

Guidelines for Liturgy of the Word with Children



Parish of the Holy Spirit – Te Wairua Tapu
1 July 2016

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to ensure that Children’s Liturgy is ministered in the Parish of the Holy Spirit – Te Wairua Tapu in a liturgically appropriate manner, and with consistency by those involved in this Ministry.

It has been prepared in consultation with a representative from each church in the parish currently offering Children’s Liturgy, and referencing the Auckland Diocese’s Children’s Liturgy Guidelines (which we were referred to by the Wellington Diocese office).

These guidelines should also greatly assist those starting in this ministry to understand how to go about preparing for the Sunday Liturgy.

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What is Children's Liturgy?

Children's Liturgy is the Liturgy of the Word suitably adapted to make it relevant to the lives and experience of children. It gives children the opportunity to understand the Gospel message at their level and consider how to practice it in life.

When and where does it take place?

The children begin Mass with their family. Following the opening hymn and welcome the celebrant will call the children forward to be blessed and dismissed for their own liturgy, which takes place in a separate room, preferably not too far away. The children return to the main assembly during the offertory.

What happens in Children's Liturgy?

The format of Children's Liturgy closely follows the structure of the Mass, including Introductory rites, Penitential rite, Gloria, Gospel acclamation, Gospel, Gospel reflection, Creed and Prayers of the Faithful. Each of these parts of the Liturgy have been adapted and targeted to children. An activity based on the Gospel message and to encourage discussion will also usually occur.

What age group does Children's Liturgy cater for?

Children's Liturgy in the Parish of the Holy Spirit includes pre-school up to Intermediate aged (Year 8) children. Pre-school children are welcome to attend but must be accompanied by a parent or carer.

Currently both Sacred Heart and Our Lady of the Rosary churches cater for children up to Year 8 (approximately age 12). Each of these churches holds two Children's Liturgies catering for a younger and older age group. This recognises that the understanding and experience of differing aged children can vary enormously. As Children's Liturgy is very much about making the Liturgy appropriate and meaningful to our children, this approach facilitates that. As up to 50 children can be attending Children's Liturgy in these churches on any given Sunday, it also means that groups can be kept somewhat smaller and more manageable.

How the groups are split will be at the discretion of each church, based on the numbers of children they have attending and their ages. A good starting point to consider is keeping children who haven't been through the Sacramental programme together i.e. Year 3 school age and below, then Years 4-8 as the second group.

How many adults should be present?

Ideally, there should be two adults ministering to the children – a leader and a helper. This should be aimed for if possible but will depend on the number of adult volunteers available in each church.

Adult helpers do not need to be limited to the parents of the children attending. Tap into the grandparents in your church, also teenagers and young adults.

Police vetting

Please note that all those involved in leading Children’s Liturgy must be police vetted. These need to be updated every three years. New members to the team must be police vetted immediately. The parish secretary will diarise and prompt existing team members to complete an updated vetting every three years. The secretary will arrange the forms to be sent together to the Archdiocesan Office, which is the Approved Agent, for actioning.

What resources does the Parish have available?

Our Lady of the Rosary, Sacred Heart and St Patrick’s all use the same Children’s Liturgy book – *'The Complete Children's Liturgy Book – Liturgies of the Word for Years A,B,C'* by Katie Thompson.

This book provides all the prayers, structure and ideas for leading the Gospel discussion, for each Sunday of the year.

A list of websites that are very helpful in providing ideas for the leader on how to approach the discussion and reflection of the Gospel is listed at the end of this document.

A Children’s Bible is another good resource to have. The “Catholic Book of Bible Stories” has been recommended.

Basic resources such as felt pens, paper, glue sticks, scissors etc. are needed. You will need to be allocated some cupboard space in the church to store these items. Sacred Heart Church has been able to self-fund for items such as pens, glue sticks etc., without the need to call on the Parish for funding, by holding a cake stall once a year, after Sunday morning Mass. The families of the children attending Children’s Liturgy are asked to bring baking that day. These are well supported by the parishioners and enough money is raised to replenish supplies. This, or something similar, could be an idea for the other churches in the Parish.

What preparation is required of a Children's Liturgy Leader?

Understand the Scriptures

Consider the scriptures of the Sunday and what they mean to you. What is God saying to you?

How will you speak God's Word to the children?

How will you help them to understand what God is saying to us? What questions can you ask to see how the children understand what God is saying? How do you actively involve the children in discussion? This will be more beneficial to their understanding than just "preaching or talking to" them.

Structure of Children's Liturgy in the Parish of the Holy Spirit – Te Wairua Tapu

Before Mass prep:

1. The Children's Bible and a lit candle/s are placed at the front of the church. (The children will collect these and take them to their Liturgy when they are dismissed by the priest after the opening hymn.)
2. Prepare the Children's Liturgy room - set up a table with a cloth and crucifix and a Gospel focus if appropriate, words for songs and prayers hung up or on a flip chart ready to use, activity items organised if being used such as pens, paper etc.
3. Let the priest know if there is anything special happening that day i.e. if you will have something to bring up in the offertory etc.

Entrance Procession

Children's Liturgy leaders should be part of the Entrance Procession. Once processed in, join your family in the pews until the children are called forward by the celebrant.

Dismissal of the children

Following the greeting, the celebrant will call the children forward, bless them and then children will move to their own room/s for their Liturgy of the Word. Make sure children collect the Bible and candle/s (symbols of the presence of God in the Word) from the front of the church to take with them to their liturgy. The children carrying the Bible and candles should position themselves so that they lead all the others out of the main assembly.

Ideally children should be sung out by the congregation. (This currently happens at our OLR church. Words and music for the hymn "Come Gather & Praise" is attached.) Alternatively instrumental music can be played. The children should always be sent out with song or music, rather than in silence.

Children's Liturgy Structure

Once gathered in the room where Children's Liturgy will take place, the following structure is followed:

Note that for the younger age group it is appropriate to use the prayers and songs from the Children's Liturgy Book. For the older group you should consider using the prayers from the Missal.

1. Introductory Rites

The Bible and Candle are placed on the focus table.

Introduction by the Leader and welcome to everyone.

Make the Sign of the Cross.

Opening Prayer

- taken from the Children's Liturgy book

2. Penitential Rite

Prayers are suggested each week in the Children's Liturgy book. Alternatively you can encourage the children to quietly think about something good they've done this week, and to tell Jesus about it in their heart, then to think about something that they've done that they need to say sorry to Jesus for. Younger children can sing the "Sorry Song" from the book.

3. Gloria

Sing if possible. (There is no Gloria in Lent or Advent.)

Listening to God's Word:

4. Gospel Introduction – provided in the Children's Liturgy book

5. Gospel Acclamation - a variety of songs are suggested in the Children's Liturgy book to welcome the Gospel. The older age group may prefer to say the acclamation.

6. Proclaim the Gospel

The Gospel should always be read from the Bible if possible. If you have a version you're reading printed on a piece of paper, place the paper inside the Children's Bible or Liturgy book that you're using, so that it appears you're reading directly from the book you're holding.

The Gospel can also be presented in a more creative fashion eg. as a short play, or with children in the older age group being assigned various parts to read.

(Note, the other readings of the day and the Psalm may be proclaimed but this may leave little time to reflect on the Gospel adequately. It is totally appropriate to proclaim only the Gospel in Children's Liturgy of the Word.)

7. Gospel Reflection

- a) **Discussion** – the children are invited to reflect on the meaning of the Gospel in their lives. The Children's Liturgy book has a number of points included in the discussion session. It is probably best to choose only two or three points at most to discuss. This keeps it simple (and thus more likely to be remembered) and reduces the chance of running out of time. You can keep a few questions up your sleeve, to pick up on should there be time left over!

- b) **Activity** – The activity can be taken from the book, website ideas or from your own creativity! This could include role play, game, art, song etc... While we are aware that colouring in and other art activities are frowned on in some parishes, in the Parish of the Holy Spirit we believe this is entirely appropriate for the younger age group. Children in this age group have very short attention spans. The activity supports the discussion that has just taken place around the Gospel story. The children usually rush back to their seats to show their parents their work and this provides a prompt for parents in further discussion with their children at home.

8. Profession of Faith (The Creed)

Use the Children's version in the book for the younger age group (known as The Little Creed).

The Apostle's Creed can be used with the older age group.

9. Prayers of the Faithful

Encourage the children to offer some prayers. These could reflect current issues, prayer for people in need etc. Prayers can also be sourced from many of the websites listed at the end of this document.

10. Closing Prayer (from the book)

Return to the Assembly

Thank the children for taking part and ask them to return quietly to their whanau or caregivers. Select children to return the Children's Bible and candle/s to the front of the Church (this can be done as part of the offertory). The candle/s should be placed on the front of the altar symbolising that the children are now entering into the Liturgy of the Eucharist. You may have done something in Children's Liturgy that shows/shares/summarises what the children have done/learnt. If you have something that the children have made to take up in the offertory, organise children to join the offertory procession with this also.

Ideally you should aim for the children to return to the church during the Offertory/Preparation of the Gifts. A good benchmark is that the offertory will normally take place around 35 minutes after the start of Mass. (If it is logistically possible, you could also organise someone in the church each week to come out to the Children's Liturgy room to let you know when the Homily has finished.)

Sometimes this isn't always possible so you do have until the *Holy Holy Holy* for the children to return. Children should not return to the church later than this though, as it is important that they are present to celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist, especially those who will be receiving Communion.

Children's Liturgy Web Resources

- <http://www.sermons4kids.com/>
 - USA Christian not for profit org
 - comes up with children's sermon based on that week's gospel (and sometimes an alternative sermon down bottom of page)
 - has wide range of resources for all ages including colouring pages, group activities, puzzles etc. ('worship bulletin' downloads a word doc)
- <http://www.word-sunday.com/index.html>
 - USA online catholic resource for sermons etc
 - Click on 'children's readings' section. Has child friendly version on the reading (we usually only use the gospel)
 - Gives a modern day scenario that relates to gospel's teaching. Quite American examples but can give some interesting ideas sometimes.
- <http://www.sadlierreligion.com/webelieve/weeksliturgy.cfm?>
 - US Catholic org.
 - Click on the relevant week. Has faith activities for primary grades at the bottom and the discussion questions whilst for adults can sometimes have relevant ideas
 - Also has proclaiming faith activities for primary grades.

Or click link to liturgical year

- gives overview of different seasons in the liturgical year
- has good activities for each season from kindergarten to grade 6.
- <http://www.loyolapress.com/sunday-connection.htm>
 - Jesuit site from the US.
 - Should open to current week. Otherwise click on box with name on it. Has readings and background as well as activities by Grade. Outlines materials needed and questions/activities that could be covered.
 - Also has resources associated with particular times of year eg Advent, Easter, Lent
- <http://www.sdc.me.uk/sundayliturgy/default.html>
 - UK Catholic society
 - Has worksheets for each Sunday as well as resources for different times of liturgical year.
- <http://www.liturgycentre.org.nz/ChildrensLiturgy.aspx>
 - Auckland diocese site.
 - Click on 'Liturgy of the Word with Children' and then 'Preparation material and Liturgy outlines' and then relevant date to get PDF that overviews liturgy for that week.
 - NB Auckland does not believe in worksheets or activities as part of children's lit, but does sometimes have interesting questions around the scripture for that week.
- <http://cafod.org.uk/Education/Children-s-Liturgy>

Also if you just google the scripture for that week or theme and 'children' / 'kids' or 'children's liturgy' and 'Catholic' you can often come across ideas/plans/activities that can be used ☺

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* Come Gather & Praise

Words and Music by Monica Brown

$\text{♩} = 152$

The musical score is written for guitar and voice in the key of D major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line and a guitar line. The lyrics are: 'Come gather and praise all you children of God Sing and make music unto your God Come gather and praise. celebrate God, united as one in God's presence. Come presence.' The score includes various chords (D, G, A, A7) and musical notations such as repeat signs, first/second endings, and a 'Last time' section. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 152.

D G A .

Come gath - er and praise all you child - ren of God

D G A⁷ D

Sing and make mus - ic un to your God Come gath - er and praise.

G A D G | 1. 2. etc... A D

cel - e - brate God, un it - ed as one in God's Pres - ence

Last time A D

Come Pres - ence

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