

## 4. We Listen to the Word of God

During the next part of the Mass, we listen to readings from Sacred Scripture. This part of the Mass is called the Liturgy of the Word. We believe that the Bible is God's Word for us; it is God's way of communicating with us.

Usually, the first reading we hear at Mass is taken from the oldest part of Sacred Scripture, the Old Testament. In the Old Testament we learn that God created the world and everything in it and we hear about God's relationship with his people up to the coming of Jesus.

The next Scripture passage we hear at Mass is taken from the Book of Psalms, which is also in the Old Testament. The Psalms are hymns of praise. At Mass, we have a response to the Psalm that everyone says or sings together.

The Second Reading is taken from one of the books of the New Testament that comes after the Gospels. For example, it might be a passage taken from a letter written by St Paul to one of the early Christian communities, or it might be a reading from the Acts of the Apostles, which tells us about the establishment of the early Church.

After the Second Reading, an acclamation (usually 'Alleluia') is sung as a way of welcoming the Gospel reading. In the Gospels, we read about the life and teachings of Jesus, who was sent by God as the greatest sign of

his love for us. Jesus showed us how to relate to others and how to relate to God.

The homily and Prayer of the Faithful follow the Gospel. In the homily the priest helps us to understand God's Word and suggests the ways in which it can be put into practice in our own lives. The prayers which follow are the prayers of the community at this time.

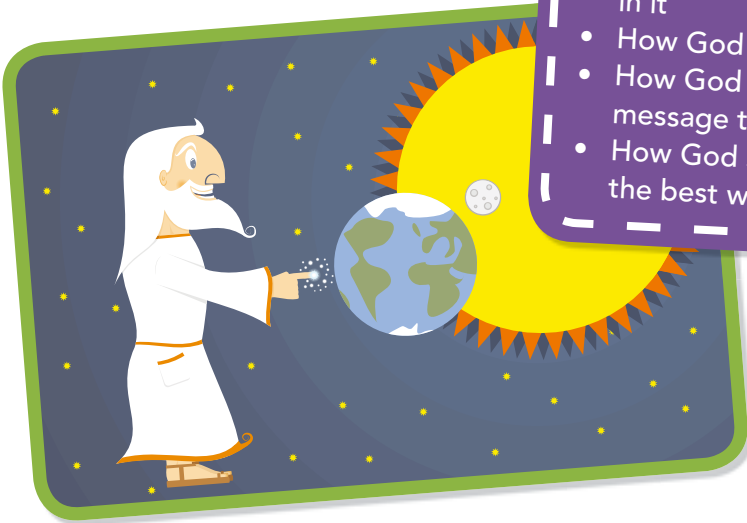
In the next set of pages, we want to help children to understand that the readings from the Bible are different from anything else that we read or listen to. They are not stories *about* God, but they are actually God's words *to* us. We need to listen to them with an open heart, and to allow them to become part of our lives.

### A Prayer for Parents and Families

Loving God,  
Thank you for the gift of your Word, which we hear each week at Mass.  
May it help us and our children to grow in love for you and for others.  
May we treat it with respect, and listen to it with an open heart and mind.  
Amen.

During the next part of the Mass, we listen to **stories from the Bible**. The Bible is a holy and important book because it is God's Word for us. It is one of the ways that God speaks to us today.

**In the Bible we hear stories about:**



- How God made the world and everything in it
- How God loves all that he created
- How God called people to bring his message to the world
- How God sent Jesus to show the people the best way to live.

The most important stories that we hear at Mass are the **stories about Jesus**. These are written in four books called the Gospels. In the Gospels we hear about:

- How Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem
- How he grew up in Nazareth
- How he told people all about God and God's love for them
- How he suffered and died on the cross.



At Mass, **the priest reads a story** from one of the Gospels. We might hear about how Jesus healed someone who was sick, or about when he calmed a storm.



Then we are ready to hear **what message Jesus has for us today.**

We might listen to a story that Jesus told his friends, like the one about the lost sheep or the good neighbour. Each of the stories we hear teaches us something about God and **how God wants us to live.**

The readings from the Gospels are the most **special and important stories** that we will ever hear. At Mass, we do particular things to show just how special they are:

- We stand up
- We sing 'Alleluia' to welcome the Gospel
- We make the sign of the cross on our forehead, our lips and our heart.

What do we say at the end of the Gospel?

The Gospel of  
the Lord



**PJ Prayer**

Loving God,  
Thank you for the stories in the Bible.  
Help me to listen to them carefully,  
so that I can hear your message.  
Help me to act on that message, so  
that I can show my love for you  
and for others.  
Keep us all safe through the night.  
Amen.