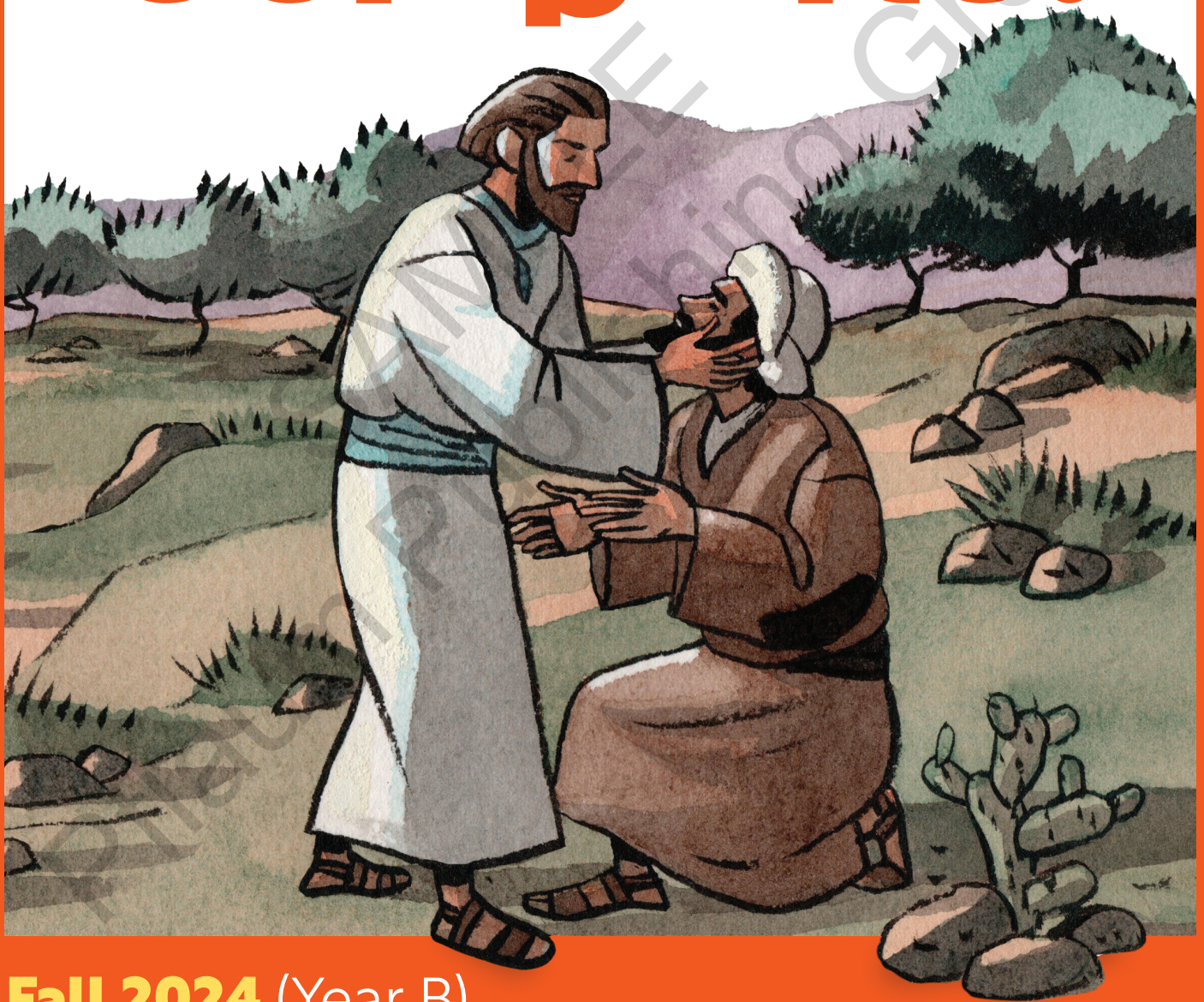


**NEW! WEEKLY GOSPEL  
REFLECTION VIDEOS**

**Leader's Guide**

LITURGY OF THE WORD WITH CHILDREN

# Children Celebrate!



**Fall 2024** (Year B)

**AUGUST 25, 2024** | TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

through **NOVEMBER 17, 2024** | THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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Liturgy of the Word with Children

LEADER'S GUIDE

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YEAR B

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**Pflaum Publishing Group**

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# Children Celebrate!

Liturgy of the Word with Children

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## Additional Resources at Pflaum.com

### Sunday Readings

For your convenience, each Sunday's Lectionary readings for the Liturgy of the Word with Children can be downloaded from [pflaum.com](http://pflaum.com). It's as easy as 1-2-3!

1. Go to [pflaum.com/readings](http://pflaum.com/readings) for a list of Sunday readings (updated at the end of each month).
2. Click on the date you want. That Sunday's readings will open in a PDF.
3. Print or download the file.

For more about the Sunday Readings, see the Introduction to this Leader's Guide.

### Weekly Gospel Reflection Videos!

Available to subscribers of *Children Celebrate!*

Visit <http://bit.ly/3lafw8E> for weekly Gospel Reflection videos. These videos can be used within your Children's Liturgy of the Word program, or shared with parents and families to view at home.

### Children Celebrate! Director's Manual

For an easy-to-follow Director's Manual, go to [pflaum.com/liturgy-of-the-word](http://pflaum.com/liturgy-of-the-word) and click on "Bonus Resources" and then "Program Directors." There you will find a manual that outlines practical steps for establishing a program, recruiting and training volunteers, and creating the proper environment and liturgical flow.

In addition, you will learn how to most effectively incorporate *Children Celebrate!* materials into your program. Additional resources are also suggested.

### Children Celebrate! Children's Liturgy of the Word – MP3 Album

With joyful melodies, call-and-response segments, and child-friendly lyrics, John Burland's inviting liturgical pieces are perfect for Children's Liturgy of the Word programs. For example, "Go Now and Listen to God's Word" can be sung as children are dismissed from the assembly, and "Yes, Lord, I Believe" is a jubilant option for singing the Creed, helping little ones to profess their faith.

Visit [giamusic.com](http://giamusic.com) and search "Children Celebrate" to order.

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# This Issue's Themes

DATE	SUNDAY	THEME
August 25, 2024	21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	Jesus Is the Way to the Father
September 1, 2024	22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	We Follow God's Law
September 8, 2024	23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	Jesus Heals the Deaf Man
September 15, 2024	24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	Jesus Calls Us to Follow Him
September 22, 2024	25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	The Greatest Is the One Who Serves
September 29, 2024	26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	God's Love Is for All People
October 6, 2024	27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	Jesus Welcomes the Children
October 13, 2024	28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	The Rich Man and His Possessions
October 20, 2024	29TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	Jesus Teaches About True Greatness
October 27, 2024	30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	Jesus Heals the Blind Man
November 3, 2024	31ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	Jesus Teaches the Great Commandment
November 10, 2024	32ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	The Poor Widow Gives All She Has
November 17, 2024	33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	Jesus Returns to Gather His Followers

## Using *Children Celebrate!*

*Children Celebrate!* is a complete step-by-step resource for celebrating the Liturgy of the Word with Children. The two components of *Children Celebrate!* are this Leader's Guide and the Children's Leaflets, a book of tear-out, take-home sheets.

### **LEADER'S GUIDE** (each week has two parts)

**I. Preparation** provides the leader with information about the week's Scripture readings and how they relate to children today. Its elements are the following:

- **Today's Readings** cites the exact Scripture readings you will be using that day. (Remember, these readings do not always match the readings chosen for the adults. See more about the

readings on page 6.) A theme sets the tone of that day's liturgy.

- **Prepare with Prayer** helps center you on the task at hand, which is not only helping children hear and understand God's Word but also hearing and understanding God's Word through the children.
- **Scripture Background** helps you understand the readings and prepare to break open the Word.
- **Prepare the Meeting Space** gives you suggestions for enhancing the environment for that day's celebration. Review this section a few days before the liturgy.

- **Suggested Music** provides suggestions for appropriate songs during the liturgy. Information on where to find each piece of suggested music is on page 62.
- **Children's Connections** explains each week's theme and Scripture message as it applies to children today.
- **More About...** provides additional background about a topic that is related to this week's liturgy.
- **Using the Children's Leaflet** provides brief background information about the take-home sheet.
- **Activity** provides a reproduction of the take-home sheet. Solutions to puzzles are shown as needed.

**II. The Liturgy of the Word** is a ready-made liturgy specifically written for that week's readings and theme. Its elements are the following:

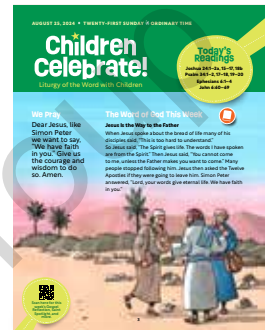
- **Gathering** helps the children settle into their places. Playing appropriate background music or singing a song provides a transition into an attitude of prayer.
- **Collect** sets the tone for the worship experience.
- **Focus Statements** for each of the readings help you give the children a key idea to listen for and to help them better understand the theme of the readings.
- **Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation** provide liturgically appropriate responses for the children to use.
- **Homily** gives you starter ideas for interesting, creative, and relevant reflections on the Gospel.
- **Profession of Faith** is a simple and interactive declaration of what we believe as Catholics.
- **Prayer of the Faithful** are the prayers for the needs of the world, the Church, and the community. These are often a common first step for children into spontaneous prayer and can be powerful moments for children.

- **Return to Assembly** provides the leader with a cue to prepare the children to rejoin the main assembly and to remind them to take home a Children's Leaflet.

## CHILDREN'S LEAFLETS *(each leaflet is two-sided)*

### Front Side

- **Today's Readings** gives the Scripture citations for that Sunday's liturgy.
- **We Pray** is a short prayer for children based on the week's theme.
- **The Word of God This Week** is a summary of the day's Gospel story.



### Back Side

- **Activity** provides an entertaining way to reinforce the Gospel message.
- **Faith Focus** highlights how the Gospel message can pertain to the family.
- **Family Activity** provides practical suggestions to families on how to put the Gospel into action at home.



## WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION VIDEOS

- **How to access the videos:** Visit <http://bit.ly/3x37mJb> to view the videos for this quarter.
- **What's included?** Each weekly video includes a Gospel Reflection, Saint Spotlight, Closing Prayer, and Reflection Question.
- **Promote:** Share these videos with those assisting with Children's Liturgy of the Word for use during your program, as well as with parents and families.

# Introduction

## What Is Liturgy of the Word with Children?

Liturgy of the Word with Children is a worship experience geared especially for children. It mirrors the worship experience of the larger community, with a style that is engaging and interactive. Jesus himself recognized that children have a pure spirituality, and he made them the primary spiritual model for all believers.

Liturgy of the Word with Children is not formal religious education, nor is it intended to be a substitute for attendance at religious education sessions. Rather, it should be considered a partner to religious education programs. Both are important for a child's spiritual development, just as continuing faith formation and growth in spirituality are important for adults.

The Word of God has a message that is as relevant and fitting for children as it is for adults. The children, however, often fail to hear the message simply because the adult vocabulary is beyond their comprehension. Liturgy of the Word with Children offers an experience for the children to hear Scripture in words they understand and to share their own understanding of God's Word.

Celebrating the Liturgy of the Word in this way is an empowering experience, giving children a foundation for understanding and appreciating Scripture. Over several years, the children not only become comfortable with hearing and discussing God's Word but also gain an understanding of and appreciation for their liturgical heritage as Catholics.

## When and How Do the Children Leave the Assembly?

The celebration of the Liturgy of the Word with Children follows the same structure as the Liturgy of the Word for the entire assembly. In fact, it begins with the Introductory Rites, which are celebrated in the large assembly, where the children are seated with their families.

After the Introductory Rites, the presider invites any children wishing to participate to join the leader and proceed to the worship space set aside for them. They return after the Prayer of the Faithful to celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist with the entire community.

## What About the Readings?

**The readings in the children's Lectionary sometimes differ from those used in the adult Lectionary.** When planning liturgies to be used with children, the Church allows some flexibility in the number and choice of readings on Sundays and feast days.

**According to the *Directory for Masses with Children*, "If three or even two readings appointed on Sundays or weekdays can be understood by children only with difficulty, it is permissible to read two or only one of them, but the reading of the Gospel should never be omitted" (Chapter III, No. 42). In addition, because of the difficulty some children may have in understanding certain verses, it is sometimes possible to omit one or another verse from the reading. (For a complete reading of the directives regarding selection of readings, see the *Directory for Masses with Children*, Chapter III, Nos. 41–47.)**

In *Children Celebrate!* we follow the readings from the *Lectionary for Masses with Children*, which is approved for use in all dioceses of the United States by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. We determine themes and make suggestions for each Sunday's liturgy based on these readings. For this reason, it is important that you check each week's citations as listed in this Leader's Guide before finalizing your plans for that Sunday's celebration.

## Preview the Readings

If you do not have access to a children's Lectionary while you prepare your liturgy, you have three other options for previewing the readings for each Sunday.

- 1 Go to our website ([pflaum.com/readings](http://pflaum.com/readings)), click on the date you need, and print or download the readings.
- 2 The *Lectionary for Masses with Children* uses readings from the Old Testament and Book of Psalms. A select number of the refrains for the Responsorial Psalms are taken from the *Contemporary English Version* © 1991 by the American Bible Society. Readings from the New Testament are taken from the *Contemporary English Version, Bible for Today's Family: New Testament* © 1991 by the American Bible Society. The CEV can be purchased at stores and at [americanbible.org](http://americanbible.org).
- 3 Go to [americanbible.org](http://americanbible.org). Scroll over BIBLE RESOURCES. Scroll down and click on BIBLE SEARCH. Under the search box, click on Search Options. Select CEV Contemporary English Version (US Version). Enter the book, chapter, and verses that you need, such as Luke 15:11–32.

## Where Do I Begin?

Your first step to prepare a Sunday session should be to pray for guidance. "Prepare with Prayer" opens each week's background material. It will help you begin to focus your mind and open your heart to God's message. Remain in prayer as long as you like.

Read the Scripture and background material in their entirety. Although the story may be familiar, you may see it with new eyes when challenged to lead a reflection on it. The background material will give you an idea of the social and historical context behind the Scripture.

Gather and write down your thoughts for the reflection. Look at them and meditate on them for a while. Certain themes or ideas will come through. Create an outline for your reflection based on these ideas.

Be sure to read through the Prepare the Meeting Space and The Liturgy of the Word sections well in advance so that you are not taken by surprise by any preparations you should have made or items you will need on hand. Allow plenty of time to set up and prepare before the session.

## What Else Should I Know?

### LITURGICAL COLORS

This edition of *Children Celebrate!* begins with the Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time on August 25 and ends on the Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time on November 17. The liturgical color for Ordinary Time is green, a color that signifies hope and renewal.

### MOVEMENT

Introduce movement wherever you feel it could be appropriate in the liturgy. Young muscles cry out to be used often, and this physical need causes the restlessness that some adults find irritating. Even the simple act of lifting their arms in prayer or carrying some small object to the front of the room can give children a refreshing but orderly break from being in one position for too long.

## Trust Yourself

Finally, remember that *Children Celebrate!* is a complete resource that you can trust to be liturgically sound while also being creative. Nevertheless, you are the leader and you must be comfortable with what you want to do each week. Feel free to use (and trust) your own ideas as well.

There is no limit to what God can work through each of us. Your time with these children will have God's blessing and will be immeasurably fruitful. Enjoy!



### Today's Readings

Joshua 24:1–2a, 15–17, 18b  
 Psalm 34:1–2, 17–18, 19–20  
 Ephesians 6:1–4  
 John 6:60–69

### Prepare the Meeting Space

In the worship area, on a table draped with a violet cloth, place:

- a Lectionary
- a battery-operated candle
- a crucifix

Have ready a music player and a recorded hymn with lyrics about dancing before the Lord. (See **Music** for suggestions.)

### Suggested Music

See page 62 for more information.

#### GATHERING:

**“The Trinity”** (*Promise & Good News CD-2, Track #22*) or **“Upon This Rock”** (*Promise & Good News CD-2, Track #21*)

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

**“Gospel Acclamation; Alleluia”**

(*Promise & Good News CD-2, Track #24*)

# Jesus Is the Way to the Father

## PREPARATION

### Children's Leaflet

Have on hand copies of the Children's Leaflet for this Sunday. Distribute copies either at the start of the session or before the children return to the assembly.

## PREPARE WITH PRAYER

*Protect me, LORD God! I run to you for safety, and I have said, “Only you are my Lord! Every good thing I have is a gift from you.” (PSALM 16:1–2)*

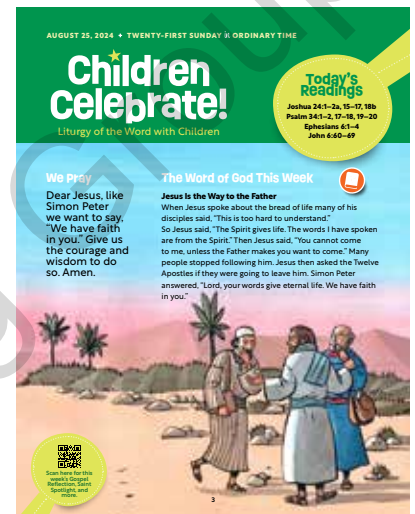
## Scripture Background

After the Israelites settled the Promised Land, the temptation to worship false gods became bigger than ever. In their new land, they had new worries, especially concerning crops and herds. Seeing the agricultural success of their pagan neighbors, they all too easily assuaged their anxieties in the same fertility rites that had seemed to work so well for the Amorites.

It wasn't that the Israelites wished to abandon faith in Yahweh; rather, they wanted to hedge their bets by continuing to worship Yahweh while adding devotions to other gods. In today's First Reading, Joshua warns them that they can't have it both ways. Worship of the one true God must be total and all-consuming; it cannot be combined with worship of other, lesser gods.

In the Second Reading, Saint Paul follows in the master's footsteps by paying special attention to the needs of children. To live lives in harmony with God, children need to obey their parents. Parents, in turn, need to school their children in the faith and enforce rules that are neither too harsh nor too lenient.

In the Gospel, Jesus sets before his disciples a choice similar to the one offered the Israelites in the First Reading. Either they must believe that he is true bread from Heaven or they must depart from him now, before his teachings get even harder to accept. How will they understand his return to Heaven (his future Resurrection and Ascension) if they do not first accept that he came from Heaven?



## THE CHILDREN'S LEAFLET

In today's Homily, you are asked to tell the story of the silly billy goat, which is loosely based on a fable of Aesop called "The Man and the Satyr." This story, which follows, will work best if you tell it from memory or put it into your own words, rather than simply reading it aloud. Have fun!

*A boy and a billy goat became fast friends. One cold winter day when they were outside playing together, the boy blew on his hands to warm them. When the billy goat asked what the boy was doing, the boy replied, "I am blowing on my hands to warm them."*

*"Oh," said the billy goat.*

*Then a few days later, the boy's mother gave the two friends steaming hot bowls of soup for lunch. When the goat saw the boy blowing on his soup, he asked what the boy was doing. The boy said, "I am blowing on my soup to cool it."*

*"Oh," said the billy goat.*

*Then a few days later, the boy received a message from his billy goat friend. The message said, "You are no longer my friend. How can I trust someone who blows hot and cold with the same breath? I have a new friend now. His name is Snake, and his breath is always cold."*

*And do you know what happened next? A few days later the boy saw the goat, frozen stiff—like a statue—by the cold breath of his new friend.*

*Silly billy goat!*

## THE CHILDREN'S LEAFLET

The Children's Leaflet for this week helps children learn about true discipleship through a summary of the Gospel, prayer, and a creative activity.

You may distribute the leaflet now, for use during the session, or before the children return to the assembly. If you distribute the leaflet now and time permits, you may wish to read with the children the summary of the Gospel in "The Word of God This Week" after you have read the Gospel. Point out the artwork and ask the children what is happening in the picture.

## More About ...

### The Importance of Perseverance

Students exposed to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* sometimes take up the question, "Who is the lost soul in the group?" That is, while every character among Chaucer's 34 medieval Christians on pilgrimage is a sinner, has any of them sinned beyond redemption?

Some readers say the Canon is that person, for he is the only character who grows disenchanted and departs the group without finishing the pilgrimage.

In today's Gospel, John draws a similar contrast between Judas and the other Apostles. When Jesus says, "But some of you refuse to have faith in me" in verse 64, it is because he knows Judas will betray him. The other eleven will remain true even as they continue, sometimes, to fail in faith or to fall into sin.

It seems that understanding Jesus perfectly and obeying him completely is less important than simply staying with him, especially when that starts to feel uncomfortable.



### **Leaflet Activity**

Loyalty is the theme this week in the family setting as well as in the children's activity.



## **THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

### **Gathering**

Tell the children that because today's liturgy speaks about choices, you will begin with an activity that also includes choices. When you begin playing a song, everyone starts dancing in any way that he or she likes. When you stop the music, all dancers freeze in place.

Then choose the person whose pose you think is the most graceful or most interesting. That person in turn gets charge of the music player, and he or she restarts the music, again stopping it to choose the person with the most graceful or most interesting pose. Continue in this manner until the entire song has been played.

### **Collect**

**LEADER:** *Invite the children to bow their heads. Then pray:*

Loving God, all of life is a dance. Each one of us dances a little differently, but it doesn't matter how we dance as long as we try to look good in your eyes. Show us, Lord, how you want us to live, through Christ our Lord.

**CHILDREN:** Amen.

*Invite the children to be seated. Light the candle and begin the First Reading.*

### **First Reading**

**LEADER:** A few weeks ago, when we had the reading about the manna and the quail, we spoke briefly

about Moses. Today we will hear from Joshua, who became leader of the people after Moses died. In our First Reading, Joshua calls the people together and tells them about an important choice they must make.

*Read Joshua 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b. Then say, "The word of the Lord."*

**CHILDREN:** Thanks be to God.

### **Responsorial Psalm**

The psalm may be either sung or spoken. Before beginning, sing or announce the response.

**LEADER:** Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

**CHILDREN:** Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

**LEADER:** Read Psalm 34:1-2, 17-18, 19-20.

### **Second Reading**

**LEADER:** The people in Joshua's time weren't the only ones with a choice to make. As children, you, too, face choices every day. Listen to what Saint Paul has to say about that.

*Read Ephesians 6:1-4. Then say, "The word of the Lord."*

**CHILDREN:** Thanks be to God.

### **Gospel Acclamation**

Invite the children to stand. Sing the suggested Acclamation or another familiar one. If you choose not to sing the Gospel Acclamation, proceed to the proclamation of the Gospel.

## Proclaim the Gospel

**LEADER:** God says you should obey your parents, but do your parents ever ask you to do something that seems way too hard for you? Well, guess what! One day Jesus' followers felt the same about Jesus. Can you guess what these followers decided to do?

**LEADER:** The Lord be with you.

**CHILDREN:** And with your Spirit.

**LEADER:** A reading from the Gospel of John.

**CHILDREN:** † Glory to you, O Lord.

**LEADER:** Read John 6:60-69. Then say, "The Gospel of the Lord."

**CHILDREN:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

## Homily

- 1** Review how the disciples reacted when Jesus' teachings grew difficult to understand.
  - Many turned their backs on Jesus.
  - But the Twelve, led by Simon Peter, decided to stay with Jesus.
- 2** Reread Peter's exact words: "Lord, there is no one else that we can go to! Your words give eternal life. We have faith in you, and we are sure that you are God's Holy One" (John 6:68-69).
- 3** Point out that when we have faith in someone, we don't let misunderstandings divide us from that person; we are not like the silly billy goat in an old story.
- 4** Tell the story of the silly billy goat given in Children Connections.

## Profession of Faith

**LEADER:** Please stand for the Profession of Faith and respond, "I choose the Lord." The devil is an evil destroyer, but God is a loving Creator. Whom do you choose to worship and obey? I choose the Lord.

**CHILDREN:** I choose the Lord.

**LEADER:** The devil is a faithless betrayer, but the Lord Jesus is a friend forever. Whom do you choose to worship and obey? I choose the Lord.

**CHILDREN:** I choose the Lord.

**LEADER:** The Devil brings trouble but the Holy Spirit is the Lord of life. Whom do you choose to worship and obey? I choose the Lord.

**CHILDREN:** I choose the Lord.

## Prayer of the Faithful

**LEADER:** Children, blessed will you be if you always choose Jesus, even when his teachings seem hard to understand or to obey. He can always be trusted. Now let us go to the Lord with all our needs. Our response to each petition will be, "Hear us, O Lord."

**CHILDREN:** Hear us, O Lord.

**LEADER:** For the Holy Father and all the leaders of the Church, that their faith will be as strong as Saint Peter's, let us pray to the Lord.

**CHILDREN:** Hear us, O Lord.

**LEADER:** For the parents of our parish, that they will raise their children properly and teach them about the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

**CHILDREN:** Hear us, O Lord.

**LEADER:** For the children of our parish, that they will obey their parents and learn all they can about the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

**CHILDREN:** Hear us, O Lord.

**LEADER:** Invite the children to pray their own petitions. Then pray:

Let us pray. Loving God, every day we have choices to make. We must decide whom to follow and whom to obey. Help us always to choose Jesus. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

**CHILDREN:** Amen.

## Return to Assembly

The Liturgy of the Word ends with the Prayer of the Faithful. Prepare the children to return to the assembly in a respectful manner. If you haven't already done so, distribute the leaflets. Remind the children to take the leaflets home and share them with their families. Encourage them to watch this week's Gospel Reflection video and complete the Family Corner activities as a family.

# Leader's Checklist

AUGUST							SEPTEMBER							OCTOBER							NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5							1	2	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		

SUNDAY	PREPARATIONS /PROPS	MUSIC	LECTOR	SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND	HOMILY PREP	CHILDREN'S LEAFLETS	OTHER
<b>8/25/24</b> 22nd OT							
<b>9/1/24</b> 22nd OT							
<b>9/8/24</b> 24th OT							
<b>9/15/24</b> 25th OT							
<b>9/22/24</b> 26th OT							
<b>9/29/24</b> 26th OT							
<b>10/6/24</b> 26th OT							
<b>10/13/24</b> 28th OT							
<b>10/20/24</b> 29th OT							
<b>10/27/24</b> 30th OT							
<b>11/3/24</b> 31st OT							
<b>11/10/24</b> 32nd OT							
<b>11/17/24</b> 33rd OT							