



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

‘The Kingdom of God is a treasure’

Green

1 Kings 3:5,7-12 Psalm 119 Romans 8:28-30 Matthew 13:44-46

Have you got something that is very precious to you? It might be something that isn't very important to anyone else, but is very special to you. Would you be willing to give it away or swap it? When you treasure something a lot, you usually are very careful with it. Where do people usually keep their treasures?

Jesus explains to us that God's kingdom is like a priceless treasure that people would give their most precious possessions for.



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Seventeenth 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.

The last part of the Psalm this week has been shortened in our material. You will find the words 'but I hate anyone who leads me astray' complete this verse in the Lectionary for Masses with Children. Our suggestion is that you finish reading the psalm with the words 'I follow all of your commands' as we have done on the next page. The word 'hate' had a different emphasis for the Hebrew people than it has for us today.

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:44-46

Jesus said to his disciples: "The kingdom of heaven is like what happens when someone finds treasure hidden in a field and buries it again. A person like that is happy and goes and sells everything in order to buy that field."

"The kingdom of heaven is like what happens when a shop owner is looking for fine pearls. After finding a very valuable one, the owner goes and sells everything in order to buy that pearl."



FIRST READING

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

One night at Gibeon, God appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, "Ask me for anything you want." Solomon answered, "My Lord and God, I am your servant. You have made me king in place of my father David. But I don't know any more about being king than a child would know. And I must serve your chosen people, even though they are a great nation with more people than can be counted. Please make me wise enough to rule them well and know the difference between right and wrong. No one is really able to rule this great nation of yours." The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked this, and he said: "I will answer your prayer. You will be wise and know more than anyone who has ever lived or ever will live. You didn't ask to live a long time or to be rich, and you didn't ask for your enemies to be destroyed. All you wanted was to be honest and fair."

PSALM

Psalm 119

Response: Lord, I love your commands.

You, Lord, are my choice, and I will obey you.
I would rather obey you than to have a thousand pieces of silver and gold.

Your laws mean more to me than the finest gold.
I follow all of your commands.

SECOND READING

Romans 8:28-30

Brothers and sisters: We know that God is always at work for the good of everyone who loves him. They are the ones God has chosen for his purpose, and he has always known who his chosen ones would be. He had decided to let them become like his own Son, so that his Son would be the first of many children. God then accepted the people he had already decided to choose, and he has shared his glory with them.

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

The first reading recounts Solomon's prayer for wisdom at the very outset of his reign, and shows God's delight with this request. The Gospel concludes its famous chapter of parables with two more simple word pictures that give insight into the joy and value of finding the kingdom of God using the imagery of everyday life. Pearls were highly valued in the Near East and also were regarded as a symbol of wisdom, giving rise to the saying 'pearls of wisdom'. The picture Jesus paints for us is of those who recognise the full value of spiritual wealth committing everything they own to acquiring it. Jesus shows his hearers that this is a fair swap, the kingdom is worth the sacrifice of everything we value most.



It is interesting to speculate on why Matthew records two such similar parables together: is it for emphasis? Is it to compare the actions of the main characters? In those times, when there were no banks, it was common practice for people to hide their valuables. Treasure buried in a field would belong to the owner of the field. This treasure-finder re-hid the treasure until he could buy the field from the unsuspecting owner, thus establishing his own claim to the treasure. But Jesus passes no moral judgment on this questionable action, the emphasis is solely on the man's commitment to his quest.

Images from the Readings

- *The kingdom of heaven*
- *Precious things*
- *Make me wise*
- *Always at work for our good*
- *Become like his own Son*

Reflection for Leaders

Jesus sees the search for God as integral in the journey of life that we are all involved in. We are all searching for the 'treasure' in our life. Identifying what is real treasure and then committing ourselves to it wholeheartedly is a challenge for each one of us. The call of the Gospel is simple – acquiring the kingdom of God involves paying a price. Can you identify what price you have paid in order to follow Christ? What are you prepared to give up? What moments of delight in your life have pointed you towards the kingdom? Think about the things which you value most highly. Does this Gospel challenge your attitude to them? Make an effort this week to show in a special way how much you value someone.

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 jewellery box or treasure chest with a small card for each child (to be used during the Liturgical Action).



LEADER'S Liturgy Outline

Seventeenth 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 store up riches in heaven for us. Help us to know what is important so that we don't need to waste our time on worthless things.

R Amen.

First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

(if used)

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

Psalms 119

Response: Lord, I love your commands

Second Reading: Romans 8:28-30

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 13:44-46

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.*

- Close your eyes and think about this question: If you had to leave your house very quickly and you could only take one precious thing with you, what would it be?
- What do you think your parents might take?
- When you value or treasure something a lot do you look after it? Would you give it away or swap it with a friend? Why?
- What makes it so precious to you?
- Jesus tells us today that the kingdom of heaven is so valuable, worth more than all our possessions, that we would be very happy if we should sell everything in order to have it. What is he telling us when he says this?
- Can you imagine the kingdom of heaven being that good?



- What can we do to find the treasure of God's kingdom for ourselves? (live the way Jesus taught us, follow his example in the way we live our lives)

5-7 year olds: Adapt some of the questions in the 8-12 material or use the 'Liquid Picture' on page 9 and then join with the older group for the 'Liturgical Action'

LITURGICAL ACTION – Ko te Ritenga Karakia

Ask the children to write on a small card the thing that they have identified as being precious to them. During a quiet time ask them to bring this card up and place it in the treasure chest at the focus.

(This treasure chest might be processed back in to the church at the end of children's Liturgy of the Word – check with your priest beforehand)



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: Jesus has told us to ask God for what we need, so as God's children we pray:

- That we learn to value the things that are truly valuable in our life
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That we learn to value the things that are truly valuable in our life
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That delight in God's kingdom will be given to all who search for it
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That the love of God will comfort those who are sick or poor in our community
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God of faithfulness, we know that you are always at work for the good of those you love you. Answer our prayers through Jesus Christ your Son

All: Amen

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

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Liquid Picture

Matthew 13:44-46

The Kingdom of God is a treasure.

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: The Kingdom of God is a treasure, just like ...

Loving parents!

Good friends!

A healthy body!

A happy school!.

A safe place to live!



Leader: The Kingdom of God is a treasure.

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.