



Liturgy of the Word with Children Mandate

The Office of Catechetics assists parishes in the development and implementation of Liturgy of the Word with Children (LWC). LWC provides young children with an opportunity to participate in Mass while hearing God's Word proclaimed in a way they can relate to and understand.

A. Directory for Masses with Children

The Church must show special concern for baptized 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. The circumstances of contemporary life in which children grow up are less favourable to their spiritual progress. In addition parents sometimes scarcely fulfill the obligations they accepted at the baptism of their children to bring them up as Christians.(1)

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. (2)

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B. Celebrating the Liturgy of the Word with Children: Guidelines for Practice

Liturgy is a celebration; it is an event that children experience...Liturgy and catechesis are intimately related, but different. Both are powerful formative tools in Christian life, but each accomplishes its task in a very different way...(24)

Arts and crafts or pencil and paper activities have no place among adults at Mass; neither are they a part of the liturgy of the word celebrated with children. (36)

If we consider the Sunday Eucharistic celebration, there are at least twenty-five actions or movements of the gathered assembly. We do not sit quietly and still for an hour...children too need to do all these movements and more. (38)

The Directory for Masses with Children is insistent that children are an integral part of the Sunday assembly and every effort be made to honour the presence of children and make necessary adaptations throughout the Sunday Liturgy. There are a variety of reasons why a parish may decide to establish a Liturgy of the Word with Children as part of its plan for pastoral care of children (72)

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