

Children's Liturgy Parish Wide Agreement

Logistics

The book of the gospels to be kept in the sacristy.

The Children's Liturgy (CL) team to check in with the head altar server/deacon/priest before Mass and get the right book of the gospels.

The CL team to nominate a child to carry the book of the gospels before the start of Mass.

Exiting the Church

The priest to invite the child up to receive the book of the gospels. The child will be invited to lift the book up as they process out of the church.

Two acolytes will be assigned to accompany the child holding the book of the gospels. If possible the 2 acolytes will stay throughout the children's liturgy of the word.

The rest of the children in the church are invited to follow the acolytes and the book of the gospels and process out of the church together.

The children are to leave straight after the penitential rite.

Re-entering the Church

The Crucifer (an altar server carrying the cross) is to come in and inform the CL team to start getting ready to come back at the beginning of the creed. This gives the team around 5 minutes to leave and start processing back into the church.

At St Pius X the altar server to stand by the side door of the church waiting for the offertory music to begin. The altar server to quickly inform the group to start processing in from this side door. The procession walks down the right side of the church and back up the middle isle. The children make their way back to their families while the book of the gospels is placed on the waiting stand by the lectern.

At St Joseph's and St Mary's the crucifer remains with the group and leads the procession back to the church. You need to nominate two children to carry the gifts for the offertory, and another nominated child to carry the book of the gospels. The crucifer, the acolytes and the three nominated children to lead the procession back to the church. Once the procession begins which should be at the start of the offertory, the remaining children make their way back to their families while the book of the gospels is placed on the waiting stand by the lectern.

St Edward's will know when to come in when the money collector comes into the hall. The group process behind the book of the gospels up the middle isle. The children make their way back to their families while the book of the gospels is placed on the waiting stand by the lectern.

Sacred Space

The Room

There will be two separate areas, one for under 5's and their parents, and one for the 5-8's.

In each space there will be a prayer focus which consists of

- a table,
- a white altar cloth,
- table runner in the appropriate liturgical colour (green, red, white or purple),
- two candles (either real or LED),
- a cross,
- And a book stand for the book of the gospels.

The People

It would be ideal for each space to have a welcome/helper. This person stands at the door of each space welcoming the children and parents. This person will also show the children where to sit and if necessary help set the tone for the room by reminding the children and their parents to be quiet. This person will also free the leader to concentrate on proclaiming the gospel and breaking open the word.

In each space we will have a leader whose job it is to lead the group, proclaim the gospel and facilitate the breaking open of the word. The leader will be sitting ready in front of or near the sacred table. The children will be invited to sit down in front of the leader.

Proclaiming the Gospel

The following structure will be repeated every week.

- The children come into their space and sit down.
- The leader gives a **short welcome** and may introduce themselves.
- The leader leads the group in the **sign of the cross** trying to making sure everyone can do it. Although this was done in the church already it is good to remind everyone why we are here and that CL is a continuation of Mass.
- The leader then says the **opening prayer** (collect). This summarises the theme of the Mass.
- The leader may put the gospel in context with a short explanation.
- The leader invites everyone to **stand**.
- We all welcome the Gospel, either by saying or singing the **alleluia**, top and tailing the acclamation. All could either say the acclamation together or ask a child to read it.
- During the Season of Lent, a different "Gospel Acclamation" is used, such as "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!" or "Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!" or "Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!" or something similar.
- Go through the gospel proclamation narrative that happens in the church...
 - **LEADER: "The Lord be with you", ALL: "and with your spirit"**
 - **LEADER: "A reading from the Holy Gospel according to... [Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John]", ALL: "Glory to you, Lord!"**
 - Teach the children to how to **sign their forehead, lips and heart** with the Cross of Christ. Explain that while they do this action to pray... "May the Word of the Lord be in my mind, on my lips and in my heart."
- The leader then **reads the Gospel** reading. It is essential that this is read. Even if you wanted to focus on another reading the Gospel should always be read.
 - You could choose another voice to read the Gospel. This could be a parent or the helper.
 - Children could be encouraged to put their hands together in prayer as they listen to the gospel.

- At the end of the reading end with LEADER “The Gospel of the Lord”, ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!”

Breaking Open the Word

Follow this basic structure

- Recap the Gospel story
- Give a homily: always lead them to Jesus and be prepared to shock. This needs to be age appropriate and engaging for the children but it doesn't necessarily require a response from the children. It is important to help the children learn how to “ponder these things” in their hearts.
- Lead a reflection: this could be meditative, a small group discussion, a small group activity, a craft if you have enough resources/help for this. This is a time of reflection so this atmosphere should be encouraged. Doing things such as crafts and activities may break this atmosphere so be careful not let this overtake your time with the children.

Remember you are preparing the children to be able to listen and ponder the word of God at Mass.

Intercessions

The saying of intercessory prayers, whether as a group or individual, should act as a buffer in terms of timing.

The five fingered prayer is recommended, see below.

This is something that could be done as a group or done as the children process back into the church. The prayer will need to be taught. A3 posters of the prayer will be provided for each group.

It is also encouraged that the “Hail Mary” is said as a group either at the beginning of the intercessory prayers or at the end. Again A3 posters of this prayer will be provided.