

Spirit of the Season

Winter 2003

Liturgical Year B

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NY Resolution – Action



Listening is a present action.

When we fall short as listeners it is usually because our minds or hearts are in the past, going over something that has happened, or in the future, anticipating something that might or will happen.

The Liturgy of the Word challenges the People of God to be present listeners.

'This is the Word of the Lord'.

'Thanks be to God!'

The cycle of readings is the story of God's love told here and now so that we know ourselves as God's People celebrating the love which gives life to all the world.



God always with us, make our ears attentive to the voice of your Son, and our hearts generous in answering his call.



Getting In Touch

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Who celebrates?

A key principle is that the liturgy is adapted according to the needs of the participants so leading to full conscious and active participation.

The pastoral effectiveness of a celebration will be heightened if the texts of the readings, the prayers, and the liturgical songs correspond as closely as possible to the needs, spiritual preparation, and aptitude of the participants.

In planning the celebration of Mass, then, the priest should pay attention to the common spiritual good of the people of God, rather than his own inclinations. He should also remember that choices are to be made in consultation with those who perform some part in the celebration, including the faithful in regard to the parts that more directly belong to them.

...Harmonious planning and carrying out of the rites will, to a great extent, help dispose the faithful spiritually to take part in the eucharist.

General Instruction on the Roman Missal 352.

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.

Eucharistic catechesis, should develop such human values. Then, depending on their age and their psychological and social situation, children will gradually open their minds to the perception of Christian values and the celebration of the mystery of Christ.

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Even in the case of children, the liturgy itself always exerts its own inherent power to instruct. Yet within religious-education programs in the schools and parishes the necessary importance should be given to catechesis on the Mass. This catechesis should be directed to the child's active, conscious, and authentic participation. "Suited to children's age and capabilities, it should, by means of the main rites and prayers of the Mass, aim at conveying its meaning, including what relates to taking part in the Church's life." This is especially true of the text of the eucharistic prayer and of the acclamations by which the children take part in this prayer.

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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 and to make it more intense. For this reason as many children as possible should have special parts in the celebration.

To encourage participation, it will also sometimes be helpful to have several additions, for example, the insertion of motives for giving thanks before the priest begins the dialogue of the preface.

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It is the responsibility of the priest who celebrates a Mass with children to make the celebration festive, familial, and meditative. Even more than in Masses with adults, the priest should bring about this kind of attitude of mind which depends on his personal preparation and his manner of acting and speaking with others. The priest should be concerned above all about the dignity, clarity, and simplicity of his actions and gestures. In speaking to the children he should express himself so that he will be easily understood, while avoiding any childish style of speech.

The free use of introductory comments will lead children to a genuine liturgical participation, but these should not be

merely didactic explanations. It will help him to reach the hearts of the children if the priest sometimes expresses the invitations in his own words, for example, at the penitential rite, the prayer over the gifts, the Lord's Prayer, the sign of peace, and communion.

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If three or even two readings appointed on Sundays or weekdays can be understood by children only with difficulty, it is permissible to read two or only one of them, but the gospel reading should never be omitted.

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In the choice of readings the criterion to be followed is the quality rather than the quantity of the texts from Sacred Scripture. A shorter reading is not in itself always more suited to children than a lengthy reading. Everything depends on the spiritual advantage that the reading can bring to the children.

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Good celebrations nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken or destroy it.

Music in Catholic Worship 5

Questions for reflection:

(as individual, as staff)

In each Key Stage

Remembering

In a liturgy you have prepared at this Key Stage what stays with you? What was memorable or effective?

Preparing

In a particular liturgy what is being celebrated?

Who are celebrating? Who makes up the liturgical assembly?

What are the best ways of celebrating at this key stage?



Welcoming the Word in Song

Short acclamations that speak about the Word could be used in class whenever scripture is read. Some could also be used liturgically — particularly in Lent if don't include an Alleluia.

Your words are Spirit and Life
— Bernadette Farrell
(*Laudate, Christ be our Light*)

Light, truth and joy
— Anne White

Your word is like a lamp
— Chris Malone
(All in *Rejoice 2*)

In *Children at Heart* by Paul Inwood there are 3 different Acclamations for the Word and also 3 **Dismissals for Children's Liturgy of the Word** — songs to accompany the procession of the children on Sunday morning.

Songs about the Word

Liturgical music is often catechetical — it deepens our understanding of what is happening. The combination of music and liturgical action can be more powerful than simple explanations

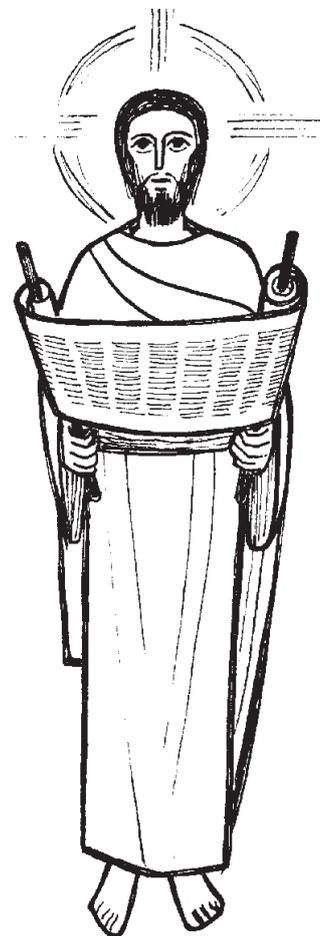
We hear God's word — Christopher Walker (*Calling the Children*)
Take the Word — Christopher Walker (*Calling the Children, Laudate*)
In the Land — Bernadette Farrell or Mike Lynch (*hymnbooks*)
Word of God — Peter McGrail (*Laudate*)

Christ is always present in his Church

— in his word proclaimed

Christ is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read. So it's always right to take care in helping children prepare to read the Word carefully and clearly. It is at least as important to help the other children to hear the Word speaking to them. We hear with our ears, we ponder in our hearts and we respond to God in words of prayer. The new General Instruction of the Roman Missal (56) says:

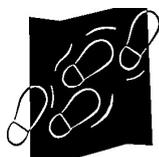
- the Word must be celebrated in a way to promote meditation
- there should be short silences after the readings for us to take the Word of God to heart
- there must be time to ponder on it with the help of the Holy Spirit and to prepare a response to it in prayer.



An opportunity for some Word Art



Look up *Here I Am* Key Words for this topic:
Book



Action: Does the parish have a *Book of the Gospels* that can be borrowed and brought into class?

This passage of Scripture came true today while you heard it being read.



God's Story 3, p.95
based on Luke 4:21)

The Prayer Space in Winter

Is there a space in your classroom for special place for the Word of God?

The Word of God could take the form of either a Lectionary or a Bible, the book you normally read from.

This shrine could be constructed with a bookstand (locate an old 'Missal stand' from church or a recipe book stand).

The end of January (25/1) has the feast of the conversion of St Paul. The story is one of the most

dramatic in the Bible with blinding lights and Paul falling off his horse. But Paul went on to write some of the most familiar passages in the New Testament in his letters to the young Churches. Now turn that into a prayer space!

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