



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Green

'The faith of the Canaanite woman'

Isaiah 56:1,6-7, Psalm 67, Matthew 15:21-28



Jesus spent a lot of his time travelling from place to place, teaching people and performing miracles. Sometimes he needed to get away from people and rest. The people from the nations around Israel practiced pagan religions, and when this woman came begging Jesus to help her daughter, Jesus at first seemed reluctant. Why was this? What convinced Jesus to change his mind about this situation? What can we learn from this passage about Jesus, the message that he brought, and who it was for?

Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration, begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, starting with the Gospel. Then look through the preparatory material that follows and familiarise yourself with the Liturgy Outline.

(You may choose to use or focus on one reading only, but remember that the Gospel may not be omitted. On this occasion, because of the language used in the Gospel in the Children's Lectionary, it may be better to use Rina Wintour's material given on page 9 of this resource in place of proclaiming the Gospel.)

GOSPEL

Matthew 15:21-28

Jesus went to the territory near the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Suddenly a Canaanite woman from there came out shouting, "Lord and Son of David, have pity on me! My daughter is full of demons."

Jesus did not say a word. But the woman kept following along and shouting, so his disciples came up and asked him to send her away.

Jesus said, "I was sent only to the people of Israel! They are like a flock of lost sheep."

The woman came closer. Then she knelt down and begged, "Lord, please help me!"



Jesus replied, "It isn't right to take food from the children and feed it to the dogs."

"Lord, that's true," the woman said, "but even dogs get the crumbs that fall from their owner's table."

Jesus answered, "Dear woman, you really do have a lot of faith, and you will be given what you want."

At that moment her daughter was healed.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 56:1,6-7

The Lord said, "Be honest and fair!

"Soon I will come to save you, and my saving power will be seen. Foreigners will follow me. They will love me and worship in my name. They will respect the Sabbath and keep our agreement.

"Then I will bring them to my holy mountain and let them celebrate in my house of worship. Their sacrifices and offerings will all be welcome on my altar. And my house will be known as a house of worship for all nations."

PSALM

Psalm 67

Response:

O God, let all the nations praise you!

Our God, be kind and bless us!

Be pleased and smile.

Then everyone on earth will learn to follow you,
and all nations will see your power to save us.

Let the nations celebrate with joyful songs,
because you judge fairly and guide all nations.

Make everyone praise you and shout your praises.
Pray for his blessings to continue
and for everyone on earth to worship our God.

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

All the readings for this week speak of foreigners who have accepted faith in the one God. Isaiah speaks of a new inclusiveness in the attitude to faithful foreigners who had returned with the Hebrew people after their exile in Babylon, who were being welcomed to join in the Jewish faith. When we join the Gospel story today, Jesus is near the cities of Tyre and Sidon, leading towns of ancient Phoenicia on the Mediterranean coast of what is now Lebanon. The Phoenicians were descendants of the ancient Canaanites. Israel despised the Canaanites for their pagan practices and fertility rites. Up until this time Jesus has been dealing only with his own people, but in her persistent desperation this woman forces him to recognise the truth that salvation is available to all who have faith. Here we see the tiny beginning of the universal mission and Jesus is generous with both his praise and his healing power in response. This event was used by Matthew to illustrate the movement of Christianity from a Jewish to a gentile setting that was taking shape in his time – a move that many in his community were struggling to come to terms with themselves.

Images from the Readings

- *Have pity*
- *Send her away*
- *Even dogs get crumbs from their owner's table*
- *Reward of faith*
- *House of prayer*

Reflection for Leaders

Being marginalized or excluded is a lonely experience for many. In our communities today we often need to consider our own response to people of other nations, cultures and races. Maybe the readings today challenge our thinking. Reflect on a time when you have felt alien and unwelcome, or treated unfairly. How did it feel? Do you find it easy to stick up for yourself or someone close to you as this woman had to do? Her quick wit and easy repartee must have helped her achieve her aim. As we follow the Gospel reading today we almost have a sense of Jesus learning or having a revelation about the extent of his mission. Have you had an experience of a 'moment of revelation' like this? During this week try to put into practice some of the learnings from this Gospel – try to include an outsider.



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 large candle and a tray of tea-lights



LEADER'S Liturgy Outline

Twentieth 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*

for their

I invite the children to join in the procession

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 believe in you and we love you. Make our faith as strong as the Canaanite woman so we can come to you whenever we need your help.

R Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-7 The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki
if used) Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

Psalm 67

Response:

O God, let all the nations praise you!

(or another suitable response known by the children)

(Second Reading not included this week)

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 15:21-28

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.

- Have you ever been interrupted when you were doing something important? How did it feel?
- Jesus was interrupted by a Canaanite woman who wanted his help for her sick daughter. What do we know about the woman in the Gospel today? We are told she was a Canaanite – a pagan religion despised by those who followed the Jewish religion. (she was also persistent, vocal, not afraid to speak out, determined, had a quick wit and a strong faith that Jesus could help her daughter)
- Why do you think she was shouting out to Jesus to help her? (she was desperate for help)
- Why did Jesus ignore her at first?
- What made him change his mind?
- What does this tell us about Jesus and about the work that God sent him to do? (Jesus is ready to help anyone who asks because he loves all of us, and when our faith in God is strong enough our prayers will be answered. God's



message was for everyone, not just the Jewish people.)

- What do you think we should learn from this story?

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 Rītenga Karakia

Light tea-lights from the large candle (symbolising God's love) to show the spreading of the message of God's love to all people everywhere.



*Ask the children to name people of other nations,
or people who are excluded in their own community or school
and pray together
that God's love will touch them in a special way.*



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: We are God's children, and Jesus tells us that we can ask God for what we need. So together we pray:

- That our Church be a house of worship for all people
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That we are aware when others need help and never exclude them
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For persistence in our prayer
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That more generous people will serve God's people wherever they are needed in the world
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: Saving God, you have compassion for all people who cry to you for help. Hear the prayers that we bring to you in faith through Jesus Christ your Son

All: Amen

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

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Voice A, Voice B

Matthew 15:21-28

Faith of the Canaanite woman

Note to leaders: The reading is simply presented in the format for 2 readers to read. The text is best read in a flow on manner. Suited for use with older children who are good readers.

Voice A: Jesus went to a place
Voice B: Near the cities of Tyre and Sidon
Voice A: And met a woman,
Voice B: A Canaanite woman.
Voice A: A stranger!
Voice B: A foreigner!
Voice A: The woman begged Jesus
Voice B: to heal her daughter.
Voice A: But Jesus kept quiet,
Voice B: didn't say a word!
Voice A: But the woman was persistent!
Voice B: She kept shouting and screaming until
Voice A: Jesus took notice of her.
Voice B: Help me Jesus, please help me!
Voice A: You are a stranger, you are not a Jew!
Voice B: Does God love only Jews?
Voice A: God loves everyone!
Voice B: Woman, you have great faith!
Voice A: Your daughter is healed.
Voice B: Thank you, Lord, thank 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.