



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A Green

'God's word is life giving'

Isaiah 55:10-11, Psalm 65, Romans 8:14-18, Matthew 13:1-9

Do you like listening to stories? Jesus often told stories to teach people deep truth about God. These stories are called 'parables'. People often needed to go away and think about them before they got the message and understood what Jesus was trying to tell them. Sometimes he had to explain what his parables meant to his friends because even they didn't quite understand either.



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Fifteenth 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 13:1-9

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus went out beside Lake Galilee, where he sat down to teach. Such large crowds gathered around him that he had to sit in a boat, while the people stood on the shore. Then he taught them many things by using stories.

He said, "A farmer went out to scatter seeds in a field. While the farmer was scattering the seed, some of it fell along the road and was eaten by birds. Other seeds fell on thin, rocky ground and quickly started growing because the soil was not very deep. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and dried up, because they did not have enough roots.

"Some other seeds fell where thorn bushes grew up and choked the plants. But a few seeds did fall on good ground where the plants produced a hundred or sixty or thirty times as much as was scattered. If you have ears, pay attention!"

FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:10-11

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

The rain and the snow fall from the sky. But they don't return without watering the earth that produces seeds to plant and grain to eat. And that's how it is with my words. They don't return to me without doing everything I sent them to do.

PSALM

Psalms 65

Response: **The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.**

Our God, you take care of the earth
and send rain to help the soil grow all kinds of crops.
Your rivers never run dry,
and you prepare the earth to produce much grain. **R**

Wherever your footsteps touch the earth, a rich harvest is gathered.
Desert pastures blossom, and mountains celebrate. **R**

Meadows are filled with sheep and goats;
valleys overflow with grain and echo with joyful songs. **R**

SECOND READING

Romans 8:14-18

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters: Only those people who are led by God's spirit are his children. God's Spirit doesn't make us slaves who are afraid of him. Instead, we become his children and call him our Father. God's Spirit makes us sure that we are his children. His Spirit lets us know that together with Christ we will be given what God has promised. We will also share in the glory of Christ, because we have suffered with him. I am sure that what we are suffering now cannot compare with the glory that will be shown to us.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

Parables were a familiar way of teaching in the time of Jesus. They used stories of everyday things to explain profound truths – and Jesus was a master at teaching this way. Some images had commonly understood meanings: for instance a vineyard, sons or servants were understood to represent Israel; while a master, king or father represented God. Using seed to give a picture of the word of God would help his followers understand something of the life, capacity for growth and productivity that they would understand seed to have; and the receptivity of the soil gives a picture of how we need to be open and receptive and not allow other concerns to crowd it out of our lives. This parable would have had a great appeal to the rural population living in the arable region around the Sea of Galilee – so unlike the desert areas further south around Jerusalem. The parable is aimed at those who are losing faith in Jesus – God will give the harvest.



Images from the Readings

- The seed that is the word of God
- Jesus is the sower
- Good ground
- God's word is life giving
- We are God's children

Reflection for Leaders

This parable, which spoke so strongly to the rural people of Jesus day, continues to hold a powerful message for us today. We are called to examine ourselves to see what image of ground matches our receptivity to the word of God. Can you recall a time when God's word really connected with you, took root in your heart? What was this experience? Do the Scriptures form a rich source for your own prayer life? How might you improve this in a practical way? You might consider journaling your reflection on a short passage each night. Spend some time with today's reading, recognising a word or phrase that moves you. Share this with a friend.

What can you do to ensure your parish becomes a more fertile ground for the word of God? What may be some thorns in your heart that do not allow the word to fruit in you? During this week try to be rich soil, not just for the word of God, but for your family and those around you. Look to messages from God in the events of everyday life.

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 candle, a bowl of large seeds (ie corn, pumpkin)

Fifteenth 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, we gather to listen to your words, so that we can learn to follow your ways. Help us to understand so that our hearts and lives are filled with your love.

R Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 55:10-11 The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki
(if used) **Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua**

Psalm 65 **Response:** The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

Second Reading: Romans 8:14-18 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 13:1-9

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 Whakāaro

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 have a favourite story? Jesus told stories to the people who came to listen to him. Today he tells us a story about a farmer who sows seed. How did the farmer sow the seed? (demonstrate the hand sowing action to the children)*
- *Do you remember what happened to the seed?*
- *Have you ever planted seeds – maybe the lawn at home, or seeds at school to see how they grow?*
- *When Jesus told his stories, he told about things people knew about to explain about the things of God, the things people can't see. What do you think Jesus meant when he spoke about the seed in this story? (God's word)*
- *Some people don't listen; other people do listen but give up trying when things get difficult; others listen and understand – they put the message into action in their lives.*
- *Did the story help you to understand what Jesus was explaining?*
- *What sort of ground should we try to be?*



- *How will we know that God's word is growing within us?*
- *What things stop the word of God from growing in our lives?*
- *What can we do to make sure that we produce a good harvest?*

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

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

Our God, you take care of the earth
and send rain to help the soil grow all kinds of crops.
Your rivers never run dry,
and you prepare the earth to produce much grain.



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 know that God loves us, so let us pray for others and ourselves.

- That our Church will be good ground where the word of God can grow and be shared with everyone
Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That by listening to the word of God we will become people who show God's love in our actions, our thoughts and our words
Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That we learn to really listen to what Jesus teaches us
Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For those who are sick or lonely in our community. Today we pray for....
Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God of the harvest, we ask you to hear our prayers which we make in confidence through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord

All: **Amen**

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

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Liquid Picture

Matthew 13:1-9

Parable of the sower

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: Once there was a farmer who went out to sow some seeds and lots of different things happened to the seeds:

Some were eaten by the birds.

Some fell on rocky ground and died.

Some were choked by weeds.

Some fell in good soil and grew and grew and grew.

Leader: Some people listen to God and some people don't listen.

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.