



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 B

Green

'Everything he does is good!'

Isaiah 35: 4-7a Psalm 146 James 2:1-5 Mark 7: 31-37

*Unless we know someone who is deaf,
we take the gift of hearing for granted.
We never stop to imagine how different
our lives would be if we could not hear.
Today we hear how one deaf man's
world would never be the same again.*



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

Mark 7:31-37

Jesus left the region around Tyre and went by way of Sidon toward Lake Galilee. He went through the land near the ten cities known as Decapolis.

Some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk. They begged Jesus just to touch him.

After Jesus had taken him aside from the crowd, he stuck his fingers in the man's ears. Then he spit and put it on the man's tongue. Jesus looked up toward heaven, and with a groan he said, "Effatha!" which means "Open up!"

At once the man could hear, and he had no more trouble talking clearly.

Jesus told the people not to say anything about what he had done. But the more he told them, the more they talked about it. They were completely amazed and said, "Everything he does is good! He even heals people who cannot hear or talk."

FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:4-7a

The people were worried. So the Lord told Isaiah to say to them: "Cheer up! Don't be afraid. Your God is coming to punish your enemies. God will take revenge on them and rescue you. The blind will see, and the deaf will hear. The disabled will leap about like deer, and tongues once silent will shout. Water will rush through the desert. Scorching sands will turn into lakes, and thirsty ground will become fountains.

PSALM

Psalms 146

Response: **Praise the Lord my soul!**
 or Alleluia!

God always keeps his word.
He gives justice to the poor and food to the hungry. **R**

The Lord sets prisoners free and heals blind eyes.
He gives a helping hand to everyone who falls.
The Lord loves good people and looks after strangers. **R**

He defends the rights of orphans and widows, but destroys the wicked.
The Lord God of Zion will rule forever!
Shout praises to the Lord! **R**

SECOND READING

James 12:1-5

My friends, if you have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, you won't treat some people as better than others. Suppose a rich person wearing fancy clothes and a gold ring comes to one of your meetings. And suppose a poor person dressed in worn out clothes also comes. You must not give the best seat to the one in fancy clothes and tell the one who is poor to stand at the side or sit on the floor. That is the same as saying that some people are better than others, and you would be acting like a crooked judge. My dear friends, pay attention. God has given a lot of faith to the poor people in this world. He also promised them a share in his kingdom that he will give to everyone who loves him.

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

The poem in the first reading belongs to the time when Israel was in exile in Babylon. It promises restoration, and encourages those who are losing heart. The image of the blind seeing and the deaf hearing is a sign of the fulfilment of God's promise of freedom for the oppressed.

In the Gospel today, physical deafness is a symbol of being closed off from the community. The deaf man's friends bring him to Jesus, who chooses to heal sacramentally (through gesture, touch, word and even spittle as signs which effect a cure) rather than just with a simple word. The cure opens the man to a whole new way of living but also new demands – no longer will he be able to be totally dependent on his family; now he must take up his own place in the community. As the healing takes place outside the borders of Israel in a non-Jewish district, we can assume that the deaf man was a Gentile, which indicates that God's mercy and compassion extends to all with no conditions or strings attached.

Images from the Readings

- *They begged Jesus just to touch him*
- *Jesus chose to heal through gestures and actions*
- *Jesus' compassion for the deaf man*
- *"Everything he does is good!"*

Reflection for Leaders

Today's Gospel story is a miracle of liberation as one man is set free to hear and proclaim the mercy of God. Jesus' mission is to be of service to all, the handicapped and disabled he welcomes – no one is rejected because of their difference. We are encouraged to be open to the influence and needs of all as well – there is no place for prejudice. We must take people as we find them, God's people, and God has touched each one.

There are other forms of deafness; we can refuse to listen to what Jesus wants us to hear; we can be so tied up in our own world and how busy we are, that we can neglect to hear what people say to us. Is Jesus calling us to bless others with our full attention? What new possibilities might open up to us as we meet and hear the words Jesus has for us? What comfortable aspects of our life might we need to relinquish, or what new demands might be made on us? Spend time this week being attentive to the way we use gestures and touch – either to include or exclude others.

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

Green cloth (ordinary time), Lectionary, candle



LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

Twenty third Sunday in Ordinary Time, 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: O God, you sent Jesus to lead us to you. We are slow to understand. Help us to know you better and live our lives to help others.

R Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 35:4-7a

(if used)

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

Psalms 146

Response: Praise the Lord my soul!

or Alleluia!

Second Reading: James 2:1-5

(if used)

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

- How did Jesus heal the man? Why did he choose to touch him and not just say “Be healed”?
- What do you think the man’s first words might be after Jesus cured him?

While today’s Gospel is speaking about a man who is physically deaf, lead the children to see that there are also other forms of deafness that we all participate in. We can refuse to listen to others; others can refuse to listen to us, or we can refuse to listen to what Jesus wants us to do.

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

Invite the children to use the words of the Gospel, but addressed directly to Jesus (“Everything you do is good!”) as a response to a simple litany of praise, such as:

Praise you Jesus, You are the healer R. *Everything you do is good!*

Praise you Jesus, You are the Son of God R

Praise you Jesus, You are the holy and anointed One R

Praise you Jesus, You are the Prince of Peace ... R

Praise you Jesus, You show us God’s love and mercy R



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: With joyful hearts, let us pray to our loving God for our needs:

- For the Church, may we always remember the sick and isolated and listen to their needs. Let us pray to the Lord
R **Lord hear our prayer** or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That people who suffer will be healed and will find peace. Let us pray to the Lord
R **Lord hear our prayer** or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That people of Aotearoa-New Zealand will reach out and care for others. Let us pray to the Lord
R **Lord hear our prayer** or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That we will learn to trust each other. 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 love, your loving kindness knows no end. Hear the prayers that we your children make to you through Jesus Christ

All: **Amen**

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