



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A *Green*

'Parable of tenants in the vineyard'

Isaiah 5:1-7 Psalm 80 Philippians 4:6-9 Matthew 21:33-43



Jesus came to share the Good News and to bring God's message to all people. He wanted them to learn how to live in the love of God and one's neighbour, and to know what mattered most in life. Many people did not listen, so Jesus told them that he would give his message to others.

Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Twenty-Seventh 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 21: 33-43

Jesus told the chief priests and leaders to listen to his story:

"A land owner once planted a vineyard. He built a wall around it and dug a pit to crush the grapes in. He also built a lookout tower.

"Then rented out his vineyard and left the country.

"When it was harvest time, the owner sent some servants to get his share of the grapes. But the renters grabbed those servants. They beat up one, killed one, and stoned one of them to death. He then sent more servants than he did the first time. But the renters treated them in the same way.

"Finally, the owner sent his own son to the renters. Because he thought they would respect him. But when they saw the man's son, they said, 'Someday he will own the vineyard. Let's kill him! Then we can have it all for ourselves.' So they grabbed him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him."

Jesus asked, "When the owner of that vineyard comes, what do you suppose he will do to those renters?"

The chief priests and leaders answered, "He will kill them in some horrible way. Then he will rent out his vineyard to people who will give him his share of the grapes at harvest time."
"Jesus replied, "Surely you know that the Scriptures say, "The stone that the builders tossed aside is not the most important stone of all. This is something the Lord has done, and it is amazing to us.'
"I tell you that God's kingdom will be taken from you and given to people who will do what he demands."

FIRST READING

Isaiah 5:1-7

I will sing a song about the vineyard of my dear friend. It was on the side of a fertile hill. My friend dug the ground, removed the stones, and planted the best vines. He built a watchtower and dug a place to press the grapes. He hoped they would be good, but bitter grapes were all that grew.

Now listen, people of Jerusalem and of Judah! You be the judge of my vineyard and me. What more could I have done for my vineyard? I hoped for good grapes, but bitter grapes were all that grew.

Now I will tell you what I am going to do I will cut down the hedge and tear down the wall. My vineyard will be trampled and left in ruins. It will turn into a desert, neither tended nor hoed, and it will be covered with thorns and briars. I will command the clouds not to send it rain.

Israel is the vineyard of the LORD All-Powerful. Judah is the garden that makes him rejoice. He had hoped for honesty and for justice, but dishonesty and crying were all he found.

PSALM

Psalms 80

Response: The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel

We were like a grapevine
you brought out of Egypt.
You chased other nations away
and planted us here.
Its branches stretched to the sea;
its new growth reached to the river. **R**

See what's happening to this vine.
With your own hands
you planted its roots.
LORD God All-Powerful,
make us strong again!
Smile on us and save us. **R**

Brothers and sisters: Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything.

With thankful hearts, offers up your prayers and requests to God. Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.

Finally, my friends keep your minds on whatever is true, pure, right, holy, friendly, and proper. Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise. You know the teachings I gave you, and you know what you heard me say and saw me do.

So follow my example. And God, who gives peace, will be with you.

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

Isaiah writes an allegory for the people at a time when the northern tribes of Israel were forming an alliance against the might of Assyria, and forcing Judah to join, Judah, however, prefers its association with Assyria, and turns a deaf ear to the pleadings of the prophets for moral reform. It adds richness to today's Gospel. Paul's letter to the Philippians is drawing to an end, the fear of persecution is always close – even for Paul, who urges his readers to pray and not worry. The Gospel offers a blunt allegory of the blindness of those who, thought out Israel's history, have been appointed leaders of God's people. Aimed at the chief priests and scribes who do not carry out the will of God, the ones who will later cause the execution of Jesus just as the renters kill the land – owner's son. Vineyard's consistently portrayed the kingdom of God, and listeners understood the intensive long-term care that they required to be fruitful and profitable. Walled, to discourage grazing animals, well appointed, but needed, constant work pruning, thinning, supporting the vines, irrigating etc. Jesus then speaks of the most important stone that the builders have rejected. This refers to the keystone, the one at the very top of a Roman arch, which held all the other stones in place. The implication of the Gospel is clear: the kingdom will be taken from those who refuse to accept God's messengers and son, and given to those who have faith in Jesus.

Images from the Readings

- Planted a vineyard
- They will respect my son
- The stone the builders tossed aside
- Bitter grapes grew
- God will bless you with peace

Reflection for Leaders

Prophets are often unpopular because they bring messages that are uncomfortable and challenging. Who are the prophets of the present age, and what are they telling us? How have we received their messages and what have we done about them? What is the message the world most needs today? The message of today's Gospel too is blunt and we should reflect on how we have received it, Jesus calls himself the 'keystone' or most important stone that supports the rest of the building. What have been the 'keystones' in your life in the past and the present? What are the things which you have rejected, and why? Think about being fruitful in your life, and think about three specific ways you can be fruitful during the 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 bunch of grapes



LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

Twenty-Seventh 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 whakataua

Leader: O God we are your children. Open our ears to hear and share your message so that others can be your children too.

R Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 5:1-7 (if used)

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

Psalms 80

Response: The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel
(or another suitable response known by the children)

Second Reading: Philippians 4:6-9

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



Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43

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.*

- What do you know about vineyards? What grows there? (grapes) Jesus explains how carefully the landowner has prepared the vineyard before he rents it out. What do you think this means?
- The people Jesus was talking to would have recognised that the vineyard is an image of the kingdom of God. So who do the characters in the story represent? (the land owner is God; his servants are the prophets; his son is Jesus; and the renters were the religious leaders who wanted to keep the vineyard for themselves)
- What happened to the owner's son? (the renters killed him)
- What was Jesus telling us in this story? (people should obey God's wishes and accept Jesus, God's son, into their lives) Just as the vineyard could be taken from those who were not prepared to listen to the land owner's message, so too the kingdom of God will be taken from those who do not listen to God's message and given to others who listen and live according to God's way.
- How do we show that we are people who listen to God's message today?

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

Pray with the children the
St Francis of Assisi prayer:



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 God's children, let us come in faith and confidence to ask for the things we need:

- That the Church will continue to proclaim the message of God's love to all
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That our country's leaders will work for peace and justice as they govern our country
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 hear the message of God and understand it
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For all in our community and schools who are lonely, sick and hurting, that the message of God's love will be shared with them
Let us pray to the Lord R Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: Loving and merciful God, listen and answer these prayers that we make in confidence through Jesus Christ your Son

All: Amen

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