



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Third Sunday of Lent, Year A

Violet

The water that I shall give will become a spring of eternal life.

Exodus 17:3-7, Psalm 95, John 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-41

Have you ever been thirsty? What do we need water for? When Jesus was thirsty he asked a Samaritan woman for some water. Because the Jews and the Samaritans had a long-standing hatred, this was a very significant encounter.

Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Third Sunday of Lent, starting with the Gospel. (You may choose to use or focus on one reading only, but remember that the Gospel may not be omitted. The Second Reading is omitted in the Lectionary for Masses with Children.) Then look through the preparatory material that follows and familiarise yourself with the Liturgy Outline.



GOSPEL

John 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-41

On his way to Galilee, Jesus came to the town of Sychar. It was near the field that Jacob had long ago given to this son Joseph. The well that Jacob had dug was still there, and Jesus sat down beside it because he was tired from travelling. It was noon, and after Jesus' disciples had gone into town to buy some food, a Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well.

Jesus asked her, "Would you please give me a drink of water?"

"You are a Jew," she replied, "and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink of water when Jews and Samaritans won't have anything to do with each other?"

Jesus answered, "You don't know what God wants to give you, and you don't know who is asking you for a drink. If you did, you would ask him for the water that gives life."

"Sir," the woman said, "you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. Where are you going to get this life-giving water? Our ancestor Jacob dug this well for us, and his family and animals got water from it. Are you greater than Jacob?"

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again. But no one who drinks the water I give will ever be thirsty again. The water I give is like a flowing fountain that gives eternal life."

The woman replied, "Sir, please give me a drink of that water! Then I won't get thirsty and have to come to this well again."

She also told him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. My ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews say Jerusalem is the only place to worship."

Jesus said to her: "Believe me, the time is coming when you won't worship God either on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans don't really know the one you worship. But we Jews do know the God we worship, and by using us God will save the world. But a time is coming, and it is already here! Even now the true worshippers are being led by the Spirit to worship the Father according to the truth. These are the ones the Father is seeking to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship God must be led by the Spirit to worship him according to the truth."

The woman said, "I know that the Messiah will come. He is the one we call Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

"I am that one," Jesus told her, "and I am speaking to you now."

A lot of Samaritans in that town put their faith in Jesus. They came and asked him to stay in their town, and he stayed on for two days.

Many more Samaritans put their faith in Jesus because of what they heard him say. They told the woman, "We no longer have faith in Jesus just because of what you told us. We have heard him ourselves, and we are certain that he is the Saviour of the world!"

FIRST READING

Exodus 17:3-7

The people of Israel were thirsty and kept on complaining. They said, "Moses, did you bring us out of Egypt just to let us and our families and our animals die of thirst?"

Then Moses prayed, "Lord, what am I going to do with these people? They are about to stone me to death."

The Lord answered, "Take some of the leaders with you and go on ahead of the rest of the people. Take along the walking stick that you used to strike the Nile River, and when you get to the rock at Sinai, I will be there with you. Strike the rock with the stick, and water will pour out for the people to drink."

Moses did this while the leaders of the people watched. He named that place Massah and Meribah. This was because the people complained and tested the Lord by asking, "Is the Lord really with us?"

PSALM

Psalm 95

Response:

If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts.

Sing joyful songs to the Lord!

Praise the mighty rock where we are safe.

Come to worship him with thankful hearts and songs of praise. **R**

Listen to God's voice today!

Don't be stubborn and rebel as your ancestors did
at Meribah and Massah out in the desert.

They tested God and saw the things he did. **R**

*Scriptures from the Lectionary for Masses with Children (CEV)
© Archdiocese of Chicago LTP. 1994 Used with permission*

Background to the Readings for Leaders

The reading from Exodus tells us of how God provides water for the thirsty people newly liberated from slavery in Egypt. This water would sustain them on their journey to the Promised Land. The thirst of the Samaritan woman is more profound, and she is open to receiving the living water that Jesus offers. Hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans was longstanding because of cultural and religious differences resulting from the inclusion of pagan practices, which sullied the religious practices of the Samaritans over the centuries. Samaritans had built a 'break away' Temple on Mt Gerzim. At the time, social mores prevented men and women from speaking to each other in public, so Jesus contravenes all sorts of taboos to ask the woman for a drink. Her bucket would have been ritually unclean to the Jews in any case. The well is an important local meeting place for these people, and the fact that this woman was visiting it in the heat of the day indicates her exclusion from her community. But we are really hearing about this woman's thirst for spiritual satisfaction and her journey in faith towards God. Her amusement at his comments and the banter that develops through their dialogue is typical of interactions of the time and leads to a deeper conviction of spiritual truth, and eventually to the woman's powerful testimony which leads so many others to Jesus.

Images from the Readings

- Tired from travelling
- Give me a drink of water
- Ask him for the water that gives life
- True worship



Reflection for Leaders

Sometimes we can have a very superficial understanding of our faith and what Jesus really offers us. Can you identify a time when your appreciation of your spiritual life has become acute and deeper? When have you experienced a personal invitation to faith? Had you been thirsting for God at the time? Visualise your spiritual life as a map with ups and downs. See if you can identify the points of change and what was happening at the time. Who assisted you on your faith journey at these times? What thirst do you have in your life at the present time? Are there others around you who might be thirsty for company or feeling excluded by society that you can reach out to during this week?

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 a bucket of water with a rope tied to the handle. Make sure the bucket is very clean (perhaps a **new** plastic bucket) as the children will be invited to drink the water from it.*

LEADER'S LITURGY OUTLINE

Third Sunday of Lent, Year A

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 thank you for the blessing of water and for the life giving water which you give us through Jesus at our baptism. Help us to share this with those who are thirsty.

R Amen.

First Reading: Exodus 17:3-7

(if used)

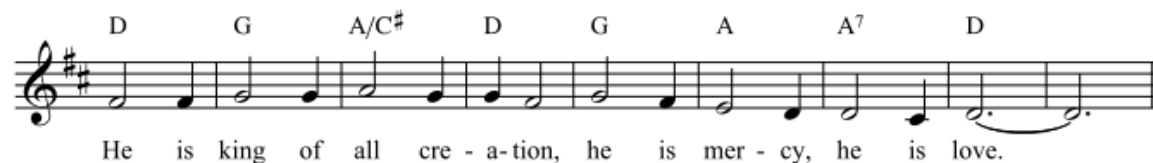
The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki
Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

Psalm 95

(if used)

Response:

If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts.



Gospel: John 4:5-15, 19b-26, 39a, 40-41

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.

- Have you ever stayed somewhere that is really dry and hasn't had rain for a long time? What happens when it doesn't rain? Some places in the world don't get much rain, and water means life in places that are very dry. Can you think of any ways that they find enough water to live on? (Wells, bores, aqua ducts, irrigation etc)
- What do we do with water? (Washing ourselves, our clothes, bathing and swimming, watering plants, drinking)
- In today's Gospel Jesus meets a woman at a well. He was very thirsty because he had been travelling. Have you ever felt really thirsty? In this dry country the well was a place where people would often meet and talk. Jesus talked with the woman. Can you remember what they said to each other? Were they talking about the same kind of water?
- What happened to the woman because of Jesus?
- What do you think Jesus meant by 'living water'?
- When do we use water at Church as a symbol of Jesus' 'living water' (at baptism, the holy water we use to sign ourselves with as we enter the church)
- Do you remember the promises that were made for us when we were baptised? We renew these promises again at Easter.

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

Thank God for the gift of water. Invite the children to come up and sip a handful of water from the bucket. (Have a towel handy to dry hands afterwards).



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: As loved children of God, let us come with confidence to God with all our prayers.

- That our Church will be a place where those who are thirsty for God will always find refreshment and life
Let us pray to the Lord **R** Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For those who feel rejected in our school or neighbourhood, that we will learn to include them and be friends
Let us pray to the Lord **R** Lord hear our prayer
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- For a sense of thankfulness to God for the everyday blessings of sufficient water, good, shelter and clothing
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: Merciful and loving God, you give us all we need to live life fully. Help us to share your love with all we meet, especially those who are thirsting for you and your goodness. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord

All: **Amen**

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