



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Green

‘Love your enemies.’

Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18, Psalm 103, 1 Corinthians 3:18-20, Matthew 5:38-48

Does anyone know what an enemy is? (Someone who hates another person and wants to hurt or harm them.) Today we hear Jesus telling us that we must learn to forgive and love our enemies, and never to hate them.



Leader's Preparation

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

Matthew 5:38-48

Jesus said to his disciples: “You know that you have been taught, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to try to get even with a person who has done something to you. “When someone slaps your right cheek, turn and let that person slap your other cheek. If someone sues you for your shirt, give up your coat as well. If a soldier forces you to carry his pack one mile, carry it two miles. When people ask you for something, give it to them. When they want to borrow money, loan it to them.

“You have heard people say, ‘Love your neighbours and hate your enemies.’ But I tell you to love your enemies and pray for anyone who mistreats you. Then you will be acting like your Father in heaven.

“He makes the sun rise on both good and bad people. And sends rain for the ones who do right and for ones who do wrong. “If you love only those people who love you, will God reward you for that? Even tax collectors love their friends. If you greet only your friends, what’s so great about that? Don’t even unbelievers do that? But you must always act like your Father in heaven.”

FIRST READING

Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18

The LORD told Moses to say to all of the people of Israel: Keep yourselves holy. I am the LORD your God, and I am holy.

Don't secretly hate someone.

Correct anyone who does wrong, And you won't be guilty of that person's sin.

Don't try to get even. And don't hold grudges. You must love others as much as you love yourself. I am the LORD your God.

PSALM

Psalm 103

Response: **The Lord is kind and merciful.**

With all my heart I praise the LORD, and with all that I am I praise his holy name!

With all my heart I praise the LORD! I will never forget how kind he has been. **R**

The LORD forgives our sins, heals us when we are sick.

Just as parents are kind to their children, the LORD is kind to all who worship him. **R**

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 3:18-20

Brothers and sisters: Don't fool yourselves!

If any of you think you are wise in the things of this world, you will have to become foolish before you can be truly wise. This is because God considers the wisdom of the world to be foolish.

It is just as the Scriptures say, "God catches the wise when they try to outsmart him." The Scriptures also say, "The Lord knows that the plans made by wise people are useless."

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

Jesus instruction on the reinterpretation of the Law, begun last Sunday, continues today. Once again we realise that true wisdom, which comes to us through the Holy Spirit, will enrich us with insight into life in ways we never thought possible before. We are quite familiar with the command to love because we have read it so often in the Gospels.

Here in Leviticus we are asked to understand this love from a new perspective. Firstly we are asked to be holy as God is holy. It is from this concept of divine holiness that the contrast of love and hate must be understood. The life of holiness we are asked to embrace, is a life lived in community, patterned on the holiness of God. Our likeness to God is determined by the way we relate to others. This is the standard that Jesus puts before us when he commands us to "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect". It takes a life time of living to come anywhere near the complete, fulfilled and undivided potential of our growth in holiness, but it remains our goal!

Three exaggerated examples illustrate what Jesus means: offering the other cheek to be struck, handing over even the cloak that might be used as a blanket at night and carrying the soldier's gear much further than required are extremely creative ways of reinterpreting the

Law. Give much more than is asked! Disarm your enemies with your willingness to go beyond what is required! Your generosity will shame them and you will gain honour in their sight - a total reversal of what they set out to achieve. Jesus is not suggesting that we allow ourselves to be abused, neither is he advocating passivity - rather he is describing what some people might call “active non-resistance”. Instead of retaliating in kind, Jesus is teaching us to “right the wrongs” by overcoming evil with goodness, not with revenge. This is what makes Jesus’ teaching so extremely radical.

Images from the Readings

- Love one another
- Wise vs foolish
- Forgiveness
- Make peace
- Pray for your enemies



Reflection for Leaders

In the heat of the moment, it is so difficult to choose **not** to answer back, **not** to repay the first insult with worse, **not** to raise a fist in protest. How much easier it is at times to end a friendship rather than persevere in healing the “injuries” inflicted on each other. And how hard it is to admit our own fault, to take responsibility for our own hasty words, thoughtless actions or the things we have failed to do! All the more reason then to learn and practice creative, respectful and non-violent ways to respond to people and situations. Then we don’t get caught out so easily when the going gets tough! Peace begins with you. It spreads to your family and friends. It becomes yeast in your community. It has the capacity to transform the world. This brings us back to the first reading - and the call to embrace holiness and love. Our likeness to God, in whose image and likeness we are made, is determined by the way we relate to others. What community groups or organisations are promoting healthy relationship living, parenting skills, or non-violent conflict resolution (mediation) in your local school, parish, community? There is always something more we can learn about the ways we relate to God, to ourselves and to each other!

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’ which this week uses *the ‘Liquid Picture’ on page 8 to reinforce the Gospel message.*

Suggested Focus

Prepare a focus for the area where the children’s Liturgy of the Word is to be held: Green cloth, Lectionary, a candle, crucifix.

LEADER'S Liturgy Outline

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, 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, God of Peace, have mercy on us and help us to understand how to show mercy to those who hurt us.

R Amen.

First Reading: Leviticus 19:1-2,17-18

(if used)

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

Psalm 103

Response: The Lord is kind and merciful.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:18-20

(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 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: Matthew 5:38-48

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.

- Jesus tells us to love as God loves; that is, all people, even those we do not like! Is it easy to love someone who hurts us?
- How do you continue to be their friend? (bully, peer pressure)
- What has Jesus told us to do? We should not let our anger win. We must try to be generous and kind, and to become friends. This is never easy, but we should try to do what we know is right.
- What is another example where people don't get along? (war) All over the world many different nations are enemies and their people are at war. Many people are trying hard to bring peace to these places and to encourage friendship, just as Jesus wanted.
- How can we help to bring a more peaceful environment? (Being nice to each other, respect, sharing, and learning to say sorry because we too can be the person that is hurting someone else.)



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

Both older and younger children come together for the liturgical action this week using Rina Wintour's 'liquid picture' of this Gospel on page 8.

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: Loving God, we offer up our gifts, let us pray:

- That we be selfless people and give to those less fortunate
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 love others, taking our example from the way you love us
Let us pray to the Lord **R** Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit will support us in times when others don't show us love, so that we may forgive rather than seek revenge
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 be like you, God, and have mercy on those who may hurt us
Let us pray to the Lord **R** Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God the Father, fill our world with love, especially those countries at war. Bring peace to people's hearts so they may do your will.

All: **Amen.**

The children rejoin the assembly before the prayers over the gifts.

Note to leaders: The following **liquid picture** is appropriate to use with children and young people of **any age**.

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: If you are to be a disciple, you will ...

Forgive someone who hurts you.

Share your belongings.

Help someone in need.

Be kind to people.

Be a good friend.

Leader: This is how God loves us.



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