



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

5th Sunday of Lent - Year B

Violet

'A grain of wheat'

Jeremiah 31:31-34 Psalm 51 John 12:24-26



Today we hear Jesus tell a story about wheat and how it can live in a different way after it has died or broken down.

Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration, begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Fifth Sunday of Lent, 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

John 12:24-26

Jesus said to his disciples: "I tell you for certain that a grain of wheat that falls on the ground will never be more than one grain unless it dies. But if it dies, it will produce lots of wheat.

"If you love your life, you will lose it. If you give it up in this world, you will be given eternal life.

"If you serve me, you must go with me. My servants will be with me wherever I am. If you serve me, my Father will honour you."

The Lord says, "The time is coming when I will make a new agreement with the people of Israel and Judah. It will be different from the agreement that I made with their ancestors, when I led them out of Egypt. Although I was their God, they broke their agreement with me.

"This is the agreement that I, the Lord, will make with the people of Israel: I will write my laws on their hearts and minds. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

"No longer will they have to teach each other to obey me. I, the Lord, promise that all of them will obey me, no matter who they are. I will forgive their sins and forget the evil things they have done."

PSALM

Psalm 51

Response: **Create a clean heart in me, O God.**

You are kind, God! Please have pity on me.

You are always merciful! Please wipe away my sins. **R.**

Create pure thoughts in me and make me faithful again. **R.**

Make me as happy as you did when you saved me; make me want to obey! **R.**

Scriptures from the Lectionary for Masses with Children (CEV)
© Archdiocese of Chicago LTP. 1994 Used with permission

Background to the Readings for Leaders

For the Israelites the heart was the centre of human intelligence and will power. For Jeremiah sin had been second nature to the people of God, and the very absence of heart in the covenant explained why obedience to God was never realised. Only a conversion of heart will lead to an eternal covenant, one that cannot be broken.

Images from the Readings

- Law
- Agreement
- Heart
- Grain of Wheat
- Losing – Gaining

Reflection for Leaders

In the First Reading today the writer draws a picture for us of the relationship the Lord has with the people “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel”. The new covenant that Jeremiah is prophesying for the people of God he describes as being unlike the old one “...where I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt my covenant which they broke, though I was married to them....” And the bond which Jeremiah here describes is a close physical bond which stretches back to God the creator in the Genesis narrative. The new covenant though is to be different “... I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people.” The image of a loving God possessive and painted in very human terms emerges from this writing by the prophet. So during these days of Lent, of preparation, of reminding ourselves of the constancy and the mercy of our Creator God, we can echo the words of the psalmist

“A new heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.”

“Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it
remains alone, but if it dies it bears much fruit.”

“...it remains alone,...”



The whole purpose of Jesus’ existence is to redeem us through Calvary and his life. The law and covenant that Jeremiah wanted replaced, that was written on stone and had been handed down from Moses, was to be rewritten in the hearts of the people because, as Jeremiah saw, unless the covenant and the law of God are taken to heart, conversion from sin is impossible.

Jesus by his message and life that speaks to the hearts of all people has become the archetype for that conversion of heart. And the message is the message of today’s Gospel- unless you die to yourself you will not have life in you and so the call of Lent for a change of heart, a turning back to God is echoed once more. It is Christ’s journey to death and resurrection that draws us to him, we are, in a way, the fruits of that journey and within us is implanted its seed.

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: Violet cloth, Lectionary, Candle, Bowl of wheat grains.



LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

5th Sunday of Lent - Year B

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: Lord our God, you want to be as close to us as a mother is.
Help us to be open to your saving help in our lives.

R Amen.

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

(if used)

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

Psalm 51

Response:

Create a clean heart in me, O God.

(or another suitable response known by the children)

D G A D Bm A D A

Praise the God of all com- pas- sion, Lord of hea - ven, Lord of earth.

D G A/C# D G A A7 D

He is king of all cre - a- tion, he is mer - cy, he is love.

Gospel: John 12:24-26

Minister of the Word: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

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.

- In the First Reading how does the writer describe the relationship between God and the people? How is it going to be different in the future? Where will the new agreement be written?
- What does God promise in the new covenant?
- Seeds when planted change, what do they change into? How can the story of the seed apply in your life today? Just as the seed is not a seed any more, once it is sprouted and grown into a plant or tree so too do you change when you say yes to the light of God's love in you.

Lead the children to understand that Jesus is using rich imagery in today's Gospel in order to make his point. The seed does not die, but appears to die, as it shrivels up to give life to the shoots as they grow. Jesus is telling us that we need to be like the grain of wheat – not to physically die for others (although people have done this) but rather, to put others and their

needs first, so to ‘die to ourselves’ in order to serve others. Jesus says that when we think of others before ourselves we are like the grain of wheat that helps to provide a rich harvest.

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

Sing the chorus of *Unless a Grain of Wheat* (Gather Australia 500) together several times:

Unless a grain of wheat shall fall
upon the ground and die,
It remains but a single grain with no life.



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.

A change of heart ...



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: In trust and hope let us call upon our loving God for our needs:

- For the Church, that it will be a home for the broken hearted, and that they will be welcomed and find a place within.

Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For people in countries that are at war with their neighbours, that their governments will find a way to make peace.

Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For those who are without friends, that we will care for them.

Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For the grace to share what possessions and gifts we have with others.

Let us pray to the Lord ℟ Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: Loving and constant God, you see our needs and our weakness, bless us and those for whom we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

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