



**An Essential Guide to the
Liturgy of the Word with Children
at
Sacred Heart RC Church
Diocese of Salford
2026 - 2028**



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Introduction

The 'Liturgy of the Word with Children' is the practice of children leaving the congregation on Sunday just after the beginning of Mass, gathering with adult leaders close by to celebrate a separate Liturgy of the Word that is more appropriate to their level of understanding and returning to Mass as part of the Offertory procession.

Two key principles need to be kept in mind when preparing and celebrating the Children's Liturgy of the Word. Firstly, this is **liturgy** ie. ritual prayer rather than catechesis/religious instruction or child minding and as a liturgical celebration all the principles of liturgy apply eg. clear symbols, active participation. Secondly, it is the liturgy of the **word** and so the ritual is centred on the proclamation and breaking open of the scriptures. The children mirror what the rest of the congregation are doing during this part of the Mass. They listen to the scriptures proclaimed and applied to contemporary life and respond in various ways. It is an experience of prayer, of dialogue with God.

Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Supervision

The key aim of the Liturgy of the Word with Children at Sacred Heart is to proclaim the Gospel to the children who attend. We keep the safety and supervision of children paramount as we do this. We acknowledge that:

- When parents of younger children are present with their children during the separate liturgy, they obviously have full responsibility for them.
- When parents remain in the main body of the church, they will want to be confident that their children are safe and secure during the separate liturgy.

The organisation of the Liturgy of the Word for Children at Sacred Heart is the responsibility of the parish clergy together with the Children's Liturgy leaders. As well as planning the content of the sessions, clergy and liturgy leaders must also take into account three main considerations to ensure the safety of the children involved:

1. Are the premises safe?

The premises are well maintained and there are robust systems in place to address all aspects of health & safety. There is a Risk Assessment that identifies hazards and the control measures in place to reduce risk to an acceptable level. The Children's Liturgy is identified as a separate Risk Factor within this document. A copy of this section can be found in Appendix 1. A copy of the Emergency Fire Procedure Briefing Sheet – Children's Liturgy which informs leaders & helpers of their responsibilities in the event of an emergency evacuation can be found in Appendix 2 with an Emergency Evacuation Plan (Appendix 3) clearly showing the fire exits and route to the assembly point from the Parish Hall. The First Aid and Accident Reporting Notice at Appendix 4 informs leaders & helpers of where the First

Aid Kits are & how accidents and near misses should be reported. Leaders and helpers who discover a defect with the building or any equipment should report it using the Repairs Reporting sheet (Appendix 5) displayed on the noticeboard. A further aspect of safety are the measures the parish has in place for addressing security risks. These arrangements are clearly laid out in the following documents: Escalation Protocol (Appendix 6), Emergency Response Procedures (Appendix 7), Lockdown, Invacuation and Evacuation Policy (Appendix 8). All the above documents are covered in the annual training for Children's Liturgy volunteers and are available on the Parish website:

<https://shjwesthoughton.org.uk/clotw-essential-documents/>

2. Is the supervision adequate?

There should always be a minimum of three adults present and the supervision ratios of 1:6 adhered to which takes into account the numbers of children attending and their ages. Extra helpers are always available if required at busy times ie. during Sacramental Programme.

As far as child protection procedures are concerned, there is no restriction on the age of children participating in these sessions as long as the number of supervisors is adequate.

Particular considerations such as access to the accommodation and the special needs of one or more of the children may also indicate a higher number of adults are required to supervise. Children's liturgy helpers will invite the parents of the child/children with additional needs to support their child in Children's Liturgy until both the child and parent are comfortable in the new setting.

3. Have the leaders and their regular helpers clearly demonstrated that they are appropriate people to be running these sessions by completing the diocesan "safe recruitment" process, including a DBS check?

The Diocese of Salford provides the following information to Children's Liturgy volunteers:

We put a very high value on all our work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We want to make sure you know the resources and support available to you. We intend you should not work unsupported or unsupervised.

The person designated to give you support is:

Cathy Ward (Designated Safeguarding Lead – Sacred Heart RC Parish)

The particular responsibilities of your role have been discussed with you in detail. Any further questions that arise from time to time can be discussed with: Cathy Ward

We want to help you give the best possible service to your group, so we will meet with you to talk about your work with children, young people, or vulnerable adults. Training needs will also be discussed with you and opportunities to develop your skills made available to you.

All Children's Liturgy volunteers agree to a three-yearly Role Description and Person Specification (Appendix 9) required by the Diocese of Salford; this being implemented universally across dioceses. Volunteers sign this and also the following declaration:

I have read the Church's policies for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. I understand that it is my duty to safeguard the children and young people and vulnerable adults with whom I have contact. I know what action to take in cases of suspected or alleged abuse and agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

(See Appendix 10 – Code of Conduct for Leaders and Helpers)

Underpinning Guidance

Two documents of the Church specifically consider the celebration of the Eucharist with children:

- Congregation for Divine Worship (1973) Directory of Masses with Children (DMC)
- Bishops' Conference of England & Wales (1996) Liturgy of the Word with Children (LOWC)

The Directory for Masses with Children

The Directory for Masses with Children (DMC) approved by Pope Paul VI, consists of 55 paragraphs providing guidance for priests celebrating of Masses with children. In addition, some key statements, relating to specific paragraphs (n) in the document, also inform the implementation of the Liturgy of the Word with Children:

1. The Church must show special concern for baptised children who have yet to be fully initiated through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist as well as for children who have only recently been admitted to Holy Communion.
2. In the upbringing of children in the Church a special difficulty arises from the fact that liturgical celebrations, especially the Eucharist, cannot fully exercise their inherent pedagogical force upon children. Although the vernacular may now be used at Mass, still the words and signs have not been sufficiently adapted to the capacity of children. In fact, even in daily life children do not always understand all their experiences with adults, but rather may find them boring. It cannot therefore be expected of the liturgy that everything must always be intelligible to them. Nonetheless, there is a fear of spiritual harm if over the years children repeatedly experience in the Church things that are barely comprehensible; for recent psychological study has established how profoundly children are formed by the religious experience of infancy and early childhood, because of the special religious receptivity proper to those years.
3. The Church follows its Master, who “put his arms around the little children . . . and blessed them” (Mark 10:16). It cannot leave children in the condition described... On the occasion of the Synod, the President of the Concilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy said explicitly that it could not be a matter of “creating some entirely special rite but rather of retaining, shortening, or omitting some elements or of making a more appropriate selection of texts.”
6. The DMC is concerned with children who have not yet entered the period of preadolescence. It does not speak directly of children who are physically or mentally handicapped (previously used terms now replaced with ‘children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities’ ie. SEND) because a broader adaptation is sometimes necessary for them.

8. The Church baptises children and therefore, relying on the gifts conferred by this sacrament, it must be concerned that once baptised they grow in communion with Christ and each other. The sign and pledge of that communion is participation in the Eucharistic table, for which children are being prepared or led to the place where the adults have meanwhile celebrated their own Liturgy of the Word a deeper realisation of its meaning. This liturgical and Eucharistic formation may not be separated from their general education, both human and Christian; indeed, it would be harmful if their liturgical formation lacked such a foundation.
9. For this reason, all who have a part in the formation of children should work together and consult toward one objective: that, even if children already have some feeling for God and the things of God, they may also experience in proportion to their age and personal development the human values that are present in the Eucharistic celebration. These values include the community activity, exchange of greetings, capacity to listen and to seek and grant pardon, expression of gratitude, experience of symbolic actions, a meal of friendship, and festive celebration.
13. Various kinds of celebrations may also play a major role in the liturgical formation of children and in their preparation for the Church's liturgical life. By the very fact of such celebrations, children easily perceive some liturgical elements, for example, greetings, silence and common praise (especially when this is sung together). But care must be taken that the instructive element does not become dominant in these celebrations.
14. Depending on the capacity of the children, the word of God should have a greater and greater place in these celebrations. In fact, as the children's spiritual capacity develops, celebrations of the word of God in the strict sense should be held rather frequently, especially during Advent and Lent. These celebrations are able to encourage in the children an appreciation of the word of God.
17. (In Masses with adults) it is necessary to take great care that the children present do not feel neglected because of their inability to participate or to understand what happens and what is proclaimed in the celebration. Some account should be taken of their presence: for example, by speaking to them directly in the introductory comments (as in the beginning and the end of Mass) and at some point, in the homily.

Sometimes, moreover, if the place itself and the nature of the community permit, it will be appropriate to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word, including a homily, with the children in a separate, but not too distant, room. Then, before the Eucharistic liturgy begins, the children are led to the place where the adults have meanwhile celebrated their own Liturgy of the Word.

Liturgy of the Word with Children – Guidelines

Expanding on the DMC, the Liturgy of the Word with Children (LOWC) guidelines seek to make clear and encourage good practice, affirming and developing the ministries involved in this children's celebration of God's word.

General Principles

- Liturgy is the praise and worship of God.
- Liturgy is the source and summit of the Church's life and our lives.
- It is the right and duty of all the baptised, both children and adults.
- The function of liturgy is to build up the members of Christ's body, to strengthen us in preaching Christ.
- Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the whole person, it involves all the senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell.
- Participating in liturgy forms our habits, because we are ritual people and learn through repetition and copying.
- In liturgy we discover the riches of prayer, through word and gesture, silence and stillness.
- The purpose of adapting liturgy for children is to lead them into full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy of the parish.
- Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity, and simplicity.

Preparing the Environment

The DMC speaks of a 'separate, but not too distant room'. The place should be:

- Comfortable and bright.
- Near enough to the main assembly so that valuable time is not taken up by overly long processions.
- Far enough away so that the group can celebrate without impinging on the others' worship.
- The space should be well prepared before the children arrived.
- If possible, they should take part in preparing and ornamenting the place of celebration...such activity may help to develop the spirit of community celebration (DMC 29).
- A focal point for the liturgy is essential. This should include a 'place of honour' for the Lectionary.
- A candle may be lit.
- Colour or decoration should be used appropriate to the liturgical season or festival.
- Images and symbols can attract and focus the children's' attention; they can be used to reflect the themes of the scriptures, the season or feast.
- Avoid arranging the worship space like a classroom with children in rows or sat at tables. Experience indicates that this is not ideal for this kind of celebration.

A Model for the Children's Liturgy of the Word

The LOWC guidelines offer a model for the liturgical celebration:

1. Children gather with their families in church for the introductory rites of the Mass. After the introductory part of the Mass, the children, together with their leaders, are called forward by the priest.
2. A book of the scriptures is presented to a child or leader.
3. All process to a nearby place. Processions are integral to our ritual.
4. When the children have gathered, the leader introduces the scripture of the day.
5. Before the Gospel is proclaimed an acclamation is sung. This is the musical priority of the whole liturgy.
6. The scriptures are explored through reflection, discussion and other appropriate activity. This could include silence, song, drama or other activity, in order to help the children understand the message of the scriptures and apply it to their lives and experiences.
7. There is a time of intercession for the Church, the world, those in need and the local community.
8. All return to the main body of the church for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Children's Liturgy of the Word Structure

The structure of the Children's Liturgy of the Word mirrors the sequence of the Liturgy of the Word in Mass, from the Introductory and Penitential rites through to the Offertory, with the main focus on the Liturgy of the Word. The LOWC guidelines suggest the following three-part structure:

- Proclaiming the Word
- Responding to the Word
- Intercession

Proclaiming the Word

- Books containing the word of God proclaimed in the liturgy remind hearers of the presence of God speaking to his people. They are signs and symbols of the sacred, so care must be taken to ensure that they are worthy and beautiful. The Lectionary for Masses with Children is the most appropriate book from which to proclaim the Gospel. The Gospel should be read from this book and not replaced with a missalette, preparation book or piece of paper.
- Three passages from scripture are given in the Lectionary for Mass. If they are not suitable to the understanding of children two may be omitted, but the Gospel is always proclaimed.
- Brief introductory comments may precede a reading in order to help the children appreciate its biblical context, to listen attentively and make the scripture their own.
- Christian communities discover and deepen their faith by sharing the stories of salvation proclaimed in the scriptures and relating them to their own lives and

situations. The way we pass on biblical stories to children will influence the way in which they will hear the message of the scriptures proclaimed in the liturgy.

- Other forms of proclamation can be used to enhance the reception of the scriptures e.g. mime, drama, song or choral recitation.

Responding to the Word

- Leaders will need to prepare carefully what they will say. In time they will become confident in their own reflections and in the response of the children.
- The introductory comments to the scriptures and the reflection that follows the proclamation are the most important and maybe the most daunting of the leader's ministry.
- In a liturgy of the word with children, the reflection serves the same function as does the homily at Mass. In the context of the feast or season the concerns of the gospel writer can be unfolded and the point of a particular passage related to the children's lives. The scriptures are not just stories of the past but are signs of what God is doing now in this assembly.
- The reflection will probably be a dialogue between the leader and the children and can incorporate other forms of communication such as song, story and image.
- Bear in mind too that, as in the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word is not an end in itself but leads into the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The reflection is a pivotal point in the movement of the Mass.
- Be wary of replacing the reflection with activity alone, lest others perceive this gathering as a containment exercise or Sunday school rather than an act of worship.

Intercession

- Liturgy is the prayerful action of the whole assembly. Children share the prayer at their own level, absorbing the pattern and movement of the action.
- As we pray with children they learn; they adopt pattern and structure naturally. The sign of the cross, intentions for prayer, and, most of all, silence are absorbed into the manner of praying. Parents, leaders and helpers, will have their own prayer-life. This will communicate their regard for prayer to the children: their silence, joy and sadness, their respect for person and place, will nurture the children's prayer and allow them to express their natural sense of awe and wonder.

Themes

Silence

- Silence or stillness is an integral element of liturgy.
- The whole way in which liturgy is celebrated should foster reflectiveness. Short intervals of silence should be included.
- Children are capable of reflection, although they may need some guidance, so that they learn how to recollect themselves, meditate briefly or praise and pray to God in their hearts.

Music

- Music is another integral element of the Liturgy of the Word with children.
- It expresses and highlights the liturgical action; so, we use music at the important moments in our liturgy: the Gospel.
- An acclamation greets the Gospel.
- Recorded music can help to create a prayerful atmosphere.
- Movements to songs can help children take to heart their message and the words. Simple actions can be easily created.
- There are many opportunities for music and singing within the liturgy, but it is not necessary to sing everything. It is better to sing a few items well, focusing on the key points in the Liturgy.

Children's Liturgy of the Word at Sacred Heart

At Sacred Heart, the Children's Liturgy of the Word takes place at 10am Mass on Sundays throughout the year. There is a break over the summer holidays and children stay in Mass with their families on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday. The Children's Liturgy is most appropriate for children aged three to eight years and whilst parents of the youngest are welcome to join their children, it is expected that most children will attend alone. If children become worried at being separated, one of the Children's Liturgy volunteers returns the child to their parent/carer.

Prior to Mass beginning, the leader for the day will set up the space where the Children's Liturgy takes place. This will be essential to create the right atmosphere as a place of worship. A Table of the Word is set up, which houses the Children's Lectionary throughout the liturgy. The table is covered with a coloured cloth in accordance with the liturgical season. On this, a crucifix is prominently placed to be clearly visible, with battery-operated candles and ideally an object/picture relating to the Gospel reading of the day. This object/picture may be referenced at the start of the liturgy, to encourage the children to start to think about the potential Gospel message later. During the seasons of Advent and Lent, additional resources such as an Advent tree and Lenten countdown, may be added to the worship space.

Parents/carers sign a register as they arrive at church, taking a sticker so that when the Children's Liturgy leaders check that all attending have registered, they can quickly identify those without a sticker and add them to the register. Children then start Mass with their families. After the Collect, just before the first reading, Fr Christopher calls the children forward to the altar. He presents one child with the Children's Lectionary. This is carried in procession to the room at the back of church where the liturgy takes place. The children are guided to the prepared worship space where they sit down together and are welcomed by the Children's Liturgy leader.

Following the same structure as Mass from the point the children left the main congregation; after settling the children in the worship space, the group stand to greet the Gospel with a sung Gospel acclamation and the action of the three crosses prior to the Gospel reading. The group listen to the Gospel reading together, which is

read by one of the adult volunteers. The group then sit again and join in a dialogue with the Liturgy leader who will have prepared some questions to 'break open' the Gospel and prompt a discussion. The leader aims to promote a balance of reflection and dialogue with the children. If time permits, the children start to complete the activities in the weekly children's newsletter and during this time children are selected to read the prepared bidding prayers. Following the reading of the intercessions, the group processes back into church as part of the Offertory Procession. An older child leads with the Children's Lectionary, which is returned to Fr. Christopher behind the Offertory gifts. The children then return to their families taking the children's newsletter with the aim of promoting ongoing discussion about the Liturgy after Mass.

The Liturgical Year

It is important that leaders of the Liturgy of the Word with Children are familiar with the cycle of the Church's year and use the liturgical colours in the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word eg. ensuring that the correctly coloured cloth is placed on the Table of the Word during the Children's Liturgy.

The Almanac, produced annually by the Diocese of Salford, now incorporates the Ordo for the Celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of Hours. This provides a calendar year starting from the First Week of Advent through to the Solemnity of Christ the King, at the end of the following November. The Almanac is available for reference in the wooden cupboard.

Liturgical Seasons

Advent

From evening prayer 1 of the Sunday falling on or closest to the 30 November (The First Sunday of Advent) and ends before evening prayer 1 of Christmas, on 24 December. There are four Sundays of Advent. Advent has a two-fold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's first coming to us is remembered and as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. Advent is therefore a period for devout and joyful expectation.

Christmas

From evening prayer 1 of Christmas, (celebrated on the evening of 24 December, the beginning of the liturgical day of 25 December - Birth of the Lord) to the Baptism of the Lord (Sunday after the Solemnity of the Epiphany). Next to the yearly celebration of the paschal mystery, the Church holds most sacred the memorial of Christ's birth and early manifestations. This is the purpose of the Christmas season.

Ordinary Time

From the Monday following the Baptism of the Lord, to the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. The Sundays in Ordinary Time are numbered consecutively from the Baptism of the Lord. The Sundays of this season do not celebrate a specific aspect of the mystery of Christ. Instead, they are devoted to the mystery of Christ in all its aspects. Ordinary Time continues after the season of Easter.

Lent

From Ash Wednesday until the Mass of the Lord's Supper on the evening of Holy Thursday. There are six Sundays of Lent. Lent is a preparation for the celebration of Easter. The Lenten liturgy disposes both catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery: catechumens, through the several stages of Christian initiation; the faithful, through reminders of their own baptism and through penitential practices.

Holy Week

Begins on the 6th Sunday of Lent, Passion [Palm] Sunday, has as its purpose the remembrance of Christ's passion, beginning with his Messianic entrance into Jerusalem. Easter Triduum Begins with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil and concludes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. Christ redeemed us all and gave perfect glory to God principally through his paschal mystery: dying he destroyed our death and rising he restored our life. Therefore, the Easter Triduum of the passion and resurrection of Christ is the culmination of the entire liturgical year. The solemnity of Easter has the kind of pre-eminence in the year that Sunday has in the week.

Easter Season

Begins with celebration of the Easter Vigil on Easter Sunday and concludes 50 days later with Pentecost Sunday. The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day or one 'great Sunday' These are above all others the days for the singing of the Alleluia.

Ordinary Time

From the Monday following Pentecost Sunday, until the Saturday before the 1st Sunday of Advent. The last Sunday is the Solemnity of Christ the King which is the 34th Sunday in Ordinary Time. The preceding Sundays are calculated to end with the 34th Sunday. The Sundays of this season do not celebrate a specific aspect of the mystery of Christ. Instead, they are devoted to the mystery of Christ in all its aspects.

Liturgical Colours

There are four principal liturgical colours:

White is used in the seasons of Easter and of Christmas; also on celebrations of the Lord (other than of his Passion), of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Holy Angels, and

of Saints who were not Martyrs; on the solemnities of Trinity Sunday, All Saints (1 November) and of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist (24 June); and on the feasts of Saint John the Evangelist (27 December), of the Chair of Saint Peter (22 February) and of the Conversion of Saint Paul (25 January). In England & Wales, it may be used for Funerals.

Red is used on Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion and Good Friday, on Pentecost Sunday, on celebrations of the Lord's Passion, on "birthday" feasts of the Apostles and Evangelists, and on celebrations of martyred Saints.

Green is used in Ordinary Time.

Violet is used in the seasons of Advent and of Lent. It may also be worn for Funerals.

Rose may be used, where it is the practice, on Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent) and on Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent).

Preparation and Planning

Preparation is essential to good liturgy. Individual liturgies should grow from reflection on the scripture of the day, how it relates to the faith experience of the people involved, and how best the Gospel can be shared with the children.

The seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter have their own rhythm. Each Sunday should be planned as part of the whole season. The scripture readings of the Sundays of Ordinary Time also have a pattern which, with forward planning, helps the preparation of individual liturgies.

Forward planning over a season also means that those Sundays and festivals can be identified when it may be more appropriate for the whole assembly to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word together. The great feasts of the Church's year, Christmas, Easter etc. are times for adults and children to stay together.

A planning group for Children's Liturgy of the Word involves all who have a ministry. Together the group will be able to reflect on and evaluate liturgies already celebrated and to prepare, through prayer and discussion, future liturgies, coordinating the various tasks.

Leaders have the responsibility of preparing for the Children's Liturgy sessions that they are identified on the rota to lead. The rota is produced in November each year, just prior to the new liturgical year commencing. The Children's Liturgy WhatsApp group aims to make it easy to alert the group of any Sundays that a leader is not available to ensure that a replacement is agreed, and the Children's Liturgy can go ahead with adequate time for preparation. A Children's Liturgy Leader Preparation Checklist (Appendix 11) is provided to support preparation. Helpers in the groups should ideally be made aware of these preparations prior to Mass and they also

have a role in supporting the setting up of the Children's liturgy worship space and overseeing the register. All the physical resources required to plan for the Children's Liturgy can be found in the small wooden cupboard in the large room where the Children's Liturgy takes place.

Resources

The essential resources required will be:

Table of the Word

- Children's Lectionary
- Plastic box of coloured cloths for each liturgical season
- Crucifix
- Plastic box of battery-operated candles (child-safe type)
- Plastic box of objects and pictures relating to Gospel readings

Visual Support

Visual Timeline

This makes visual the sequence of the Children's Liturgy of the Word. After each step in the sequence is completed, the corresponding picture is removed from the top row to the row below, to visually highlight that this step has been completed. The lower row cumulatively shows the steps in the sequence that have been completed, whilst the upper row shows the steps yet to be completed. The use of a visual timeline enables children participating to quickly become familiar with the different steps in the sequence of the Children's Liturgy. Such visual support also encourages attention and engagement and reassures the nervous child who may need to know the stage when they will return to parents/carers in order to focus on the 'here and now' of the liturgy. The visual timeline also supports the retelling of the steps of the liturgical celebration to family members after the event. As the groups become familiar with the use of the visual timeline, a child can be given this task. There are two versions of the visual timeline available: a long version for when the children leave Mass after the initial welcome and a shortened version for when children leave Mass after the Collect. It is the shortened version that is currently in use at Sacred Heart.

Children's Liturgy Leader Preparation Checklist

This preparation checklist (Appendix 11) aims to support Children's Liturgy leaders prior to the liturgy in their confirmation of the Sunday Gospel, planning of questions to support discussion and identification of supporting resources. The checklist contains a section to support preparation on the Sunday morning of the liturgy to ensure that the worship space is set up in a consistent manner to support seamless

delivery of the session. This includes a prompt regarding the various roles that children can be asked to take within the session.

Children's Liturgy Leader Prompt Card

This visual vertical prompt card (Appendix 12) provides support for Children's Liturgy leaders to lead worship which progresses through each step in the Children's Liturgy sequence as it would occur in Mass. Implementation of the prompt card also supports consistent practice amongst leaders.

Music Resources

Two CDs are available to support the Children's Liturgy:

- Gospel Acclamations - Laminated sheets of the corresponding words are available to accompany each and can be found within plastic wallets on the back of the wooden cupboard doors.
- Background music

Activities

In compliance with guidance relating to the Liturgy of the Word with Children (1996) time away from the main congregation with the children focusses upon participating in the parts of Mass up until and including the Gospel, with the emphasis upon supporting the children's understanding of the Gospel reading. As a result, additional activity is kept to a minimum. If time permits, activity will involve the children's newsletters made available at Sacred Heart each week. These appear in two formats: 'Look' for younger children and 'Ichthus' for older children, both are available in the narthex prior to Mass. Pencils, coloured pencils and boards to lean on can be found within the wooden cupboard.

Books

The following books are specifically recommended for leader preparation of the Children's Liturgy:

Brown, J. (2010) Welcome the Word Great Britain: Kevin Mayhew

Pate, J. (2003) Welcome! Celebrations for young children for the church's year UK: McCrimmons Publishing

Thompson, K. (2008) The Liturgy of the Word with Children New London CT: Twenty Third

We are keen to support the creation of minimum waste at Sacred Heart and therefore photocopying facilities are not available. Leaders are encouraged to capture key information needed for preparation on phones and tablets. If required, physical resources can be borrowed by signing these out in the 'Borrow Book' with a request for prompt returns to ensure their access by other leaders.

Posters

We have the full set of posters by the Benedictine Nuns of Turvey Abbey. The **green** ring binder contains a description of each poster, with some key points which leaders may wish to highlight in their Gospel discussions. The posters are stored in an A2 black portfolio case. The three sets are as follows:

Jesus, Our Light – The early life of Jesus

1. Annunciation
2. Visitation
3. Birth of John the Baptist
4. Nativity - The Birth of Jesus
5. Nativity - The Shepherds
6. Presentation
7. The Magi
8. Flight into Egypt
9. Jesus teaching in the Temple
10. Jesus baptised by John
11. Jesus calls his first disciples
12. Peter the Rock

Jesus, Our Hope – The ministry of Our Lord

1. Zacchaeus
2. Jesus blesses the children
3. Jesus heals the sick
4. Martha and Mary
5. The Prodigal Son
6. The Lost Sheep
7. The Two Sons
8. The Sower
9. The Widow's Mite
10. The Samaritan woman at the well
11. The paralytic let down through the roof
12. Jesus calms the storm

Jesus, Our Way – The final events in the life of Jesus

1. Jesus enters Jerusalem
2. Jesus cleanses the temple
3. The washing of the feet
4. The Last Supper
5. Agony in Gethsemane
6. Jesus is arrested
7. The Resurrection
8. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene
9. The disciples of Emmaus
10. Breakfast on the seashore
11. The Ascension

12. The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Websites

The following websites are specifically recommended for leader preparation of the Children's Liturgy:

www.sdc.me.uk/sundayliturgy

Children's liturgy resources for each Sunday within the liturgical calendar.

<https://wednesdayword.org/parish/index.htm>

A weekly scripture and prayer resource.

<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS/index.shtml>

Spirit of the Season is published by the Liturgy Office twice a term. It offers reflection and information for worship with children.

<https://cafod.org.uk/education/children-s-liturgy>

Gospel reflections, prayers, songs to explore God's word in the Children's Liturgy.

www.rcdow.org.uk/evangelisation/resources-for-parish-ministry/childrens-liturgy

This is the website for the Liturgy of the Word with Children in the Diocese of Westminster which includes a range of key resources.

<https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/liturgy-prayer/liturgy-of-the-word-with-children/>

Preparation materials for each Sunday of the year.

www.lightoftruth.uk/clow

Links to a range of resources.

www.sadlierreligion.com

Click on:

→ This Week's Liturgy or (See other dates) for ideas relating to the Gospel reading.

www.catholicmom.com

Click on:

→ Education

→ Sunday Gospel Activities - select the Gospel and ideas for discussion.

www.catholicblogger1.blogspot.co.uk

Leads to 'The Catholic Toolbox'

→ Select 'Gospel for the Mass' – 'Year A/Year B/Year C'

→ Select Sunday and Gospel Reference

This leads to resources relating to the Gospel reading.

www.loyola.press.com

Click on the relevant Sunday.

Leads you to a choice of activities for various age groups and for families.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the use of the following resources in the development of this essential guide:

Archdiocese of Birmingham (Sr. Gillian Murphy S.P.) *Liturgy of the Word with Children*

Archdiocese of St. Andrews & Edinburgh *Children's Liturgy Resource Guide 2022*

Diocese of Leeds *Liturgy of the Word with Children Guidelines & Resource Pack*

Diocese of Plymouth (Diocesan Education Service) *Recommended Resources for Liturgy of the Word with Children*

Diocese of Westminster (Agency for Evangelisation) *Essential Quick Guide for Catechists to – The Liturgy of the Word with Children*

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Appendix 1 – Children’s Liturgy Risk Assessment

Appendix 2 – Emergency Fire Procedure Briefing Sheet

Appendix 3 – Emergency Evacuation Plan Parish Hall

Appendix 4 – First Aid and Accident Reporting Notice

Appendix 5 – Repairs Reporting Sheet

Appendix 6 - Escalation Protocol

Appendix 7 - Emergency Response Procedures

Appendix 8 - Lockdown, Invacuation and Evacuation Policy

Appendices 1 – 8 along with a copy of this document can be found by following the link below to the CLOW Leaders page of the parish website:

<https://shjwesthoughton.org.uk/clotw-essential-documents/>

Appendix 9 – Children’s Liturgy Volunteer Role Description



Role Title:	Children’s Liturgy Volunteer		
Volunteer Reports to (job title):	Parish Priest		
Key Relationships:	Parish priest, parish safeguarding representative, parishioners		
Location:	Parish church(s)	Travel Required:	Rarely
Position Type:	Volunteer (3 yearly terms of appointment)		
Hours of Work:	Volunteering time varies		
Overview and Job Purpose:			
To work with pre-school and primary school children, prepare and deliver an adapted Liturgy of the Word for them during Mass on Sundays and major feasts.			
This role is subject to an enhanced DBS with a check against the child workforce and the child barred list. This role should not be taken up until the volunteer has completed the DBS process, and a letter of appointment has been received from the parish priest.			
Role Description:			
1) To work with others to form and inform a children’s liturgy group with regular planned meetings. 2) To arrange for parents of the children, and the parish community, to be informed of the aim and content of the children’s liturgy group. 3) To prepare the venue and ensure the safety and well-being of the children and to conduct the Celebration of the Word with them. 4) To liaise with the priest presiding at the parish liturgy and any other appropriate ministers. 5) To provide the necessary books and equipment with the support of the parish. 6) To ensure that the children’s liturgy is conducted in accordance with diocesan safeguarding procedures. 7) To monitor good practice and implement changes where necessary to enhance both the quality of the liturgy and the safety of the children. 8) There should be a minimum of two catechists for each session. 9) To complete the e-learning training provided by EduCare within 3 months of taking up role. 10) To access regular training opportunities to keep you informed of developments in your role.			
PERSON SPECIFICATION			
• The ability to relate with respect and ease to children and adults, and to enjoy working with children. • Commitment to the essential teachings of the Catholic Church, and the ethos of the parish. • Experience in talking with young children and willingness to attend children’s liturgy days. • A willingness to give time to the preparation of the sessions and the coordination of the group. • All volunteers responsible for the group must be over 18 years of age. • A willingness to attend safeguarding training.			

Other Information:

In line with the Safer Recruitment Process, all applicants are required to complete a self-declaration as the successful candidate is required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check.

References and Reports

- *Two references will be required.*
- *This post is subject to the Safer Recruitment Process, and all applicants are required to provide verification of their ID. All volunteers of the Diocese are expected to work to promote the safeguarding of vulnerable groups.*

Health and Safety: *All Volunteers are required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.*

Confidentiality: *During their period as a volunteer the post holder may gain knowledge of confidential matters which may include personal or business related matters. Such information must be considered with high levels of confidentiality and must not be discussed or disclosed. Failure to observe confidentiality could lead to disciplinary action.*

Safeguarding: *The Diocese of Salford is committed to safeguarding all children and vulnerable groups at risk within its community. The Diocese aims to embed a culture of safeguarding to prevent abuse and to provide support to individuals who have been hurt by abuse, taking the necessary actions to reduce the likelihood of further harm. All diocesan volunteers are expected to contribute to the creation of a safe environment, challenge inappropriate behaviours and report concerns in line with procedures.*

In fulfilling the duties of this role, the volunteer may come into contact with children or vulnerable adults. Therefore, they must adhere to diocesan safeguarding procedures.

The Diocese will ensure that appropriate training and information is provided to each volunteer so that the volunteer is made fully aware of the Safeguarding processes.

Probationary period: *There is no probationary period as such, however there will be a recommissioning after each updated DBS check or as necessary (3 yearly basis).*

All Diocesan volunteers are expected to work with the highest standards of conduct at all times. Maintaining the respect and dignity for colleagues, clergy and visitors is essential. Volunteers are also expected to support the creation of a warm, pleasant and hospitable working environment.

Compiled By:	Nathan Keogh, Welfare Officer		
Reviewed By:	Jenny Clayton, Head of Safeguarding		
I accept and agree with the details contained in this job description.			
Signed by Volunteer:		Date:	
Signed by Parish Priest:		Date:	

Appendix 10 - Code of Conduct for Leaders and Helpers



We are called upon to be exemplary models of moral behaviour and spiritual faith.

Group Leaders and helpers (including responsible adults aged 18+ years and responsible persons aged 16 and 17 years) are committed to being positive role models and building the confidence of children and young people that they are working with.

Leaders and helpers are expected to:

Promote Wellbeing

- Ensure the safety of all children and young people by ensuring group sessions are safely planned and effectively supervised.
- Foster teamwork and co-operation between everybody, promoting trust and mutual respect.
- Discourage and stop rough or dangerous play, bullying, inappropriate language or other inappropriate behaviour.
- Treat all children and young people fairly and not show favouritism.
- Be positive, approachable and offer praise to promote the objectives of the group always.
- Listen sensitively and encourage communication between adults and children or young people.
- Respond to concerns and allegations promptly and appropriately in line with national procedures.

Promote Autonomy & Dignity

- Ensure the rights and responsibilities of children and young people are enforced.
- Promote the full participation and involvement of all children and young people, recognizing and addressing the additional needs of some children and young people e.g. disability.
- Constructively challenge all discrimination and encourage children and young people to not discriminate on the grounds of age, gender, ability, social class, race, cultural background, religious beliefs, or sexual identity.
- Respect, promote and support the right of children and young people to make their own choices and decisions, provided this does not threaten the rights, safety, and legitimate interests of others.
- Respect the right of children and young people to personal privacy
- Encourage children and young people to take responsibility for their own self-care as far as possible e.g. assistance with toileting and dressing.
- Respect and listen to the opinions of children and young people.
- Encourage children and young people to point out behaviours or attitudes that they do not like.

- Encourage children and young people to take responsibility for their own conduct.
- Ensure that sanctions do not humiliate or harm a child or young person.
- Administer first aid in the presence of others and without removing the clothing of a child or young person unless necessary.

Boundaries and Power

- Establish appropriate boundaries between pastoral care and personal lives in relationships with other leaders, helpers, children, and young people.
- Not abuse the position of trust for personal benefit e.g. financial gain, sexual gratification.
- Be conscious of explicit and implicit power vested in the role of group leader, supervisor of adult helper.
- Acknowledge the limitations of time, experience, skill, and competence – know where and how to ask for support when needed.
- Deal with differences in opinion with respect.
- Work to people's strengths, and never bully, abuse, manipulate or denigrate.

Personal Conduct

- Act always in accordance with the core values of the Catholic faith and ensure that their behaviour does not bring the church into disrepute.
- Provide an example you wish others to follow.
- Work in a way that is honest, reliable, and transparent, never seeking to deceive or manipulate.
- Refrain from using blasphemous, violent, discriminatory, or offensive language and behaviour.
- Refrain from smoking, vaping, consuming alcohol or using drugs.
- Seek help to address issues such as addictions to alcohol, prescribed medicine, other substances, gambling, and so on where these matters affect the adult's role.
- Not engage in any form of sexual relations (including verbal banter, flirtation, using one's gaze to signal attraction, etc.) with children, young people, young helpers, or adults for whom you have a supervisory or supportive role.

Any breaches of the Code of Conduct will be addressed by the group leader. More serious or persistent breaches may result in formal action being taken to address the concerns. All concerns or allegations in relation to the abuse of a child or adult at risk will be dealt with using the national safeguarding policy and procedures in relation to the management of allegations and concerns.

CHILDREN’S LITURGY LEADER CHECKLIST

Prior to the Sunday Liturgy:

- ☐ Confirm the Sunday and check the Gospel reading on the rota
- ☐ Using the resources available (books/websites) confirm the Gospel reading in the Children’s Lectionary
- ☐ Reflect on the Gospel and plan a series of questions to prompt discussion
- ☐ Source an object/picture linked to the Gospel for the Table of the Word and/or an image for the PowerPoint
- ☐ Consider any supporting resources eg. poster

On the Sunday morning:

- ☐ Place register, stickers and safety notice on the Narthex table and alert stewards
- ☐ Collect newsletters from the Narthex
- ☐ Check the Children’s Lectionary is on the sanctuary
- ☐ Set up the PowerPoint presentation
- ☐ Set up the Table of the Word
 - Low level table
 - Liturgical cloth (check colour on rota)
 - Crucifix – placed prominently on empty box
 - Battery-operated candles
 - Object/picture relating to the Gospel
- ☐ Prepare the music – CDs and laminates
 - Gospel acclamation (or Advent/Lent alternatives)
- ☐ Set up visual timeline (short version)
- ☐ Have ready: place mats, pencils and coloured pencils
- ☐ Ensure compliance with Health & Safety requirements
 - Carry out all necessary safety checks
 - Reacquaint yourself with emergency evacuation procedures
 - Ensure you have access to the First Aid Kit and Accident Forms
 - If you become aware of any damage or identify the need for repairs, please report via the Repairs Reporting Sheet

During the Children’s Liturgy:

- Refer to visual timeline
- Allocate lighting of candles
- Select children to read bidding prayers
- Choose a child to carry Children’s Lectionary
- Assist volunteers and children where required

Appendix 12a – Children’s Liturgy Leader Prompt Card (Long Version)

CHILDREN’S LITURGY LEADER PROMPT CARD	
 Welcome	Warm welcome to all children and their parents/carers. Introduce Liturgy leader and helpers. Draw the group’s attention to the visual timeline.
 Sign of the Cross	Lead making the Sign of the Cross for the children to join in.
 Light the candles	Invite children to light up the Table of the Word with candles
 Focus	Highlight the object/picture that relates to the Gospel reading. What might the Gospel be...?
 Penitential rite (Sorry song)	Encourage quiet reflection followed by singing the ‘Sorry song’ together and modelling the actions.
 Gloria	Select Gloria 1-4 Play CD track and highlight laminated sheet.
 Gospel acclamation	Stand to greet the Gospel Gospel Acclamation 5-9 Play CD track and highlight laminated sheet.
   A reading from the Gospel... Three crosses The Gospel of the Lord...	‘God be in my mind, God be in my words, God be in my heart.’ Liturgy helper reads Gospel reading from the Children’s Lectionary.
 Discussion	Promote discussion, with a balance of reflections and questions to support a dialogue with the group.
 Activity (Background music)	If time permits, share the children’s newsletters and support the children to start the activities, to be continued at home.
 Bidding prayers	Liturgy helper reads introductory and concluding prayer. Three children read pre-prepared bidding prayers A,B & C.
 Go back into Church	Three children are selected to lead the Offertory – one to hold the Lectionary and others the gifts of bread and wine.

Appendix 12b – Children’s Liturgy Leader Prompt Card (Shortened Version)

CHILDREN’S LITURGY LEADER PROMPT CARD	
 Welcome	Warm welcome to all children and their parents/carers. Introduce Liturgy leader and helpers. Draw the group’s attention to the visual timeline.
 Sign of the Cross	Lead making the Sign of the Cross for the children to join in.
 Light the candles	Invite children to light up the Table of the Word with candles
 Focus	Highlight the object/picture that relates to the Gospel reading. What might the Gospel be...?
 Gospel acclamation	Stand to greet the Gospel Gospel Acclamation 5-9 Play CD track and highlight laminated sheet.
† A reading from the Gospel... † Three crosses † The Gospel of the Lord...	‘God be in my mind, God be in my words, God be in my heart.’ Liturgy helper reads Gospel reading from the Children’s Lectionary.
 Discussion	Promote discussion, with a balance of reflections and questions to support a dialogue with the group.
 Activity (Background music)	If time permits, share the children’s newsletters and support the children to start the activities, to be continued at home.
 Bidding prayers	Liturgy helper reads introductory and concluding prayer. Three children read pre-prepared bidding prayers A,B & C.
 Go back into Church	Three children are selected to lead the Offertory – one to hold the Lectionary and others the gifts of bread and wine.

END OF DOCUMENT