



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Green

'I am gentle and humble of heart'

Zechariah 9:9-10, Psalm 145 Romans 8:9-11, Matthew 11:25-30

Is it important to be clever at school? Are grown-ups cleverer than children? What do you do if you are worried about something and aren't sure what to do? How do you feel about people who have all the answers all the time? Jesus tells us that it wasn't the clever people who first understood him and his message. Jesus liked children and today he tells us that we need to come to him with the same trust as children have.



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Fourteenth 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 11:25-30

On one occasion Jesus said:

"My Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I am glad that you hid all this from wise and educated people and showed it to ordinary people. Yes, Father, that is what pleased you.

My Father has given me everything, and he is the only one who knows the Son. But the Son wants to tell others about the Father, so that they can know him too.

If you are tired from carrying heavy burdens, come to me and I will give you rest. Take the yoke I give you. Put it on your shoulders and learn from me. I am gentle and humble, and you will find rest. This yoke is easy to bear, and this burden is light.”

FIRST READING

Zechariah 9:9-10

The Lord says this: Everyone in Jerusalem, celebrate and rejoice. Your king has won the victory, and he is coming to you. He is humble and rides on a donkey. He comes on the colt of a donkey.

I, the Lord, will take away all war chariots and horses from Israel and Jerusalem. Bows that were made for battle will be destroyed.

I will bring peace to nations, and your king will rule from sea to sea. His kingdom will reach from the Euphrates River across all the earth.

PSALM

Psalms 145

Response: I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

I will praise you, my God and King, and always honour your name.

I will praise you each day and always honour your name.. **R**

You are merciful, Lord! You are kind and patient and always loving.

You are good to everyone, and you take care of all your creation. **R**

Our Lord, you keep your word and do everything you say.

When someone stumbles or falls, you give a helping hand. **R**

SECOND READING

Romans 8:9-11

Brothers and sisters: You are no longer ruled by your desires, but by God’s Spirit, who lives in you. People who don’t have the Spirit of Christ in them don’t belong to him.

God raised Jesus to life! God’s Spirit now lives in you, and he will raise you to life by his Spirit.

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

The first reading about the king riding on a donkey prefigures the coming of Jesus into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday. The message is one of peace, contrary to expectations of the coming Messiah as a proud warrior. This sets the scene in the Gospel for the contradiction of those receptive to Jesus' message being the educated and clever – another slight to the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus maintains that understanding is for the humble, those who have a sense of wonder and awe.



Matthew is writing this Gospel to Jewish converts caught up in the turbulence of the times. They were people who had been brought up under the burdensome yoke of the Law, so could identify with the struggle of trying to fulfil the restrictive requirements that did little to address the spirit of the law. Matthew's contention is that Jesus' yoke in contrast is easy and light. A yoke is a piece of agricultural tackle that went around the neck of an ox and was attached to a plough or cart that the ox could then drag along. Yokes are still in use in many parts of the world today. The Gospel passage begins with Jesus praying a blessing, called a berakah. It is the basis of Jewish prayers of praise and thanksgiving and still in evidence in our own Eucharistic liturgy today.

Images from the Readings

- Hidden from the wise and educated
- Come to Jesus
- This burden is light
- Gentle and humble
- A humble king is coming

Reflection for Leaders

The simplicity of Jesus' message in the Gospel is a challenge to us all. It is easy to get so caught up in the academic expression of our faith that we lose the response of complete trust and wonder that marks openness to God. From whom do you learn in your life? What can you learn from Jesus? In today's society we can probably all identify with the call to come to Jesus when we are weary and overburdened. It is a call that is difficult to make in the hurry and bustle of our modern lifestyle. What are the things in your experience that cause you to feel 'burdened' and weighed down? Who do you know of for whom following the Gospel has been both a joy and a burden? Can you identify someone in your vicinity who is struggling under the weight of cares and concerns? Perhaps you could look for opportunities to help ease their burden. Spending time in praise and thanksgiving can help lift us out of our mire, so be attentive to personal prayers of praise this week.

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:

Green cloth, Lectionary, a pile of stones (our burdens)

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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 care for us and want us to know you. Help us to share what we know about you with others just as Jesus did.

R Amen.

First Reading: Zechariah 9:9-10

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

Psalm 145

Response: I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

First Reading: Romans 8:9-11

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 11:25-30

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.*

- Who is the cleverest person you know?
What is clever about them?
- Do you sometimes feel as though other people have all the answers and you don't?
- Jesus tells us that it wasn't the clever people who first understood him. Can you remember what he said?
- What does this tell us about God?
- What might make children and ordinary people more open to understanding Jesus than really clever people?
(perhaps more trusting and open to God; often more truthful about themselves; more innocent; uncomplicated; less prejudiced)



- When we work hard we sometimes get tired out. What if we had to carry around a bag of stones? That would be a burden for us. What does Jesus tell us to do when we feel like that? Do you think that we can really rely on God to take care of us?
- When we listen to the reading today, what does it say about how Jesus wants us to act?
- How can we learn to be like this?

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'. (If you have time you may choose to use the *liquid picture* on page 9 with this group)

LITURGICAL ACTION – Ko te Rītenga Karakia

Jesus teaches us to offer prayers of praise to God. We can pray today's psalm together to praise God:

**"I will praise you, my God and King, and always honour your name
I will praise you each day and always honour your name."**

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: As people filled with God's Spirit, we bring our requests to God who gives us all that we need:

- That the people in God's family will always be ruled by God's Spirit
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That all those who feel burdened and troubled will find rest in Jesus
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For a spirit of gentleness and humility
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That ordinary people always remain close to God and understand the message of Jesus that is hidden from those who consider themselves clever
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God most holy, keep us always close so that we can bring all our concerns to you. We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son.

All: **Amen.**

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

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Liquid Picture

Matthew 11:25-30

Come and rest

Note to leaders: The following **liquid picture** is appropriate to use with children of any age but especially suitable for **younger children**.

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: Jesus said to all the people . . .

I will give you rest.

Do not worry.

I will help you.

Trust me.

I am gentle.

Leader: Jesus said to all the people, 'Come to me and I will look after you.'

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.