

Spirit of the Season

Liturgical Year C

Autumn 2004

www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS

Knowing our place

Schools are ritual places. Every school day is made up of ritual moments. It may be where the children line up in the playground, what door they go in and what they do when they reach the classroom. This may seem just a way of keeping order, to make life run smoothly, but in every ritual moment we are passing on values.

In the playground at the beginning of September last year's Year 5 move to the place once occupied by Year 6 – they know what is expected of them. In doing this they become Year 6, standing in this position for the whole year, showing the rest of the school who they are. Each year group moves to its new place, not just in the play ground but within the school community. New children do not know where to go, they do not know what is expected of them, they have to learn, but next time...

Welcoming new members of staff will happen in different ways with different groups; other staff, to the whole school community. Each ritual, even if it is just a brief word of welcome, will express the relationship of new member to each group but also show the value the school places on welcome.

- In what ways do we welcome people?
How do they know they are welcome?
- What values do we hope to pass on?
How are these expressed?



Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live, a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.



Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

*from the hymn All are Welcome
by Marty Haugen © GIA Publications*

FAQ

What is this?

Spirit of the Season is a publication from the Liturgy Office and the National Project of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

It is for teachers, catechists and all involved with worship with children. It hopes to offer reflection and information in the area of worship. It is intended to publish twice every term.

It is distributed free of charge through diocesan RE centres & liturgy contacts and may be copied without charge for school and parish use.

All Saints



The feast of All Saints, while being celebrated on Sunday 31 October, as the feast is transferred, can provide opportunities to look at Saints, their lives and how they were faithful disciples.

Looking at Saints that might form either a whole school Collective Act of Worship or for class prayer.

Each class could look at a Saint taken from one of the local, regional/diocesan, national, international, school or parish Saints. The preparation would give a sense of the Communion of Saints (All Saints). The aim is to see 'The Saint' in a much greater context as belonging to a whole multitude.

The simple structure could be to listen to scripture (appropriate to the Saint where possible) and then present a short piece on the Saint. Follow this with a response or song and conclude with a prayer.

This four fold shape could be coupled to other classes' preparations to make a larger liturgy that would have the effect of an expanded and thoughtful Litany of the Saints.



Faithful Departed: (Latin *fideles*—believers) Those who have died in the Christian Faith

Lectionary: (*Ordo Lectionum Missae* – Order of Readings for Mass) The order of the Scripture readings for Sunday and daily Mass throughout the Year. For Sunday Mass, the lectionary works on the principle of reading through the whole of one of the Synoptic Gospels throughout each year of a three-year cycle, Matthew in the first, followed by Mark and then Luke. The Gospel of John is read over the three years. At weekday Masses also, whole books of Scripture are read through in the same way.

On Sundays, in Ordinary Time the Old Testament reading and the Gospel have the same theme. At other times, all the readings are related. Some scriptural books are allotted to certain seasons. In Eastertime the Acts of the Apostles is read in place of the Old Testament.

Salvation: (Latin *salus* – health, safety) In Christian usage, the liberation from death and sin and entry in eternal life through the paschal mystery of Christ, effected for believers through faith, the Church and the sacraments.

from *A Basic Catholic Dictionary* © Alan Griffiths published by Canterbury Press, Norwich. www.scm-canterburypress.co.uk

The Classroom in Autumn

There can be quite a challenge in the classroom to create a prayer space at the start of the a new school year when all about nature is taking its last breath of warm sunshine before the sun begins its roof and tree top journey of Autumn.

The joyful expectation of Spring and early Summer must now give way to the bow of autumn captured in woven willow baskets and containers.

Our liturgical year is directly related to the seasons. St Luke—our Gospel writer—for Sundays until Advent—for taking us to Jerusalem. We are all on that journey. How can our classroom reflect that journey?



An image of the heavenly Jerusalem could be a centre focus for the last few weeks of the Church's year. We will pass through the gate of All Saints and remember those who have died and gone before us to the heavenly city.

Willow branches tied together with raffia and making shapes that suggest being gathered could prove useful. Dried flowers and grasses are in abundance (and cheap) for a longer lasting display. For just a wall space display dried flowers and still supple branches can be affixed to the wall display.

One of the themes of Harvest is about being gathered to the heavenly city. Grains, beans—all dry—can be placed in pots: the abundance of the land waiting for our use or for next year's crop

Common Senses

When the Church celebrates the liturgy, she does something that we are all invited to participate in. 40 years ago, at Vatican II, the Church recognised that people at the liturgy often were not participating as they might, and called for a reform of the liturgy to help make such participation easier. There was a move to use the vernacular in our worship rather than Latin. There was a move to simplify and clarify the forms of worship to make it clearer what people were doing and why. And in all this, the first priority was to assist the whole assembly to full, conscious and active participation.

But it is not easy to say what this 'full, conscious and active participation' is. It is easy to say what ministers *as ministers* do at Mass - for example what the priest does, what the reader does, what the servers do. But they could do all that, and be just going through the motions, not be really participating at all.

What is participation?

It's *NOT* just doing something, or just being there. It *IS* really taking part. It *IS* taking what is there and making it your own. Someone else might be saying the words, but you mean them too. Someone else might be raising the gifts to God

but, in your heart and mind, you are doing it with them. Fundamentally participation means 'praying the liturgy'. There's not always much to see, because it is in the heart and mind, but when we participate a great deal is going on inside of us.

On the whole, this participation thing is something some people seem to pick up, and it just passes others by. Often attempts to teach it just amount to the encouragement to people to: 'Sit still, look and listen.' But look at what? It is not always clear what we should look at, or what it is we see. Listen to what? That is not always clear either. And in any case what are we supposed to 'do' with what we see and hear; and what

about our other senses?

Through this academic year, this page will try and answer some of these questions. Taking the various senses, we will see how the liturgy might engage each of them, what the deeper significance is of what we see, hear, touch, taste and smell - and how using these senses can lead us into prayer, and into a deeper taking-part in the worship of the Church.

Next time:
Seeing & Believing



Full participation

In a school liturgy "full participation" applies to all those gathered, children and adults. Do staff and parents feel part of the liturgy or more like supervisors and spectators? Do the children respond in a full way or are they confused about what is happening, perhaps afraid of getting it wrong? To encourage that full participation, everyone must believe that their presence and engagement is important for themselves and others. Many acts of participation need to be taught before (not during) a liturgy and will also be 'caught' from others. Many of the gestures and responses remain the same, week to week, year to year, and we grow into our participatory role through frequent repetition.

We all participate by:

- Singing – using our full voices, moving in action or dance
- Gestures - making the sign of the cross, kneeling, standing, sitting, sharing the peace, processing
- Responding - saying "Amen", "Lord, have mercy", "Hear our prayer", "Thanks be to God", praying in silence
- Breathing - being present alive in our bodies
- Hearing the Word
- Seeing Christ in one another

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- *Celebrating 'Holy Days'*
- *Glossary*
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- *Participating through our senses*

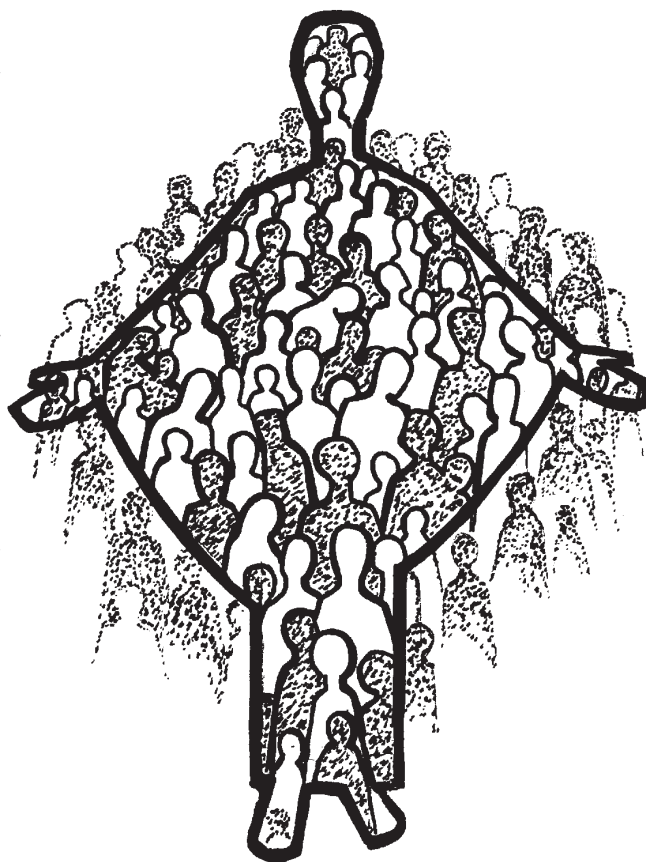
Making up the Body of Christ

As we gather together in school to celebrate as a Christian community – the Body of Christ – sometimes in that desire for unity we can fail to recognise our diversity. What do we see, or perhaps not see – even ignore, in the gathering around us, a gathering of differences. In the school community we will have those with a regular experience of Church, those with little experience and those with virtually none.

We may have those whose experience is of a liturgy which is very different to what they might experience in school; those of the Eastern Catholic rites: Eritreans and Ethiopians, those of the Chaldean Rite, Maronites, Ukrainians and others. Many of these children will be experiencing liturgy in both the parish church and within their own rite - the parish Mass a celebration of perhaps an hour, the Eastern Rite perhaps of two or three hours.

There might also be a vast array of cultural backgrounds, whose experience, or at least that of their parents, is very different to what might be experienced in the typical parish church in

England and Wales. Many of these children will be part of families who have come from an entirely Catholic culture,



where the whole of the local community are involved in the life of the Church, whose parents on arrival in this country had to search for a Catholic church.

In the midst of this cultural and national diversity we may well have children whose arrival in this country is as a result of painful situations in their country of origin, sometimes situations of religious persecution.

Finally, we will, in every school, have a worshipping community whose age range stretches from nursery or reception to the member of staff closest to retirement.

How, then, do we gather together in worship? How do we acknowledge the diversity that we recognise and use it to deepen and strengthen relationship with Christ, deepen and strengthen the community of the school?

There are, therefore, some questions we perhaps need to ask ourselves before we begin to prepare liturgy:

- Who is present in our school community?
- What is there in the experience and culture of the community that we might draw on?
- Are there choices to be made as to the appropriateness of what we offer?
- Why does it matter anyway?

Next time:
Respect for others

Getting in touch

Martin Foster, Liturgy Office,
39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PL.
020 7901 4850 (tel) 020 7901 4821 (fax)
lifeworsh@cbcew.org.uk
www.liturgyoffice.org.uk

Anne Dixon
National Project Co-ordinator,
Catholic Education Service,
39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX
0207901 4880 (tel) 020 7901 4893 (fax)
general@cesew.org.uk
www.cesew.org.uk

Spirit of the Season is put together by
Paul Varey, Trinity & All Saints College,
Leeds, LS18 5HD.
0113 283 7201 (tel) 0113 283 7200 (fax)
p_varey@tasc.ac.uk

The views expressed are not necessarily those of the sponsoring bodies.



Just as the bread broken was first scatter on the hills, then was gathered and became one, so let your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom, for yours is glory and power through all ages.

The Didache