



# Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

## Third Sunday of Advent, Year A

Violet

### Wait patiently

*Isaiah 35:1-2, 5-6ab, 10, Psalm 146, James 5:7-10, Matthew 11:2-11*

This is the Third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday, or Joy Sunday. For this reason we light the pink candle on our Advent wreath, which symbolises joy. Now that Christmas is getting closer the light is getting brighter with three candles lit. John the Baptist was getting excited to hear of the marvellous things that Jesus was doing. Why did he send his followers to Jesus? What did his followers see and hear? How would they have felt as they witnessed all these miracles happening?



### Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration, begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Third 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 11:2-11

John was in prison when he heard what Christ was doing. So John sent some of his followers to ask Jesus, "Are you the one we should be looking for? Or must we wait for someone else?"

Jesus answered: "Go and tell John what you have heard and seen. The blind are now able to see, and the lame can walk. People with leprosy are being healed, and the deaf can hear. The dead are raised to life, and the poor are hearing the good news. God will bless everyone who does not reject me because of what I do."

As John's followers were going away, Jesus spoke to the crowds about John: "What sort of person did you go out into the desert to see? Was he like tall grass blown about by the wind?

"What kind of man did you go out to see? Was he someone dressed in fine clothes? People who dress like that live in the king's palace.

"What did you really go out to see? Was he a prophet? He certainly was. I tell you that he was more than a prophet.  
In the Scriptures God says about him,  
'I am sending my messenger ahead of you to get things ready for you.'  
"I tell you that no one ever born on this earth is greater than John the Baptist.  
But whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John."

## FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:1-2, 5-6ab, 10

Thirsty deserts will be glad, and barren fields will rejoice and blossom like flowers. They will bloom everywhere and sing joyful songs. They will be as majestic as Mount Lebanon and as glorious as Mount Carmel or the plain of Sharon. Everyone will see the glory and the majesty of the Lord our God.  
The blind will see, and the deaf will hear. The disabled will leap about like deer, and tongues once silent will shout.  
The people the Lord has rescued will come back singing, as they enter Zion. Happiness will be a crown they will always wear. They will rejoice and be glad, because all sorrows and worries will be gone.

## PSALM

Psalm 146

Response:

**Lord, come and save us.**

God always keeps his word.

He gives justice to the poor and food to the hungry. **R**

The Lord sets prisoners free and heals blind eyes.

He gives a helping hand to everyone who falls. **R**

The Lord God of Zion will rule forever! Shout praises to the Lord! **R**

## SECOND READING (if included)

James 5:7-10

My friends, be patient until the Lord returns. Think of farmers who wait patiently for the spring and summer rains to make their valuable crops grow. Be patient like those farmers and don't give up. The Lord will soon be here! Don't grumble about each other or you will be judged, and the judge is right outside the door. My friends, follow the example of the prophets who spoke for the Lord. They were patient, even when they had to suffer.

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

There is a common misapprehension that prophets were people who predicted the future, but in reality their role was to speak in the name of God and call others to a way of life that reflected faith and courage. They were often passionate people and could be uncomfortable companions! Can you think of any prophets of our day who continue to challenge people and touch lives?

Like John, you may have had preconceived expectations of Jesus. Has your experience matched these expectations? Where do you expect to meet him? Is Jesus ‘the One’ as far as you are concerned, or are you looking elsewhere? What are the things that hinder you from welcoming Jesus with joy and hope this week? Where do you see the church being a presence of Jesus in the world today, and being ‘good news’ to people who are in need. During the week find a way of bringing ‘good news’ to someone.

## *Background to the Readings for Leaders*

Isaiah in the first reading, has a vision of the world bursting into bloom at the Messiah’s coming, and every suffering turned to joy. His words encouraged Israel during a time of crisis. Throughout Israel’s history the people had looked forward to the coming of the Messiah – God’s anointed One - who would rescue Israel from oppression and injustice. The coming of the Messiah, predicted in Hebrew Scriptures throughout the generations, was to be indicated by the very miracles that Jesus told John’s disciples to tell John. Jesus is indicating that these signs gave proof that the Messiah had indeed come. Like many of the day, John may well have been confused by his expectation of the Messiah being a judge full of power to effect reform in the land. Instead, Jesus brought his message of forgiveness, healing and reconciliation. Among the great prophets of Israel’s history stood Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Jesus acclaims John as being above all of these. Matthew’s gospel is believed to have been written c 80-90AD by a Jewish-Christian writer. It is well organised around five great teachings and is primarily concerned with revealing Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and announcing God’s Kingdom.

## *Images from the Readings*

- Are you the one?
- Tell what you have seen and heard
- I am sending my messenger ahead of you
- Blooming of deserts
- Wait patiently

## *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 ‘liquid pictures’ material 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. Symbols of John the Baptist (as used last week) such as an icon, hessian cloth wrapped in a leather belt, a stick, honey.*



# *LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE*

## *Third 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, we look forward to Christmas with excitement and hope and joy. Help us to share the good news with others.

R Amen.

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

Light two purple candles and the pink candle today, explaining Joy Sunday, and sing "Prepare the Way" (GA 284) or similar.



### *First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-2, 5-6b, 10*

(if used)

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

### *PSALM 146: (if used)*

**Response: Lord, come and save us.**

### *Second Reading: James 5:7-10*

(if used)

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

D      G      Bm      A      D      G      Asus<sup>4</sup>      A

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

Bm      G      D      A      G      A      D

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

### GOSPEL: MATTHEW 11:2-11

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Minister of the Word:            | A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew   |
| Children:                        | <b>Glory to you, O Lord / Korōria ki ā koe, e te Ariki</b>                                  |
| <i>At the end of the Gospel:</i> | The Gospel of the Lord  |
| Children:                        | <b>Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ / Kia whakanuia rā koe, e te Ariki, e Hēhu Karaiti.</b> |

### 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 things tell you that Christmas is nearly here? (decorations, making cakes, buying gifts, music in shops etc)
- How do you know when Christmas is really here?
- Do you remember the person we talked about last week? (John the Baptist) John wasn't sure if Jesus was the special person God was sending to Israel. What did he do to find out? (he sent his followers to talk to Jesus)
- What was Jesus' response to their question? (He asked them to look at what was happening and compare this to Scripture)
- What were the things that were happening when Jesus met with people? (Blind people could see, lame people could walk etc)
- How would people have felt when they saw all these wonderful things happening? (amazed, full of excitement and joy as they began to realise who Jesus was)
- What things tell us that Jesus really is the one God promised?

### **5-7 year olds:**

The Liquid Pictures material on page 7 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.

## *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:** God knows our needs and listens to our prayers, so let us bring them in confidence:

- That the church be a place of justice and mercy, peace and harmony  
Let us pray to the Lord                   **R**   Lord hear our prayer  
or    **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That we learn to live by hope and encourage each other  
Let us pray to the Lord                   **R**   Lord hear our prayer  
or    **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That people everywhere learn to live with integrity and fairness  
Let us pray to the Lord                   **R**   Lord hear our prayer  
or    **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For an attitude of openness to listen to prophet people who sometimes challenge us or make us feel uncomfortable  
Let us pray to the Lord                   **R**   Lord hear our prayer  
or    **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

**Leader:** God of challenge, remove from us the things that stop us from welcoming Jesus with joy. We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord

**All:**    **Amen.**

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

Liquid Picture

Matthew 11:2-6

John and Jesus?

## 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: John was in prison so he sent a message to ask Jesus if he was the Messiah. Jesus sent a message, ‘Tell John the good news that...’

**Child 1:** **Blind people can see! Yeah!**

**Child 2:** **Deaf people can hear! Wow!**

**Child 3:** **Lame people can walk! Okay!**

**Child 4:** **Sick people are healed! Cool!**

**Child 5:** **Dead people are brought back to life!  
Awesome!**

Leader: This is GOOD NEWS!



From 'Just Imagine 4, Many Creative ways of presenting Scripture' written by Rina Wintour, Mountjoy Enterprises. Available from the Liturgy Centre.