



# Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

## Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Green

### 'Love one another'

Ezekiel 33:7-9, Psalm 95, Romans 13:8-10, Matthew 18:15-17

Have you ever been given a list of instructions to follow when someone goes away for a while? Jesus is preparing his friends for the time that he will be gone, and is telling them what they must do if there are disagreements between themselves. Jesus says that they need to give each other a chance to make amends in private, and support each other when they have complaints against someone. Is it easy to sort things out without making a big fuss when people have been unfair to you?



### Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Twenty-Third 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 18:15-17

Jesus said to his disciples: "If one of my followers sins against you, go and point out what was wrong. But do it in private, just between the two of you. If that person listens, you have won back a follower. But if that one refuses to listen, take along one or two others.

"The Scriptures teach that every complaint must be proven true by two or more witnesses. If the follower refuses to listen to them, report the matter to the church.

"Anyone who refuses to listen to the church must be treated like an unbeliever or a tax collector."



## FIRST READING

Ezekiel 33:7-9

The Lord said: "Ezekiel, you are a mere human, but I have chosen you to be a watchman for the people of Israel. So listen to what I say and then warn them for me.

"When I tell evil people that they will die because of their sins, you must try to make them turn from their evil ways. If you don't warn them, you are responsible for what happens to them. If you do warn them to turn from their evil ways, and they don't then they will die. But you won't be responsible."

## PSALM

Psalm 95

**Response: If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts**

Sing joyful songs to the Lord!  
Praise the mighty rock where we are safe.  
Come to worship him with thankful hearts and songs of praise.

Bow down and worship the Lord our Creator!  
The Lord is our God, and we are his people,  
the sheep he takes care of in his own pasture.

Listen to God's voice today!  
Don't be stubborn and rebel as your ancestors did at Meribah  
and at Massah out in the desert.  
For forty years they tested God and saw the things he did.

## SECOND READING

Romans 13:8-10

Brothers and sisters: Let love be your only debt! If you love others, you have done all that the Law demands.

In the Law there are many commands, such as,

"Be faithful in marriage. Do not murder. Do not steal.

Do not want what belongs to others."

But all of these are summed up in the command that says, "Love others as much as you love yourself." No one who loves others will harm them. So love is all that the Law demands.

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

Ezekiel, in the first reading, was among the first to be deported to Babylon in 597 BC, and it was there that he received the call to be a prophet for his people. His function is to prepare them for the restoration of their city, but this will only be on the basis of their true repentance. (Your focus with the children today should not be on the Ezekiel reading.) The letter to the Romans follows with its handling of the principles of Christian living. All the commandments are gathered into the one concept, 'love' – the love that is of the will, part of God's language, freely and endlessly giving. Matthew's Gospel contains this section dealing with ways the community can regulate its behaviour in a spirit of love. Always when people are in relationship with each other there will be areas of conflict and dealing with these in ways that honour the teaching of Jesus is a challenge. All efforts to correct those in the community who are at fault must be made before the final step of exclusion from the group.

## *Images from the Readings*

- *Confronting in private*
- *Two witnesses*
- *Turn from evil*
- *responsibility of the prophet*
- *The Law demands love*

## *Reflection for Leaders*

Whenever people gather and are in relationship there is always the risk of conflict and disharmony. The challenge of the Gospel is a personal one, and the restoration of relationships is paramount to our call as Christians. It may well be useful to reflect on the ways in which you resolve conflicts in the different areas of your life – family, workplace, faith community. How are things managed differently in these areas? Have you ever turned a 'blind eye' to wrong-doing? How do you react when people criticise you? Reconciliation is at the very heart of Christian living, and it is a responsibility to all who are part of the Church to be called to restore relationships with each other when these are broken. Make an effort to attend a Rite of Reconciliation 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 candle and a cross*



# LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

## Twenty-Third 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 are all members of your family. Help us to live in peace with each other and to treat each other with love as Jesus taught us,

**R** Amen.

*First Reading: Ezekiel 33:7-9* (if used)

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

*Psalm 95*

**Response:** If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts  
(or another suitable response known by the children)

*Second Reading: Romans 13:8-10*

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 Asus<sup>4</sup> 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 18:15-17

**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.

- *If you have a fight with one of your friends, how do you fix things?*
- *Jesus is preparing his friends for the time that he will be gone by giving them some instructions or guidelines for how to treat people who hurt us and mend broken relationships.*
- *Is it possible to do this and still be friends with someone?*
- *What do you feel like doing when someone is really unfair to you? Is this what Jesus says to do?*
- *Can you remember what Jesus says to do? (make amends in private if possible, and support each other when there are complaints about someone)*
- *Do you know the very special sacrament that we have in the Church to help restore our relationship with God and with each other? (Penance – Reconciliation)*



- *What happens when we receive this sacrament? (we admit our wrongdoing, ask God to forgive us, do a penance and are forgiven our sin)*

**5-7 year olds:** Adapt some of the questions in the 8-12 material and use the 'liquid picture' on page 9 to help them understand the Gospel message.

## *LITURGICAL ACTION – Ko te Ritenga Karakia*

Explain to the children the Act of Penitence within the Mass:

*At the beginning of Mass, we come before God with everyone and we realise that we need God's love and kindness, especially when we have not loved other people at home and at school or when we play sport or do other things during the week. We are asked to think in our minds and hearts about how we can be better people with the help of God. We remember before God those things that get us down and give us 'heavy hearts', including our failures and things we have done wrong, and we fill our minds instead with an thoughts of God's great mercy so that we can celebrate the Mass with 'hearts filled with joy and thanks'.*

Explain to the children that the Priest begins the Act of Penitence with the words:

**Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so  
prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.**

Explain that there are four different forms of the Act of Penitence and they all help us to understand the mercy of God. The shortest of these forms follows. Lead the children in this Act of Penitence and have them pray the responses.

Lord have mercy	Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy	Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy	Lord have mercy

*(If the children usually leave the church after the Greeting and before the Act of Penitence to come to the 'Liturgy of the Word with Children' you should consider staying for the whole of the Introductory Rite next Sunday so that the children can experience the Act of Penitence, the Gloria and the Opening Prayer.)*

the  
words we  
pray

## *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 teaches us to bring all our needs to God who loves us. So together we pray:

- For those in our Church family who have disagreements with each other, that they will be treated with respect and love  
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 love to shine in our lives and the way we treat each other in our families, our schools, our community  
Let us pray to the Lord **R** Lord hear our prayer  
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For the courage to speak out against injustice and sin and turn back to God  
Let us pray to the Lord **R** Lord hear our prayer  
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For those involved in conflict in the world, that they will find a place of peace  
Let us pray to the Lord **R** Lord hear our prayer  
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

**Leader:** God of mercy and second chances, hear the prayers that we make as we try to live by your ways. We bring them to you through Jesus Christ your Son

**All:** Amen

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

# Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

## Liquid Picture

Matthew 18:15-17

Love one another

**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 we must love one another as he loves us. So in our community, we should ...

Care for one another!

Treat each other fairly!

Be ready to forgive!

Be helpful!

Speak kind words!

Work together!

Play together!



Leader: This is how we can build God's community (Kingdom) on earth.

From 'Just Imagine 4, Many Creative ways of presenting Scripture' written by Rina Wintour, Mountjoy Enterprises, [www.mountjoyenterprises.com.au](http://www.mountjoyenterprises.com.au). Available from the Liturgy Centre.