Children Celebrate!

SUMMER 2021 (YEAR B)

MAY 30, 2021 Most Holy Trinity through AUGUST 22, 2021 Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Liturgy of the Word with Children
New! Weekly Gospel Reflection Videos

Children Celebrate Summer 2021 Pack
(Leader’s Guide and Children’s Leaflets included)

SAMPLE

Pflaum Publishing Group
Sunday Readings
For your convenience, each Sunday’s Lectionary readings for the Liturgy of the Word with Children can be downloaded from pflaum.com. It’s as easy as 1-2-3!
1. Go to 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.

Children Celebrate!
Director’s Manual
For an easy-to-follow Director’s Manual, go to 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.

New! Available to subscribers of Children Celebrate!
Visit Pflaum.com 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.

Celebrate the Year of Saint Joseph
Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a father who was beloved, tender, loving, obedient, accepting, creatively courageous, working, and in the shadows. We honor him as patron of the universal Church during this Year of Saint Joseph (12/8/20–12/8/21). To access free resources to celebrate this special year, scan the QR code or visit Pflaum.com.

Written by Sr. Alice Ann Pfeifer, CSA
Edited by Blue Willow Publishing Works
Typesetting by Cassandra Waung
Cover design by Lorena Jimenez, and Cassandra Waung

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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 sections)

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 ...** gives insight into 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** give the Scripture citations for that Sunday’s liturgy.
- **We Pray** is a short prayer for children based on this 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 pflaum.com to view the videos for this quarter (loaded monthly).
- 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.
Jesus Sends Us On a Mission

Preparation

Children’s Leaflet
Have on hand copies of the Children’s Leaflet for this Sunday. Distribute copies at the start of the session.

Prepare with Prayer
Praise the Lord with harps! Use harps with ten strings to make music for him. Sing a new song. Shout! Play beautiful music. (Psalm 33:2–3)

Scripture Background
Today’s readings begin with an exhortation by Moses to follow the one true God, a conviction that will distinguish the Israelites from their neighbors who worship many different gods. His words, from the Book of Deuteronomy, remind us of our Jewish roots and the belief in one God that we have inherited from our Jewish forebears in the faith.

Although we believe that God the Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct from one another, our Catholic tradition tells us that the mutual love they share is so intense that the three persons are one in being, or “consubstantial,” as we now say in the Nicene Creed during Mass.

If the Jews were God’s special people in Old Testament times, then we Christians are God’s special people now. This is Paul’s focus in the reading from Romans.

He says that we are members of God’s own household, belonging to God as his sons and daughters belong to their parents — not as slaves belong to their masters. As such, we are able to enjoy with God a profound intimacy and to receive from God a vast spiritual inheritance. In the spiritual realm, we are like adopted sons and daughters to God.
The idea that we belong to God is a keynote of today’s Gospel, if we understand that being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is a way of proclaiming to whom we belong.

Furthermore, when Jesus says, “Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples,” he is saying that the chance to belong to God is not limited to members of any one race or nation. (See Matthew 28:19.) Standing on the mountain of his Ascension and speaking as clearly as God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, Jesus pronounces all persons welcome into the grace-filled life of the Trinity.

Children’s Connections

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.” (2205)

While young children cannot grasp lofty abstractions about the Holy Trinity, well within their reach is a comparison of the triune God to a loving human family. That’s why the Gathering activity involves some “show and tell” with a family portrait.

If you want to base your comments on a blended family in which there is a mix of races or ethnicities, frame your questions so that they don’t depend on a biological connection between the family members.

Finally, because icons open doors to the religious imagination, the Homily centers on the popular icon of the Trinity by Andrei Rublev. The website abcgallery.com allows visitors to print copies of this famous icon in color. (Simply go to the site and look for “Rublev” in the artist index.)

The explanation of Rublev’s icon that is provided in the Homily comes from Sister Jacka Krizanovska, a contemplative Dominican nun.

Note: If for some reason you need to streamline today’s liturgy, sing and discuss a hymn about the Trinity for the Gathering activity, and base the Homily on the discussion of a family portrait of your choice.

More About ...

The Mystery of the Trinity

Analogies abound for teaching the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Nevertheless, it is wise for catechists to remember that any analogy is only a starting point for understanding this profound theological mystery. Carried too far, all analogies ultimately break down.

The Trinity is a total union of Three Divine Persons that in no way diminishes the total singularity of each person. Comparing the Trinity to a shamrock (as Saint Patrick did) is an imperfect analogy because the three parts of the shamrock are so much alike. On the other hand, comparing the Trinity to three angels sitting at a table (as the Russian artist Andrei Rublev did) may overemphasize the separateness of the three persons.

These are distinctions, however, that only the adult mind can begin to grasp. When teaching children, we need to be as fearless as Saint Patrick and Rublev were in teaching the faith. We need to use analogies however imperfect they may be.

Using the Children’s Leaflet

The children’s leaflet for this week helps them understand the Holy Trinity through a summary of the Scripture story, prayer, and a creative activity.

Distribute copies of the leaflet. If time permits, read with the children the summary of this week’s Gospel. Point out the artwork about Jesus and ask the children what Jesus is doing in the picture.
**Children Celebrate!**

**Activity**
An interesting experiment with an ice cube helps families understand the Trinity this week. The familiar symbol of a cross is the basis for the children’s activity.

The Liturgy of the Word

**Gathering**
As the children enter the worship area, sing or play the suggested hymn or a hymn praising the Trinity. After the children are seated, note that we believe there are three persons in one God. While holding up the family portrait from the display, explain that this is a little like saying there are [number of persons] in the [name] family. Then name each person in your picture. Point out that each one has a different first name, but all have the same last name; each one has distinctive looks and traits, but all share a few traits in common. And so it is with the persons of the Holy Trinity: The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are alike but different. Promise to say more about this later, during the Homily.

**Opening Prayer**
**Leader:** Let us bow our heads for prayer. Please repeat each line of the prayer after me.
**Leader:** Glory be to the Father,
**Children:** Glory be to the Father,
**Leader:** and to the Son,
**Children:** and to the Son,
**Leader:** and to the Holy Spirit,
**Children:** and to the Holy Spirit,
**Leader:** as it was in the beginning,
**Children:** as it was in the beginning,
**Leader:** is now,
**Children:** is now,
**Leader:** and ever shall be. Amen.
**Children:** and ever shall be. Amen.

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

**First Reading**
**Leader:** In today’s First Reading, a great prophet knows that he will not be with his people much longer. That prophet is Moses, and these are some of his last words to his people.
**Read Deuteronomy 4:39–40.** 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:** Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.
**Children:** Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.
**Leader:** Read Psalm 33:4–5, 6 and 9, 20 and 22.

**Second Reading**
**Leader:** Do you know the game “Follow the Leader”? In a way, it shows how we should be living our daily lives—by going wherever the Holy Spirit leads us, just as Jesus did. Let’s listen as Paul tells us more.
**Read Romans 8:14–17.** 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: Now we will hear Jesus’ last words to his disciples. See if you can catch what he says about the Trinity.
Leader: The Lord be with you.
Children: And with your Spirit.
Leader: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew.
Children: † Glory to you, O Lord.
Children: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily
Begin by asking the children what Jesus said about the Trinity. Then tell them that today you will talk about a picture of the Holy Trinity by a famous Russian artist. While showing the group a copy of the icon, explain its symbolism.

- The Three Divine Persons are pictured as angels because God is a Spirit.
- The Three Persons form a loving community. The Father, on the left, looks with love on the Son, in the middle, as the Son and the Holy Spirit look back with love.
- The Father wears brown because he created the earth.
- The Son wears blue because it is the color of loyalty and purity: Jesus never once disobeyed his Father, never once committed a sin.
- The Holy Spirit wears green because it is the color of life and growth: the Spirit brings life.
- On the table is the gift of Eucharist that Jesus will give to humankind.
- We join in the life of the Trinity when we are baptized, receive Eucharist, and help spread the reign of God on earth.

Profession of Faith
Leader: Please stand for the Profession of Faith. Today’s response is, “I believe in the Holy Trinity.” I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of Heaven and earth.
Children: I believe in the Holy Trinity.
Leader: I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God.
Children: I believe in the Holy Trinity.

Leader: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.
Children: I believe in the Holy Trinity.

Prayer of the Faithful
Leader: Blessed are we if we believe in the most Holy Trinity! Now let us pray, with all the angels and saints, for the spread of God’s rule around the globe. To each petition, please respond, “Lead the way, O Lord.” That the leaders of the Church will obey the Father, imitate the Son, and listen to the Spirit in all that they do, let us pray to the Lord.
Children: Lead the way, O Lord.
Leader: That the families of our parish will learn to be communities of love, let us pray to the Lord.
Children: Lead the way, O Lord.
Leader: That all nations will work together for justice and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
Children: Lead the way, O Lord.
Leader: Invite the children to pray their own petitions. Then pray:
Let us pray. If you lead the way, O Lord, we know we can find perfect joy. Joy is what we ask for ourselves and for all who are dear to us, 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. Remind them to take their 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.
We Pray
Though we don’t understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity, O Lord, may we bring the Good News to others. Amen.

The Word of God This Week
Jesus Sends Us On a Mission
Jesus met the disciples on a mountain in Galilee. He said: “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize 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.”

Today’s Readings
Deuteronomy 4:39–40
Psalm 33:4–5, 6 & 9, 20 & 22
Romans 8:14–17
Matthew 28:16–20
Activity

Jesus reminds us of the Three Persons in one God when he tells us to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Complete the prayer inside the cross using the word bank. This is one way we express our belief in the Trinity.

Faith Focus

Because monotheism is a predominant belief in our society, we have no trouble believing in one God. The problem comes in trying to understand how one being can be three distinct persons with whom we can relate.

We simply and humbly have to admit that we can’t understand or explain the Trinity. It is only when we let prayer and faith rule our lives and hearts that we can accept this mystery of God.

Family Activity

Reinforce the three-in-one concept for your children with this activity:

- Show an ice cube. Ask: “What is an ice cube?” (frozen water)
- Let the ice melt. Ask: “What has the ice cube become?” (water)
- Boil the water. Point to the steam it produces and ask: “What is this?” (water vapor)

Similarly, we experience one God as three distinct persons. Close by saying the “Prayer of Praise,” which honors the Holy Trinity.