



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

The Feast of the Holy Family, Year A, B, C

White

The Lord's Promise

Sirach 3:2-6, Psalm 128, Colossians 3:12-17, Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Joseph had to save his family from terrible danger. Do you know what that danger was? Families are special in lots of ways. They can be a very important way of keeping us safe and protecting us from harm; they share the things that they have, and help us to grow and develop into strong people with good values. When we are baptised, we belong not just to our own little family, but we also belong to the bigger family of God



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Feast of the Holy Family, 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. (The Lectionary for Masses with Children gives Matthew's Gospel, 2:13-15, 19-23, for the Feast of the Holy Family for all three years of the Church's liturgical cycle, A, B, and C.)

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

An angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Get up! Hurry and take the child and his mother to Egypt! Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is looking for the child and wants to kill him."

That night Joseph got up and took his wife and the child to Egypt, where they stayed until Herod died. So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, "I called my son out of Egypt."

After King Herod died, an angel from the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph while he was still in Egypt. The angel said, "Get up and take the child and his mother back to Israel. The people who wanted to kill him are now dead."

Joseph got up and left with them for Israel. But when he heard that Herod's son Archelaus was now ruler of Judea, he was afraid to go there. Then in a dream he was told to go to Galilee, and they went to live there in the town of Nazareth.
So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, "He will be called a Nazarene."

FIRST READING

Sirach 3:2-6

Children, the Lord expects you to honour your father and has given your mother authority over you.

If you honour your father, your sins will be forgiven.

If you praise your mother, treasure will be stored up in heaven for you.

If you honour your father, your own children will make you happy, and all of your prayers will be answered.

If you respect your father, you will live a long life, and if you listen to the Lord, your mother can relax.

PSALM

Psalms 128

Response: Happy are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

The Lord will bless you if you respect him and obey his laws.

Your fields will produce, and you will be happy and all will go well. **R**

Your wife will be as fruitful as a grapevine, and just as an olive tree is rich with olives, your home will be rich with healthy children. **R**

That is how the Lord will bless everyone who respects him. I pray that the Lord will bless you from Zion and let Jerusalem prosper as long as you live. **R**

SECOND READING (if included)

Colossians 3:12-17

Brothers and sisters: God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient. Put up with each other, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you. Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything completely together.

Each one of you is part of the body of Christ, and you were chosen to live together in peace. So let the peace that comes from Christ control your thoughts. And be grateful.

Let the message about Christ completely fill your lives, while you use all your wisdom to teach and instruct each other. With thankful hearts, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of him.

Background to the Readings for Leaders

This Gospel shows how families must rely on the love and providence of God and the practical mutual support of each other. Matthew is not so much reflecting on the family in the Gospel today, as showing us that Jesus was the One long awaited by Israel, who would fulfil all the prophecies and lead the people to freedom and holiness. Even at the beginning of this story, Matthew describes Jesus, like Moses, as being 'called out of Egypt'. However, all the readings today point to the support of loving relationships and protective families. Our baptism brings us into God's family, where we learn the advantages and the responsibilities of belonging.

Images from the Readings

- Respect and honour your parents
- God loves you and has chosen you
- Love is more important than anything else
- Jesus is saved by Joseph's obedience
- God's promise came true

Reflection for Leaders

The feast of the Holy Family, coming within the Christmastide celebrations, gives us a further opportunity to reflect on the miracle of the incarnation of Jesus into a human family. God provided this special family to protect and nurture his Son during his earthly life. This family, who were so faithful and instantly obedient to God's will, provides us with a model that shows us how to be committed to and care for the family with which we have been blessed. Have you ever wondered about the instant obedience that Joseph displayed when he was warned that Jesus was in danger in a dream? How instant is our obedience when we recognise that God is asking us to do something that will be disruptive to our life?

Reflect on your own experience of family life. What is it that makes some relationships more special than others? Can you identify ways in which you have come to experience God's love in your family? Do you allow other members of your family to experience God's love through you? As a member of our own families we have certain responsibilities. We also have responsibilities as members of God's family. What are these responsibilities and how do we prioritise them? Are there times when there is conflict between these? How do you resolve this?

What ways does your faith community support families and help them to thrive? What opportunities are there for families to grow in faith together?

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 one or two questions from the 8-12 material and then focus on the 'Liturgical Action' with your group. The children may like to colour the outlined figures on page 8 to represent their whanau.

Suggested Focus

Prepare a focus for the area where the children's Liturgy of the Word is to be held:
White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a map and a small travel bag.

LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

Feast of the Holy Family, Year A, B, C

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 your children. Thank you for the gift of life. Help us to live fully, using the gifts we have each been given, learning to use these to help each other.

R Amen.

First Reading: Sirach 3:2-6

(if used)

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

Psalms 128

(if used)

Response: Happy are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-17

(if used)

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
Asus⁴
A

Christmas: Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. I bring you news of great joy. _____

Bm
G
D
A
G
A
D

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Je - sus our Sav - iour is born.

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

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.*

- Have you ever been on a long journey?
- What are some of the things that help as you travel?
- Why did the angel tell Joseph to take the child and his mother to Egypt?
- What was the hurry?
- Do you think Joseph might have been afraid? Why?
- Did Joseph have time to pack the things that would have helped on the journey?
- Why did Jesus need a loving and caring family to look after him and protect him as he grew up?
- Can you think of a time when your family/whanau had to protect you from danger?
- What else are families/whanau for?
- Do the people in your family/whanau have special 'jobs' or 'roles'?



When we were baptised we became a member of the family of God.

- Can you see any ways that being in the family of God is similar to your own family / whanau situation?

5-7 year olds: Adapt some of the questions in the 8-12 material and then focus on the 'Liturgical Action' with your group. You may wish to photocopy the outlined figures on page 8 for the children to colour to represent their whanau.

LITURGICAL ACTION – Ko te Ritenga Karakia

Invite the children to name the members of their family/whanau. Thank God for each one of them and ask God to bless them and keep them safe.



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: Just as Jesus taught us, we turn to God for all our needs:

- For the church, that it be a welcoming and friendly place where people can come in safety.

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

- That we teach others by our example to love one another.

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

- That we treat others with respect, and kindness.

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

- That families everywhere will be strong and supportive of each other.

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

Leader: Loving God, help us to live in peace with all your people, that we may share in your life forever. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

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



