



# PLANNING AND CELEBRATING PRAYER & LITURGY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

A practical and pastoral expression of  
The Prayer & Liturgy Directory for Nottingham Diocese





## Planning and Celebrating Prayer and Liturgy with Young People

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**Imprimatur** Rt Rev Patrick McKinney STL  
Bishop of Nottingham  
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### Decree of Publication

The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales published, through the Catholic Education Service, the Prayer and Liturgy Directory in autumn 2023, as a resource for good practice within the Catholic schools and colleges across England and Wales. Building upon this resource, which is already being implemented within the schools and academies of the Diocese of Nottingham, I recognise that it is further helpful to have some additional and specific guidance in particular areas of the celebration of liturgies and of the Mass within the schools of this diocese.

With all this in mind, and taking nothing from the Prayer and Liturgy Directory, and under my authority as Bishop of Nottingham, I therefore publish this practical and pastoral expression of the Prayer and Liturgy directory, Planning and Celebrating Prayer and Liturgy with Young People, for use in all of the schools and academies in the Diocese of Nottingham. It is further to be taken as the pre-eminent resource for planning and celebrating Masses in the parishes of Nottingham Diocese in which a majority of the congregation are of school age.

In this way I hope to foster an ever deeper sense of reverence for the Word of God and for the sacramental life of our diocese, especially in the hearts and minds of those in our school and academy communities. At the same time I hope that this publication will provide a resource which allows everyone to strive for ever more authentic worship of Almighty God in our schools, academies, and parishes.

Planning and Celebrating Prayer and Liturgy with Young People is to be used in the schools, academies, and (where appropriate) in parishes of the Diocese of Nottingham from 8th September 2024, Education Sunday, and the liturgical memory of the Birthday of Our Blessed Lady.

**Rt Rev Bishop Patrick McKinney**  
Bishop of Nottingham

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# A MESSAGE FROM **BISHOP PATRICK**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Nottingham  
Diocese,

Jesus Christ is present, in our midst, when we gather as a praying community, when we hear the Word of God spoken to us, and most especially when we celebrate the Mass and the bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood. For this reason we place the highest emphasis on our worship of God, recognising that as children of a loving Father we want to give of our best to God.

It is for this reason that I am very pleased to commend this publication to you: Planning and Celebrating Prayer and Liturgy with Young People. Following the recent publication of the Prayer and Liturgy Directory by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, this pastoral expression helps to put into practise in Nottingham Diocese many of the recommendations made nationally.

There will always be times when we can't do everything we would like in our prayer and in our liturgy, and often it's better to do less and do it well, rather than to overreach ourselves and not succeed. Within this publication are guides and elements of best practice which will be familiar to us, and others parts which might be new.

Be open to all that's offered here, recognising that we are each called to give of our best in the service of Almighty God, and to be ever open to new initiatives as the Holy Spirit leads us.

My prayer is that this guidance will help us to make our celebrations, especially those with young people in our schools, academies, and churches, ever more worthy offerings to God, which help each person present to give of their gifts and talents in the liturgy. There are different roles for everyone, but by coming together and using our unique and God-given gifts and talents we can make something beautiful for God. May we give of our all in our prayer and our liturgy, and may the Holy Spirit inspire us afresh as each day we come face to face with the person of Jesus Christ.

With my prayers and blessings to you all,

+ Patrick

Bishop of Nottingham



Liturgical formation in this first sense is not something that can be acquired once and for all. Since the gift of the mystery celebrated surpasses our capacity to know it, this effort certainly must accompany the permanent formation of everyone, with the humility of little ones, the attitude that opens up into wonder.

- Pope Francis, *Desiderio Desideravi* #38



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# PLANNING AND CELEBRATING PRAYER & LITURGY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

## A practical and pastoral expression of The Prayer & Liturgy Directory for Nottingham Diocese.

This document seeks to practically equip those serving and working with young people in our diocese with the approaches, perspectives and understanding to create profound moments of **encounter** for our young people.

It is designed to help us grow as **disciples**, a sign lifted up, who can accompany, guide and form those young people with whom we work.

This document also aims to create **Missionary Disciples**, faithfully exercising the ministries of the liturgy and helping to build the Kingdom of God here in our lives.

In this resource we will explore the key principles of prayer and liturgy which should underpin all of the liturgical practices in our schools and parishes in Nottingham Diocese.

These principles will help us to understand not only what we do, but *why* we do it, and will help us construct engaging and accessible experiences of prayer and liturgy for all.





# THE MASS AND GIFT OF LITURGY

The resource **Planning and Celebrating the Mass**, released in 2019, has been revised and woven into this document to show how the gift of the liturgy can, and should, inform every aspect of our practice.

By embedding the influence of Mass in this way we can see just how everything is drawn from, and leads back to, our rich liturgical tradition, whilst still providing enjoyable and inclusive opportunities for our young people and those who lead them.



***Central to everything is the Mass; the source and summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed.***

*– Catechism of the Catholic Church #1324*

To help us create a clear and consistent diocesan approach, this guidance is grouped into four “lenses” through which we can approach and reflect on every aspect of prayer and liturgy.

Each lens informs the other and they not only provide a simple way of focusing our approaches, but also provide a foundation for our formation and practice.

Each lens also helps us to navigate, understand and then express the guidance contained within ‘The Prayer & Liturgy Directory 2023’ (PLD), the document which this resource is designed to accompany.

One of the significant changes in the PLD is a change to the core terminology we use. Going forward we will use the terms **Prayer**, **Celebrations of the word**, and **Liturgy** to more accurately express the different forms of practice and participation in our schools. To support our understanding of this continuum, each lens presented here will also give a different insight into how we understand these terms and help us to create a rich tapestry of experience for our communities.

It is hoped that by articulating in this document our approach to prayer and liturgy in Nottingham Diocese, we can ensure that everything we do will lead us ever deeper into the mystery of our faith.

# SOURCE AND SUMMIT

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND PASTORAL APPLICATIONS

*The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows.*

*- Sacrosanctum Concilium #10*

### Invitation

Jesus begins his ministry by inviting the disciples to come and follow him. These were people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives and who responded in different ways. This diversity is ever present in our school and parish communities and any such journey toward participation starts with an invitation that respects the dignity and identity of those involved.

To foster an environment of respect and inclusivity, especially for those of different faiths or no faith, consider inviting rather than directing people to participate in religious practices like the Sign of the Cross or prayers. This simple change can help ensure that participation is a conscious, sincere, and authentic choice for each individual.

### Accompaniment

Jesus invited the disciples to follow him. He then walked with them and accompanied them as they grew in faith and knowledge. Prayer and liturgy is an opportunity to accompany our young people on their journey of faith, whatever their starting point, and we must work hard to ensure that our preparation, and the experience of prayer and liturgy in our communities, reflects this.

At all times we must be sensitive to the needs of those we serve. It may not be appropriate, for example, for young people of another faith to take part in certain liturgical actions, which are contrary to their beliefs, but again, this can be another opportunity for accompaniment. Through sensitive dialogue and respect for each person's dignity, we must be open to what is suitable and where, if possible, we can create opportunities to celebrate what we have in common.

With this in mind, it is important to understand the norms of the Church and the destination to which we all journey as pilgrims of hope. The norms, as affirmed in The Prayer & Liturgy Directory, indicate that as we use more traditional structures, such as Mass, specific liturgical ministries such as proclaiming the scripture readings are to be performed by those who normally receive Holy Communion at Mass [PLD Section 5]. However, in a spirit of inclusion and accompaniment, where this is not possible for pastoral or practical reasons, anyone who has begun their journey of faith through baptism may take these roles.

To further increase our capacity to bring all those we meet to Christ, we must then look for every opportunity in other forms of worship, such as Celebrations of the word, to include all those who wish to be involved. Everyone is welcome to join the rich tapestry of prayer and liturgy within school and we must be mindful to encourage, support and affirm everyone to participate fully.

*Nevertheless, in our dealings with people, we must not lose pastoral charity, which should permeate all our decisions and attitudes. The defence of objective truth is not the only expression of this charity; it also includes kindness, patience, understanding, tenderness, and encouragement. Therefore, we cannot become judges who only deny, reject, and exclude.*

*– Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, September 2023*

## Formation

As we look towards the more formal ministries and those taking a leadership role, the importance of deliberate and high-quality formation becomes evident. We must ensure that those who serve others in prayer and liturgy have the knowledge and understanding to lead with skill and sensitivity.

A programme of formation, particularly for key staff or chaplaincy teams is essential. An important step toward this is to identify a **Prayer & Liturgy Coordinator** who can be a specific point of support and guidance and support for all those involved.

As a diocese we are committed to offering structured formation in prayer and liturgy and those holding the role would be expected to take the opportunity to regularly revisit and maintain their skills using the opportunities provided. This information can be found in the NRCDES CPD booklet, from the diocesan website, and from those who lead chaplaincy provision across our CMATs.

The need for formation emphasises the value and worth of what we do in prayer and liturgy. Whenever anyone is to take a leadership role or ministry it is our responsibility to ensure they are properly formed so that what they do can communicate the value and importance of prayer and liturgy to our community.

It is also important to ground this in a culture of affirmation and support for those involved. The fear of getting it wrong is the most significant barrier to leading others in prayer and liturgy, and so our formation must grow, nurture, and affirm all those involved.



# SEND

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

***[Those with SEND] come first to mind. They have a right, like others of their age, to know ‘the mystery of faith.’ The greater difficulties that they encounter give greater merit to their efforts and to those of their teachers.***

*– Saint Pope John Paul II,  
Catechesi Tradendae #41*

Prayer and liturgy should be inclusive and accessible to all, and the perspectives and approaches we take to support those within our community with SEND will be **essential to some, but beneficial to all.**

We must remove the barriers that many young people face, and our prayer and liturgy should be an inclusive example of best practice.

In his ministry, Jesus would break down the social barriers towards inclusion and acceptance and that is what we are called to do in our ministry.





Jesus dignified those he met, especially those who faced significant challenges in life. He would listen, and he would respond with love.

Underpinning all of the approaches in this resource, should be a commitment to affirm the dignity of all those who we are serving by seeking their voice, their views and their input. To ensure everyone can fully, consciously and actively participate we must not remove agency and at all times we must act with compassion and care.

To enable the best possible inclusive practice, each of the four lenses included in this document will also give some specific SEND guidance to inform the way we work.

As with the broader principles presented in this resource, none of the guidance around the four areas can or should be used in isolation. Each lens, and the SEND approaches contained within, must inform the others.

Often the complex and individual nature of need calls us to use a wide variety of strategies to support every individual in a truly holistic approach.

We are called to recognise and celebrate the 'unity in our diversity' so that we can create a truly authentic inclusion for all.

***Unity does not imply uniformity; it does not necessarily mean doing everything together or thinking in the same way. Nor does it signify a loss of identity. Unity in diversity is actually the opposite: it involves the joyful recognition and acceptance of the various gifts which the Holy Spirit gives to each one and the placing of these gifts at the service of all members of the Church.***

*– Pope Francis, Address, October 2014*



# Season



## Lens 1 -

How is what we do shaped by when we do it?



*The liturgical year is to be revised so that the traditional customs and discipline of the sacred seasons shall be preserved or restored to suit the conditions of modern times; their specific character is to be retained, so that they duly nourish the piety of the faithful who celebrate the mysteries of Christian redemption, and above all the paschal mystery.*

*Sacrosanctum Concilium #107*

## Atmosphere

Seasonality is something that connects us all on a very human level. When considering our approach to planning and celebrating prayer and liturgy we need to think first of *when* in the life of the community it's taking place. Just as the changing seasons outside help us get a feel for the time of year, so we must give special consideration to making the different seasons in the Church feel different too.

Advent, Christmastide, Ordinary Time, Lent, and Eastertide should all have a distinct character; and the choices made here can help all the members of the community connect with a sense of seasonality throughout the year. Reflecting on seasonality is also an opportunity to recognise, with care and sensitivity, other faiths and perspectives, and to ensure that there is an inclusive provision that meets the beautiful diversity of our communities.



## Rhythm

When we look at more formal gatherings, such as Celebrations of the word and the variety of opportunities to experience prayer and liturgy in school, we must also look at the rhythm that each day / week / term takes and start to make decisions about how to further embed the seasons into the experiences of our community.

The opportunity to use different start and end of day prayers for example, or to offer extra opportunities during different seasons, such as reconciliation during Advent and Lent, can all help shape an awareness for all people of the Church's liturgical year.

The important aspect to remember is to be **deliberate and purposeful** in shaping a rhythm of prayer and liturgy that is in harmony with the liturgical year, and that is engaging and accessible for all.

# SEASON

HOW IS WHAT WE DO SHAPED BY WHEN WE DO IT?

### Liturgical Year

The Prayer & Liturgy Directory now gives a more structured way to capture and communicate a sense of seasonality throughout the year in the **Annual Plan of Provision (APOP)**. This document should contain a calendar for the year, with key feasts, events and celebrations outlined, along with a sense of the broader ideas and principles that have underpinned the choices made. It should list the various opportunities and provision throughout the year and show how they connect with RE and the Catholic life and mission of the school.

As always, looking for a rich variety of opportunities that meets the needs of all the community is the key to a good APOP, and it will provide clarity for those leading provision as to what to do when, and why. This document, when reviewed and evaluated each year, must then form the foundation for growth, development and progression in the provision for the following year and will allow leaders to minister to all those in the community in an effective, deliberate, and formative way.

When looking at the seasons of the Church, and in more detail at the liturgical year, we see a rich calendar of feasts, memorials, and celebrations in which we can connect with the Universal Church. One of the key resources to refer to is the **Diocesan Ordo** – the calendar of celebrations in our own diocese, and to have that as a reference, especially for more formal liturgies. For example, when preparing for Mass it is important to look first at the Ordo to get a sense of the season, feast day, readings, and any particulars about celebrating Mass on that day.

The Diocesan Ordo in Nottingham Diocese also features a **“Word of the Week”** for schools which can provide an accessible and clear connection to the liturgical season, and help connect the experience of prayer and liturgy in school with that of the parish and beyond.





# SEASONALITY AND SEND

ESSENTIAL FOR SOME, BENEFICIAL FOR ALL

## Safe and Included

The space and time we give to communal and personal prayer can be a real positive for those in our community with SEND. Often the safe spaces we create at these times can help all young people to explore and process difficult feelings and emotions and help them to connect with their community. Safeguarding these times for prayer and liturgy is then of the upmost importance, as is making sure that everyone feels welcome and included.

Over the course of a year the distinct feeling that we can give to each liturgical season, such as calm and quiet times during Lent, can help young people engage in genuine and meaningful ways. If you are working with young people with SEND, think about how you can integrate whole school seasonal elements into the everyday experiences in the classroom or other spaces that you use. Creating a bridge of familiar experiences between the usual and sacred spaces in schools will help create a more consistent, stable and familiar environment which all helps to facilitate authentic participation.

## The Physical Space

When considering those with SEND, the physical environment is something we need to give particular attention to. Think about how you might enter and exit a space, how people will be seated and ensure there is space for easy movement. Make sure those young people who may require time out, or who may find elements difficult, can sit near an exit and that routes out of any space are clearly visible and accessible.

The positioning of staff supporting young people is also something to consider so that you can create a sense of safety and security for the young people as they gather.

While making special consideration for young people with SEND try, where possible, to ensure that they are not separated or detached from the group. Consider, for example, if not everyone can sit on the floor, can everyone be seated so everyone is on the same level? It is also important that elements like the focus, or the screen are clearly visible to all as this can help everybody to be more engaged and more connected. In all of these approaches, always seek the voice of the young people themselves. Where we can give choices and respect their dignity, we enable them to feel secure and empower them to authentically participate.

## Content

There are many themes, stories and topics within the rhythm of the year which may prove upsetting or uncomfortable for members of the community. Consideration should always be given to the appropriate use of scripture and how to explore themes with young people who may find it difficult. Exploring death and loss, families and relationships, or sin and forgiveness could all be challenging for those involved. A positive, open and honest dialogue can help young people and staff to prepare for these times, and working with those with SEND ahead of such topics to prepare them for what you are exploring can help them to continue to play an active part. If it is decided that it would not be suitable for young people themselves to take part in a specific event, then all care should be taken to find a meaningful way for them to be connected and included. This could include a separate service or involvement with aspects of the preparation.

# SEASONALITY IN THE MASS

## MUSIC, GATHERING, ENTRANCE PROCESSIONS AND THE PENITENTIAL ACT

**When preparing Mass, seasonality is particularly important. There are specific changes and adaptations made to reflect the season in each celebration, and the season of celebration shapes nearly every aspect of preparing for Mass. The Ordo, as mentioned before, provides specific information for those preparing and should be the first point of reference when getting ready to celebrate.**

The specific areas of guidance for the Mass found in this section explicitly reflect seasonality. Ensuring that the liturgical season is faithfully expressed not only helps us prepare Mass in a more faithful and engaging way, but also helps inform our choices across all expressions of prayer and liturgy in the community.



# MUSIC

**As an art placed at the service of communal prayer, music is part of the liturgical action, drawing people together and transforming them into an assembly of worshippers.**

**For this reason, music is considered integral to worship and serves a ministerial function. In choosing music for liturgy, consideration should be given to the music itself, the text, and the ritual function. Musical factors include the quality of composition, its ability to express the tone, content, and form of a text (for example, an acclamation or a hymn), and the ease with which it can be remembered and sung.**

- Celebrating The Mass #80

Music enriches all prayer and liturgy and enables all people to participate in an active way. The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales provides clear guidance on Music in the Liturgy (Singing the Mass 1997), and this document helps us to understand where to focus our attention and resources when supporting our communities.

When approaching the music for the Mass it's worth noting that the hymns aren't actually the first priority when it comes to the music for the celebration. The order of priority is as follows:

## Most Important

- ✙ Gospel Acclamation (always Alleluia, except in Lent when alternatives are always used)
- ✙ Sanctus (Holy Holy)
- ✙ Memorial Acclamation
- ✙ Great Amen

## To Be Included Next:

- ✙ Opening hymn
- ✙ Gloria (if applicable – check the Ordo)
- ✙ Psalm
- ✙ Communion processional hymn (played during but not after Communion)

## To be included only if all of the above are already present:

- ✙ Penitential Act
- ✙ Hymn for the Preparation of the Gifts (previously known as 'Offertory')
- ✙ Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)
- ✙ Recessional / Exit / Final hymn

The most important elements should all be included before including other music in the Mass.

## What should not be sung:

**The Lord's Prayer (Our Father):** this prayer was given by Jesus to everyone and should be inclusive to all so avoid singing this unless everyone present knows the music and can join in with this prayer.

# MUSIC

After Communion has taken place it is important that any Communion processional song conclude to allow for silence after everyone has received Holy Communion.

Instrumental music can also be a great way of helping everyone to focus and to reflect at appropriate times – as long as it doesn't distract from words and actions that might be taking place at the same time.

Secular (non-religious) music, whilst potentially suitable for Celebrations of the word, or Prayer, is not usually used during Mass. Whenever it is used, it must be in conformity with the Bible and the Church's theological teaching, and should be used in a way that enhances the celebration. As the document *Celebrating the Mass* reminds us we need to make sure to allow time for all those leading to become confident with the Mass music so that it does not become a distraction or a worry. Remember to also rehearse with the accompaniment that will be played during the Mass – changing instruments or using a different backing track can cause confusion.

***'The music of our own day,  
from every culture and region,  
should also serve the assembly  
and its worship with due  
reverence and honour.'***

*- Celebrating the Mass #82*

**Before using music in a liturgical celebration always consider the following points:**

- ✦ Check sufficient and appropriate musicians are available and that they know which pieces of music they need to prepare
- ✦ Time for musicians / congregation to practise the Mass music
- ✦ Space for the musicians (including chairs, music stands, microphones etc.)
- ✦ Check that the sheet music is suitable for the instruments being played eg chords for guitars, sheet music for woodwind / brass / stringed instruments in the correct key
- ✦ Check that the words and verses that the musicians have match those printed in the order of service / showing on screen to avoid any confusion
- ✦ Be prepared with some music that can be played whilst people gather or when the musicians receive Holy Communion



Something further to consider is how to support our communities in learning new music and how we can foster confidence in the use of music in prayer and liturgy more broadly. The Prayer & Liturgy Directory encourages the creation of a programme of music that reflects the season, and to consciously give time to allow this to become part of the culture of worship. It is good advice to then use the Mass music at other times too, such as in Celebrations of the word, to enhance its familiarity.

Most importantly, don't forget to enjoy the music during prayer and liturgy. As Saint Augustine says: 'Whoever sings well prays twice over'. Fostering a sense of joy, and a culture of participation, can create an accessible and moving experience for everyone.



# GATHERING AND INTRODUCTION



## The Atmosphere

Try to ensure that the space is set, candles are lit, and everything is ready before anyone comes into the space for Mass. Encourage people to come in quietly perhaps by playing music so that they understand the change in atmosphere for the celebration of Mass. It is worth reflecting that Mass may not always be celebrated in a church. It is vital that any space used feels different and important and reflects the liturgical season. Art, decoration, lighting and colour can all be used to enhance a space for Prayer and Liturgy.

## Who should be involved?

*The principles of active and conscious participation are in a sense even more significant for Masses celebrated with children. Every effort should therefore be made to increase this participation and to make it more intense. For this reason as many children as possible should have special parts in the celebration: for example, preparing the place and the altar, acting as cantor, singing in a choir, playing musical instruments, proclaiming the readings, responding during the homily, reciting the intentions of the general intercessions, bringing the gifts to the altar, and performing similar activities in accord with the usage of various peoples.*

– Directory for Masses with Children #22

## Introduction

An introduction to Mass may be led by young people, or by a member of staff, before the celebration begins. The purpose of the introduction is to welcome those who have gathered, and to set the tone and theme of the Mass.

The beginning of Mass is also a good time for any commentary that has been prepared (see Using Commentary in Mass section) - particularly if it is a particular feast. The Introduction can come before the opening hymn or after the priest has begun the celebration with the Sign of the Cross. It is important to check with the priest what is appropriate for the particular celebration and include him in the preparation of any texts.

**The aim of the introduction is:**

***‘...that the faithful coming together take on the form of a community and prepare themselves to listen properly to God’s word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.’***

*– Directory for Masses with Children #40*

**The Introduction should:**

- ✙ Welcome the congregation and any special guests
- ✙ Introduce those (students) who have prepared the Mass
- ✙ Introduce the theme of the Mass e.g. the liturgical season, the feast day of a particular saint, the intentions of the Mass etc.
- ✙ Prepare the congregation to take part in the Mass as a community

**The Introduction could include commentary to:**

- ✙ Explain why specific readings have been chosen / why they relate to the theme of the Mass
- ✙ Ask the congregation to reflect upon and focus on a particular intention during the Mass

# GATHERING AND INTRODUCTION

The Introduction / Gathering is also a good opportunity to bring up any objects or symbols that may help the congregation to reflect upon the theme or season of the Mass.

These might include young people's work, symbols to represent the theme, or religious icons. This could be done by creating a prayer focus at the front of the celebration during the introduction or by pointing out and explaining the objects / symbols that have already been prepared before the Mass began. Care must be taken that this doesn't distract from the altar, or that the altar becomes simply a backdrop for the display. A separate site is always preferable.

## For example:

'We place before the altar a sleeping bag to remind us that Saint Vincent de Paul cared for those who were homeless and in need, and to remind us that we should follow his example.'



Using the beginning of Mass to bring up objects or symbols such as these allows them to inform and be present for the entire celebration. It also allows the priest to refer to them and use them as a foundation for dialogue with the congregation.

The presentation of the gifts, where items like this have previously been brought up before, **should not** be used for this purpose and should focus on simply the 'fruit of the earth and work of human hands': the gifts of bread and wine brought to the altar.

***...it is appropriate to introduce other related elements that will permit children to perceive visually the wonderful works that God performed in creation and redemption and thus support their prayer. The liturgy should never appear as something dry and merely intellectual.***

***For the same reason, the use of pictures prepared by the children themselves may be useful, for example, as illustrations of a homily, as visual expressions of the intentions of the general intercessions, or as inspirations to reflection.***

*– Directory for Masses with Children #35*



# THE PENITENTIAL ACT

The Penitential Act comes in the first part of Mass, just after the welcome / introduction, and the Sign of the Cross. It is there to help us prepare our hearts and minds for what we are about to participate in, and to receive.

The Penitential Act is part of each Mass however it is sometimes replaced with an alternative Rite, such as on The Presentation of the Lord (2 February) or Ash Wednesday.

The Penitential Act always begins and ends with words from the priest. Some of the statements within can be written and led by those taking part in the Mass.

## **There are three different forms that the Penitential Rite can take.**

1. The 'I confess to Almighty God...' prayer
2. The 'Have mercy on us O Lord...' dialogue
3. Three statements about Jesus' love and mercy followed by the responses: 'Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy' (also familiar in the Greek 'Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison').

It is possible for young people to write and lead a Penitential Act in the third form (statements followed by: Lord have mercy...). This will take the form of three statements written about Jesus and his love and mercy rather than focusing on personal mistakes or failings. This important focus reminds us that forgiveness is rooted in love and, by focusing on Jesus' love and mercy for us, we can confidently and sincerely then ask him for mercy.

A great place to start when writing these statements is to look first to the Gospel reading to help create a connection between the different sections of the liturgy, and to root this element of the Mass with the particular feast or season.

The priest will conclude the Penitential Act with a prayer seeking forgiveness.

The readers should return to their places after the priest has concluded the Penitential Act (but not before).

On Sundays, solemnities, feast days, and other days of celebration, the Gloria (the song of the angels on Christmas night) will follow. The Gloria is not required for a weekday Mass but can still be included if appropriate. See the Ordo for times when the Gloria is required. The Gloria should be sung.



# Scripture

A photograph of two students in school uniforms. The student in the foreground is a young man with glasses, wearing a dark sweater over a white shirt and a striped tie. He is looking down at an open book. The student in the background is a young woman with blonde hair, also in a school uniform, looking down at the same book. The entire image has a warm, yellowish-orange tint.

## **Lens 2 -**

Why do we always start with scripture?

*Well-chosen Scripture passages that are informed by the liturgical season form the heart of prayer and liturgy*

– CSI Descriptor



It cannot be underestimated how important the role of scripture is in prayer and liturgy. It should be the firm foundation on which our practice and approach is rooted.

## A relationship with Christ

Scripture gives us a unique opportunity to encounter Jesus who is the Word made flesh. With that in mind, it is important to find ways of sharing and incorporating scripture not just in prayer and liturgy but also into the wider life of the school. Using scripture in subjects outside of RE can, for example, be a powerful way to show how our faith informs every aspect of our lives.

The first steps towards putting scripture at the heart of all we do is opening it up to all those in our community, and using resources which help explain and connect what is being said with what is happening in people's lives.

To ensure consistency and development along this journey in Nottingham Diocese we will use the **Good News Translation** with primary aged students as it is specially designated for use with young people and this translation makes it initially more accessible.

In year 6 we will begin to use the **English Standard Version (Catholic Edition)** where appropriate, as we seek to harmonise more closely with the translation used in the Lectionary.

In secondary schools the **ESV-CE** will be the translation used.



# SCRIPTURE

## THE FOUNDATION AND HEART OF OUR PRAYER AND LITURGY

### Our place in the story

Scripture tells a story that isn't over yet. We are part of that story and God is active in our lives. To foster this sense of connection, the careful use of well-chosen scripture will help all those in our communities build stronger links between scripture and their own lives.

Opportunities to reflect and pray with scripture will help deepen this understanding and in more structured prayer and liturgy, such as Celebrations of the word, **we always start with scripture** to support our theme and plan from there. By incorporating scripture at the start of the planning process it enables the links made to be explicit and visible in every aspect of the celebration that follows, and it keeps all the elements rooted in the Word of God. Scripture also helps deepen the understanding of all those participating as they listen to the Spirit speaking to them.

### Cycle of readings

The Church gives us a rich calendar of readings throughout the whole year. These tell the story of Jesus and the story of the people of God as a journey which accompanies us through the seasons.

We get to experience different Gospel perspectives across different liturgical years and this universal approach is a great starting point when looking to find scripture for prayer and liturgy.

The Ordo gives the specific readings for each day of the year and is an essential resource when planning for Mass. Over the course of the year the cycle of readings helps us go into scripture in depth, drawing upon scripture from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. This rich tradition of scripture permits not only an encounter with Christ, but also a connection with the wider liturgical life of the Church. We should always seek to use the cycle of readings to inform and influence the scripture we choose.



# SCRIPTURE AND SEND

ESSENTIAL FOR SOME, BENEFICIAL FOR ALL

## The written word

The written word is a fundamental part of our liturgical tradition. It can also, however, be a barrier to inclusion and where possible every accommodation should be made to support young people to engage with the texts and scripture that we use. With scripture, the use of suitable translations (such as the **GNT** in primary) can be a good start, but where pastoral demands require it, simpler texts, and pictorial resources that can accompany a full translation can be used.

A copy of any scripture to be read, or significant texts to be used, could also be displayed either in a booklet or on a screen to accompany the spoken word, to support those who may find it harder to listen or understand.

Scripture should always be presented in line with our liturgical tradition. However, in addition to this, it can be helpful to use other resources alongside the text to scaffold understanding. This could be in the form of videos, music, visual aids etc. These should not be a replacement for, but an addition to, the scripture in our prayer and liturgy so that all can share in the Word of God.

## Screens and displays

When using screens and displays it's important to work closely with your SENDCo to observe best practice particularly to support those young people who find text and the written word challenging.

Using large, clear, sans serif fonts, not displaying too much text at a time, and using high contrast text on a tinted (non-white) background are just some of the ways to improve readability and this should be considered whenever we use the written word and scripture as part of prayer and liturgy.

Where writing and communication are an active part of the prayer and liturgy itself, such as writing on a prayer wall or answering a question, care and consideration must also be given to those who may find it hard to participate. Writing aids, digital devices and staff support can all help those who may find it challenging to take part, but this needs to be well planned. Where possible, always try to find actions or activities that allow everyone to participate in the same way before making any special adaptations for individuals.

## Instruction

How we lead people and direct them through prayer and liturgy is key to ensuring they are able to engage in a meaningful way. Careful planning of how we ask people to take part in specific actions should be considered during both planning and delivery. Before a particular celebration it is important to prepare young people for their role and for what they will experience. Young people need to understand clearly what they will be asked to do and why. As always, we should listen to the young people themselves to understand what they are comfortable doing and what we can do to facilitate it. It may be helpful to practise an action or activity first, so that it is familiar.

When leading prayer and liturgy, consider how to scaffold the delivery of information. This gives people time to prepare and an indication of what to expect. Phrases such as 'In a moment we will be...' or 'After the next hymn we will...' for example, help all those gathered to know clearly what is happening. It also gives time for people to process, and creates a greater sense of security and safety. When giving instructions it is also important that you are specific, clear and direct. The use of visuals for individuals may support this further. Try also to explain *why* you are doing something to aid deeper understanding. These approaches in particular, can benefit everyone present and ensure that the prayer and liturgy celebrated is accessible to all.

# SCRIPTURE IN MASS

READINGS, SCRIPTURE INTERPRETATION, AND THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

**Scripture is a fundamental part in the celebration of Mass. During the Liturgy of the Word we hear scripture passages which help us gain something of the theme of the celebration. These scripture passages help us to encounter Christ in a profound and meaningful way.**

This section also looks at the ways we can interpret and animate scripture in Mass, create opportunities for dialogue during the homily, and how the theme of our celebration can be connected and expressed in a powerful way during the Universal Prayer (Intercessions).



# THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

## SCRIPTURE IN MASS

**During this part of the Mass we hear readings from the Bible, the Word of God.**

A brief explanation of the background of the reading can be provided as another point of commentary before the scripture.

All readings should be proclaimed from the lectern or ambo. If the text needs to be enlarged and cannot be read directly from the lectionary then the document that the scripture is read from should be presented in a respectful way that acknowledges its importance as the Word of God. Loose pieces of paper (however beautifully backed) should not be used, but rather an appropriately-decorated folder, already on the lectern, helps to indicate that the readings are taken from a common source of scripture, the Bible, and not simply something one person has prepared.

**The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has approved the following translations of the Bible for use in the Liturgy:**

- ✠ English Standard Version Catholic Edition (the translation used in the lectionary)
- ✠ Jerusalem Bible (the translation used in the lectionary until Advent 2024)
- ✠ Revised Standard Version
- ✠ New Jerusalem Bible
- ✠ New Revised Standard Version
- ✠ Good News (in Nottingham Diocese may be used only for Masses with Children in primary schools, or where the majority of those present are aged up to year 5)





# THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

## SCRIPTURE IN MASS

Before choosing readings for a celebration of Mass, check the Ordo for guidance. On Sundays or when there is a solemnity or saint's feast day specific readings will be given, different from the weekly cycle. These can be found in **The Lectionary**. Readings can be checked online at [www.universalis.com](http://www.universalis.com), ensuring the settings reference the Nottingham Diocesan Calendar.

It's important for the 'active and conscious participation' of those gathered that the readings from scripture be appropriate.

***If all the readings assigned to the day seem to be unsuited to the capacity of the children, it is permissible to choose readings or a reading either from the Lectionary for Mass or directly from the Bible, but taking into account the liturgical seasons...***

***If, because of the limited capacity of the children, it seems necessary to omit one or other verse of a biblical reading, this should be done cautiously and in such a way 'that the meaning of the text or the intent and, as it were, style of the Scriptures are not distorted.'***

- Celebrating The Mass #43

If it is considered that such a change to the readings would be prudent, make sure to discuss this with the priest in good time beforehand.

The readings in Mass follow this format:

### First Reading

- ✝ This reading is present for all celebrations of Mass
- ✝ This is usually from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), or sometimes from one of the Letters in the New Testament; Acts of the Apostles is used during the Easter Season
- ✝ The book of the Bible is given at the beginning of the reading (see the scripture introductions guidance) and ends with: 'The Word of the Lord' to which the congregation responds: 'Thanks be to God'

### Psalm

- ✝ This reading is present for all celebrations of Mass
- ✝ This is usually one, or a part of one, of the Psalms in the Book of Psalms; sometimes a canticle from another part of the Bible takes this place
- ✝ For a responsorial psalm the psalmist (singing or reading the psalm) introduces the response which the congregation repeats. Then the psalmist sings or reads each verse, interspersed by the response each time



***Even when it is impossible to sing the psalm, it may be possible to support and enrich its recitation with instrumental music. Psalms should always be recited in a manner conducive to meditation.***

*- Celebrating The Mass #162*

- ✠ Psalms are songs, and were sung by God's chosen people long before they were written down. Wherever possible the psalm at Mass should be sung, even if to a very simple tune. This can be done using the responsorial format described, or sung altogether. It is permitted to sing the response and recite the verses. If it is not possible to sing any parts of the psalm then instrumental background music can be used to help meditation on the words.

### **Second Reading**

- ✠ This reading is usually only given on Sundays and solemnities.
- ✠ The second reading is always taken from one of the Letters in the New Testament.

To ensure clarity and ease of understanding, scripture should be proclaimed by a single voice. If the scripture given for the first or second reading is of particular length, and has a number of voices or characters in, then this can be an opportunity to involve several young people in its reading, each taking a different character or voice or reading the part of narrator.

***Depending on the text of the reading, it may be helpful for the children to read it in parts distributed among them, as is provided for the reading of the Lord's Passion in Holy Week.***

*- Directory for Masses with Children #48*

### **The Gospel Acclamation**

- ✠ The acclamation is always sung, and the congregation stands to greet the Gospel.
- ✠ There may be a procession with candles (and incense if used) during the acclamation.
- ✠ The reader of the previous piece of scripture may remain at the lectern or ambo to sing the acclamation before the Gospel is proclaimed. Care should be taken to ensure the reader leaves the lectern or ambo before the deacon or priest and any altar servers arrive.

### **The Gospel**

This is the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. Accordingly special marks of honour are used to distinguish it:

- ✠ The deacon or priest proclaims (or even sings) the Gospel after a prayer or blessing
- ✠ A procession to the lectern or ambo with candles and incense is made
- ✠ Whilst the Gospel passage is introduced (ie A reading from the Holy Gospel according to N.) those present make the sign of the cross with the thumb on forehead, lips and chest, whilst responding: 'Glory to you, O Lord'.
- ✠ The Gospel ends with the words: 'The Gospel of the Lord' and the response 'Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ'.
- ✠ Optionally the Gospel acclamation may be sung again, especially where there is a procession of candles and incense.

The Gospel always comes from one of the four canonical Gospels in the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

# SCRIPTURE INTERPRETATION

## General Advice

Scripture readings should be read clearly and confidently. Young people reading should have the chance to practise the readings, and be given an explanation of their meaning and context, so that they are comfortable and familiar with what they will be saying. If a microphone is needed it should be in place and easily adjustable by the reader, so that the readings can be heard easily by everyone.

If young people wish to prepare scripture reflections then these must be done in a way that enhances understanding rather than to detract from the Word of God. (See the separate guidance sheet for further information)

**Drama can be used to enhance the pupils' response to the liturgy of the word but should not replace a scripture reading. Care should be taken that it is appropriate and proportionate.**

– Prayer & Liturgy Directory FAQ

After the scripture readings the priest preaches on the Word of God and the theme of the Mass in general, this is called the homily. When celebrating with young people participation of those gathered is encouraged. This homily should be suitable and relevant to the young people with whom it is shared.

**If it is to fulfil its purpose, the Homily must be the fruit of meditation, carefully prepared, and in length, style, and content sensitively adapted to the needs and capacities of all present. This may well be more easily achieved if the priest prepares the Homily in shared reflection and prayer with members or representatives of the congregation.**

– Celebrating the Mass #169



Interpreting Scripture creatively can be an engaging and enjoyable way to help young people connect with the liturgy. It can help contextualise complex concepts in a meaningful and relevant way.

**Some key questions to consider and discuss with young people when preparing an interpretation of scripture are:**

1. What is the meaning of the piece of scripture?
2. What is a message or phrase that sums up the passage (there is often a precis of the reading in the lectionary which can help with this)
3. What does the piece of scripture mean in today's time and place?
4. How do the words personally speak to our community?

When preparing to interpret scripture consider the best ways to bring that scripture to life. It is important to remember that all scripture must be read (or in the case of the psalm, sung) before any interpretation is given, so that the reflection enhances understanding. The scripture interpretation must never replace hearing the Word of God as it has been handed down to us.

**Scripture interpretation could take one of several forms:**

1. A re-enactment of the scripture, either as the passage is read, or shown directly after reading.
2. A dramatised interpretation of the scripture, set in a modern-day situation.
3. A metaphorical interpretation where the core theme is reflected in a different setting or scenario.
4. A musical interpretation prepared to explain the message and theme of the scripture.
5. An artistic interpretation of the scripture (eg posters, pictures, sculpture), where the scripture is read followed by a showing and explaining of the artwork. This works well when young people are not very vocal or confident in front of others.

It is important to remember that this is not a performance. It is not there to highlight the people taking part, but rather to help explain the scripture itself. With that in mind it is important to keep the focus on the scripture, not to give rounds of applause, and to encourage the young people to be respectful and appropriate.

Ensure any interpretation isn't too long or too complicated. Pick one aspect or theme to interpret and keep it simple. The experience of leading the interpretation should be enjoyable for the young people. Young people shouldn't have to memorise extra words for example, nor rehearse over and over again.

It is also important to remember that any interpretations do not replace the homily; rather they form part of a dialogue with the priest to which he can respond. To enable any interpretation to be in harmony with the homily it is vital to ensure that the preparation of any interpretation is done in collaboration with the priest.



# THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

***Enlightened and moved by God's word, the assembly exercises its priestly function by interceding for all humanity. Because "the joy and hope, the struggle and anguish of the people of this age and especially of the poor and those suffering in any way are the joy and hope, the struggle and anguish of Christ's disciples," the Church prays not just for its own needs but for the salvation of the world, for civil authorities, for those oppressed by any burden, and for the local community, particularly those who are sick or who have died.***

*- Celebrating the Mass #171*



The Universal Prayer, or Prayer of the Faithful, (sometimes called Intercessions, Bidding Prayers or Asking Prayers), concludes the Liturgy of the Word, encouraging us to turn to God and to ask for help with those things that the scripture has taught us. These prayers are offered on behalf of all people across the wider Church and the whole world.

The Universal Prayer begins with an introduction from the priest, and ends with the priest's prayer on behalf of the whole congregation. The intercessions are led by those taking part in the Mass, with all invited to make the response at the end of each.

The intercessions are purposely phrased so that those leading the prayer first invite the community to pray for particular intentions:

For example 'We pray for [Theme]... that...'

Then, after a period of silence, when all present can make their own quiet prayers for the intention suggested, it is collectively brought together with the words 'Lord hear us' or 'Lord in your mercy' And the response: 'Lord, graciously hear us'; or 'hear our prayer'.

**The intentions of these intercessions are usually in the following order:**

1. For the needs of the Church
2. For public authorities and the salvation of the whole world
3. For those burdened by any kind of difficulty
4. For the local community
5. Any other specific intentions of the community, including prayers for those who have died.

**The intercessions should reflect:**

- ✙ The scripture
- ✙ The theme of the Mass
- ✙ The liturgical season
- ✙ The needs of the local community
- ✙ The needs of the world

At the end of the intercessions and prayers the congregation should be invited to pray for their own personal intentions in silence, followed by a longer pause. We then collectively pray 'Lord hear us' or 'Lord in your mercy' to offer up our silent prayers.

In England and Wales the prayers usually conclude with asking for the intercession of Mary, Mother of God. For example:

**We ask Mary our Mother to pray / intercede for us as we say, Hail Mary full of grace....**

Other Marian prayers (such as the Hail, Holy Queen, or the Memorare) can also be used here.

The readers should only return to their seats after the priest has concluded the final prayer of the Universal Prayer, and all have said 'Amen'.





# Senses

## **Lens 3 -**

How can we use the language of the senses?



## Incarnation

***Existential engagement happens — in continuity with and consistent with the method of Incarnation — in a sacramental way. The Liturgy is done with things that are the exact opposite of spiritual abstractions: bread, wine, oil, water, fragrances, fire, ashes, rock, fabrics, colours, body, words, sounds, silences, gestures, space, movement, action, order, time, light.***

***The whole of creation is a manifestation of the love of God, and from when that same love was manifested in its fullness in the cross of Jesus, all of creation was drawn toward it.***

*- Pope Francis - Desiderio  
Desideravi #42*

Prayer and liturgy should be a reflection of our lives, and the way in which we experience God's creation. On the human level we experience God's creation through our senses, and this medium of experience provides a powerful and profound language with which to communicate to everyone. With this in mind we must always give great thought to how we use the 'language of the senses' to enhance and enliven our prayer and liturgy.

Reflecting on what we **see, hear, think** and **do** during prayer and liturgy can be a useful approach to ensure what we plan is both engaging, and most importantly, accessible, as the language of the senses speaks to everyone.

***...the Liturgy is the priesthood of Christ, revealed to us and given in his Paschal Mystery, rendered present and active by means of signs addressed to the senses (water, oil, bread, wine, gestures, words), so that the Spirit, plunging us into the paschal mystery, might transform every dimension of our life, conforming us more and more to Christ.***

*- Pope Francis - Desiderio  
Desideravi #21*

# THE SENSES

## ACCESSIBLE AND ENGAGING PRAYER AND LITURGY

### Ritual, Signs and Symbols

Prayer and liturgy encompasses a broad range of approaches, techniques and experiences but often what helps us move from personal prayer to more formal approaches such as Celebrations of the Word, are the rituals, signs and symbols that help to make these experiences distinct.

When planning more formal experiences, think carefully about the use of signs and symbols and ensure that they all inform and direct those present toward the meaning of the celebration. Think too about the customs and rituals that we can use to enhance our experiences such as the Rosary, or gestures and actions. Using the small Sign of the Cross on our forehead, lips and heart for a Gospel reading outside of Mass for example, can be a good way to build familiarity with the gestures we traditionally use at Mass. Rooted in an invitational approach, we can invite people toward more informed and sincere participation by engaging with the ritual actions present in the Mass in other areas of prayer and liturgy.

***The principles of active and conscious participation are in a sense even more significant for Masses celebrated with children. Every effort should therefore be made to increase this participation and to make it more intense.***

*- Directory for Masses with Children #22*

### Participation,

Our goal should always be the full active and conscious participation of all. We must work hard to respect the dignity of those present, through an invitational approach, but we should also not miss any opportunity to make our prayer and liturgy accessible to as many people as possible. Whilst it may not be possible for some in our communities to engage with some liturgical actions and customs, an open, honest and sensitive dialogue can lead us to find harmony of practice. The language of the senses will often be the bridge to that harmony, and we should make every effort to ensure there is a balance, breadth, and depth to the way in which we engage others in prayer and liturgy.

The Mass is a particularly sensory experience and it speaks to the reality of our incarnation. Mass truly engages the senses and by reflecting on elements from the Mass, such as gesture, procession, offerings, and posture we can find new and creative ways to engage others in all aspects of prayer and liturgy and beyond.





# SENSES AND SEND

ESSENTIAL FOR SOME, BENEFICIAL FOR ALL

## The 'language of the senses'

The 'language of the senses' weaves and connects everyone present in prayer and liturgy. It helps everyone to be connected and to engage.

How we use the 'language of the senses' is of vital importance when working with those in our community with SEND. Often approaches involving the use of our senses can provide a bridge to help others connect - but it can also present a challenge to those who face barriers with sensory input. We must be mindful of the different sensory needs of all those who are present and make adjustments where necessary to ensure that all can feel safe and secure.

When thinking about the environment and atmosphere we want to create, we must consider specific sensory needs. Consider if a space, environment or activity would be comfortable for young people and where possible, allow them to see and assess the spaces and environments to be used in preparation. Reflecting on whether a space will be too light or dark, loud or quiet, even crowded or spacious can help us consider the sensory needs of others.

## Mobility

One of the key considerations is making sure the space, gestures, objects and activities are suitable for those with physical needs too. Think carefully about the way people will move, the objects or actions that are to be shared, and what types of interactions will take place.

Supporting the physical needs of those present is a fundamental part of creating the safe and secure environment that is needed, and unless absolutely unavoidable, we should plan and prepare all elements of our prayer and liturgy to be accessible to all.

As always, speaking directly to young people with specific needs, and being guided by them, can help you plan and prepare in an authentically inclusive way.

## Support and Aids

Those with SEND may sometimes face additional barriers when using different senses. We need to be mindful of this and use the tools and techniques at our disposal to ensure they are able to meaningfully participate.

When planning, think first of the specific physical and sensory needs of your group and allow this to shape your ideas and process from the beginning.

If there is a visual impairment, think carefully about how images, actions and symbols can be described and communicated. Think also about how movement, actions and gesture can be made inclusive and accessible.

Where there is a hearing impairment, consider the use of visual tools, such as images, props and screens to communicate in a variety of ways. The use of gesture and action to scaffold instructions and movement along with more deliberate support such as microphones, loop systems and sign assisted communication, can also ensure that everyone can be a part of the celebration.

The use of support aids and equipment does not negate the need to seek approaches and activities that are accessible to all. Support aids can however, facilitate greater inclusion where this is not possible and ensure greater levels of participation.

# THE SENSES IN MASS

## THE PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS AND THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The Mass speaks to everyone using the language of the senses. Although during the preparation of the gifts, which begins the Liturgy of the Eucharist, there are not many opportunities for young people to take specific roles, there is a rich tapestry of gesture, prayer, song and movement with which we can engage everyone present.



# THE PREPARATION OF GIFTS

(OFFERTORY)

**The Preparation of the Gifts, which we used to call the 'offertory' is an important part of the celebration of Mass and should only involve the procession of bread, wine and if necessary, a collection of money or goods for the parish and the poor.**

***Besides money, gifts in kind and other real gifts for the poor are appropriate, but not token items that will be retrieved and returned to ordinary use after the celebration. If it is intended to make use of things that symbolise the particular work or identity of the assembly or occasion for celebration, these are best brought to the sanctuary as part of the Entrance Procession and displayed near the altar or other suitable place. They should not be brought in the Procession with the gifts of bread and wine.***

*– Celebrating the Mass #180*

Where possible the bread and the wine should each be brought up in a single container that makes them clearly visible to those celebrating Mass, for example a glass jug or open ciborium. The water should be already on the credence table since, unlike the bread and the wine, it is not the work of human hands.

The procession should not be used to bring up other objects or work from the young people. These should be brought up during the Entrance Procession and placed in a prominent position (but not on the altar) so they are present for the entire celebration. It may seem confusing that young people's work cannot be "offered" to God, but a distinction is made here between elements which are offered (symbols at the start of Mass, our prayers after the scripture readings, etc) and the elements which are given here, as an offering from the community, offered in sacrifice to God, and then transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit through the priest's words, given back to the congregation as the Body and Blood of Christ.

# THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

*At the Last Supper, Christ instituted the Sacrifice and Paschal meal that make the Sacrifice of the cross present in the Church. From the days of the Apostles the Church has celebrated that Sacrifice by carrying out what the Lord did and handed over to his disciples to do in his memory. Like him, the Church has taken bread and wine, given thanks to God over them, broken the bread, and shared the bread and cup of blessing as the Body and Blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16).*

*The Church's Eucharist, in all its rich variety of forms and traditions, has always retained this basic shape: the taking of the elements of bread and wine in the preparation of the gifts, the act of thanksgiving in the Eucharistic Prayer, the Breaking of the Bread, the giving and sharing of the Body and Blood of Christ in Communion.*

- Celebrating the Mass #174



After the procession of gifts the priest prepares the gifts of bread and wine (mixed with a little water) often with the help of a deacon and altar servers.

The priest prays over the gifts, and then he begins the Eucharistic Prayer by saying the Preface, to which the congregation are invited to respond by singing 'Holy, Holy, Holy...' (Sanctus). During this time everyone is invited to kneel if they can and if the setting allows it.

There are several different Eucharistic Prayers, each of which has its own particular focus and themes with the same basic structure. Young people are to be encouraged to think about the words used as they are being prayed out loud. In Nottingham Diocese, below year 6, the Children's Eucharistic Prayers may be used, with those Eucharistic Prayers found in the Missal being normative for young people in year 6 and above.



After the elevation of the consecrated bread and wine, which have been transformed into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Our Lord, the cantor will start one of the three memorial acclamations.

The Eucharistic Prayer concludes with the Doxology, as the priest sings: 'Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, for ever and ever' Everyone then responds together with the Great Amen.

As the congregation stands the priest invites them to pray the prayer common to all Christians, the 'Our Father', and then after a prayer for peace all together share a sign of peace, which usually takes the form of a handshake (or similar) with those close around. The Lamb of God (Agnus Dei) is then recited or sung, sometimes led by a cantor rather than the priest.

***The priest should be concerned above all about the dignity, clarity, and simplicity of his actions and gestures. In speaking to the children he should express himself so that he will be easily understood, while avoiding any childish style of speech. The free use of introductory comments will lead children to a genuine liturgical participation, but these should not be merely didactic explanations. It will help him to reach the hearts of the children if the priest sometimes expresses the invitations in his own words, for example, at the penitential rite, the prayer over the gifts, the Lord's Prayer, the sign of peace, and communion.***

*-Directory for Masses  
with children #23*

# SENSES

## CREATING A SENSE OF SAFETY AND BELONGING

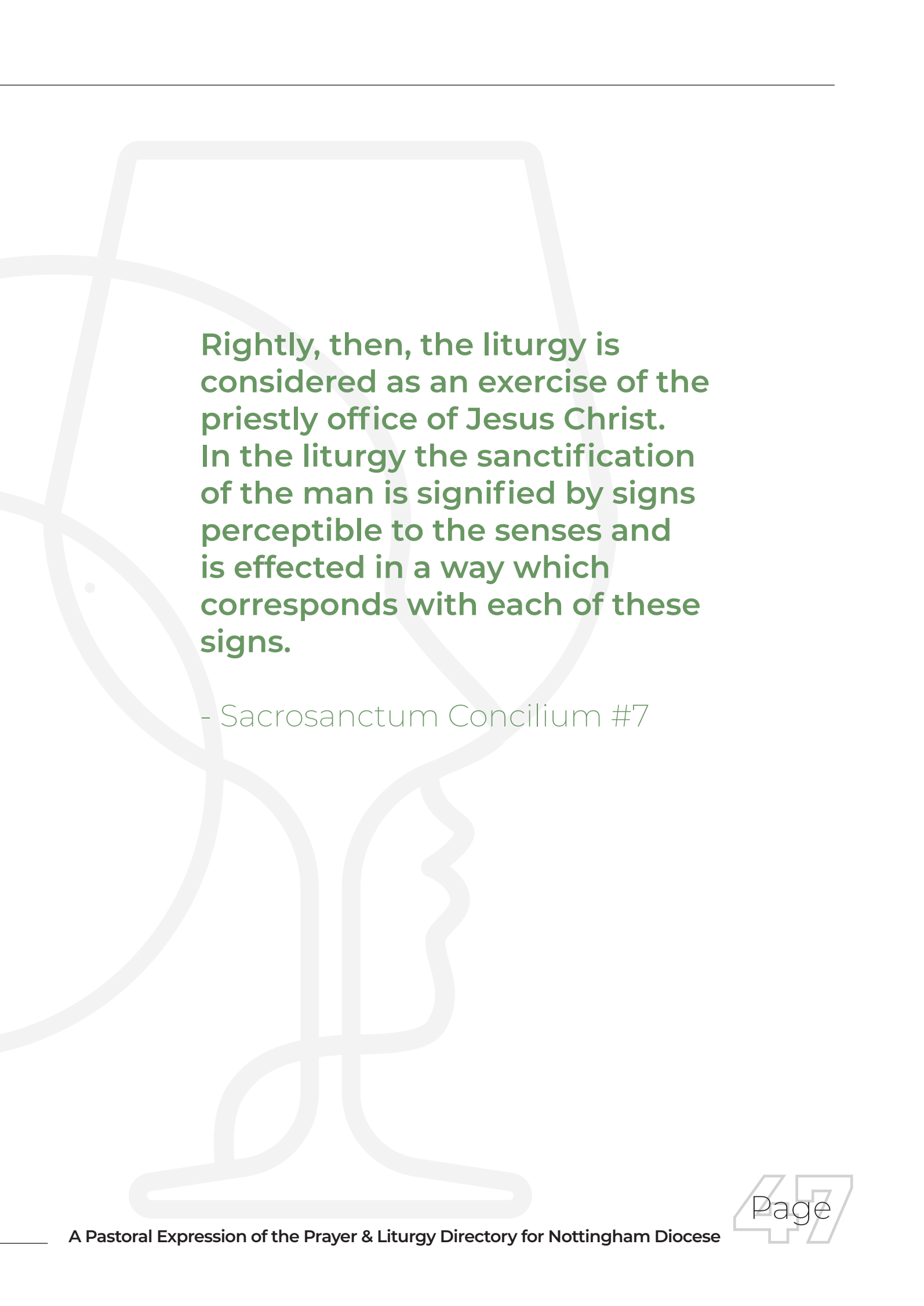
### Holy Communion

During the distribution of Holy Communion great care and sensitivity should be used when explaining who is able to receive Communion. It can also be helpful to explain to everyone how and when to move, and what to do when receiving Communion in the particular setting. This might more helpfully be undertaken before the Mass begins, so that this sacred time doesn't become distracted with announcements. Likewise it can be helpful to have some young people or staff acting as stewards here, to help the congregation come forward to the priest in a dignified and calm manner.

It is key that everyone receives an invitation to participate, be that in receiving Holy Communion or coming forward for a blessing, should each individual wish to do so. This is a special moment and everyone should be invited sensitively to participate in a way that is authentic to what they believe.

After Communion a purposeful and deliberate silence should be observed to allow for prayer and reflection.





Rightly, then, the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy the sanctification of the man is signified by signs perceptible to the senses and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs.

- Sacrosanctum Concilium #7



# Structure

## **Lens 4 -**

How do we harmonise  
our practice with the rich  
tradition of the Church?



## Processes

Our planning model, and the approaches taken when planning and preparing prayer and liturgy in Nottingham Diocese foster a sense of consistency and familiarity for those involved. We must think carefully about how we scaffold experiences for our young people so that they can access prayer and liturgy in a meaningful way and the two constant structures we use in planning and preparation can help to break down the process and provide support at every level.

By following the **Season – Scripture – Senses – Structure** model when planning we can build confidence in all those involved and help to create a consistent culture, harmonised with our tradition, where everyone is included and best practice is followed.

By following the **Gather – Word – Response – Mission** structure in Celebrations of the word and in other Liturgies, we help to build a recognisable and understandable format that becomes familiar and safe for all those in the community.

When we then explicitly use these terms, both in our leadership and in our resourcing, it helps to reinforce and establish a set of norms which support all those involved in prayer and liturgy.

## Harmony

Understanding and celebrating the different elements that make up the structure of our prayer and liturgy helps us to add a richness and diversity to the experience of all. The deepening of this understanding is often empowering to staff and students as it enables each person to think about the progression and development of skills, and the different techniques and approaches that could be used.

***With the awareness that we participate in a communion that precedes and includes us, we can rediscover a symphonic Church, in which each person is able to sing with his or her own voice, welcoming the voices of others as a gift to manifest the harmony of the whole that the Holy Spirit composes.***

*- Pope Francis, World day of social communications, 2022*

Using a **Skill Strategy** for collective worship is advised to set clear expectations for areas such as:

- ✠ The outcomes and skills of the young people – what they will learn and experience
- ✠ The level of independence – how staff move from direction to facilitation
- ✠ The planning approaches used – resources and techniques
- ✠ The way which scripture is explored – translations and length of passages
- ✠ The different traditional elements – such as traditional prayers and practices
- ✠ The resources available to support progression – what people will use to support the process
- ✠ The key vocabulary used
- ✠ What methods and approaches to evaluation are used

A document such as this, which makes clear how young people grow and progress in prayer and liturgy, can help clarify the journey young people and staff will make as part of the community.

Regularly reviewing the progression map can then help ensure that a spirit of growth and formation is continually fostered to ensure that prayer and liturgy remain engaging and accessible to all.

# STRUCTURE

## CREATING A SENSE OF SAFETY AND BELONGING

### Familiarity

The structure of the liturgical life of the school, just like the structures of the prayers and liturgies themselves, is a powerful way to build familiarity, and in turn create a sense of safety and belonging. There is something reassuring about a rhythm or order that we come to know, and this very human need is reflected in much of the Church's liturgy, particularly in the Liturgy of the Hours and the cycle of readings. The structures we use, help to remind us of the dynamic relationship we have with a living God, present in our lives.

Using an **Annual Plan of Provision (APOP)** we can give careful consideration to the structure of our days, weeks, terms and school year to ensure that the consistency and familiarity allow for a deep and meaningful engagement with the spiritual life of the school. This document should be a working document reviewed toward the end of each academic year and informed by evaluation of the previous year.

Considering the structure of the academic year, and how best to work with clergy and parishes, it is expected that **schools within the Diocese of Nottingham, will meet with relevant local clergy in the Pentecost term to formulate the calendar for Masses and other events for the following academic year.**

This important dialogue will then enable the Annual Plan of Provision to be fully completed during the Pentecost term and ahead of the next academic year to build consistency and clarity.



## Tradition

Thoughtful structures help us connect with our traditions. The four-part structure of Mass (**Gather, Word, Response, Mission**) is reflected in our Celebrations of the word, creating familiarity and confidence for everyone.

Using liturgical elements like the Sign of the Cross, responses to scripture, traditional prayers, and thoughtfully choosing the frequency of Mass, Celebrations of the word, and personal prayer opportunities, also help us to celebrate and continue the Church's rich traditions.

Where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, Mass should be celebrated **at least twice a month** in that chapel to highlight the gift of the Real Presence in the school [Canon 934 §2]. For this reason it is also important to remove the Blessed Sacrament from school tabernacles during significant breaks in the school year. In Nottingham Diocese, the Blessed Sacrament must be removed (either through transfer to the parish church's tabernacle, or through consuming the Reservation remaining) for any planned school closures of two weeks or more.

To help our young people experience an authentic expression of the Church's liturgical forms we should ensure then, that **prayer punctuates the school day**, that young people experience **a Celebration of the word every week** and that, where possible, **Mass is celebrated at least once each term, and for holy days of obligation.**



# STRUCTURE AND SEND

ESSENTIAL FOR SOME, BENEFICIAL FOR ALL

## Now and Next

'Now and next' is a key approach to use when thinking about structure and supporting those with SEND. Thinking and leading in this way builds inclusivity by helping young people to feel secure in what is happening in the moment and by helping them to prepare for what is going to happen next.

The 'now and next' approach can be used in many aspects of our planning and delivery. Adding graphics to Power Points which show progress through the Mass, or using pictographic icons / cues in a Mass booklet to inform communal gestures such as sit, kneel, stand are good examples of this. This approach should also be evident in the way in which we lead, explain and guide young people through prayer and liturgy: 'Now we are going to present the bread and wine which during the eucharistic prayer will then become the Body and Blood of Jesus which we will share at communion.' for example.

Carefully structuring what we do, and then using those structures clearly and consistently, helps us all to journey together and creates an environment of familiarity and safety for all. It also helps all those present to better understand not just what is happening by *why* is it happening too.

## Time and Space

We all process things differently. During prayer and liturgy there will be many thoughts, ideas and emotions and we need to give space for everyone to process what they are thinking and feeling.

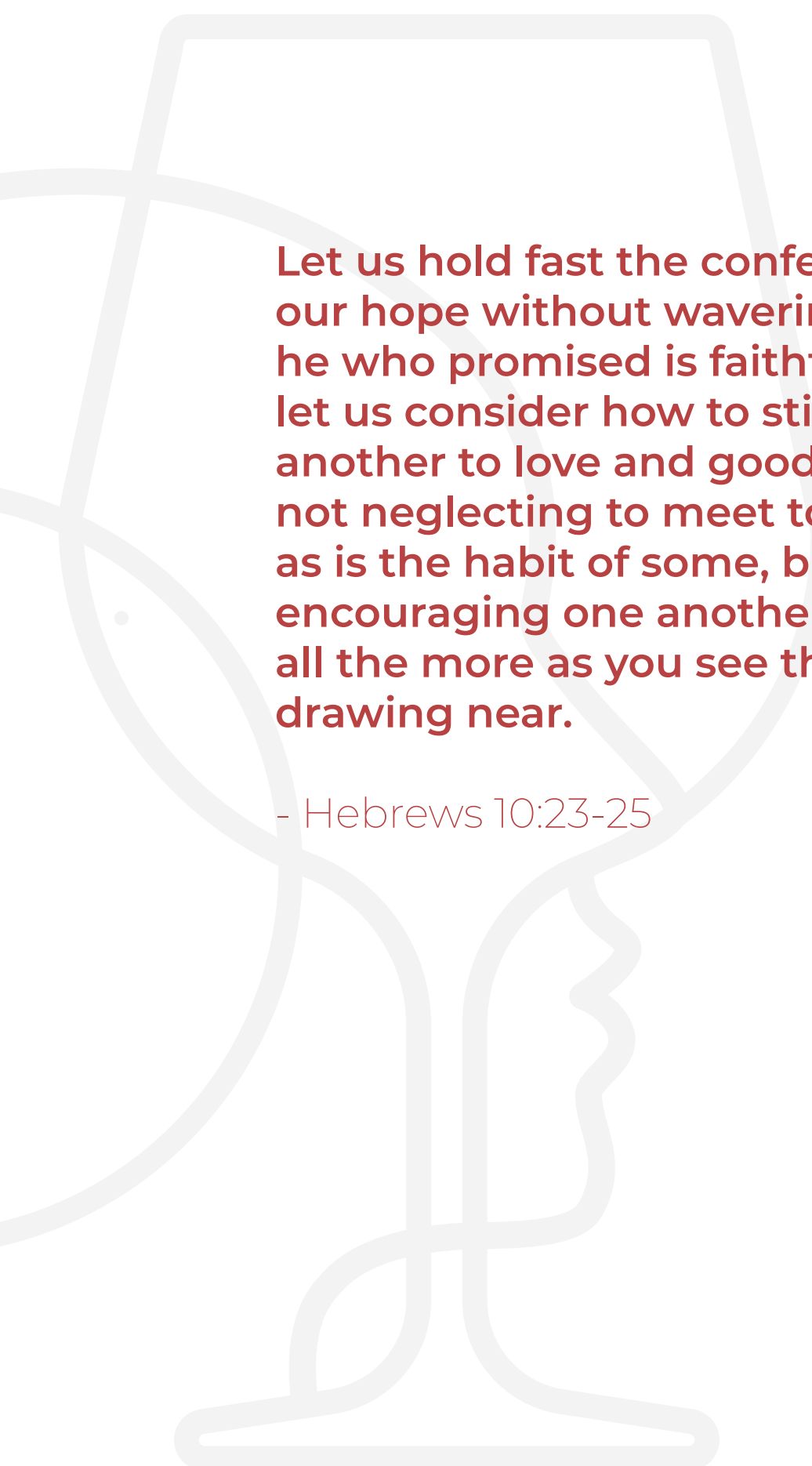
Make sure your structures, both in planning and delivery, have space and time for processing and thought. Moments of reflection, silence and prayer help everybody respond in their own way and create opportunities for encounter and an authentic personal response. They also help to ensure that we are using the breadth of expression found in the language of the senses. There should be a balance in our structures between the things we **see, hear, think and do** so that we are engaging everyone and providing opportunities for all to participate in their own way.

## A holistic approach

Employing all of the strategies shared throughout the different lenses will provide a holistic approach to meeting individual needs and removing barriers and provide opportunities for encounter for everyone within the community.

The SEND content within this resource is not intended to be a complete picture of what can be provided. It is simply a starting point for reflection and growth to help us consider how we can reach out and actively include everyone in prayer and liturgy. As stated before, the principles and considerations outlined across all four lenses will be **essential to some, but beneficial to all.**





Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

- Hebrews 10:23-25

# STRUCTURE IN THE MASS

The structure of Mass is geared toward sending us out to proclaim the Good News. The Rites of Dismissal, as with the 'Mission' in our Celebrations of the word, should inspire, empower, and enable direct action that proclaims the Gospel by our lives.



# STRUCTURE IN THE MASS

## BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

The end of a celebration is an important moment, particularly in its missionary focus. We are being sent out to live and share what we have heard and received. With this in mind, it can be suitable to have a final piece of commentary which gives those attending a mission or focus for when they leave. This could be accompanied by a prayer card / gift prepared by a group.

It is important that this is brief and focused, so that the missionary nature of this part of the celebration is not lost. For that reason, it is a good idea to allow people to collect any prayer cards / gifts as they leave rather than to give them out to everyone gathered.

Shortly before the final blessing is also the time for any community announcements to take place.

***The invitation that precedes the final blessing is important in Masses with children. Before they are dismissed, they need some repetition and application of what they have heard, but this should be done in a very few words. In particular, this is the appropriate time to express the connection between the liturgy and life.***

*- Directory for Masses with Children #54*

***The practice of a final song or hymn is foreign to the Roman Rite, which is notably brief in its concluding rites. The use of a final hymn at Mass which keeps ministers and assembly in their place after the dismissal detracts somewhat from the dimension of missionary imperative present in the dismissal texts. The use of instrumental music, particularly an organ voluntary, is more appropriate to this moment.***

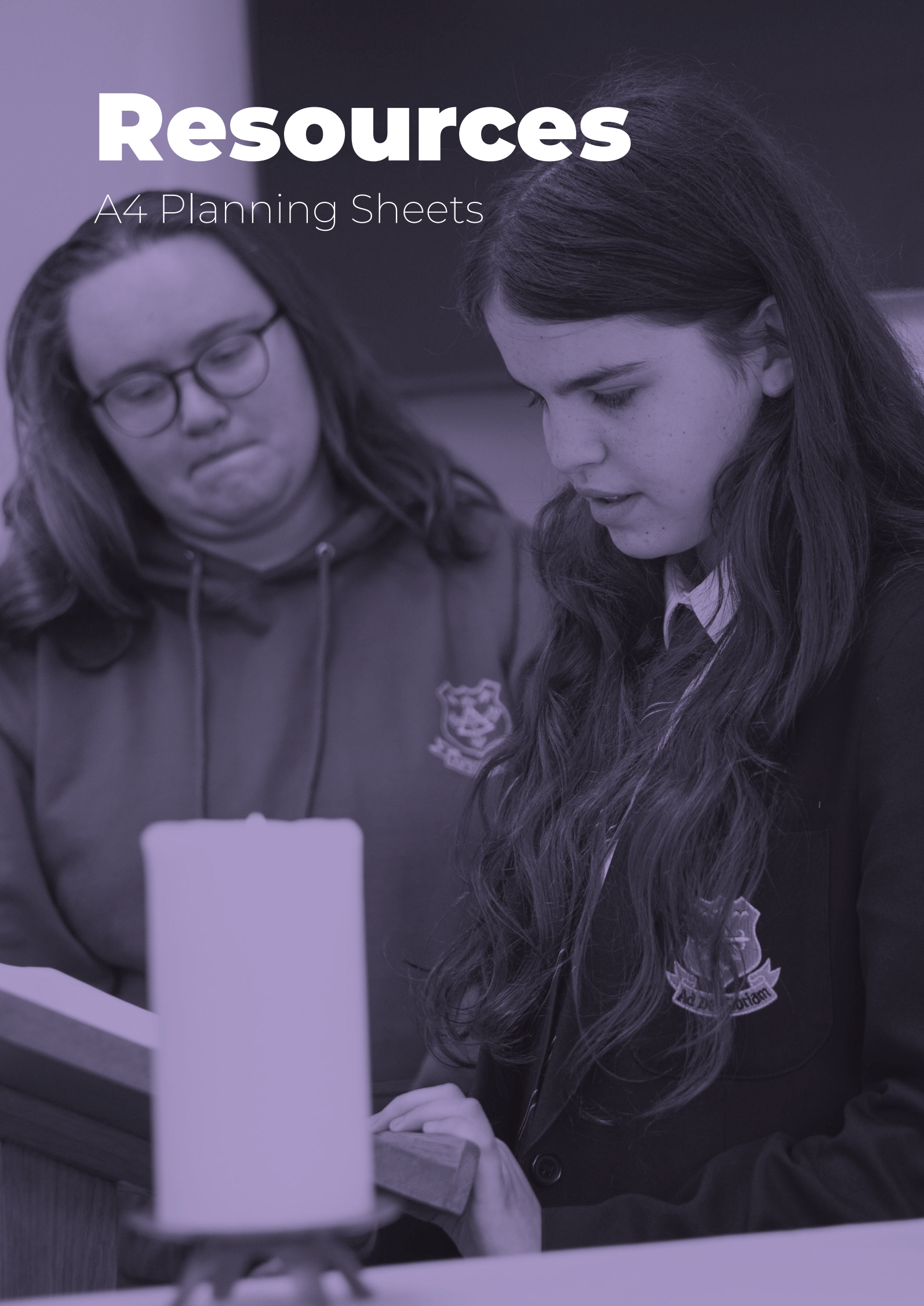
*- Celebrating the Mass #225*

If a final hymn is to be included then it should be short, celebrational, and purposeful to inspire people to mission. It can be a good idea to leave the Mass whilst singing (meaning that all announcements must be done before) so that those gathered can process out during the song.



# Resources

A4 Planning Sheets





# SPACE AND ARTWORK

## PLANNING GUIDE

Creating a space for worship is a really important part of the preparation for Mass. The style, colours, artwork and lighting all contribute toward setting the right tone for the celebration and for setting this time together apart from any others. The key is always to be guided by the liturgical season, the scripture and any liturgical feast you may be celebrating - check the Ordo for guidance on this.

***The primary place for the eucharistic celebration for children is the church. Within the church, however, a space should be carefully chosen, if available, that will be suited to the number of participants. It should be a place where the children can act freely according to the requirements of a living liturgy that is suited to their age.***

***If, however, the church does not satisfy these demands, it will sometimes be suitable to celebrate the eucharist with children outside a place of worship. But in that case the location chosen should be appropriate and worthy of such a celebration.***

- Directory for Masses  
with Children #25

### Space - Key Tasks:

- ✝ Set up the altar
- ✝ Set up the credence table
- ✝ Prepare all of the items needed for Mass (See checklist)
- ✝ Decide how and where the congregation and the altar will be (if not in a Church)
- ✝ Ensure space is given for movement, and is accessible to those with additional needs
- ✝ Ensure musicians and anyone else responsible for a ministry in Mass has their space and correct equipment
- ✝ Decorate the space in accordance with the liturgical season / celebration
- ✝ Ensure that any words / PowerPoints / hymn books are ready and accessible

### Artwork - Key Tasks

- ✝ Create artwork that is clear, easily visible and suitable for display
- ✝ Use the colours of the liturgical season
- ✝ Study the Gospel scripture so that any art work can form part of a dialogue / reflection
- ✝ Reflect on any particular feast and the images associated with it
- ✝ Be prepared to explain what you've made / created
- ✝ Be creative and brave

***...the use of pictures prepared by the children themselves may be useful, for example, as illustrations of a homily, as visual expressions of the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful, or as inspirations to reflection.***

- Directory for Masses  
with Children #35

# COMMENTARY

## PLANNING GUIDE

Finding three key points that celebrate and explore the themes of Encounter, Discipleship and Missionary Discipleship helps those gathered to understand the liturgy and the context of the celebration.

*The commentator, provides the faithful, when appropriate, with brief explanations and commentaries with the purpose of introducing them to the celebration and preparing them to understand it better. The commentator's remarks must be meticulously prepared and clear though brief.*

*- General Instruction of the Roman Missal #105*

### Commentary - Key Tasks:

- ✚ Think about who will read and how the commentary can be read during Mass.
- ✚ Ensure it is marked clearly on any information shared with the celebrant, which pieces of commentary have been prepared and that the celebrant is aware.
- ✚ Make sure that the content has been checked with the celebrant so that it can form part of the dialogue

There are three key areas to focus on for the commentary. These are outlined below. For a more detailed exploration of ideas and sample texts please see the 'Using Commentary In Mass' resources.

### Encounter - Before the Entrance

**Procession and Opening Hymn** there is a chance to set the tone / theme of the Mass and welcome all those who are here with an introduction. This should be on the theme of Encounter. You could include:

- ✚ The name of the saint/feast being celebrated
- ✚ A welcome to those who are gathered
- ✚ An explanation of who you are as a community or why you are celebrating Mass together

**Discipleship - Before The Scripture** there is a chance to show how the Word of God helps and inspires us to be disciples. You could include:

- ✚ What the readings are about and what is the context of the readings of the day
- ✚ Who the readings were originally written for or by
- ✚ Key lines to listen out for during the reading

**Missionary Discipleship - Before the Presentation of the Gifts or Before the dismissal** there is chance to show how we can live out what we have received as Missionary Disciples. You could include:

- ✚ **[Preparation of the Gifts]** An explanation that we are moving into the Liturgy of the Eucharist
- ✚ **[Preparation of the Gifts]** An explanation of any charitable gifts that are being presented
- ✚ **[Dismissal]** What your mission could be when you take what you've received in Mass out in to the world or how we can live our lives inspired by our celebration

# ENTRANCE PROCESSION

## PLANNING GUIDE

The Entrance Procession is an opportunity to set the tone and theme of the celebration and also to bring forward objects that symbolise the nature of the celebration. These can be presented with explanation and form the beginning of a narrative dialogue that the priest can pick up on during his opening remarks and homily.

***If it is intended to make use of things that symbolise the particular work or identity of the assembly or occasion for celebration, these are best brought to the sanctuary as part of the Entrance Procession and displayed near the altar or other suitable place. They should not be brought in the procession with the gifts of bread and wine.***

*- Celebrating the Mass #181*

### Entrance Procession - Key Tasks:

- ✦ Think about what objects / symbols best reflect the theme of the Mass
- ✦ Think about what objects/symbols best reflect those who are gathered
- ✦ Create / find objects and symbols that can be brought up which are practical and appropriate.
- ✦ Possibly prepare short explanations as to what is being prepared and why, presented during the procession

If it is the feast of a saint, you could include objects and symbols that link to their life, for example you could bring forward roses for the Feast of Saint Thérèse and then explain what they mean and what they symbolise.

These objects will need to be displayed prominently but not on the altar so think about how to use the space to show off what you've made and incorporate them into the dialogue of the liturgy.

You may also want to bring objects that reflect the nature of the group, retreat, school and that tell the story of the community gathered together.

The Entrance Procession should be accompanied by the entrance hymn.



# PENITENTIAL ACT

## PLANNING GUIDE

**The Penitential Act comes at the start of Mass, just after the welcome / introduction and the Sign of the Cross. It is there to help us prepare our hearts and minds for what we are about to participate in and receive.**

The Penitential Act is part of all Masses except Ash Wednesday, February 2nd 'The Presentation of the Lord', Masses with Baptisms, the Easter Vigil and usually Palm Sunday.

The Penitential Act always begins and ends with words from the priest. Some of the prayers or statements within can be led / written by those taking part in the celebration of Mass.

**There are three different forms that the Penitential Rite can take.**

1. The 'I confess to Almighty God...' prayer
2. The 'Have mercy on us O Lord...' dialogue
3. Three statements about Jesus' love and mercy followed by the responses: 'Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy' (also familiar in the Greek 'Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison').

A pause should be left between each prayer and the response to allow everyone to reflect on that prayer.

It is possible for young people to write and lead a Penitential Act in the third form (statements followed by: Lord have mercy... etc).

This will usually take the form of three statements written about Jesus and his love and mercy.

The important thing to stress is that we are focusing on Jesus' love and mercy rather than our own sin and mistakes.

### Penitential Act - Key Tasks:

- ✚ Look at the Gospel (and other scriptures) for the day and see what Jesus does that shows love and forgiveness
- ✚ Think about three statements that we can make about Jesus that highlight his power, love and mercy
- ✚ If there is not a clear link in the scripture of the day think about what else we know that Jesus did
- ✚ Write three statements using the templates. These can be read by the same person or split across three people
- ✚ Practise leading the Penitential Act, leaving pauses for reflection and making sure that the three statements work together without repetition

The priest will conclude the Penitential Act with a prayer seeking forgiveness. The readers should only return to their seats after the priest has concluded the Penitential Act.

On feast days or Sunday Masses the Gloria will follow. The Gloria is not required for a weekday Mass but can still be included if appropriate. See the Ordo for times when the Gloria is required.





# PROCLAIMING THE SCRIPTURE

## PLANNING GUIDE

*In proclaiming the word of God from Sacred Scripture, readers exercise their responsibility in mediating the presence of Christ. God speaks to the assembly through them, and the impact of God's message will depend significantly on their conviction, their preparation, and their delivery.*

*- Celebrating the Mass #41*

**During Mass there are up to four peices of scripture, a first reading, a psalm and a second reading and the Gospel. With the exception of the Gospel, these would normally need to be read by your group.**

The readings will begin with the proper introduction to the book of the bible and conclude with 'The Word of the Lord' See the Scripture Resource Sheet for guidance.

The Psalm will begin with the response that is read out loud and then repeated back by the congregation.



### Scripture - Key Tasks:

- ✚ Look at the Scripture for the day and decide who and how each reading will be proclaimed
- ✚ Practise the correct introductions and responses
- ✚ Decide if you should use different voices when proclaiming the readings
- ✚ Decide on how to reflect the musical nature of the Psalm

(Should time allow you can also create artwork to accompany the intercessions.)

The reading of the scripture should be done clearly and at a good pace, but it can be split between voices. If your reading has different people speaking or a narrator these can be given to different people, the scripture should not be simply divided into parts for multiple readers however.

The psalm should always stand out as different and have a musical / reflective nature.

You could write a musical version that you as a group could sing, with a chorus response that everyone can repeat at the start and then sing between the verses.

If that sounds like a bit too much you could just come up with a melody for the response, teach that to everyone and then read the verses over some music.

If you want a simpler way to reflect the musical nature of the psalm then you can play or choose some instrumental music to read the psalm over.

# THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

## PLANNING GUIDE

***Enlightened and moved by God's word, the assembly exercises its priestly function by interceding for all humanity. Because 'the joy and hope, the struggle and anguish of the people of this age and especially of the poor and those suffering in any way are the joy and hope, the struggle and anguish of Christ's disciples, the Church prays not just for its own needs but for the salvation of the world, for civil authorities, for those oppressed by any burden, and for the local community, particularly those who are sick or who have died'.***

*- Celebrating the Mass #171*

**The Prayer of the Faithful or Universal Prayer (sometimes called Intercessions, Bidding Prayers or Asking Prayers), follow the Liturgy of the Word and encourages us to turn to God and to ask for help with those things that the scripture has taught us.**

**These prayers are offered on behalf of all people across the wider Church and the wider world.**

The prayers begin and end with words from the priest with the intercessions and responses led by those reading the prayers and those taking part in the celebration of Mass.

The intercessions are purposely phrased so that those leading the prayer first invite the community to pray for particular intentions:

For example **'We pray for [Theme] ... that...'**

Then, after a period of silence, when all present can make their own quiet prayers for the intention suggested, it is collectively brought together with the words **'Lord hear us'** or **'Lord in your mercy'** And the response: **'Lord, graciously hear us';** or **'hear our prayer'**.

**The intentions of these Prayers are usually in the following order:**

1. For the needs of the Church
2. For public authorities and the salvation of the whole world
3. For those burdened by any kind of difficulty
4. For the local community
5. Any other specific intentions of the community, including prayers for those who have died.

### Intercessions - Key Tasks

- ✚ Look at the scripture for the day and draw out any themes or quotations that link with the themes
- ✚ Use the template to create intercessions for each theme and any others you want
- ✚ Practise a pause between each prayer and the response to allow everyone to reflect on that prayer
- ✚ Decide who will read each prayer during Mass
- ✚ (Should time allow, you could create artwork to accompany the intercessions).
- ✚ At the end of the prayers the congregation should be invited to pray for their own personal intentions

The prayers usually conclude with asking for the intercession of Mary, Mother of God. For example:

We ask Mary our Mother to pray / intercede for us as we say, **Hail Mary full of grace....**



