



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Twenty Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C

'Kindness and mercy'

Green



1 Timothy 1:12-15 Psalm 111 Luke 15:11-32

Have you ever lost anything that was really important to you? How did you feel? What did you do? Jesus tells us a story about a father who thought he had lost his son forever, but he came home. God is like the father, always ready to forgive us and bring us back home to him when we recognise that we have done wrong.

Leader's Preparation

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

Luke 15:11-32

Jesus told the people 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 has now 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, and he is now alive. He was lost and has now been found.' "

FIRST READING

1 Timothy 1:12-15

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord. He has given me the strength for my work because he knew that he could trust me.

I used to say terrible and insulting things about him, and I was cruel. But he had mercy on me because I didn't know what I was doing, and I had not yet put my faith in him.

Christ Jesus our Lord was very kind to me. He has greatly blessed my life with faith and love just like his own.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and I was the worst sinner of all!

PSALM

Psalm 111

Response: **Your works, O Lord, are justice and truth**

Shout praises to the Lord!

With all my heart I will thank the Lord when his people meet.

The Lord has done many wonderful things!

Everyone who is pleased with God's marvellous deeds will keep them in mind. **R**

Everything the Lord does is glorious and majestic,
and his power to bring justice will never end.

The Lord God is famous for his wonderful deeds, and he is kind and merciful. **R**

God is always honest and fair, and his laws can be trusted.

They are true and right and will stand forever. **R**

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

By demanding his inheritance, the younger son offered his father an enormous insult (it was equivalent to wishing his father dead). His 'high-life' didn't last for long – the wealth that his family had amassed, probably over generations, was gone in a surprisingly short space of time. Feeding pigs was possibly the most degrading task for a Jew, who were prohibited from eating their flesh, but just touching the animals would have rendered a person unclean. It was from the depths of this condition that the son decided to return to his father's house to take his place amongst the servants. But the father's response was immediate and effusive – the son's place in the household was reinstated. Jewish understanding of the day was that there was no place in God's kingdom for sinners, so this concept was a radical departure from the accepted image of God. In fact the image painted by Jesus is of lavish forgiveness - one who always runs to meet us when we return home, whatever that is for us.

Images from the Readings

- *Give me my share*
- *Came to his senses*
- *He ran to his son*
- *Everything I have is yours*
- *Kindness and mercy*

Reflection for Leaders

Recall some instances of rebellion, or jealousy; of receiving forgiveness and generosity. Can you identify with either or both the sons in this story? It is often hard to understand the mercy that God lavishes on the most undeserving people, and our human nature makes it difficult for us to rejoice over the good fortune of others who have made poor choices. Attitudes and motives are often the biggest challenges for us to examine in ourselves – there is nothing like an empty stomach to encourage us to re-examine our situation in life! Perhaps our biggest challenge is with the response of the older son who was so jealous and resentful of the mercy and forgiveness shown to his brother that he was unwilling to join in the celebration of welcome. Our wrong choices only keep us from enjoying God's presence for as long as we refuse to return home; our attitudes can also prevent us from enjoying our Christian life. Lack of forgiveness, lack of hospitality and generosity are all characteristics which are alien to the father that Jesus shows us. This week try to model your attitudes and meetings with others on those demonstrated by the father in this parable.

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, candle.



LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

Twenty Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 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, we are your children. Help us always to turn back to you with confidence and trust when we have done wrong.

R Amen.

First Reading: 1 Timothy 1:12-15

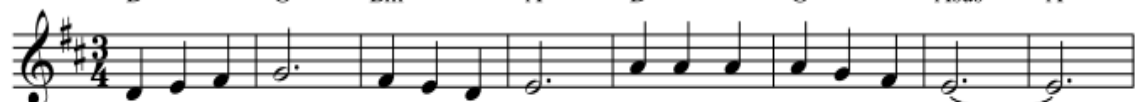
(if used)

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

Psalm 111


Response: Your works, O Lord, are justice and truth
or 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: Luke 15:11-32

- 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.*

- Do you know what this story is called? It is usually called The Prodigal Son, but many people think that it is more about the father. Who do you think Jesus was trying to teach us about when he tells us about this father? (God)
- How do you think the father felt when his son wanted to take his share and leave? Why did the son return home?
- What do you think the father felt when he saw his son return home? What did he do?
- In what ways can we be like the sons? We too make mistakes and have to come back and say sorry. How do we do this?
- What do you think about the older son? Why is he so unhappy that his brother has come home and been welcomed back? How do you think the father would have felt about his reaction?
- Did the older son’s reaction stop the father from having a celebration?
- Does God expect us to be perfect? What does God want of us? (to be with him)

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 an act of contrition, such as:



“Oh my God,
I am so sorry that I have sinned against you,
and with your help I will not sin again.”

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: Loving God, we know that you care for us. We bring our needs to you now with confidence:

- That the Church will always be willing to reach out to those who long to come home to God ...
Let us pray to the Lord
R Lord hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For an openness to God's abundant love, forgiveness and mercy ...
Let us pray to the Lord
R Lord hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For the gift of hospitality and willingness to forgive those who have hurt or rejected us ...
Let us pray to the Lord
R Lord hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For those who have made poor choices in their lives, may they have the courage to make changes ...
Let us pray to the Lord
R Lord hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God of great forgiveness, you are always ready to welcome back those who recognise that they have made wrong choices. Teach us to be like you. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

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



Twenty Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

Liquid Pictures

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 my 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!

I am not fit to be called your son.

You ARE my Son, you will always be welcome!



Leader: And this is how God loves 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.