

## A Balanced Celebration

We celebrate our lives as members of a Catholic community in our liturgical celebrations.

We use the verb 'to celebrate' liturgy, but the experience embraces sadness and need as well as joy, just like life. Catholic school inspections of worship are concerned that 'pupils' liturgical formation is well planned to ensure the widest possible experiences of the richness of the Catholic tradition of prayer and worship' ([rcdow.org.uk/att/files/education/inspection/inspection+handbook+-+jan+2014.pdf](http://rcdow.org.uk/att/files/education/inspection/inspection+handbook+-+jan+2014.pdf))

A liturgical diet of Mass only is insufficient. Other distinctive forms of Catholic prayer include the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession), praying for the dead, worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, and devotion to the saints including Our Lady (e.g. praying the Rosary). The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy includes further forms of world-wide Catholic worship, including processions and pilgrimages, and practices associated with certain seasons such as Stations of the Cross and the travelling crib. Plenty of these practices are lay-led, by children or adults, sometimes out of necessity when no priest is available. Non-Eucharistic celebrations allow time and space to meditate on the Word of God, through drama or silence, using different translations or video clips, repeating some of the prayers and songs of the Mass to gain a greater understanding, and contemplating the symbols and figures of our faith in depth.

We celebrate in school within the context of the world-wide Catholic Church, even if our reason for celebrating might feel very local. To help plan any service, connect together the reason why your school is celebrating on a particular date, and all that the Church celebrates and prays on that date (season, feast day or saint's day, readings and prayers for Mass and Liturgy of the Hours, concerns of the cycle of prayer – check your Diocesan yearbook or directory).

Having ensured your approach is not too localised, now make sure it's not too short-sighted, by asking yourself how this celebration fits into the worshipping pattern of the parish / of the school across the year / of the student throughout their school days. Bear in mind your evaluation of previous similar liturgies, and consider how best to engage the children and adults of the school community in preparing and participating in the liturgies you plan.

This resource can be freely photocopied.

In fact we hope you will copy it and distribute it widely. Please think of doing so as a form of ministry to the liturgy!

The information on these two pages is supplemented in the full edition of *Spirit of the Season* which is available at [www.ssg.org.uk](http://www.ssg.org.uk)

Content is written by Frances Bibey, Caroline Dollard, Martin Foster and Frances Novillo.

## Finding the Texts for Mass – 1

A question which teachers, chaplains etc. often ask is how do I know what readings and prayers are given for a particular day. Related to that question is 'and I change them?' Though the guidance is found in the liturgical books it is not conveniently gathered in one place. Before looking at the texts one has to know what day it is.

### Understanding the Calendar

The Liturgical Calendar has two separate parts which interact: the Liturgical Seasons and Sunday, and the Calendar of Saints. The first includes the Liturgical Seasons of Advent and Christmas, Lent, Triduum and Easter, and Ordinary Time. The dates in this Calendar shift every year. It begins on the First Sunday of Advent which is 4 Sundays before 25 December, Christmas; the other main date which shapes it is Easter Sunday which is different every year. In this Calendar is given what each Sunday is and from the Sunday the week. So following the 5th Sunday of Ordinary Time is the 5th Week in Ordinary Time and each day will be identified: Monday in 5th Week in Ordinary Time.

Overlaid on this is the Calendar of Saints where Saints are commemorated on a particular calendar date, e.g. 2 February is the Presentation of the Lord. The various celebrations have different ranks, the highest being Solemnity, Feast and Memorial (obligatory or optional). A Sunday in Advent, Lent and Easter will take precedence over a Saint's day, so for example, in 2015 the Feast of the Chair of St Peter is replaced by the First Sunday in Lent. In Christmas and Ordinary Time a Sunday can be replaced by either a Solemnity (e.g. St Peter and St Paul) or Feast of the Lord (The Presentation of the Lord).

The different ranks affect what Mass texts are used. We are used to on a Sunday there being the Gloria and Creed as well as there being two readings and a psalm before the Gospel. The same pattern applies to Solemnities. On Feasts there is a Gloria but not a Creed, and there is only one reading and a psalm before the Gospel. On normal weekdays and Memorials there is neither the Gloria or the Creed and there is one reading and a psalm before the Gospel. This difference between the different grades of celebration is sometimes referred to progressive solemnity the more important the celebration the more elaborate the liturgy. A challenge sometimes in schools is to take account of this difference, for example, though we may be familiar with singing the Gloria on a Sunday it is not sung at every celebration of Mass.

### Engaging Children

Enable the children to have a good grasp of the liturgical year: the Advent–Christmas cycle, the Lent–Triduum–Easter cycle and Ordinary Time. Relate the year to the life of Christ.

Explore the different ranks of celebrations — why might one celebration be more important than others. Make a set of liturgical 'top trumps'.

### Further information

The full version of *Spirit of the Season* available at [www.ssg.org.uk](http://www.ssg.org.uk) will give much more information.

## Criteria for evaluating collective worship in schools – 1

Good celebrations foster and nourish faith.  
Poor celebrations may weaken and destroy it.  
*Music in Catholic Worship*, US Bishops, 1972

Reviewing liturgical practice is essential. In Old Testament times, the prophet Amos reminded the people that the Lord no longer wanted to receive their sacrifices, nor hear their singing, until they had learnt how to act justly! (Amos 5:23) Evaluation reveals the need for ongoing formation of staff and students, for example, helping everyone to learn the important role of the congregation (which obviates the need to find individual special jobs for each child to do, since this is not liturgical). Need for new or replacement resources may be identified. However, we do not evaluate merely to make changes, since repetition increases the effectiveness of good liturgy and allows children to measure their spiritual growth by returning to the same act of worship on the same feast day every year.

Reflective practice informs liturgy preparation, so that each detail may be judged on its relevance to the whole, and the whole liturgy tested for coherence and balance. The central theme of every Mass, that of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, must not be obscured, but rather highlighted by our creativity and talent. Just as liturgy preparation operates simultaneously in the short-, medium- and long-term, so effective evaluation takes into account the value of an individual liturgy in the context of worship planned for that week, term and year. It may not be a formal process – informal conversations in the staff-room where colleagues express what has interested, confused, moved, bored or inspired them in a preceding act of worship also have value. If possible, include the priest celebrant in discussion.

The criteria for evaluating worship do not depend on merely stirring the emotions, or giving each pupil a job nr making sure everyone 'got something out of it', since liturgy is neither a performance, nor a consumer activity. However, ask yourself the question: Did everyone participate, actively or inwardly? Did the act of worship enable prayer at a deep level, not merely evoking an emotional or cerebral response? Did it provide long-term sustenance for the faith journey?

## Lead Prayer with Confidence – 1

### Be Prepared

Before you lead prayer look through the whole text. Is everything there that is needed.

As you will be leading the prayer it can help to even have texts of prayers you know off by heart. A loss of memory even while leading as familiar a prayer as the Lord's Prayer is not uncommon!

If you are unused to leading you may find it worthwhile preparing the bits of texts you may need to give instruction that may not be part of the liturgical text.

Part of the preparation may be to identify if any explanation or instruction is needed. As a rule in liturgy and prayer less is more. Give clear simple instructions but let the liturgy speak for itself.

## Praying through the Day

The Church's formal daily prayer is called the Liturgy of the Hours (or Divine Office). Different time zones ensure this prayer is effectively unceasing around the world. This prayer is non-Sacramental, and can be led by a priest or lay person, child or adult. Schools are familiar with a pattern of daily prayer, so why not use the Liturgy of the Hours? Each liturgy is short so staff could pray together Morning Prayer before work begins, and Evening Prayer when it concludes.

The full text is available from [www.universalis.com](http://www.universalis.com) as an app (*Laudate*), and in *Magnificat* ([www.catholicherald.co.uk/magnificat/](http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/magnificat/)). The Metrical Index in full music hymnals lists familiar tunes to fit the hymn words provided, or substitute a familiar morning or evening hymn such as *Morning has broken*, or *Abide with me*. The Psalms may be read antiphonally, that is, with one person or group saying one paragraph and the others reading the next, then alternating. The Gospel canticle is best sung – at Morning Prayer Ruth Duck's *Benedictus* in *Laudate* hymnbook goes to the tune *Amazing Grace*, and at Evening Prayer well-known versions of the Magnificat are *Tell out my soul* and *My soul is filled with joy*.

Midday Prayer is harder to squeeze into the school day, but staff might pray it privately during the lunch-break, unified virtually with individuals and groups of Catholics world-wide praying the same prayer. Each class could connect with a local prayer-group or single parishioner who prays this prayer, reminding school staff and students that they are prayed for daily.

In class, the children might pray aspects of the Liturgy of the Hours. Simplified forms include *A Time of Prayer* ([www.ctsbooks.org/time-of-prayer/](http://www.ctsbooks.org/time-of-prayer/)) or the following

### Opening greeting with Sign of the Cross:

O God, come to our aid:

**O Lord, make haste to help us.**

**Glory be to the Father  
and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning, is now,  
and ever shall be, world without end.**

**Amen. Alleluia.**

The short Bible reading

The Lord's Prayer

Concluding Blessing

The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil,  
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

The prayer can be led equally by a priest or lay-person, child or adult. It is unifying, reminding us that we do not work alone, but together to build up God's kingdom, even through our routine daily activities. Read more at [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Rites/GILH.pdf](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Rites/GILH.pdf)

If there is a service booklet check it against your leader's text. You may find different words or verses to hymns or even sections in a different order.

Part of the leader's role is to enable and encourage the ministry of others. Check the text to see what other ministers are involved and who they are.

## Use Scripture with confidence – 1 What is Scripture? Who is it for?

‘Let us take up this book! Let us receive it from the Lord who continually offers it to us through the Church! Let us devour it, so that it can become our very life! Let us savour it deeply: it will make demands of us, but it will give us joy because it is sweet as honey. Filled with hope, we will be able to share it with every man and woman whom we encounter on our way’  
Pope St. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa* 65

**Basics:** In our Christian tradition, the Sacred Scripture, held in the many books of the bible, is the Word of God spoken to every generation, assuring us of God’s plan and purpose, revealed in Jesus Christ – that God reaches out in love to share God’s life with us. The Word in Scripture is described as ‘alive and active’ by St Paul. Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet, likens the Word to the ‘rain that waters the earth providing seed for the sower’, accomplishing the purpose for which it was sent. For over two thousand years, the church has been listening to and pondering on Scripture. We in our turn join ourselves with the wisdom of the whole living tradition of the Church. As we enter the story of our lives as the people of God, the Word gradually shapes our identity as individuals and communities, actively speaking to every situation in the ups and downs of life, offering nourishment, comfort, healing and strength; vision, courage, challenge, hope, and much more, according to the abundance of God’s grace.

**Growing in Confidence:** All ‘disciples of Christ’ are invited to enter into the stream of the living tradition of attentiveness to Scripture, and to pass on this ‘gift’ to future generations too. Jesus himself encourages us to ‘put out into deep water’ (Luke 5:4) St Gregory describes Scripture as ‘a magic pool in which a lamb can paddle and an elephant swim.’ St Bede, the 8th Century monk, calls it ‘the bread of the Word’. God is waiting just below the

### Top Tip

**Read through the whole Gospel of the Year (A, B or C) to get a sense of the whole story.**

**CTS produce an attractive single volume edition of each of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. It would make sense to start now by reading Luke’s Gospel, the Gospel we use from next Advent and through the following Church Year. ([www.ctsbooks.org](http://www.ctsbooks.org))**

surface of the text, and the Word meets us exactly where we are. We come with our own variety of ignorance and understanding, our own problems and questions – and we come, not so much to learn what they are said to have said, but more to allow them to speak in a new way, into our present. However, often at first glance it all looks too complex. Our experience can be buried beneath layers of interpretation – what others have said, through art, music, theological and biblical commentaries. These voices in the conversation can be important, but at the outset, it is good to come fresh, with the openness and reverence of a beginner’s mind, i.e. not saying ‘I’ve heard this scripture a thousand times before, and it means this’, but more in

a spirit of expectation, allowing God to speak into our lives, children, young people, adults, as a friend– this place, this time, these people. God’s word expressed in human language, our language! (Vatican II, *On Divine Revelation*, 12)

**Resources for Biblical Formation** – To help you and others find your way around the Bible

- Bible Society: <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/the-bible/>
- *Gift of Scripture*, Catholic Bishops Conference of England & Wales, and Scotland CTS (2005) for overviews of Old Testament and New Testament.

## Directory for Masses with Children

Originally published by the Congregation for Divine Worship on 1st November 1973, this is still the current document for use when planning Masses with children. A copy of the document can be found on the Liturgy office website [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk). It includes a section on ‘Masses for Children in which Only a Few Adults Participate’ as well as one on ‘Masses with Adults in which Children Also Participate’.

- A very good resource for schools to use in conjunction with the DMC when planning Masses is available on the Westminster Archdiocese website ([www.rcdow.org.uk/diocese/liturgy/preparing-for-celebration/](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/diocese/liturgy/preparing-for-celebration/)) It offers clear guidance as to the purpose of different aspects of the Mass, including the ministries, and is particularly designed to help RE Coordinators in Secondary Schools delegate particular responsibilities for the preparation of Mass, confident that these sheets give the basic information to allow others to take responsibility in an effective way

## New Eucharistic Prayers for Masses With Children

ISBN 978-1-86082921-5

This volume contains the ‘New Eucharistic Prayers for Masses With Children’ to accompany the new translation of The Roman Missal published in 2010. As well as the texts, it contains music for the responses ‘With Jesus we sing your praise’, ‘Glory to God in the highest’, ‘Hosanna in the highest’ and ‘We praise, you, we bless you, we thank you’, which occur during the Eucharistic Prayer. An explanation of the modifications to the Eucharistic Prayers can be found on the News page of the Liturgy Office website.

# Understanding the Calendar

## Sanctoral Cycle

Through the year the Church commemorates on specific days events in the life of Christ and Our Lady, mysteries of our faith and the lives of saints. These dates are recorded in Calendars.

## Solemnities, Feasts and Memorials

As the Church's liturgy and the liturgical year are primarily celebrations of Christ's Paschal Mystery the celebrations of the Calendar are given rankings. There are 4 rankings:

### Solemnities

- January 1 - Mary, Mother of God
  - January 6 - The Epiphany of the Lord
  - March 19 - St Joseph
  - March 25 - The Annunciation of the Lord
  - The Ascension
  - Holy Trinity
  - The Body & Blood of Christ
  - The Sacred Heart of Jesus
  - June 24 - The Birth of St John the Baptist
  - June 29 - Ss Peter & Paul, apostles §
  - August 15 - The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary §
  - November 1 - All Saints §
  - Christ the King
  - December 8 - The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
  - December 25 - The Birth of Our Lord §
  - Patronal Solemnity
  - Anniversary of Dedication of church
- § are Holydays of Obligation in England and Wales

### Feasts

- The Baptism of the Lord §
- January 25 - The Conversion of St Paul, apostle
- February 2 - The Presentation of the Lord §
- February 22 - The Chair of St Peter, apostle
- April 25 - St Mark, Evangelist
- May 3 - Ss Philp & James, apostles
- May 14 - St Matthias, apostle
- May 31 - The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- July 3 - St Thomas, apostle
- July 25 - St James, apostle
- August 6 - The Transfiguration of the Lord §
- August 10 - St Lawrence, deacon & martyr
- August 24 - St Bartholomew, apostle
- September 8 - The Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- September 14 - The Triumph of the Cross §
- September 21 - St Matthew, apostle & evangelist
- September 29 - Ss Michael, Gabriel & Raphael, archangels
- October 18 - St Luke, evangelist
- October 28 - Ss Simon & Jude, apostles
- November 9 - The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica §
- November 30 - St Andrew, apostle

- December 26 - St Stephen, martyr
- December 27 - St John, apostle & evangelist
- December 28 - The Holy Innocents, martyrs
- The Holy Family §

§ are Feasts of the Lord and replace the Sunday Liturgy when they fall on a Sunday.

### Memorials

All other celebrations are Memorials of which there are two types: Obligatory and Optional.

So that the purpose of the liturgical year to unfold the mystery of Christ is not lost *the General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar* offers a table of liturgical which indicates the order of precedence where two celebrations occur on the same day.

### Propers & Commons

Where specific texts are provided for a celebration for Mass (*Missal* and *Lectionary*) or the *Divine Office* these are called Propers. Where no text is provided texts are chosen from the relevant Common (i.e. Common of Martyrs etc.).

### Calendars

The Church recognises that a particular celebration can have more significance in one area other another, i.e. St George is a Solemnity in England whereas elsewhere in the world he is an optional memorial. There are, therefore, different degrees of Calendars.

### Universal

The Universal Calendar is celebrated by the whole Church. You can find a separate webpage for each month of the Universal Calendar on the Liturgy Office website: <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar>

### Regional

Some celebrations are celebrated over a whole continent such as the 6 patrons of Europe who are celebrated as feasts within Europe.

- February 14 - St Cyril and St Methodius
- April 29 - St Catherine of Siena
- July 11 - St Benedict
- July 23 - St Bridget of Sweden
- August 9 - St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)

### National

There is a National Calendar for England, for Wales and for Scotland celebrating Saints of national importance.

### Diocesan

Each diocese has its own Calendar commemorating the diocesan patron(s) and Saints significant to the life of the diocese.

### Religious

Each religious order has its own Calendar commemorating its founder and saints of the order. In a religious order school this calendar may be followed.

### Local

Every parish should celebrate as a Solemnity its patronal feast (who it is dedicated to) and the Anniversary of its Dedication.

## Top Tip

**Prepare a School Calendar giving prominence to the principal patron of the countries the children (and staff) come from.**

**Explore the variety of ways in which the feasts can be marked**

- Whole school worship?
- Classroom prayer?
- Display of icon/statue at entrance to school?
- Congratulatory message on school Social Media account