



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Green

'Workers in the vineyard'

Isaiah 55: 6-9 Psalm 145 Matthew 20: 1-16

Often we call people great when they are very successful, or rich and powerful. Jesus explains that such things are not important to God. He measures our greatness by our goodness and willingness to think of other before ourselves.



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Twenty-Fifth 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 20: 1-16

As Jesus was telling what the kingdom of heaven would be like, he said: "Early one morning, the man saw some other people standing in the market with nothing to do. He said he would pay them what was fair, if they would work in his vineyard. So they went. "At noon and again about three in the afternoon he returned to the market. And each time he made the same agreement with others who were loafing around with nothing to do. "Finally, about five the afternoon the man went back and found some others standing there, He asked them, Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?" "Because no one has hired us', they answered. Then he told them to go work in this vineyard. "That evening the owner of the vineyard told the man in charge of the workers to call them in and give them their money. He



also told the man to begin with the ones who were hired last. When the workers arrived, the ones who had been hired at five in the afternoon were given a full day's pay. "The workers who had been hired first thought they would be given more than the others. But when they were given the same, they began to complain to the owner of the vineyard. They said, 'The ones who were hired last worked for only one hour. But you paid them the same that you did us. And we worked in the hot sun all day long!' "The owner answered one of them, 'Friend, I didn't cheat you. I paid you exactly what we agreed on. Take your money now and go! What business is it of yours, if I want to pay them the same that I paid you? Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Why should you be jealous, if I want to be generous?' "Jesus then said, "So it is! Everyone who is now first will be last."

FIRST READING

Isaiah 55: 6-9

Turn to the LORD! He can still be found. Call out to him. He is near. Give up your wicked ways and your evil thoughts. Return to the LORD our God. He will be merciful and forgive all your sins. The LORD says: "My thoughts and my ways are not like yours. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, my thoughts and my ways are higher than yours."

PSALM

Psalms 145

Response: **The Lord is near to all who call on him**

LORD, I will praise you each day and always honour your name. You are wonderful, LORD, and you deserve all praise, because you are much greater than anyone can understand.

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.

Our LORD, everything you do is kind and thoughtful,
and you are near to everyone whose prayers are sincere.

Second Reading not included.

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

Isaiah's words were addressed to the exiles in Babylon and follow the invitation to the Messiah's banquet. They are words of pleading to those whose faith has grown cold, to turn back to a forgiving God whose thoughts are far beyond our understanding. The Gospel challenges our human understanding of the principles of fairness and generosity. God does not operate on a formula of who deserves what. In this story the owner makes a point of having the last workers paid first in full view of the others. If the order of payment had been otherwise the full day workers would have gone away happy with their remuneration and none the wiser. The audience is drawn into sharing the feelings of disgruntlement in solidarity with the full day workers. Our sense of fairness is very challenged by this story. But it sheds light onto a problem



that had arisen in Matthew's community. Jewish Christians who had come to faith in Jesus early and had been persecuted for that faith, are seeing new-comers, mostly Greek converts, being offered the same reward. Jesus addresses this issue squarely – God is sovereign and his generosity extends to all believers regardless of merit.

Images from the Readings

- Hiring workers
- Fair payment agreement
- Why be jealous if I want to be generous?
- First will be last
- Turn to the Lord

Reflection for Leaders

This parable, where the vineyard symbolises the people of God and the owner symbolises God, would be understood to be about those being gathered into God's people and welcomed into the kingdom. The challenges of this story hit us as we identify with the feelings of indignation alongside the workers. Think about the times you have experienced jealousy or resentment. What caused these emotions, and how did you deal with them? Have you ever experienced giving or receiving generosity? Is there a difference in how we react to being recipients of generosity and watching others being treated with generosity when we don't believe they deserve it? During this week think on God's gift of abundance and generosity and look for specific ways to be generous with others, with your time, your money, your attention and your attitudes.



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 cake to share and a chart to write on the things we have to be grateful for.



LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

Twenty-Fifth 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 are always kind and generous. Fill us with the generosity of your love and make us more understanding with each other. Amen

R Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 55: 6-9 (if used)

The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki

Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

Psalms 145

Response: The Lord is near to all who call on him

(or another suitable response known by the children)

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 20: 1-16

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.

- When you have a cake to share out, how do you do it? Do you watch carefully to see that no one gets a bigger piece than you? How do you determine what is fair? Have you ever watched someone else getting treated better than the others? Has it ever been you who has been given extra? * (see below, end of page 7)
- In the story today do you think the vineyard owner was fair? (those who worked all day had a whole day's pay as they had agreed upon; those who worked only a little while also got a whole day's pay. God was not unfair with the first group, but was abundantly generous with the others) Jesus told today's story to make people think in new ways because many people in that time believed that God didn't love people who sinned. What do you think Jesus was telling them about God in this story? (that God is generous, even with people who don't deserve it, and gives gifts freely; God's love is big enough for us all to share) What do you think Jesus was saying about how people react when God does this? (that we can often be jealous instead of pleased when we see others getting blessed)
- Do we really deserve all the wonderful blessings that God gives us? What can we do when we find ourselves feeling jealous of others?



- What can we do this week to be more thankful for what we have and more generous?

You may wish to use the 'liquid picture' on page 8 to help reinforce the Gospel message with the children.

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

Make a list of things we have to be grateful and lay it at the prayer focus.

Invite the children to say a prayer of thanksgiving in their own words.



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 our generous God:

- For the people in God's family, that they will learn to be tolerant of others
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For all those who feel jealous of others' blessings, that they will learn to trust God to meet their needs
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For the spirit of generosity
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For our country's leaders, that they will govern us with fairness, honesty and integrity
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God your generosity goes far beyond our understanding. We bring these prayers to you, trusting them to your love and kindness, through Jesus Christ your Son.

All: **Amen**

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

***This week invite the children to return after Mass to share the cake.**

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Liquid Picture

Matthew 20:1-16a

Workers in the vineyard

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 Heaven is like someone who owned a vineyard and during the day employed several people to work in it....

Six o'clock and a day's work ahead.

I'll pay you one silver coin.

Nine o'clock and there's work to do!

I'll pay you one silver coin.

Midday and half a day's work ahead.

I'll pay you one silver coin.

Three o'clock and a few hour's work ahead.

I'll pay you one silver coin.

Five o'clock and only one hour's work ahead.

I'll pay you one silver coin.

Each one received one silver coin.

Unfair, unjust, not right!

No injustice has been done!

You each received exactly what you were promised.



Leader: God's blessings are always generous. Everyone is welcome in the Kingdom regardless of the hour they arrive.

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.