



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Green

Do not be afraid

Jeremiah 20:10-12a, 13, Psalm 69, Matthew 10:26-31

Jesus gave his friends a job to do: to share the good news. They were not having an easy time and often felt afraid of doing things that they hadn't done before. Do you ever feel like that? Jesus tells them not worry or be afraid of people. Being afraid often stops us from doing the things that we need to do. Jesus gives us a wonderful word picture of just how tenderly God cares for us and how valuable we are.



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Eighth 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 10:26-31

Jesus said to his disciples: "Don't be afraid of anyone! Everything that is hidden will be found out, and every secret will be known.

"Whatever I say to you in the dark, you must tell in the light. And you must announce from the housetops whatever I have whispered to you.

"Don't be afraid of people. They can kill you, but they cannot harm your soul. Instead, you should fear God who can destroy both your body and your soul in hell.

"Aren't two sparrows sold for only a penny? But your Father knows when any one of them falls to the ground. Even the hairs on your head are counted. So don't be afraid! You are worth much more than many sparrows."

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 20:10-12a, 13

I heard the crowds whisper, "Everyone's afraid! Tell on him! Tell on him!"

All of my friends are waiting for me to make a mistake. They say, "He will slip up. Then we can trap him and get even at last."

But the Lord is with me like a mighty soldier. And those troublemakers will stumble, then fall down and fail. They will be forever disgraced and terribly ashamed.

Lord All-Powerful, you test everyone who does right, and you know everything anyone thinks or feels.

Sing and praise the Lord! He rescues the helpless from cruel oppressors.

PSALM

Psalm 69

Response: Lord, in your great love, answer me.

I pray to you, Lord. So when the time is right answer me and help me with your wonderful love. **R**

Answer me, Lord! You are kind and good.

Pay attention to me! You are truly merciful. **R**

Protect me, God, and keep me safe!

I will praise the Lord God with a song. **R**

SECOND READING

The Lectionary for Masses with Children gives no Second Reading for this Sunday.

Scriptures from the Lectionary for Masses with Children (CEV)
© Archdiocese of Chicago LTP. 1994 Used with permission

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The first reading is part of a powerful message by the prophet Jeremiah of the doom and destruction of Judah, illustrated by the smashing of a pottery jar. By recounting the message Jeremiah is subject to rejection by the people who refuse to receive the unwelcome message. Jeremiah's prayer is a beautiful heartfelt acknowledgement of God's care for his faithful servants.

Matthew's Gospel is written for Messianic Jewish Christians who are being expelled out of not just their synagogues, but also their traditional society and lifestyle. The future looked uncertain and lonely for them as they struggled to find a new way of living their faith. The comforting words of encouragement that Matthew offers assures them that they need not fear physical harm. Sparrows were sold in the market places as inexpensive food for the poor and so symbolised minimal value. If God holds common sparrows in such regard, then how much greater is the value of his beloved sons and daughters? The call to not be afraid is reinforced three times in this passage as a sequence of strongly argued contrasts is put forward. Jesus' words assure believers that their faith will be rewarded, and a time is coming when his teachings will be shouted from the rooftops and obvious all.

Images from the Readings

- Don't be afraid of anyone!
- Every secret will be known
- Hairs on your head are counted
- You are worth much more
- He rescues the helpless

Reflection for Leaders

Swimming against the crowd is always a frightening and vulnerable place for us. Perhaps you could put yourself in the place of the early Christians who were being forced out of everything that was familiar to them. What things make you afraid as you journey towards greater personal commitment to Jesus in your life? When are you silent or what do you avoid doing so as not to have to defend your faith to others? During this week consider how your faith community values each individual. Does its care authentically reflect the value that Jesus tells us God places on each person? Look for an opportunity this week to actively witness to your faith in a public place.

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 'Chorus Play' 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, a picture of two sparrows



LEADER'S Liturgy Outline

Twelfth 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, you are our hope and our strength. Help us to follow Jesus and do the work you call us to.

R Amen.

First Reading: Jeremiah 20:10-12a, 13

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

Psalm 69

Response: Lord, in your great love, answer me.



General: Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Fill us O Lord with your word._____

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Your word is life for our souls.

Gospel: Matthew 10:26-31

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.

- Do you know how tall you are and what you weigh? How many teeth do you have? If I asked you exactly how many hairs were on your head, could you say?
- What does Jesus tell us about the hairs on our head? What does he mean? (God knows us intimately, even better than we know ourselves, and loves and values us) How does this make you feel?
- Have you ever felt frightened?
- Have you ever been unpopular, or on you own against the crowd?
- Did anyone stick up for you or take your side?
- The disciples were having a difficult time and were feeling afraid. The Jews were pushing them out of the synagogues because of their belief that Jesus was the Messiah. God had a special love and care for each of them.
- How did Jesus tell them about their value in God's eyes?
- What about sparrows – have you ever seen them in your garden?
- How many are there? What do you think they might be worth?
- What does this tell us about how God loves and cares for us?

- Why does God care for us? (we are God's sons and daughters)
- Does this change the way we might treat other people? Why?

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 'chorus play' 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: Let us call upon God who is near to us in every need:

- For the Church that we are able to share the good news with all people with courage and confidence

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

- That all people, especially those who are sad or lonely or confused, will come to know how tenderly God values them

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

- That we move past our fears and do the work that God calls us to

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 feel loss in their lives, that they will be comforted

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

Leader: God of wisdom and love, you understand all our feelings and needs even before we ask. We ask you to answer these prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: **Amen.**

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

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Chorus Play

Matthew 10:26-31

Fear not

Note to leaders: It might be helpful if the responses for the 'Chorus group' were written on signs for the rest of the children to read.

What is a Chorus play?

A Chorus play presents a Scriptural story in the form of a play with both individual characters and a chorus. The chorus aspect allows for whole group participation. One of the aims of chorus plays is to provide not only a presentation of the story but also - and more importantly - an informed interpretation of it. There are many excellent sources of material available today to assist interpretation, especially Biblical commentaries.

People required: Reader

Reader: Jesus said . . .

Chorus: **Don't be afraid!**

Reader: Don't be afraid to help others

Chorus: **Help others!**

Reader: Don't be afraid to be kind and caring.

Chorus: **Be kind and caring!**

Reader: Don't be afraid to tell the truth.

Chorus: **Tell the truth!**

Reader: Don't be afraid to play fairly.

Chorus: **Play fairly!**

Reader: Don't be afraid to help Mum and Dad.

Chorus: **Help Mum and Dad!**

Reader: Don't be afraid to be nice to your sisters and brothers.

Chorus: **Be nice to our sisters and brothers.**

Reader: Don't be afraid to talk to Jesus.

Chorus: **Talk to Jesus.**

Reader: Jesus said . . .

Chorus: **Don't be afraid!**



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.