Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

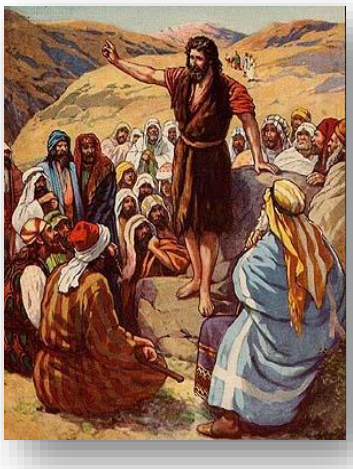
Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

3rd Sunday of Advent -Year B

Violet

'John's message'

Isaiah 61:1-2 Psalm: Luke 1:47 and 49, 53-54; Isaiah 61:10b 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24 John 1:19 - 28



John is a man sure of his purpose and mission. We can pray that we may be like him; sure of the path that God wants us to walk. If we are not sure or if we have gone our own way a bit what better time is there to find the path once more and set our feet back on it with renewed resolve.

Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Third Sunday of Advent, 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 1:19-28

The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and temple helpers to ask John who he was. He told them plainly, "I am not the Messiah." Then when they asked him if he was Elijah, he said, "No, I am not!" And when they asked if he was the Prophet, he also said "No!"

Finally they said, "Who are you then? We have to give an answer to the ones who sent us. Tell us who you are!" John answered in the words of the prophet Isaiah, "I am only someone shouting in the desert, Get the road ready for the Lord." Some Pharisees had also been sent to John. They asked him, "Why are you baptising people, if you are not the Messiah, or Elijah or the Prophet?" John told them, "I use water to baptise people. But here with you is someone you don't know. Even though I came first, I am not good enough to untie his sandals."

John said this as he was baptising east of the Jordan River in Bethany.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:1-2

The Spirit of the Lord has come to me, because he has chosen me. The Lord has sent me to tell the oppressed the good news, to heal the broken hearted, and to announce freedom for prisoners and captives.
This is the year when the Lord God will show kindness to us and punish our enemies. The Lord has sent me to comfort all who mourn.

PSALM

Luke 1:47 and 49, 53-54; Isaiah 61:10b

Response: **My soul rejoices in my God**

With all my heart I praise the Lord, and I am glad because of God my Saviour.
God All-Powerful has done great things for me, and his name is holy.

God gives the hungry good things to eat, and he sends the rich away with nothing in their hands. He helps his servant Israel and is always merciful to his people.

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Brothers and sisters: always be joyful and never stop praying. Whatever happens, keep thanking God because of Jesus Christ. This is what God wants you to do.
Don't turn away God's spirit or ignore prophecies. Put everything to the test. Accept what is good and don't have anything to do with evil.
I pray that God, who gives peace, will make you completely holy. And may your spirit, soul and body be kept healthy and faultless until our Lord Jesus Christ returns. The one who chose you can be trusted, and he will do this.

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

The fact that there were still followers of John the Baptist long after Jesus had gone back to the Father tells us something about John. This explains why he is deliberately downplayed in some of the Gospel writings. John explains that he is not the Light but a witness to the Light. The Light being the revelation of God. Jesus Christ becomes synonymous with the Light. (In Christ we see clearly who God is and where we should follow to be true people of God.) John the writer makes sure that John the Baptist is made subordinate to Christ he does this through the Baptist's own words. "I am not the Messiah...There is someone you don't know ...even though I came first, I am not good enough to untie his sandals." The water preparation is merely a preparation to the baptism yet to come.

Images from the Readings

- Witness for the light
- Baptise with water
- Anointed
- Pray constantly

Reflection for Leaders

The readings today speak of being sent, of being full of the spirit of God, of responding to that spirit with action and joyful hearts. The psalm speaks of God as having done great things for us. It speaks of a merciful God who redresses the imbalance between rich and poor, advantaged and disadvantaged, the mighty and the lowly.

The reading from Isaiah tells us how we are to respond to the coming of God into our lives. It is like a song of joy, a hymn of rejoicing. We have been called by our baptism and we in turn are to give the good news of God's message to whomever we meet. We are to respond with joy. In our liturgy we sing of our thanks and praise as we stand redeemed by Jesus Christ we pray with, through and in him before God who has enabled this to happen. We are full to overflowing with hope.

The single pink candle of Advent, in some places alight today reminds us like the pink of the sky before sunrise that a new day is almost upon us. The waiting that is this Advent time reminds us that we are but awaiting the day when in time Jesus will come again in glory.

You might ask the children to agree to live for one day after the example of John the Baptist. Perhaps by fasting or being a sign for others of the coming of Christ or by dressing simply without ornament or bright colour. By acting to others as John was to act to Jesus, as a servant. By, for one day at least, preparing for Christ's coming in a special and appropriate way.

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, a candle and an Advent Wreath with three purple candles and one pink candle.

LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

3rd Sunday of Advent - 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: God of Hope, with your help we will try to live good lives. We will try to help others, especially our mothers and fathers, our sisters, brothers and friends.

℟ **Amen.**

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-2

(if used) The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki

Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

Psalm

Response: **My soul rejoices in my God**

(or another suitable response known by the children)

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

(if used) The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki

Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *(Sing)*

Music © 2011 Maria Guzzo

Gospel: John 1:19-28

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.

- Who did the priests think that John might be? At first they thought that this extraordinary man might be the Messiah, the saviour promised by God. Then they wondered whether John was Elijah or another prophet.
- John helped the crowds prepare a way for the Lord by explaining that true happiness comes from pleasing God and leading lives filled with goodness. By being sorry for the mistakes they had made and the wrongs they had done, and by changing their lives, they could make a fresh start on the way to God.
- When people asked for God's forgiveness and made up their minds to live as God wanted them to, John would baptize them in the river. As they came up out of the water, it was as though a new life was just beginning for them.
- Most people today are baptized as babies rather than as adults, but water is still used at baptism. All life needs water, and the water used at baptism reminds us that we are now welcomed into the family of God and share in new and everlasting life.

- What sort of things has God done for us? Given us families and people to care for us. Given us the Church to guide our lives to Everlasting life. How are we to react to the things God has done for us in our lives? We say thank you to God by respecting what has been given to us and by offering our lives back to God. What kind of a character was John the Baptist? What can we learn from the way he responded to God's call?

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

Light two purple candles and the pink candle today, explaining Joy Sunday, and sing 'Prepare the Way' (GA 284) or similar.

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 Īnoīnga 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 strong faith and hope let us bring our prayers before our loving God.

- For the Church, help of those in need, mother of the poor. Let us pray to the Lord.
  Lord hear our prayer

  or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For those who suffer from sickness and lack of food. 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. Let us pray to the Lord.
  Lord hear our prayer

  or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For the strength to love others as we love ourselves. Let us pray to the Lord.
  Lord hear our prayer

  or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: O God our hope, shower your abundant blessings upon us and those for whom we pray so that seeing your mercy we might work to help others. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

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

3rd Sunday of Advent, Year B

Chorus Play — John 1:19-28 — Prepare the way

***People required**: Reader 1, Reader 2, John.*

Reader 1:	The Jewish leaders asked John,
Reader 2:	Are you the messiah?
Chorus:	**No, I am not!**
Reader 1:	The Jewish leaders asked John.
Reader 2:	Are you Elijah?
Chorus:	**No, I am not!**
Reader 1:	The Jewish leaders asked John.
Reader 2:	Are you THE prophet?
Chorus:	**No, I am not!**
Reader 1:	Who are you then?
Chorus:	**Who are you?**
Reader 2:	John used the words of the prophet Isaiah:
John:	I am only someone, shouting in the desert.
Chorus:	**In the desert!**
Reader 1:	This was John's message:
John:	Get ready for the Lord!
Chorus:	**Get ready for the Lord!**
John:	Get ready now!
Chorus:	**Get ready now!**
Reader 2:	John baptised people in the River Jordan.
Chorus:	**In the River Jordan!**
Reader 1:	John told the people….
John:	Someone is coming, someone really important.
Chorus:	**Really important!**
John:	I am not fit to untie his sandals!
Chorus:	**Not fit!**
Reader 2:	This was John's message . . .

(continued overleaf)

John: Get ready for the Lord!

Chorus: Get ready for the Lord!

John: Get ready now!

Chorus: Get ready now!

From 'Just Imagine 4, Many Creative ways of presenting Scripture' written by Rina Wintour, Mountjoy Enterprises, www.mountjoyenterprises.com.au. Available from the Liturgy Centre.