



Liturgy of the Word with Children

Te Ritenga o te Kupu hei ngā Tamariki

Prepared by the Liturgy Centre, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

The Ascension of the Lord, Year A

White

'Go to the people of all nations'

Acts 1:8-11, Ps 47, Ephesians 1:17-21, Matthew 28:16-20

Has someone you cared about ever gone away and left you? How did it feel? Jesus was returning to his Father and he knew that his friends would be feeling really lost when he went. But he had finished the work that he was to do. Now it was time to leave the disciples with a mission, with some work to do. What was that work? Who does this work today?



Leader's Preparation

In preparation for leading this celebration begin by reading and reflecting on the Scriptures for the Ascension of the Lord, starting with the Gospel. (You may choose to use or focus on one reading only, but remember that the Gospel may not be omitted. This week it would be good to also focus on the First Reading from Acts as well as the Gospel.) Then look through the preparatory material that follows and familiarise yourself with the Liturgy Outline.

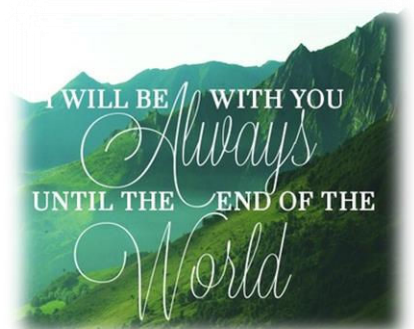
GOSPEL

Matthew 28:16-20

Jesus' eleven disciples went to a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus had told them to meet him. They saw him and worshipped him, but some of them doubted.

Jesus came to them and said: "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you.

"I will be with you always, even until the end of the world."



FIRST READING

Acts 1:8-11

Jesus told his disciples:

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and everywhere in the world.”

After Jesus had said this and while they were watching he was taken up into a cloud. They could not see him, but as he went up, they kept looking up into the sky.

Suddenly two men dressed in white clothes were standing there beside them. They said, “Why are you men from Galilee standing here and looking up into the sky? Jesus has been taken to heaven. But he will come back in the same way that you have seen him go.”

PSALM

Psalm 47

Response: Alleluia

All of you nations, clap your hands and shout joyful praises to God.

The Lord Most High is fearsome, the ruler of all the earth. **R**

God goes up to his throne, as people shout and trumpets blast.

Sing praises to God our King. **R**

God is ruler of all the earth! Praise God with songs.

God rules the nations from his sacred throne. **R**

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

Jesus has been working, living and praying with his disciples, showing them a way of life and the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven. In today's Gospel, Jesus calls his disciples to a mountain in Galilee. Mountaintops are significant in Matthew's Gospel – the temptation, the transfiguration, the 'sermon on the mount' all take place on mountains - peaks that offer new or renewed vision. Matthew draws parallels with Moses who received the old Law on Mt Sinai. Jesus is shown to fulfil and extend the old Law, and extend the reach from the chosen people of Israel to all the people of the world. Jesus commissions the disciples to continue his work in the world. Now baptism is extended to all in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit. He sends them out despite the fact that they are still uncertain about what was happening. The word 'apostle' comes from the Greek for 'one who is sent out'. Change is a constant in life for the disciples as well as for us, but Jesus' final words to them bring comfort for all who are serious believers in times of doubt or difficulty. The story of the early church is continued in the first reading, the beginning of the book of Acts. The disciples are further reassured by the words of hope that complete the scene.

Images from the Readings

- They worshipped and some doubted
- God to the people of all nations
- I will be with you always
- The Holy Spirit will give you power
- He will come back in the same way

Reflection for Leaders

Jesus has conquered death and now passes the baton on to us to continue the mission of the church to carry on the work of Jesus. As you reflect on this Gospel, underline the words and phrases that stand out for you. In what way does it speak to your experience of life? How do you respond to Jesus' command to be a witness to him? Jesus tells his disciples that he will be with them until the end of the world. How do you experience God's presence in your life today? Just as the disciples have been sent by Jesus, so too we are sent at the end of each Mass with the words, "Go" Most of us don't have a mission to go to the ends of the earth, but our mission field is the place where we are, those whom we come in contact with in our day to day life. Be aware this week of the practical ways that you can witness to Christ in your life – by your hospitality, your treatment of others, your response to their needs, the way you share your faith, your joy.

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

Leader's Liturgy Outline

The Ascension of the Lord, 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, you tell us that you are with us always and we need never be afraid.
Help us to do your work in the world until you send Jesus back to us in glory.

R Amen.

First Reading: Acts 1:8-11 The Word of the Lord / Ko te Kupu a te Ariki
Thanks be to God / Whakamoemiti ki te Atua

Psalms 47

Response: Alleluia!

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

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

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

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 gone to the airport to farewell someone who was going overseas? Who were you saying goodbye to?
- What sort of things do people say before they go on a long journey? In today’s story we hear about Jesus saying farewell to his friends as he goes back to his Father. But he tells us that he will come back, and we will not be alone.
- Jesus leaves a special job for his friends to do. Have you ever been sent to do a special job for someone?
- Jesus sends his friends out to the ends of the earth. What were they being sent to do? Did they do it?
- What did Jesus’ friends do next? Do you think they missed Jesus? Who are Jesus’ friends now? What does Jesus want us to do? Can children really do what Jesus was asking?
- Jesus told his friends that he would always be with them. Has Jesus kept his promise? How is Jesus with us today?

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

Teach the children an echo creed (maybe chanted) as they repeat:

Jesus rose from the dead. *Alleluia*
Jesus ascended into heaven. *Alleluia*
Jesus will come again. *Alleluia*
The kingdom of Jesus will not end. *Alleluia*
Alleluia!



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: On this day when Jesus was lifted up from our midst, let us stand before his Father in prayer:

- That God will give wisdom to those who lead the Church
Let us pray to the Lord **R Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

- That we always share the wonderful things that God has done for us with those we meet
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For those who are suffering, that the Spirit will give them strength
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**
- For all those who feel afraid of the future, that they will trust in God's presence and be comforted
Let us pray to the Lord **R** **Lord hear our prayer**
Or **E te Ariki whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou**

Leader: God most holy, we ask you to hear our prayers as we wait for Jesus to return in glory. We come to you with our needs through Jesus Christ our Lord who has ascended to your right hand

All: **Amen**

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