



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

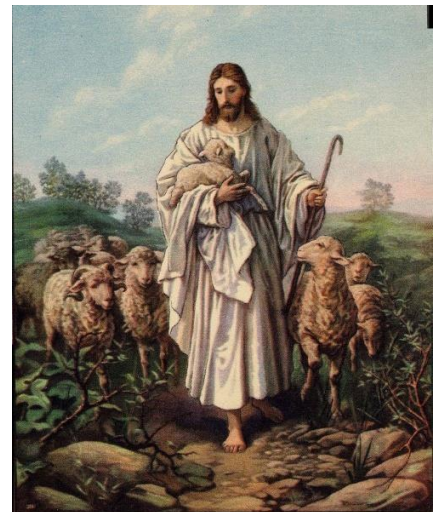
Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year A

White

'I am the gate for the sheep'

Acts 2:14a, 36-41, Ps 23, John 10: 1-10

Jesus came to show us how to live in a way that would please God. By following this pathway, we are able to live life to the fullest. As a Shepherd leads his flock of sheep, so Christ leads us.



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Fourth Sunday of Easter, 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 10:1-10

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I tell you for certain that only thieves and robbers climb over the fence instead of going in through the gate to the sheep pen. But the gatekeeper opens the gate for the shepherd, and he goes in through it. The sheep know their shepherd's voice. He calls each of them by name and leads them out.

"When he has led out all of his sheep, he walks in front of them, and they follow, because they know his voice. The sheep will not follow strangers. They don't recognize a stranger's voice, and they run away."

Jesus told the people this story.

But they did not understand what he was talking about.

Then Jesus said:

"I tell you for certain that I am the gate for the sheep. Everyone who came before me was a thief or a robber, and the sheep did not listen to any of them.

I am the gate.

All who come in through me will be saved.

Through me they will come and go and find pasture.

"A thief comes only to rob, kill, and destroy. I came so that everyone would have life, and have it in its fullest."

FIRST READING

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood with the eleven apostles and spoke in a loud clear voice to the crowd:

"Everyone in Israel should know for certain that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ, even though you put him to death on a cross."

When the people heard this, they were very upset. They asked Peter and the other apostles, "Friends, what shall we do?"

Peter said, "Turn back to God! Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will be given the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and your children. It is for everyone our Lord God will choose, no matter where they live."

Peter told the people many other things as well. Then he said, "I beg you to save yourselves from what will happen to all these evil people."

On that day about three thousand believed his message and were baptized.

PSALM

Psalm 23

Response: *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want*

You, LORD, are my shepherd. I will never be in need.

You let me rest in fields of green grass.

You lead me to streams of peaceful water,

And you refresh my life. **R**

You are true to your name, and you lead me
Along the right paths.

I may walk through valleys as dark as death,

But I won't be afraid, You are with me,

And your shepherd's rod makes me feel safe. **R**

Your kindness and love will always be with me

Each day of my life, and I will live forever

In your house, LORD. **R**

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

The concept of the shepherd in ancient times is one of intimate and trusting relationship which forms the basis of our terms 'pastor' and 'pastoral care'. It is a traditional image the Jewish people had long held as an image of their own relationship with God. The image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is well known and well-loved because of the individual care that is symbolised for each one of the flock. But John takes the imagery a step further by the introduction of the gate. Valid entry into the flock of God's people can only be made by way of the gate, which is belief in Christ. Jesus states that no other entry is acknowledged or permitted. John's Gospel uses a different literary technique from the synoptic Gospels. He does not utilise the parables as they do. However this Gospel uses the imagery of the Good Shepherd to great effect as it contrasts the shepherd who brings the sheep in by the gate with the robbers who climb over the fence. John is reflecting on pastoral leadership. A good leader will always come through Jesus, the gate, or the people will be scattered and confused. Abundant life is available to those who follow Jesus' leadership.

Images from the Readings

- *He calls each by name*
- *They follow because they know his voice*
- *Find pasture*
- *Life in its fullest*
- *Given the Holy Spirit*

Reflection for Leaders

No image of God gives us a complete picture, but each offers a valuable insight into God and our relationship with God. We understand that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the image of Jesus the Good Shepherd gives many a deep sense of comfort and security. What particular images of Jesus have you found most helpful to you in your faith journey? As we travel our journey of faith, many people will have guided us and protected us. Can you recall the special people in your life, the attributes that they had and how they used their gifts to care for you and others? Jesus assures us that as his followers we will have life to its fullest, and for many in our society today this is a vain hope. How would you describe 'life in its fullest' to someone?

During the coming week seek our opportunities to protect or shepherd someone who might be feeling a bit lost or helpless.

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

Prepare a focus for the area where the children's Liturgy of the Word is to be held:
White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, an image of Jesus the Good Shepherd.



Leader's Liturgy Outline

Fourth Sunday of Easter, 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

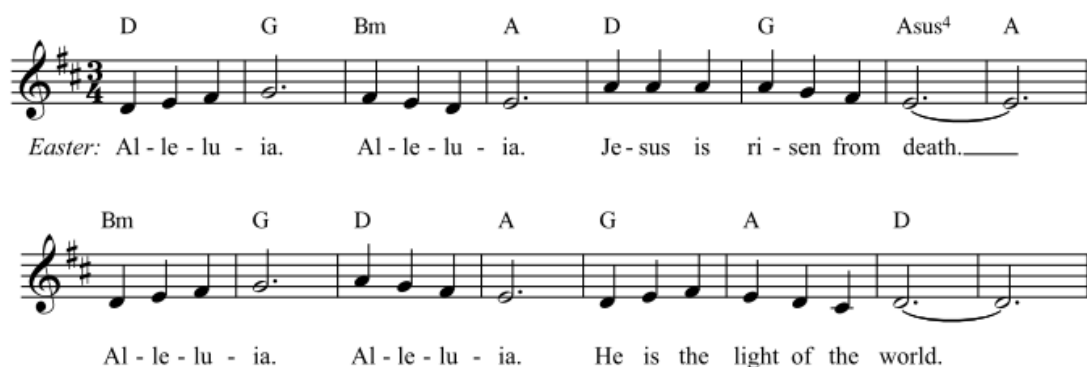
Leader: O God, you protect us with great love and care. Help us always to turn to you with trust whenever we need help.

R Amen.

First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 36-41 The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki
Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

Psalm 23

Response: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.



Gospel: John 10:1-10

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 questions, like the following, to stimulate ideas.*

- Have you ever heard someone's voice and recognised that it belongs to someone you know?
- Can you think of a time when you needed to ask your Mum or Dad a question and even before you asked them you knew exactly what they would say?
- Why do you think Jesus talks of shepherds and sheep? (in his day, a shepherd cared for a group of sheep and he knew each one by name. He looked after them, protected them from dangers, took them to where there was grass to eat and water to drink. He would talk to his sheep and even sleep with them so that no wild animals could attack them in the night; the sheep knew that their shepherd kept them safe so they trusted him. Jesus chose this image to show his great love, because he gives life to us just as the shepherd does for his sheep)
- What do you think Jesus is trying to teach us with this story today? (like the sheep we can hear and recognise God's voice.)
- How can we do this? (by listening to our parents, teachers etc)
- What does Jesus tell us he really wants for us? (to live full and happy lives)

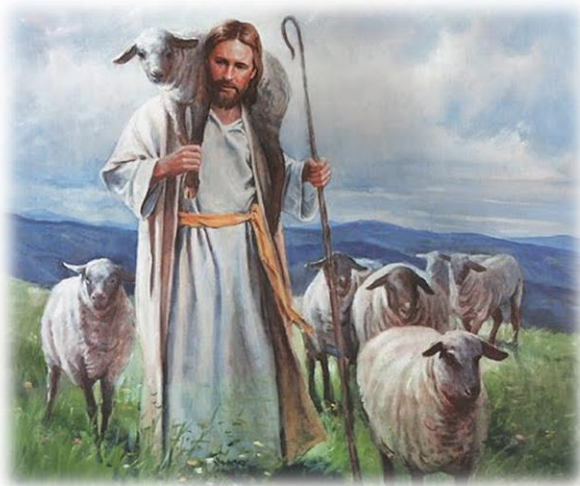
5-7 year olds: Adapt some of the questions in the 8-12 material and then join with the older group for the 'Liturgical Action'.

LITURGICAL ACTION – Ko te Rītenga Karakia

Sing one of the 'Shepherd' songs that the children might know such as "The Lord is my Shepherd". Alternatively, pray this simple version of Psalm 23 with the children. You may need to copy it on to a large sheet of paper so the children can join in and read along:

The Lord is my shepherd;
I have everything I need.
He lets me rest in fields of green grass
and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.

He gives me new strength.
He guides me in the right paths,
as he has promised. (*Ps. 23:1-3*)



As a way of the children committing themselves to follow Jesus, you could invite the children to come and touch the hands of the Good Shepherd image from your liturgical 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: With trust in God's love and protection we call upon God for all our wants:

- That our Church will be a place of safety that cares for all
Let us pray to the Lord **R Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For peace and security in our homes, our schools and our community and throughout the world
Let us pray to the Lord **R Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For all those who are like lost sheep
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 compassion to care for the sick and the helpless around us
Let us pray to the Lord **R Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God of new life, you give hope to the hearts of all who are afraid. Hear and answer the prayers that we make for ourselves and others through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: Amen

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