



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

'Be prepared, follow Jesus'

Green

Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10 Psalm 40 Hebrews 12:1-4 Luke 12:49-53

In the Gospel today Jesus tells us that we have to be prepared for difficult times. Following him won't always be easy and sometimes people will question us or even tease us for living the way Jesus asks.



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration, begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Twentieth 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

Luke 12:49-53

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I came to set fire to the earth, and I surely wish it were already on fire!

"I am going to be put to a hard test. And I will have to suffer a lot of pain until it is over.

"Do you think that I came to bring peace to earth? No indeed! I came to make people choose sides. A family of five will be divided, with two of them against the other three. Fathers and sons will turn against one another, and mothers and daughters will do the same. Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law will also turn against each other."

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

The nation's leaders said to King Zedekiah, "Jeremiah should be put to death! He's saying things that are upsetting every soldier left in the city and everyone else as well. He isn't trying to help anyone. He just wants to cause trouble."

"Do what you want with him!" Zedekiah replied. "I can't stop you."

So they took Jeremiah to the open courtyard where prisoners were kept. Then they let him down with ropes into the cistern that belonged to Malchiah, the king's son. There was no water in the cistern, and Jeremiah sank down in the mud.

Jeremiah's friend Ebedmelech went out of the palace and reported to the king, "Your Majesty, those men were wrong to put Jeremiah the prophet down in a cistern. There's no more food in the city, and he will starve to death."

The king then told Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, "Take thirty men and pull Jeremiah out before he dies."

PSALM

Psalm 40

Response: **Lord, come to my aid!**

I patiently waited, Lord, for you to hear my prayer. **R**

You listened and pulled me from a lonely pit full of mud and mire.

You let me stand on a rock with my feet firm. **R**

I am poor and needy, but, Lord God, you care about me,
and you come to my rescue. Please hurry and help. **R**

SECOND READING

Hebrews 12:1-4

Brothers and sisters:

Such a large crowd of witnesses is all around us! So we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially the sin that just won't let go. And we must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us.

We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete. He endured the shame of being nailed to a cross, because he knew that later on he would be glad he did. Now he is seated at the right side of God's throne!

So keep your mind on Jesus, who put up with many insults from sinners. Then you won't get discouraged and give up.

None of you have yet been hurt in your battle against sin.

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

Jeremiah, like most prophets, brought an unpopular message, to the people of Jerusalem he proclaimed destruction if they would not repent. In choosing to be faithful to the mission God had given him he was thrown into a pit. Scholars have long believed Jeremiah to be a 'figure' of Christ, his sufferings reminding us of Jesus' sufferings and his escape from the pit reminding us of Jesus' resurrection from the tomb.

The theme of persecution, suffering and struggle is continued in this Gospel reading. Luke's gospel can strike us as rather surprising, Jesus' words seem harsh, and in contrast to our image of him as the Prince of Peace. However if we read the Gospel in light of the situation in which it was written we can begin to understand. Luke was writing to members of the early Church, for whom the decision to become a Christian generally meant turning away from either their Jewish heritage or the religious cult of the Roman Empire – either decision would have caused anguish and difficulty whether from within their families, or from neighbours, friends or Roman Officials. In this context Jesus' words brought comfort and encouragement – it is worth sacrificing and suffering for the sake of the Kingdom.

As it was for Jeremiah and the early Christians, so it can be for us. While we may not face physical suffering today we may still experience emotional 'sufferings' and divisions because of our Christian faith. When we choose to take a lower paid job because it allows us to spend more time with our family, we might be told we're crazy and we'll never get ahead. When we choose not to go with friends to a movie because we don't believe the content appropriate, we may be laughed at or called a 'prude'. When we don't let our child go away with friends over Easter because they won't be able to get to the Easter services, we may face anger and resentment. Christianity is not for the faint hearted, in choosing to follow the call of Christ in our life, we will face moments of persecution and anguish, but if we remain faithful as Jeremiah did, we will receive the promise of eternal life.

Images from the Readings

- The unpopularity of the prophet
- Accepting humiliation
- Being rescued
- Throwing off what hinders us
- Keeping our eyes on Jesus
- Division as a result of commitment to Christ

Reflection for Leaders

As you reflect back on your own faith journey, has the decision to follow Christ caused you any anguish, division or isolation? If you have experienced any of these things, how has it affected your faith?

This gospel passage began with Jesus say 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!' Fire has both negative and positive connotations. We often think of fire purely in terms of destruction, but it can also be purifying and be used to describe great zeal 'I'm all fired up'. Is there any 'fire' in your Christian life at this time? How could you get yourself and others 'fired up' about your faith?



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
Lectionary
Candle

LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year 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: God of goodness, help us to share your goodness and love with all we meet.

R Amen.

First Reading: Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

(if used)

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


Psalms 40

Response: Lord, come to my aid!
or Alleluia

Second Reading: Hebrews 12:1-4

(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


 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: Luke 12:49-53

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

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.

- Has anyone ever laughed at you because you have done what you know is right?
- Have you ever been hassled by others because you wouldn't join in on name-calling?

In today's readings we hear that it is not always easy to be a follower of Jesus. In the first reading we hear that Jeremiah was thrown down the well for doing what God asked him, and telling the people of Jerusalem that trouble was coming. Jeremiah suffered, but in the end everything happened as he had said, and the people realised they needed God. Through Jeremiah, God invited them to come back to him and live his way of love.

The second reading tells us that living our life the way Jesus asks us to, is a bit like a race.

- Who's been in a running race before? Who's been in a sack race before? Which one is easier? In which one can you get to the finish line quicker? The sack slows us down. In our life there are things that can slow us down, or keep us from being a really good follower of Jesus? What are some things that keep us from being a good follower of Jesus?

- *Our second reading tells us we should get rid of these things and keep our eyes on Jesus. To help you do this, next time you're not sure what to do you might like to ask yourself... What would Jesus 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 join in this prayer



“Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in us the fire of your love
send forth your Spirit and we shall be re-created
and you will renew the face of the earth”

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, we are fed by the teaching that Jesus gave us. We now turn to God for what we need and pray together

- That our Church will always be first in helping to lift the burdens from people who suffer
... Let us pray to the Lord
R **Lord hear our prayer** or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For strength for all people who want to be followers of Jesus
... Let us pray to the Lord
R **Lord hear our prayer** or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For people who suffer because of their faith
... Let us pray to the Lord
R **Lord hear our prayer** or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- That those who serve God will do everything that is good and will please God
... Let us pray to the Lord
R **Lord hear our prayer** or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God of love, sometimes it is hard to be your followers. Give us, and those we pray for, the strength to do the right thing always. We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son.

All: **Amen**

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





OR

Follow Jesus one step at a time ...

