peace and forgiveness
Let us pray to the Lord
R Lord hear our prayer or E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou

Leader: God of compassion, teach us your ways. Hear the prayers that we make to you through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

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

The Holy Season of

