

What is Children's Liturgy of the Word?

Children age 3 to pre-First Communion are invited to experience God's Word during Mass at a level appropriate to them. Following the gathering song and opening prayer, the children – following an adult leader – process to the Chapel, where the Word is read using the Children's Lectionary. The homily and prayers enrich the children's understanding of the scripture readings. Children rejoin their parents in Church when the collection is taken up. All children age 3 to pre-First Communion present at Mass are invited to participate, and no pre-registration is needed.

Calendar

Children's Liturgy of the Word takes place during the 5:00 pm Saturday evening Mass, and the 8:00 am, 10:00 am and Noon Mass on most Sundays of the year. There is no Children's Liturgy of the Word on Christmas, on Palm Sunday, on Easter Sunday, or on specific weekends noted on the schedule.

Schedule

The schedule and materials are emailed from the Ministry Scheduler Pro to all Leaders and Timekeepers. Take time to review these, especially noting when you have been scheduled. If you are unable to participate when you are scheduled, it is your responsibility to switch with someone or find a replacement. **You can use MSP (Ministry Scheduler Pro) to ask for a substitute.**

Safe Environment Policy / "2 Adult" Rule

In an effort to keep the children safe and to comply with the Diocesan Safe Environment Program, Children's Liturgy of the Word sessions must have **at least 2 adults** who have been cleared as volunteers in the room at all times. If the leader is the only cleared volunteer in the room (if no aides have shown up), then you cannot hold Children's Liturgy of the Word at that time and must send the children back to their seats. A cleared volunteer should be wearing their appropriate name badge that shows they are cleared and get a Children's Liturgy Badge when they **check in at least 15 minutes before Mass**. They can return the Children's Liturgy Badge at the end of Mass.

Children are **not** allowed to leave the room to go to the restroom or to get a drink of water. If they are having a hard time being quiet or behaving, or just want to go back to their parents, then an aide may take them back into the main church and make sure they get back to their seats. This is the only exception to the two-adult rule and is a "last resort."

Teen aides are a great resource. They also need to have taken the Children's Safe Environment Training. They can aid the leaders and sessions as the adult aides do, but they cannot be considered "cleared" for Safe Environment. They must not be left alone with the children. They can walk on the side of the line of children going to and from the Chapel room, but they cannot be in the back of the line. They must be watched by a cleared adult at all times, just like the younger children. They want to help, and it is a great way to get our youth involved with the church!

Format

Procession from Church to Chapel (immediately after Opening Prayer, when the congregation is seated)

Proclamation of Word

Old Testament Reading

brief silence (10-15 seconds)

Psalm - sung

brief silence (10-15 seconds)

New Testament Reading

brief silence (10-15 seconds)

Gospel Acclamation – sung; STAND

Gospel Reading - **STAND**

Homily/Breaking Open the Word

Prayer of the Faithful (intercessions)

Procession from Chapel to Church

Setup

Setup is done by the Leader and one or both of the Timekeepers.

Arrive 20 minutes before Mass. Check in with the EM Captain in the Narthex.

Find the Children's Lectionary in the working sacristy (near the Chapel). It is in the single set of top cabinets on the south side of the room.

One of the Timekeepers needs an Assisted Listening device from the Narthex.

In Chapel...

- ✓ The Children's Liturgy of the Word materials are located on the credence table in the Chapel.
- ✓ Plug in the CD player. Practice the psalm refrain and Gospel Acclamation with the CD. These should be sung, not spoken.

Leader

Your ministry is to open the hearts of the children to the Word of God and allow them to respond to God's Word in prayer and life.

As the Leader of Children's Liturgy of the Word, you are given the authority to proclaim the Gospel and to break open the Word, i.e., to give a reflection. Recognizing this role will move you to prayer and to the necessary preparations worthy of this honor. You are being entrusted with a special role of sharing your faith – in your actions, how you carry yourself, as much as what you say – with our children. You are also the "key" to a smooth, effective experience of the Liturgy of the Word for the children. Preparation and flexibility are necessary.

Preparation the Week Before

Read and reflect on the readings and the commentary and guiding questions in your information/preparation packet.

Allow your experience of faith to help you “break open the Word” in your preparation.

Before Mass

Arrive at church at least 20 minutes before Mass.

Check in at the table in the church Narthex with the EM captain..

The last leader to check in will let the presider know that we have two safety cleared volunteers and therefore can have Children’s Liturgy.

Go to the Chapel and find the Children’s materials and make sure everything is ready.

Consult with the Presider or musicians to be aware of special events, such as RCIA rites, other blessings, etc., which will affect the time allotted between the procession from church and return to the assembly.

These will require adjustments to your liturgy.

Then, keeping the Children’s Lectionary with you, find a seat in the church assembly (near the front, or near the center aisle).

Mass

Participate in Mass as usual.

After the Opening Prayer, wait for an invitation or announcement from the Presider.

Immediately process up the center aisle. After the children assemble and the Presider gives the blessing, using both hands, hold the Children’s Lectionary high. This is the holy book of God’s Word.

Slowly turn to the left and process toward the Chapel area and door to the working sacristy. Other team members will intermingle with the children.

Children’s Liturgy of the Word – *This mirrors what is happening in church.*

After children are seated, introduce the first reading.

First Reading – Reader

Responsorial Psalm – Timekeeper #1 or other designate (note: refrain is always sung)

Second Reading – Reader

Gospel Acclamation – sung ALL STAND

Gospel – Leader ALL STAND

Reflection – plan for 5 to 7 minutes. Be aware of Timekeepers and their signals. Allow them to handle children’s behavior or other needs. Wrap up the reflection when the Timekeeper signals that the homily in church is finished.

Prayer of the Faithful (intercessions) – Leader

If there is extra time at this point, you may lead a question/discussion about the reflection; open it up to the children’s intercessions, etc. This is not a time for socializing or games.

Returning to the Assembly

Bring the children quietly into the sacristy, lining up by the entrance into church. When the offertory song begins, children come back into church. Check that all children find their families before you sit down.

Reflection Tips

The Introduction to the Lectionary for Masses with Children (10):

Because the explanation of the scripture readings is so important at Masses with children, a homily should always be given. However, in order that they might not be deprived of the riches of God's word, especially if the priest finds it difficult to adapt himself to the mentality of children, and with the consent of the pastor or rector of the church, one of the adults participating in these celebrations may speak to the children after the gospel.

This is one rare opportunity where a non-ordained member of the Catholic Church is empowered to give a reflection. This is not a talk. Be reverent. You are breaking open the Word of God.

Prepare! This is important; take it seriously.

Pray!

Reflect!

Use and study the resources you are given. The resources will help you give the official teaching of the Church (we want the Gospel according to Matthew/Mark/Luke/John, not the Gospel according to you).

Take the Word and the resources, and run them through your life experiences.

Don't try to do all the suggestions in the resources. Choose a few points and do them well. Be flexible.

This is a solemn, beautiful moment. The children are already spiritual; you are not making them that. We don't give them spirituality; we draw it from them.

Good proclamation is important. The Word of God becomes flesh – comes alive – in the proclamation of the Word. Use the Children's Lectionary (it is a strong symbol).

Your message must be focused. Be able to say your whole message in one brief sentence. During the week before, work on it a little each day to refine it. Convey a clear message to the children.

Dialogue is a good technique.

Have the children use their senses – *close your eyes...see...hear...smell...*

A proper visual aid can be helpful, but is not necessary. Note: This is not Religious Ed or Sunday School; no arts or crafts, no snacks.

Length: 5-7 minutes.

During the Prayer of the Faithful you have some time for flexibility. Stop early if necessary. If time, ask the children "Who or what do you pray for?"

Timekeepers

Before Mass

Arrive at church at least 15 minutes before Mass.

Check in at the table in the narthex.

Before Mass, get an Assisted Listening device from the table in the back of church to take with you during Children's Liturgy of the Word.

Mass

As soon as the Presider calls the children forward, stand up and walk to the front of the aisle.

As the children come forward, guide them to follow the Leader in a timely but reverent manner.

Timekeeper waits until all children have come forward and is the person last to leave the church.

Follow the children back to Chapel, keeping them as quiet as possible when they are in procession.

Timekeeper

Using the Assisted Listening device, listen to the readings and homily in Church.

As soon as the homily in church is finished, signal to the Leader that the homily in Church is finished.

Listen for the intercessions. As soon as they begin make sure the Leader knows that NOW is the time to return to church.

The Leader will start bringing the children down the hallway to the church sanctuary.

Quickly check that the offertory song has begun, then lead the kids through the door near the choir area.

Stand near the floor grate by the piano and guide children to walk on the carpet between the grate and steps (not up the steps). Don't let them go behind you by the cantor; this will distract the musicians, and walking on the grate is noisy. Watch the children as they return to their families or drop their coins in the collection basket. Scan the assembly to be sure no children are wandering or searching for their parents; then return to your seat in the assembly.

Leader #2

It is your responsibility to maintain order with the children and keep them quiet for the Leader. If necessary, remind them that they are still in church. Assist the Leader with other aspects of the Liturgy (psalm, reflection, intercessions) as asked.

No children may return to the church until the Children's Liturgy of the Word is completed.

Help the Leader line up the children and return them to the church at the signal of the Timekeeper. Stand by the sacristy door as the children pass through it.

Music

Music is integral to all liturgy and it is therefore integral to a Liturgy of the Word with children. A CD player, CD, and copies of the printed music are provided for you. Practice using these so you are comfortable. Try not to be self-conscious about your singing voice. The children will join with the same spirit with which you lead!

Responsorial Psalm

What do we sing?

We use “A Psalm for All Seasons” by Carey Landry. It is an adaptation of a familiar tune, with verses written for each Sunday throughout the year.

Which refrain text do we use?

Refer to the Leader’s Cover Sheet to see which text to use each Sunday.

Do we *have* to sing this?

Yes. The psalm is a “song,” so the refrain is always sung. Verses are read from the Children’s Lectionary.

How do we use the CD?

1. Turn the CD on to **Track 1**.
2. You will hear the piano introduction (the second line of the refrain).
3. The Cantor (Leader or Timekeeper) sings the refrain, then everyone sings it together.
4. Stop the CD.
5. Read verse 1 from the Children’s Lectionary.
6. Sing the refrain without the CD.
7. Read verse 2 from the Children’s Lectionary.
8. Sing the refrain without the CD.
9. Etc.

Gospel Acclamation

Which version of the Gospel Acclamation do we use?

Ordinary Time Celtic Alleluia – CD **Track 2**

Advent, Christmas season, Easter season Celtic Alleluia – CD **Track 2**

Lent “Glory to You, O Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ.” – CD **Track 3**

How do we use the CD?

1. Find the correct track.
2. You will hear the piano introduction. Everyone stands.
3. The Cantor (Leader or Timekeeper) sings the acclamation, then everyone sings it together.
4. Stop the CD.

Universal Prayers (Prayers of the Faithful)

Introduction

The prayer of the general intercessions is made to the Father through Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our introductions can help express this.

Jesus has told us to ask God for what we need, so as God's children we pray:

For all God's family so that we may share the Good News with everyone,

We pray to the Lord.

Lord Hear Our Prayer

For God's beautiful world that we look after it with loving care,

We pray to the Lord.

Lord Hear Our Prayer

For all who are hungry or sad, lonely or sick,

We pray to the Lord.

Lord Hear Our Prayer

Oh Loving God, we ask you to listen to these prayers which we bring to you today in the name of Jesus the Lord.

Amen.

PROFESSION OF FAITH – Apostles Creed (substituted for the Nicene Creed)

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.