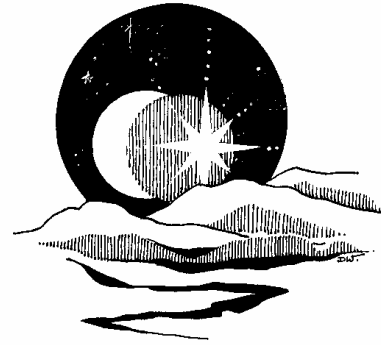


Liturgy of the Word for Children

BE STRONG, BE JOYFUL Advent Week 3 Year A



Please note:

Elements of this liturgy can be adapted for classroom prayer and ritual.

Gathering Hymn & Entrance Procession: A VOICE CRIES IN THE WILDERNESS (A Voice Cries In The Wilderness)

During the singing of the Gathering Hymn, the Entrance Procession makes its way into the worship space.

Order of Procession:

- Processional Cross bearer
- Oil bearer holding a glass jug of fragrant oil
- Lectionary bearer
- Presider

The Lectionary is enthroned in the sacred space and the oil is placed next to the Advent Wreath.

Welcome & Lighting of the First, Second and Third Advent Candle

The Presider welcomes the community and then says:

We gather during this third week of Advent to continue to ready our hearts for the coming of Jesus among us. In our first week of Advent we reflected on living in the light of Jesus. A child lights the first Advent Candle. In our second week of Advent we prayed that we would trust that all will be well in Jesus. Another child lights the second Advent Candle from the first candle. And now in our third week of Advent, as we light this rose-coloured candle, we remember that because of Jesus' coming, our hearts can be strong in his love and joyful in the hope his birth gives to us. A third child lights the rose candle from the second candle. (To ensure the flow of this ritual, have these children standing in line near the Advent Wreath, each with a taper in their hands, ready to light their candle at the appropriate time).

Penitential Rite

Presider:

We pause to consider how we have lived as Jesus shows us. (PAUSE)

Presider:

Lord Jesus, your love takes away all fear. At times we are afraid and anxious. Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Presider:

Lord Jesus, you are with us always. At times we are unaware of you in our midst. Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Presider:

Lord Jesus, you are our strength. At times we are weak and lose heart. Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Presider:

God our strength, forgive us our failings and make us strong in you. Bring us to your everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Opening Prayer

Presider:

Let us pray.

God who is near, you long for your children to be happy and free from fear. May we strive to remain close to you, living in your strength, comfort and joy. We pray this through Jesus, your Son.

All: Amen.

First Reading: ISAIAH 35: 1- 6, 10

Sung Response: COME LORD JESUS (Hi God 2)

Gospel Acclamation: PREPARE YE (Musical 'Godspell')

Gospel: MATTHEW 11: 2-11

Homily:

The gospel speaks of how John the Baptist needed to be reassured that Jesus was truly the One sent by God. And in the reading from Isaiah we hear God's reassuring Word to strengthen our spirits and stand strong in our hope, because Jesus is coming and he will make a difference – life will be better with Jesus amongst us. The reassuring signs for John the Baptist that Jesus was the true prophet sent by God, were that the blind see and the deaf hear, the lame walk and life is renewed. What are the signs that reassure and strengthen us; the signs that confirm for us that Jesus is with us? Invite the children to think of the things that worry them and cause them to lose heart. In those times and experiences, how do they know that Jesus is there for them? Talk with them about the support and love they receive from others and how this is one way that Jesus' love and support can strengthen us. Reflect with them about how prayer can also be a way of strengthening our hearts and experiencing Jesus' presence with us. Direct them to be still, to close their eyes and to feel the nearness of Jesus' presence with them. Begin

playing some quiet instrumental music here. After a minute or two invite them to share with Jesus whatever it is that worries or harms them. Let the music play on for a minute or so. When the time is right, invite them to kneel and pray together the following litany.

Litany

Presider: Strong and faithful God, we are in need of your reassuring strength and comforting presence. In those times ...

Reader: When we are afraid and anxious...

All: Strengthen us, O God.

Reader: When we are hurt and rejected ...

All: Strengthen us, O God.

Reader: When we are sad and lonely...

All: Strengthen us, O God.

Reader: When we are sick and in pain...

All: Strengthen us, O God.

Reader: When we feel we have lost our way...

All: Strengthen us, O God.

Reader: When we struggle to be free of things that bind us...

All: Strengthen us, O God.

Reader: When we are weak and lose hope...

All: Strengthen us, O God.

Reader: When our dreams seem shattered...

All: Strengthen us, O God.

Presider: God of strength, help us to be aware of your presence in our midst so that we may be strong in your saving love.

Fade the music out as the litany ends.

Anointing Ritual

The Presider invites them all to be seated. S/he then goes to the sacred space and pours the oil into several small glass bowls, in such a way that all can see this action. The Presider then says,

As a symbol of God's strengthening of our hearts, you are invited to come forward to be anointed with oil. Consider what it is that you would like God to strengthen you in.

Each class teacher comes forward and is anointed by the Presider and then given a bowl of oil with which to anoint her/his class of children. The teachers then return to their class. When all the teachers are in place with their bowl of oil, the children come forward to their class teacher for their anointing. Have

the children hold in their hearts what they want God to strengthen in them. As each person is anointed, the teacher may say: **(Child's name), God strengthens you. Do not be afraid.** The children respond by signing their hearts with the sign of the cross. *(Brief the children about this ritual before the liturgy begins – have one or two children demonstrate what they need to do. The logistics re movement etc need to be worked out according to the specific worship space you are in. Have, for example, the class teachers stand in the aisle where their classes are seated. Have all the children stand and turn towards their teachers and process along the pew to her/him for the anointing.)* Throughout this ritual sing, **GOD OF OUR JOURNEY (Praise & Blessings).**

Closing Prayer

Presider:

Let us pray.

Holy God who is our strength, you are here in our midst always ready to save us. As we continue on our Advent Journey we pray that we remain close to you as we prepare for Jesus to be born in our hearts. We ask this in the name of Jesus our Saviour.

All: Amen.

Presider: Let us go now in peace and in the knowledge that we are strengthened by our God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Recessional Hymn: EMMANUEL GOD WITH US (Our God Is Near)

© 2004 Emmaus Productions. All Rights Reserved.

Duration of Liturgy: Approximately 30 minutes

Props & Resources:

- Processional Cross
- Glass jug of oil
- Several small glass bowls/dishes for distribution of oil
- Advent Wreath
- Lectionary
- Small table draped with purple cloth

People Required:

- Processional Cross bearer
- Oil bearer
- Lectionary bearer
- Reader for First Reading
- Reader/s for Litany
- Teachers to anoint their class groups.

Music Suggestions: These songs and hymns are suggestions only – you would know others that are suitable for this liturgy. The important thing about

choosing music is that whatever is chosen needs to support and enhance the ritual for which it is being used. (See notes on the Music Resource Page on this site)

- **A Voice Cries In The Wilderness** (Chris Robinson – A Voice Cries In The Wilderness – see our noticeboard for details)
- **Come Lord Jesus** (Carey Landry – Hi God 2)
- **Prepare Ye** (from the Musical ‘Godspell’)
- **God Of Our Journey** (Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings)
- **Emmanuel God With Us** (Monica Brown – Our God Is Near)