



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year A

White

'I will also love you and show you what I am like!'

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17, Ps 66, John 14:15--21

Jesus knew that he was soon to be leaving his disciples and going back to the Father. He promises to send a special helper – the Holy Spirit. Jesus tells his disciples about this precious gift. Through the Holy Spirit Jesus was able to remain with the apostles then and with us in the same way today. When do we receive the Holy Spirit in a special way? At our baptism and confirmation. If you were asked to describe the Spirit what would you say?



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Sixth 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 14:15-21

Jesus said to his disciples:

"If you love me, you will do as I command. Then I will ask the Father to send you the Holy Spirit who will help you and always be with you. The Spirit will show you what is true.

"The people of this world cannot accept the Spirit, because they don't see or know him. But you know the Spirit, who is with you and will keep on living in you.

"I won't leave you like orphans. I will come back to you. In a little while the people of this world won't be able to see me, but you will see me. And because I live, you will live. Then you will know that I am one with the Father. You will know that you are one with me, and I am one with you.

"If you love me, you will do what I have said, and my Father will love you. I will also love you and show you what I am like."

FIRST READING

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

Philip went to the town of Samaria and told the people about Christ. They crowded around Philip because they were eager to hear what he was saying and to see him work miracles. Many people with evil spirits were healed, and the spirits went out of them with a shout. A lot of crippled and lame people were also healed. Everyone in that city was very glad because of what was happening.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that some people in Samaria had accepted God's message, they sent Peter and John. When the two apostles arrived, they prayed that the people would be given the Holy Spirit.

Before this the Holy Spirit had not been given to anyone in Samaria though some of them had been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Peter and John then placed their hands on everyone who had faith in the Lord, and they were given the Holy Spirit.

PSALM

Psalm 66

Response: Let all the earth cry out to God with joy

Tell everyone on this earth to shout praises to God!
Sing about his glorious name. Honour him with praises.
Say to God, "Everything you do is fearsome!" **R**

"You are worshipped by everyone! We all sing praises to you."
Come and see the fearsome things our God has done! **R**

All who worship God, come here and listen;
I will tell you everything God has done for me.
Let's praise God!
He listened when I prayed, and he is always kind. **R**

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

Persecution following the stoning of Stephen caused the spread of the gospel outside Jerusalem as the Greek-speaking disciples fled. The first reading presents us with a scene of great welcome by the Samaritans as Philip brings the gospel message to them accompanied by miraculous signs of healing. The Easter joy is prevalent as people received the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The giving of the Holy Spirit is promised by Jesus in the gospel reading as he tenderly assures his closest friends that they would not be left uncared for like orphans. As followers of Jesus we need never feel abandoned by God because the presence of the Holy Spirit is always with us, freely given at our baptism and confirmation. Through it we are enabled to love God and keep his commands.

Images from the Readings

- If you love me, you will do as I command
- People focused on this world cannot know the Holy Spirit
- I won't leave you
- I am one with the Father
- Many were healed

Reflection for Leaders

Obedience is a benchmark of love. To profess that we love God may be easy, but being obedient to Jesus' commands takes us to a new level of commitment in our Christian walk. These can be summed up by the command to love God and each other. This might sound easy, but when we are asked to love people who provoke or ridicule us we need to call on the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit is not only with us, but within us, as a source of inner strength and empowerment – the same Spirit at work in the life of Jesus, freely given to us at our baptism and confirmation. Through this presence Jesus remains forever present to the church, and through it we share in the life of God and mission of Jesus. During the week watch for moments which you consider to be experiences of the Holy Spirit, in your own personal prayer, in your relationships and in the church and its liturgy.

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, a picture of a dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit



Leader's Liturgy Outline

Sixth 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 sent your Holy Spirit to breathe your life into us. Help us to touch the lives of others with the love and strength that you give to us.

R Amen.

First Reading: Acts 8: 5-8, 14-17 The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki
Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

Psalm 66

Response: Let all the earth cry out to God with joy

D G Bm A D G Asus⁴ A

Easter: Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Je - sus is ri - sen from death.____

Bm G D A G A D

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. He is the light of the world.

Gospel: John 14: 15-21

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

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 been left alone for a long time?
- What does it feel like when people go away and leave you behind? Who minds you when this happens?
- When Jesus was getting ready to go back to his father, he knew that his friends would be feeling 'left behind', so he promised to send a special helper to be with them. Who was this helper? (Holy Spirit)
- How did we receive this Spirit? (at our baptism, confirmation)
- Can we see the Holy Spirit? How do we know the Holy Spirit is present? (We can experience the Holy Spirit. We know the Spirit is with us as Jesus promised the Spirit.)
- Can you think of any ways that we might recognise the Holy Spirit in people? (When we see someone do something good, this is a clear sign that the Holy Spirit is present.)

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

When we see someone do something good we know that the Holy Spirit is leading them in God's mission.

Ask the children **'What good action can you do today?'**

Then pray

'Come Holy Spirit, help me to do.....' (and the children can add their good deed.)
Amen.



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: We have listened to God's word. Now let us bring all our prayers and our needs to our loving God:

- That our Church be led by the Holy Spirit in all things
Let us pray to the Lord **R Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That we always treat others with respect and love
Let us pray to the Lord **R Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For courage to help others who have been treated unfairly
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 rejected, lonely, abandoned. May they know the Holy Spirit's presence
Let us pray to the Lord **R Lord hear our prayer**
Or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God of comfort, you always hear the prayers of your children. Knowing your great love for us we make these prayers now through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: **Amen**

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