

# CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

## Fifth Sunday of Lent Year B

Sunday 21 Mar 2021

### Preparation

#### A. Focus

'I will be their God and they will be my people.' God's covenant to his people, handed down again and again, throughout all of Hebrew Scriptures, is fulfilled for us in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our Easter covenant is to live for others, so that when we die we will be raised to new life with Jesus.

#### B. Presider's personal reflection

Time and time again, we read in the Scriptures how God forgives his people and takes them back. In the Gospel today, we hear it again, as Jesus gives us an indirect preview of his upcoming suffering and death. We too must die to be reborn. That is part of our covenant with God. Are we living our lives as God's covenant people?

Do we give example by being that grain of wheat?

#### C. Parents' notes

To illustrate today's gospel, we talked to the children about seeds and how they must die and be buried in order to grow into something wonderful. So it is that we must let the selfish part of ourselves die in order that we can grow into something wonderful.

Maybe that's a cue for you to do some gardening with your children! An indoor plant will suffice if you don't have a garden. Choose seeds that are quick growing and discuss the gospel analogy as you go.

## Order of Service

### 1. Prayer for dismissing the children

(Prayed by the Priest before the children leave the main assembly)

#### Lent I

My dear children

this is the time to go forward to hear the word of God.

Turn to the Lord who is kind and merciful

and listen with open hearts.

(May the Spirit be with those who lead you in your prayer.)

When you return

we will continue to celebrate the Eucharist together.

#### Lent II

My dear children

come forward to share the word of God

and open your hearts to the Gospel of Jesus.

Go to your sacred place,

and hear of God's great love and mercy.

(Bless those who lead and guide you in your prayer.)  
We look forward to your return  
so that we may continue to celebrate the Eucharist together.

## 2. Gathering children in liturgical space

(Choose where to process from, who will carry the book [child or adult] and what will be sung.)

## 3. Preparing to hear the First Reading

(Make sure children are ready to hear the Word of God)

### Today's reading in context

(Is there a context for this story which may help the children better understand it? Did something happen earlier which is not part of the story but is important? Is there a tradition or practice or attitude from the time period of the story which helps the hearer understand its meaning?)

### Introductory remarks

Take a few moments to talk about covenant and what it means. Invite the children to listen to how important this covenant is, so important that it is 'written within their hearts'.

## 4. Proclamation of the First Reading

(See Note 2)

First Reading:

Reader:

## 5. Reflection by lay leader on the First Reading

(What the scripture reading means in my life here and now – See Note 3)

Is this the first time God has made a covenant with his people? (No!) What happened to the first covenant? (The people broke it.) What does this tell you about God? ('I will forgive their sins and forget the evil things they have done.')

Just like the people in Old Testament times, we, too, break God's covenant; but God always takes us back, forgives our sins and starts anew with us

## 6. Responsorial Psalm

(Optional - see note 2 and suggested psalm settings in Appendix)

Responsorial Psalm:

Cantor:

## 7. Gospel Procession

## 8. Preparing to hear the Gospel

(Make sure children are ready to hear the Word of God)

### Today's reading in context

(Is there a context for this story which may help the children better understand it? Did something happen earlier which is not part of the story but is important? Is there a tradition or practice or attitude from the time period of the story which helps the hearer understand its meaning?)

## Words which may be difficult to understand

(Explain any words or concepts in the Gospel which may be difficult for the children to understand.)

## Introductory remarks

In the Gospel today, Jesus talks about wheat. Making sure everyone know what wheat is, invite the children to listen to the Good News.

## 9. Proclamation of the Gospel

(See Note 2)

**Gospel:**

**Reader:**

## 10. Reflection by lay leader on the Gospel

Start your reflection by talking about seeds. (Perhaps even bring in a packet of seeds.) Ask the gardeners in the group to tell what happens when you plant a seed. Use different varieties of seeds, e.g. a flower seed, a vegetable seed, a tree seed...

What happens to that seed? after a day? after a week? after several years? (those tree seeds again).

How does that differ from if you never planted those seeds? if you left them in that very package? Would they grow? Why not?

Now go back to the grain of wheat, the seed from that type of plant. Why do you think Jesus says it must die before it can grow? Do we not 'bury' the seed?

Why do you think Jesus says we must die in order for us to live? Do you think Jesus wants us to physically die?

Does the grain of wheat really die even though it is buried in the ground?

Just like the grain of wheat must be planted (die) so that it can harvest many grains (and make many loaves of bread and feed many people); we too must die (to ourselves and our selfishness) so we can be born (to serve other people's needs before our own).

Our preparation for Easter, for Christ's resurrection, should be just like that grain of wheat. We look forward to Easter Sunday when God again renews his covenant with his people.

## 11. Children's response

(Ask the children to respond in their own words – See Note 4.)

## 12. Guided period of silence

(See note 5.)

## 13. General Intercessions

(See sample Adult General Intercessions)

Presider: God is the source of all goodness. Let us now offer our prayers to our loving God.

Reader: That nations will live in peace and friendship. Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: That those who are preparing for Baptism will be supported by the love of our church community. Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: That those who have plenty will be generous in sharing with those who are poor.  
Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: Remember Lord those who are sick and the people who care for them. Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: Welcome Lord all those who have died and comfort their family and friends who miss them. Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: That we will serve Christ by our Lenten prayer, fasting and good works. Lord, hear us.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Presider: Lord, you told Philip and Andrew that you have to plant a seed in order for it to grow and become many seeds. Help us to be the seeds for all those who need to grow. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

## **14. Review of time together and comment on next action in the Liturgy**

(Only if there is extra time before return to the main body of the Church.)

## **15. Concluding rite**

(Prayed by the Presider before the children return to the main body of the Church.)

Blessed be God.

**All: Blessed be God forever.**

(Lay person makes the sign of the cross on himself or herself.)

May the Lord bless us,  
protect us from evil  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**All: Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## **16. Return**

---

## **Notes**

Note 1: This material is only a guide and may be used as a beginning point for your own reflection.

Note 2: From the readings available choose those which are most suitable. The Gospel is always to be used and may be the only reading proclaimed. (Directory of Masses with Children: par. 42). The Psalm may be sung and the Gospel Acclamation must be sung.

Note 3: Someone other than a priest may speak to the children regarding the Scriptures (Directory for Masses with Children: par. 24).

Note 4: Children are then asked to respond in their own words to move from written and spoken words to lived ideas. The response of the child may actually take a different direction to where the presider was going. This is fine and should be expected. The presider must correct any theological or factual inaccuracies.

Note 5: Ask a question that will allow the children to enter into a 30-40 second period of silence.

© St Mary's Press

Lisa-Marie Calderone-Stewart (1958-2011) gained her doctorate in education from Cardinal Stritch University and was associate director of early adolescent ministry in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Previously she served for six years as the director of youth ministry for the Diocese of Grand Island, Nebraska. She also established "Tomorrow's Present", a youth leadership ministry. She was a highly regarded speaker and wrote many books on spirituality and youth ministry.