



# Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

## Fourth Sunday of Easter - Year C

White

*'They follow me'*

Acts 13:43-44, 47-48 Psalm 100 John 10:27-30

*What does Jesus mean when he calls himself the 'Good Shepherd'? What does a shepherd do for his sheep? In Jesus' day, flocks of sheep were very small and the shepherd knew each sheep by its name. They were a bit like pets. If you have a pet, think about what they do when you call them? Why do they do this? Jesus is telling us that he will always be there for us when we need him, and that he watches over us and protects us always.*



### Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for The Fourth Sunday of Easter, 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 10:27-30

Jesus said to his disciples:

"My sheep know my voice, and I know them.

They follow me, and I give them eternal life, so that they will never be lost. No one can snatch them out of my hand.

My Father gave them to me, and he is greater than all others.

No one can snatch them from his hands, and I am one with the Father."

## FIRST READING

Acts 13:43-44, 47-48

After the Sabbath service, many Jews and a lot of Gentiles who worshipped God went with Paul and Barnabas. They begged the people to remain faithful to God, who had been so kind to them. The next Sabbath almost everyone in town came to hear the message about the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas told them, "The Lord has given this command, 'I have placed you here as a light for the Gentiles. You are to take the saving power of God to people everywhere on earth.' This message made the Gentiles glad, and they praised what they had heard about the Lord. Everyone who had been chosen for eternal life then put their faith in the Lord.

## PSALM

Psalm 100

**Response:** We are God's people, the sheep of his flock

Shout praises to the Lord, everyone on this earth.

Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the Lord! R

You know the Lord is God! He created us, and we belong to him;  
we are his people, the sheep in his pasture. R

The Lord is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever. R

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

The image of a caring shepherd, which was formed within an ancient agricultural society, remains valid despite the change in farming practices of today. It still speaks of the intimate closeness and tenderness of Christ's relationship with each one of us individually. The shepherd knows his sheep, and the sheep their shepherd. Complete trust is implicit. The Gospel today makes some sweeping claims – eternal life promised for his sheep, and total protection from anyone who would seek to snatch them away. It finishes up with the declaration that Jesus and God are one. The Latin root word for shepherd is pastor, and it is from this root that spring the church terminologies and concepts of pastoral care and roles within faith communities. These roles imply a duty of love and care. Besides that the Shepherd-King was an ancient image of God used

by the Hebrew people. The first reading gives us insight into how the early church was struggling with the opening up of the good news to the Gentiles, leading to diversity in the make-up of the communities, much as we have in parishes today. Antioch, where Paul and Barnabas were preaching, was home to a military garrison, so conversion of the soldiers promoted the spread of the good news as they were stationed throughout the Roman Empire

## *Images from the Readings*

- *They know my voice*
- *They follow me*
- *No one can snatch them*
- *Light for the Gentiles*
- *Remain faithful*

## *Reflection for Leaders*

Reflecting on how today's readings impact our own situation might lead us to looking more closely at who the people of our own 'flock' are? What characteristics does our community have? What are the things that make you feel that you belong? In what ways are you called to act as a 'shepherd', and to whom? Who are the people who act as shepherds to you? How do they carry out this role? As we place ourselves in the midst of this intimate relationship with Jesus, we might think about the ways in which we 'hear his voice'? Do you have a sense of being called by name? What are the other conflicting voices that try to drown him out, and where are they leading us?

During the week be attentive to the needs of people who are in your care.

## *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:

*White cloth, Lectionary, a candle, a picture of the Good Shepherd, and perhaps a picture of modern sheep-farming to compare it with.*



# *LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE*

## *Fourth Sunday of Easter*

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 people and we want to follow wherever you lead us. Help us to listen and recognise your voice.

**R** Amen.

#### *First Reading: Acts 13;443-44, 47-48*

(if used)

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

***Psalm 100*** Response: We are God's people, the sheep of his flock

(or another suitable response known by the children)

Easter: Al - le - lu - ia.      Je - sus is ri - sen from death.

Al - le - lu - ia.      He is the light of the world.

*Gospel: John 10:27-30*

**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 whakanua 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:

The idea of a good shepherd would have carried a different meaning for the people of Jesus' day – then shepherds had small flocks of sheep and knew them intimately. You might convey the idea of this by linking in to the children's experience of pets, and how they come when they are called for food, attention, walks, companionship etc. The shepherd would often carry a lamb on his shoulders if it was tired or hurt. The image of the Good Shepherd has stayed alive in the Church, and we are often called his 'flock'.

- When we read the Gospel today, how do you feel when you hear about how much Jesus loves and protects us?
- How does this have an effect on our lives?
- How can we act in the same way for one another?

**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*

Options: Sing a version of ‘The Lord is My Shepherd’ that the children might know, or a similar one on the theme of being shepherded, (eg AOV #26, #33, #144, #160), say Psalm 23 together, or today’s Psalm 100.

Like a shepherd you feed your flock  
And gather us lambs in your arms  
Holding us carefully close to your heart  
Leading us home.



(As One Voice 160)

## *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.



“they know my voice,  
they follow me”

## *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:** We are followers of the Good Shepherd, who takes care of all our needs. Let us bring these to God in confidence.

- For the Church, that she will care for the people of God in the same way that the Good Shepherd took care of his flock ... Let us pray to the Lord

R Lord hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- That we be filled with a desire to be attentive to the teachings of Jesus...  
Let us pray to the Lord

R Lord hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- That we have a sense of being a community of believers, the people of God ...  
Let us pray to the Lord

R Lord hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For confidence in knowing the safety and protection of Jesus so we can be free to live as God wants... Let us pray to the Lord

R Lord hear our prayer or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

**Leader:** God of faithfulness, bless and protect us and those for whom we pray.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord

**All:** **Amen**

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

The Lord is my shepherd,  
I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down  
in green pastures,  
he leadeth me by still waters.  
He restoreth my soul:  
he leadeth me in the paths  
of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Yea though I walk through  
the valley of the shadow of death  
I will fear no evil:  
for thou art with me;  
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me  
in the presence of mine enemies:  
thou anointest my head with oil;  
my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy  
will follow me all the days of my life:  
and I will dwell in the  
house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm 23