



# Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

## First Sunday of Advent, Year A

*Violet*

### *Be Ready*

*Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122, Romans 13:11-13a, Matthew 24:37-44*

*Jesus came to earth the first time as a baby - we remember this and celebrate it at Christmas. We know that one day he will return, but we don't know when. During Advent we think about the second coming of Jesus – we must be ready. Jesus tells us what sort of lives we must lead in preparation for this time.*

*The Advent wreath helps us to focus on these things – its circle of greenery represents God's unending love, and the candles represent Jesus, the Light of the World. There are three violet and one pink one. The four candles are lit consecutively on the four Sundays of Advent. Today we light the first violet one.*



### *Leader's Preparation*

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

**Please Note:** During the Liturgy of the Word with Children the Scriptures are to be proclaimed from either the *Lectionary for Masses with Children* or from the *Contemporary English Version of the Bible* as approved by the New Zealand Bishops Conference. Scripture should not be proclaimed from loose sheets of paper during liturgy.

## GOSPEL

Matthew 24:37-44

Jesus said to his disciples:

“When the Son of Man appears things will be just as they were when Noah lived. People were eating, drinking, and getting married right up to the day that the flood came and Noah went into the big boat. They didn't know anything was happening until the flood came and swept them all away. That is how it will be when the Son of Man appears.

“Two men will be in the same field, but only one will be taken. The other will be left.

Two women will be together grinding grain, but only one will be taken. The other will be left.

“So be on your guard! You don’t know when your Lord will come. Homeowners never know when a thief is coming, and they are always on guard to keep one from breaking in. Always be ready! You don’t know when the Son of Man will come.”

## FIRST READING

Isaiah 2:1-5

This is the vision that Isaiah son of Amoz had about Judah and Jerusalem:  
In the future the mountain with the Lord’s temple will be the highest of all. It will reach above the hills, and every nation will rush to it. Many people will come and say, “Let’s go to the mountain of the Lord God of Jacob and worship in his temple.”  
The Lord will teach us his Law from Jerusalem. He will settle the arguments of nations and of people. They will pound their swords and their spears into garden tools. And they will never make war or attack other nations.  
People of Israel, let’s live by the light of the Lord.

## PSALM

Psalms 122

**Response:** **Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.**  
It made me glad to hear them say, “Let’s go to the house of the Lord!”  
Jerusalem, we are standing inside your gates. **R**  
Because of my friends and my relatives, I will pray for peace.  
And because of the house of the Lord our God, I will work for your good. **R**

## SECOND READING (if included)

Romans 13:11-13a

Brothers and sisters:  
You know what sort of times we live in and so you should live properly.  
It is time to wake up.  
You know that the day when we will be saved is nearer now than when we first put our faith in the Lord. Night is almost over, and day will soon appear. We must stop behaving as people do in the dark and be ready to live in the light. So behave properly, as people do in the day.

*Scriptures from the Lectionary for Masses with Children (CEV)*  
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## *Reflection for Leaders*

In the early church believers expected the second coming of Christ at any moment. Customs and traditions that have developed around this season of waiting often reflect the marking of time, such as with Advent wreaths and Advent calendars. Have there been any times in your life when you have been sleepless with excited expectation, or nights that have dragged interminably with anxiety or sadness? How can we link the call to be alert in the readings this week to what is happening around us? Reflect this week on the needs of others, and how we can respond to these; your own self – where you are in life and what things need to change; where God is in the ordinariness of your daily life. Make time each day to watch and listen. Engage in times of silent prayer.

## *Background to the Readings for Leaders*

Advent is a four-week season of Liturgical time during which we look back to the coming of Christ in history, and forward to his coming in glory. The first readings at the beginning of this liturgical year focus on the prophet Isaiah. His vision and images evolve with joy as he sees what is to come and what this means for the world. His joy is infectious as he calls us to live by the light. Paul writes to the early church with huge urgency to prepare, and this is echoed in the words of the Gospel.

Preparations need to be linked back to history, always looking back and then ahead with alertness. In contrast to the titles given to him by the disciples, Jesus refers to himself as the 'Son of Man'. This simply means a human being, but also links to the Scriptural references to the one who will be judge and saviour of all.

## *Images from the Readings*

- *Be on your guard!*
- *Always be ready!*
- *pound swords and spears into garden tools*
- *it is time to wake up*
- *live in the light*

**Please note:** Some of the end-time images might be frightening for the children, particularly those who have been close to natural disasters or tragedy. You may choose to use the alternative Gospel version given at the end of this material.

## *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: You may choose to use the 'Echo Reflection' provided after the Reading/s to reinforce the Gospel message with the children.

## *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 and an Advent Wreath with three purple candles and one pink candle.*



# LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

## First Sunday of Advent, Year A

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 sent your Son, Jesus, to be our Saviour.  
Help us to prepare for Christmas as we hear God's Word.

**R** Amen.

### LITURGICAL ACTION – *Ko te Rītenga Karakia*

Before lighting the first candle of the Advent Wreath, introduce the children to the Season of Advent, the four weeks before Christmas, which is the beginning of the church year. Point out the violet cloth and the Advent Wreath. Explain that the wreath is one way of celebrating this special time of preparation. Its circle of evergreen branches represents God's love which is without beginning or end; one candle is lit each week until Christmas.

Invite the children to join hands around the focus and pray a blessing on the wreath:

"Lord God, let your blessing be on us as we light the candles of this wreath. May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation. May he come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen"

**Children respond:** "Come, Lord Jesus, Come"

Light the first purple candle.



*First Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5*  
(if used)

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

*Psalms 122* (if used) **Response:**

**Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.**

*Second Reading: Romans*

*13:11-13a* (if used)

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

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Sing)

Music © 2011 Maria Guzzo



Advent: Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Make a straight path for the Lord. \_\_\_\_\_

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. He is the hope for the world.

## *Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44*

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

- How does your family prepare for Christmas? The church helps us to prepare by reminding us what will happen at the end of time.
- What are the things that we can do to make our hearts ready inside for the new birth of Jesus this Christmas?
- Just as we need to do special things to get ready for Christmas, we also need to be ready for the time when Jesus comes again, to welcome him into our hearts and lives today and every day. How can we do this?
- What is Jesus asking us to do when he tells us to be on our guard and always be ready?

**5-7 year olds:** *The Echo Reflection at the end of this material can be used as part of the 'Reflecting on the Readings' time within the liturgy and can be given to the children as 'take home' material to share with their families to reinforce the Gospel message.*

**What is an echo reflection?** (Echo reflections are most suited for use with younger children.) A leader reads and the rest of the children repeat a phrase or short sentence. A child leader may be selected. This child would require a copy of the script in order to know what and when to read. The rest of the children repeat whatever the child leader says. This method avoids having to supply copies of the script for every child.

## *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 have listened to God's Word. Now let us come to God full of hope for all our needs:

- For a real sense of excited anticipation of the coming of Jesus

Let us pray to the Lord           **R**   **Lord hear our prayer**  
or                                   **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For peace in our homes, our schools and our communities as we approach the Christmas season

Let us pray to the Lord           **R**   **Lord hear our prayer**  
or                                   **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For peace and harmony in countries torn apart by war around the world, that weapons be remade into garden tools

Let us pray to the Lord           **R**   **Lord hear our prayer**  
or                                   **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- That we always learn to be alert and aware of God's presence in our daily lives

Let us pray to the Lord           **R**   **Lord hear our prayer**  
or                                   **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

**Leader:** God of light, we bring these prayers to you through Jesus Christ our Lord

**All:**           **Amen.**

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

## First Sunday of Advent, Year A (5-7 year olds)

### Echo Reflection

Matthew 24:37-44

Are you ready?

- Leader:** The chorus response is 'Be ready'.
- Reader:** Jesus said to his disciples ...
- Chorus:** **Be ready!**
- Reader:** Whatever you are doing ...
- Chorus:** **Be ready!**
- Reader:** You could be eating or drinking, just ...
- Chorus:** **Be ready!**
- Reader:** Be ready to do what God wants, just ...
- Chorus:** **Be ready!**
- Reader:** Like Noah was! God told Noah to ...
- Chorus:** **Be ready!**
- Reader:** You never know what might happen, so ...
- Chorus:** **Be ready!**
- Reader:** Be ready to do what God wants, just ...
- Chorus:** **Be ready!**
- Reader:** Be ready to help others. Are you ready?
- Leader:** The chorus response is 'We're ready'.
- Chorus:** **We're ready!**
- Reader:** Be ready to forgive. Are you ready?
- Chorus:** **We're ready!**
- Reader:** Be ready to be kind and friendly. Are you ready?
- Chorus:** **We're ready!**
- Reader:** Be ready to think about others. Are you ready?
- Chorus:** **We're ready!**
- Reader:** Be ready to say you are sorry to those you hurt. Are you ready?
- Chorus:** **We're ready!**
- Reader:** Be ready to accept people. Are you ready?
- Chorus:** **We're ready!**
- Reader:** Be ready to do what God wants, ....
- Chorus:** **We're ready!**



Ready, Set, Live for Jesus!

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

## *Alternative Gospel Reading for First Sunday of Advent, Year A*

*Matthew 24:42-44*

### **A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew**

Jesus said to his disciples,

“Stay awake! Always be ready!

You do not know when your Lord is coming.

“You know that if the owners of a house knew

at what time of night a thief was coming,

they would stay awake

and would not allow the thief to break into their house.

“Well, in the same way, you must always be ready

because you do not know the time when the Lord is coming.”

*(from ‘Sunday Book of Readings, The Lectionary Adapted For Children’, Texts adapted by Sister Paule Freeburg, D.C., Treehaus Communications, Inc., United States)*