

# Liturgy of the Word with Children



## RC Church of St Mary Littleborough

### ***What is it?***

The term 'Liturgy of the Word with Children' refers to the practice of school age children leaving the Sunday assembly during the Liturgy of the Word. They gather...elsewhere so the Gospel can be presented to children in a way that they can understand. Participation in this liturgical experience is appropriate for primary-age children (key stage 1 and 2).

Pre-school children may attend the liturgy with a parent providing this does not prove too disruptive for the other children.

### ***Why a Liturgy of the Word with Children?***

To provide a quality liturgical experience for children and to proclaim scripture in a way that children will be able to understand and live.

It is liturgy of the word: breaking open of the scriptures. The children do what the rest of the community is doing at this point of the Mass. They listen to the scriptures proclaimed...and respond in various ways.

The Liturgy of the Word with children is liturgy, ritual prayer, not catechesis (religious instruction) or child minding. Because it is a liturgical celebration, all the principles of good liturgy (active participation, clear symbols, etc) apply.

***It is an experience of prayer, of dialogue with God.***

### ***What happens?***

The celebrations of these liturgies are intended to form children in the liturgical language of the Church, to nourish and guide their spiritual growth, and to immerse them in the Word in ways that are understandable to them. Children present at mass gather with their families and the assembly for the opening rites. After the opening Prayer, children are called forth to process to their separate worship place.

The Sunday Readings and Gospel are proclaimed from the Children's Lectionary. A reflection on the readings, creed and prayers of the faithful, that are appropriate for school age children, are also shared. Children return to the assembly during the gathering of the gifts and complete the celebration of the Mass with their families.



## ***Which Church Documents Guide Us?***

Two Church documents specifically consider the celebration:

### ***The Directory for Masses with Children***

(Congregation for Divine Worship, 1973)

### ***Liturgy of the Word with Children Guidelines***

(Bishops' Conference of England & Wales, 1996)

***The Church forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful. . .to learn the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ, by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures.***

***Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.*** (Sacred scripture in the Catechism 133)

## **How it Works**

Children gather for mass with their families and after the opening song, the children are called forward. A book of the scriptures is presented. All process out. The leader introduces the scripture of the day. Before the gospel is proclaimed an acclamation is sung. The scriptures are explored through reflection, discussion and other appropriate activity. There is a time of prayer. All return to the main body of the church.

## **Safeguarding**

*The Church has a responsibility to ensure all those who undertake work in the name of the Church are adequately trained in safeguarding matters. But we all have a role to play in safeguarding the young or adults who may be at risk.* (Salford RC Diocese Safeguarding)

For this reason each Liturgy of the Word session will have at least two leaders who have DBS clearance. All helpers will be aware of safeguarding issues and procedures.

"The Catholic Church in England and Wales is striving towards a culture of safeguarding where all are safe from harm and abuse and where every person is encouraged and enabled to enjoy the fullness of life in Jesus Christ through the prayerful, caring, nurturing, supportive and protective endeavours of the Catholic community, both individually and collectively." (TaCoS 2012)

## **Liturgy of the Word with Children Key Points:**

- It is not child-minding
- It is an experience of prayer
- A liturgical experience for primary-age children (Key Stage 1 and 2)
- Pre-school children may attend (with an adult)
- Will take place on Sundays during school term-time