

Word on Worship

Newsletter of the Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, NJ

In This Issue:

- Forming Students into Believers
- Twenty Principles for Planning the Liturgical Year in a Parochial School/Religious Education Setting
- Sample Planning and Preparation
- Resources

The way a group of people use and celebrate time forms patterns for life and perpetuates a way of life. The reverse is also true. In order to evaluate a group of people's way of life, examine their use and celebration of time. Our society today is seemingly on a quest to squeeze as many activities into each moment of time without any sense of purpose, celebration or focus. This is the irreverence for time that invades our lives and the lives of our children.

Cultural phenomena such as immediate results, quick pace, and the burdensome crunch of time, run counter to a faith life that proclaims Jesus as Lord of all time. Every moment is made holy by Christ. Growth in faith involves a "deepening of our awareness of and commitment to, the action of his Spirit in the whole of our lives at every moment." (*Music in Catholic Worship* 2) Thus the Christian stands in awe of time, in appreciation of time, stirred by time, forming patterns of life that are Christ's. (Philippians 2)

The reverencing of time in the Christian spirit is rooted and fostered in the annual observance of the liturgical year. The liturgical year proclaims and unfolds the mystery of Christ who transcends time and permeates every moment of our being. In the celebration of the liturgical year, the paschal mystery is proclaimed, communicated and participated in. The Church year sets up a rhythm of cycles

to draw us into and conform us to the mystery of Christ, to permeate our lives with Christ. The liturgical year is the source of our spirituality.

**Special Edition:
Parochial
School/
Religious
Education**

The calendar of the Christian community shapes, expresses, carries on, and expands the identity of the people of God. Faithful observance "is vital to Catholic identity. This is true for children no less than for adults. Faithful observance of the calendar promotes formation and participation in the life of the Church." (*Lectionary for Masses with Children* 25) Much to the loss of Christian formation, parochial religious education, with its adherence to the academic year, misses the opportunity to form its participants when it fails to observe and celebrate the liturgical year. The liturgical year consciously remembered and celebrated in an academic setting transforms the educational environment into a school of Christian and liturgical formation for the children and addresses the students as believers. The celebration of the Church year becomes the sacred curriculum which has as its purpose not the accumulation of data but a lived faith.

The liturgical year is a mystery of our faith that we hand on to our children, generation after generation. A fully Christian life is inconceivable without participation in the liturgical life celebrated year after year. (*Directory for Masses with Children* 8) This issue of *Word on Worship* will propose principles and suggestions for planning and celebrating the liturgical year in a parochial religious education setting with the intent of discussing that "sacred curriculum" that can provide students the opportunity to don the garment of **believers** even in an academic setting.+

Sr. Sandra DeMasi, SSJ
Director, Worship Office

FORMING STUDENTS INTO BELIEVERS

TWENTY PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING THE LITURGICAL YEAR IN A PAROCHIAL SCHOOL/RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SETTING

When planning the liturgical year in a parochial school/religious education setting there are some basic assumptions that need to be remembered and principles of planning worship with children to which we must adhere.

1. "A fully Christian life is inconceivable without participation in the liturgical services in which the faithful, gathered into a single assembly, celebrate the paschal mystery." (DMC 8) Sunday is the first of all holy days and all the celebrations of the liturgical year plunge us deeper into the experience of the Sunday Eucharist. Sunday is the "primary and indispensable source from" which children are to derive "the true Christian spirit." (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 14) The celebration of the liturgical year in a parochial school setting or in a catechetical setting is not about replacing the Sunday celebration; it is about leading children to a deeper participation in Sunday.

2. "The preparation and celebration of liturgies for children begin with and flow from a clear desire to assist them to participate in the worship of the entire community." Catechesis, liturgy, and prayer in a parochial school and/or religious education setting supports the worship of the community "when the basic shape of the ritual used with children, its symbols, gestures, and language, is similar" (LMC 53) to the worship of the Church.

3. "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... it should be kept in mind that external activities will be fruitless and even harmful if they do not serve the internal participation of the children." (DMC 22) **Participation as members of the assembly should be the clear focus.** "The most powerful experience of the sacred is found in the celebration and the persons celebrating; that is, it is found in the action of the assembly." (*Environment and Art in*

Catholic Worship 28) All liturgical ministries are exercised for the sake of the prayer of the assembly. Avoid creating or multiplying "jobs" in the prayer and worship of the school or catechetical community under the guise of "fuller participation." Creating and distributing such liturgical or prayer roles does not foster participation in the fullest way which belongs to the assembly.

4. "Masses with children are recommended... during the week. It is always necessary to keep in mind that these celebrations must lead children toward the celebration of Mass... on Sundays." (DMC 20-21) In the scheduling of school Masses the guiding principle should be the Christian formation of children. Days honoring the Lord and Mary are times when the school community ought to join together for a liturgy. Planning the calendar begins with a sense of seeking those days, rather than an assumption that "school Masses" have to be on the first Friday of the month.

- If a school is an interparochial school belonging to more than one parish, it is appropriate to observe/celebrate the feast days of all the parishes that make up the interparochial school community.

- Guidelines for preparing "school Masses" are found in the *Directory for Masses with Children*, Chapter 3. These Masses with children in which only a few adults take part are recommended but some adaptations are necessary. Such adaptations are considered specifically in nos. 38-54. The *Lectionary for Masses with Children* should be used as well as one of the Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children.

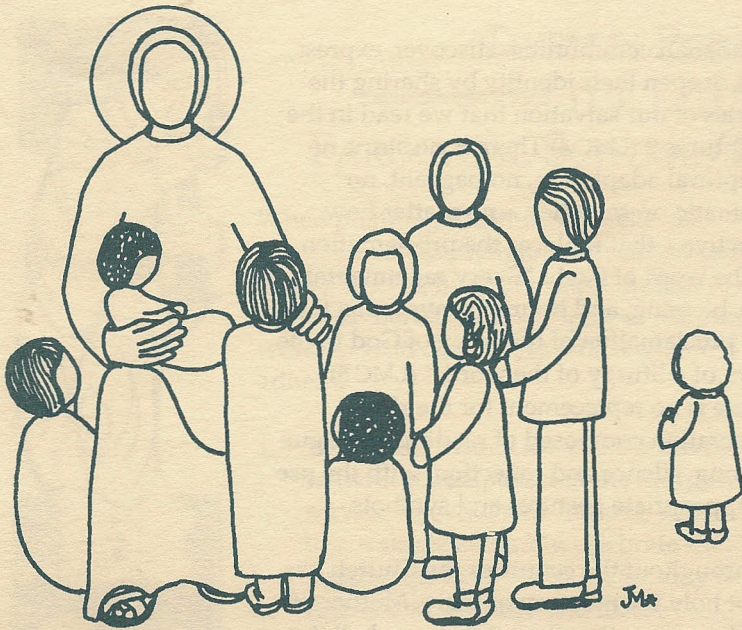
5. "Various kinds of celebrations may also play a major role in the liturgical formation of children and in their preparation for the Church's liturgical life." (DMC 13) Sunday Eucharist is vital to the life of the Church and the source of the spiritual formation of the people of God. On other days, the Church has a rich



tradition of noneucharistic liturgy, such as morning prayer, midday prayer, and even non-sacramental penance services that should be encouraged.

- School penance services (non-sacramental) are not scheduled to replace the parish's communal penance services. School penitential prayer experiences should lead school families to the parish's sacramental experiences.
6. Worship and prayer with children is "not a matter of creating some entirely special rite." (DMC 3) While the liturgical year offers us a variety of celebrations, the prayer style, the ritual language, the gestures, selection of texts, symbols must be that of the Church.
 7. "The place of celebration may influence how the children receive God's word. It should be chosen carefully." The primary place for eucharistic celebrations, celebrations of the Word and other noneucharistic liturgies is the church. "Sometimes a space outside the usual place of worship may be chosen. Even when classrooms or other non-liturgical spaces must be used for celebrations with children every care must be taken that these spaces be well prepared, and that the environment is suitable for the worship of God." (LMC 49)
 8. "By their beauty and the reverent way in which they are carried and handled," the Lectionary and other objects used in celebration "should be eloquent witnesses to the Church's reverence" for the scriptures and symbols. (LMC 50)
 9. "In order to engage children's authentic participation... they should be invited to participate in the actions of prayer and worship whenever it is appropriate and possible. Therefore, ritual elements such as gestures and postures, processions, song, dialogue, silence, and use of symbol are integral to their experience of prayer and worship." (LMC 22)
 10. Attention to symbol/visual elements "should be given great prominence with children. This is especially true of the particular visual elements in the course of the liturgical year." (DMC 35) Attention to symbol in prayer and worship stimulates the religious imagination of children.
 11. "Christian communities discover, express, and deepen their identity by sharing the stories of our salvation that we read in the scriptures." (LMC 4) There is no story, no scriptural adaptation, no pageant, no dramatic presentation – no matter how effective – that replaces the proclamation of the word of God. "Every sacramental rite, blessing, and hour of prayer calls for the proclamation of the word of God in the form of a liturgy of the word." (LMC 5) There is no replacement for the ritual celebration composed of reading, dialogue in song, silence and reflection, with the use of appropriate gestures and symbols.
 12. "Throughout the centuries the Church has kept holy the memory of Mary, Mother of God, the apostles, the martyrs, and all the saints. The liturgy presents these men and women to us as intercessors and models... Children's openness to the power of stories makes them ready listeners when they hear stories of the saints, the examples of whose lives gives them a deeper appreciation of the gospel." (LMC 47-48)
 13. The final purpose of all liturgical and eucharistic formation must be "a greater and greater response to the Gospel in the daily life of the children." (DMC 15) Celebrating the liturgical year in parochial school/religious education is about forming disciples, not making students. Our planning is not so much about the imparting of information but about formation. The celebration of the liturgical year is the source of our spirituality.
 14. In the actual planning of the liturgical year in a parochial setting it must be understood that a parochial school and/ or





religious education program is part of a larger unit called a parish. In the parochial religious education setting we plan and celebrate the liturgical year in the context of (not apart from) the parish's celebration of the Church's calendar.

15. "From its earliest days the Church has recognized that liturgy and catechesis support each other. Prayer and sacraments call for informed participants; fruitful participation in catechesis calls for the spiritual enrichment that comes from liturgical participation." (National Catechetical Directory 36) Planning the liturgical year in an academic context is an environment that can be very conducive to the unity of the relationship between liturgy and catechesis. It also affords an opportunity to play out the supportive role that catechesis has to liturgy and liturgy has to catechesis.
16. "The Sundays, seasons and feasts of the liturgical year celebrate many facets of a single mystery. Each of them expresses from a different perspective the one great mystery of Christ's dying and rising yesterday, today and for ever." (LMC 26) Sometimes in order to accommodate the academic schedule, liberties are taken in adjusting the liturgical calendar. Often there is a temptation to anticipate the Christmas season during Advent or anticipate Easter during Lent. Each season has a specific character and should be celebrated with their respective integrity in tact. (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 107, LMT 48)

- Sensitivity and fidelity to the liturgical year should be such that pre-Christmas "school Masses" are "pre-Christmas" (Advent) Masses in vestment color, prayers, and spirit of anticipation.

17. The role of music in Catholic worship is much more than filling in musical slots. "Music is of preeminent importance" (MCW 23); it shares in the fundamental purpose of liturgy itself: the praise and glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful. "Singing must be given great importance in all celebrations, but it is to be especially encouraged in every way for Masses celebrated with children." (DMC 30)

- The choice of music for worship with children is not about creating a musical repertoire distinct and different from the parish's musical repertoire. Remember, celebrations with children are not about replacing the Sunday celebration; they are about leading children to a deeper participation in Sunday.

18. "Great care must be shown in the selection of music for seasons and feasts. Contemporary culture seems increasingly unwilling either to prepare for or to prolong Christian feasts and seasons... The season of Advent should be preserved in its integrity, Christmas carols being reserved for the Christmas season alone... Easter should not be allowed to end in a day, but rather, the fifty days of its celebration... should be planned." (LMT 48)
19. Preparations and planning take time and must be invested with personal and prayerful faith, care, attention, and enthusiasm. (MCW 9) Remember "good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken and destroy it." (MCW 6)
20. Liturgy with children is never entertaining children; it is prayer with children. Creativity in liturgy is not about adding new things to the liturgy. Creative liturgy is liturgy celebrated well where the prayers of the Church are heard and prayed and the symbolic activity of God is unleashed and allowed to shape children into the body of Christ.

Sr. Sandra DeMasi, SSJ
Director, Worship Office

SAMPLE PLANNING AND PREPARATION

The principles listed above are meant to shift our mode of thinking from an academic model of planning, which is about imparting information to students, to a mystagogical model of planning which is liturgical, catechetical, formational, ministerial, and communal. The following is an example of a month's planning and celebrating the liturgical year in a parochial religious education environment. This pattern could be repeated.

SEPTEMBER

ROMAN CALENDAR NOTES

1. The Season of Ordinary Time
2. September 8/ Birth of Mary
3. September 14/ Feast of the Holy Cross
4. September 21/ Feast of Saint Matthew
5. September 27/ Vincent de Paul
6. September 29/ Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael

(On the feast for whom a child is named, a "Blessing on a Name's Day" from *Catholic Household Book of Blessings* may be used. The life of the saint may also be related.)

OPENING OF SCHOOL

- Use a liturgy of the word format (see: *Leader's Manual: Hymnal for Catholic Students*, p.53-54)
- Celebrate the eucharist with the entire school community on a special day in the Church calendar, for example, the feast of the Birth of Mary - September 8; the feast of the Holy Cross - September 14; the feast of Saint Matthew - September 21.

SEPTEMBER 14 - FEAST OF THE HOLY CROSS

- Mark entrance into the new school year with a eucharistic liturgy this day. (see: *Leader's Manual: Hymnal for Catholic Students*, pp. 54-58)
- Focus **liturgical catechesis** in September on the cross as

- an identity symbol for Christians
- a victory symbol, our hope of glory
- Emphasize in **ritual catechesis** the Church's
 - procession with the cross
 - veneration of the cross
 - signing with the cross
- Catechize and reflect on ways to embrace the cross in our lives. (See: prayers of the Sacramentary for the feast of the Holy Cross and Good Friday for personal reflection and adaptation for use with children.)
- Use classroom prayer or morning prayer to place emphasis on the opening gesture of "O Lord, open my lips" or "O God, come to my assistance."
- Display in a prayer space the cross used for Good Friday veneration.
- Bring crosses from home for blessing. (See: *Children's Daily Prayer*).

SEPTEMBER 21 - FEAST OF SAINT MATTHEW

- Gather the school community for eucharist, a liturgy of the word or morning prayer. (See: *Children's Daily Prayer*).
- Provide catechesis on discipleship.
- Highlight the proclamation of the gospel in **liturgical catechesis** by emphasizing the gospel book.
- Focus **ritual catechesis** on the gospel procession and the assembly's stance as



active listeners singing "Alleluia!"

- Discuss the role of evangelization in the life of the Christian.
- Display the *Book of the Gospels* in a prayer space.

SEPTEMBER 27 - MEMORIAL OF VINCENT DE PAUL

- Emphasize our responsibility to work with the poor.
- Invite a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society or the parish social justice committee to speak to the children about outreach to the poor. Children may wish to join in their efforts for a week or for the whole month of September.
- Highlight the presentation of the gifts at Sunday worship and / or the procession of the gifts for the poor on Holy Thursday in liturgical catechesis.
- Emphasize the rite of sending "to love and serve the Lord" in ritual catechesis.
- Connect liturgy and life by discussing parish policy and archdiocesan programs of stewardship.
- Collect and display baskets of food for the poor in a prayer space.

Calendar 43) Ordinary time gives the community an opportunity to focus on and to improve its liturgical life as a whole.

- **Ritual catechesis** could be focused on doing ordinary things extraordinarily well. For example:

- consider the parish's liturgical music repertoire. Have a Christian Ritual Music Song Fest in school or in the parish.
- invite the music ministers of the parish to spend time in the school or during religious education to discuss music as an expression of prayer and worship.
- invite lectors of the parish to spend time in the school or during religious education to discuss the ministry of the word in the life of the parish.+

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SEPTEMBER 29 - FEAST OF THE ARCHANGELS MICHAEL, GABRIEL, AND RAPHAEL

- Gather the school community for
 - a eucharistic liturgy (see: *Leader's Manual: Hymnal for Catholic Students*, pp. 58-62)
 - morning prayer (see: *Children's Daily Prayer*)
- Highlight the Sanctus in liturgical catechesis.
- Use and emphasize the traditional prayer to our guardian angels.
- Consult the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 334-336 and adapt information for doctrinal catechesis.

ORDINARY TIME

- The weeks of ordinary time "do not celebrate a specific aspect of the mystery of Christ... rather, they are devoted to the mystery of Christ in all its aspects."
(General Norms for the Liturgical Year and



RESOURCES

Take Me Home: Notes on the Church Year for Children. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1991.

The 60 notes in this book are meant to be photocopied and handed out to be taken home. These notes can serve as a reminder of a special day or an upcoming season. They can help join the liturgical life of the parish with our kitchens and living rooms and gardens.

Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1988.

This book contains blessings for many days and seasons and occasions.

Children's Daily Prayer. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1996.

A service of prayer is provided for each day of the school year. An additional service of prayer is provided for groups that meet only once each week. Simpler prayers are offered for meal time and the end of the school day.

Leader's Manual: Hymnal for Catholic Students. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications and GIA Publications, 1989.

This is a carefully organized, pastorally practical tool for all who plan liturgy. There are introductions to the seasons, suggestions for music and the worship environment, and prayer texts.

The Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1996

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL)

The initial document of Vatican II that governed liturgical reform.

Sacramentary. The Roman Missal.

Directory for Masses with Children (DMC) (1973)

Contains fundamental principles for the celebration of the eucharist with children. The DMC supplements the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. It offers principles and guidelines for adaptation of the liturgy for worship with children.

Lectionary for Masses with Children (LMC) (1993)

The only lectionary approved for use in Masses with children. "The readings of this lectionary are also a resource for those who wish to prepare other liturgical celebrations with children, and wish to do so in the context of the liturgical year." (LMC 12)

Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory (NCD)

Music in Catholic Worship (MCW)

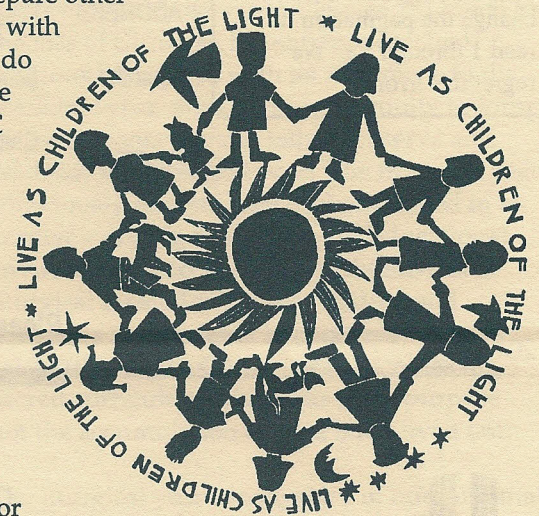
Concrete guidelines for selecting and incorporating music into the worship of the church.

Liturgical Music Today (LMT)

A document published ten years after MCW. The document treats subjects not addressed in MCW.

General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar (GNLYC)

Provides a useful description of how the Church experiences the paschal mystery of Christ in the course of the liturgical year during seasons, weeks and each day.



BOOKS YOU NEED! BOOKS TO ORDER!

Children's Daily Prayer

by Elizabeth McMahon Jeep

This book is a step-by-step approach for praying during the school year. For each day of the school year there is a format for prayer with a scripture reading and reflection, meal prayer and end-of-day prayer. In addition, there is weekly page to be used for religious education programs. Simple directions and preparation ideas make this a treasure for every teach and student. Single copies \$14 ea., 2-9 copies \$12 ea., 10 or more \$9 ea.

To order call: 201-497-4345, Fax 201-497-4348 (9:30 am - 4:30 pm) or mail this order form to: The Worship Office, PO Box 9500, Newark NJ 07104-9500

Correction:

The pagination (67-78) in Vol. 14, No. 1 was incorrect. Subscribers may wish to change the pagination to read 1 through 12. We regret the error.

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