

Spirit of the Season

Advent 2006

Liturgical Year C www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS

Sunday to Sunday...
Week to Week...

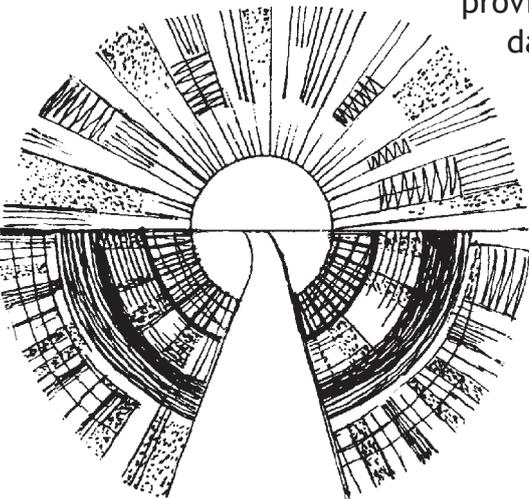
Themes from the Cycle of Prayer will often be explored in times of prayer and worship in local parishes as well as in school. There are many advantages for both parishes and schools in sharing information about what is planned. It can lead to a helpful sharing of resources. Examples can include the sharing of suitable hymns and songs; schools may be able to support parish worship – perhaps by preparing prayers or posters and display material; parish clergy or catechists may be available to assist with school activities related to the theme. This sort of collaboration can provide both schools and parishes with the opportunity to affirm the significant role the other one plays in the life of the Catholic community and in the life of our nation more broadly.

Although the Cycle of Prayer offers themes for prayer to be explored throughout the season, many parishes will focus on those themes linked with particular Sundays. Schools have the opportunity to reinforce the importance of Sunday worship, but are also in the privileged position of being able to more easily

provide for worship on other

days too. This can be an important way of forming children in the way that Sunday worship is intended to inform and feed our daily prayer.

Sometimes with the Cycle of Prayer there will be a temptation to choose readings for liturgies which are very precisely focussed on the theme. However one consequence of this would be to introduce still further readings into a week. Although not necessarily a wrong thing to do, there are often advantages in using the Sunday readings. Often exploring the theme through other less obvious readings, will cast on it a fresh and interesting light.



**Advent-Christmas
2006-2007**
3 December - 8 January

Openness to the Word of God
Bible Sunday
2nd Sunday in Advent 10/12/06

Migrants and Refugees
Migrants' Day
3 December

Expectant Mothers
4th Sunday in Advent 24/12/06

[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/
Calendar/Cycle](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Cycle)

**Cycle
of
Prayer**



In school, as in society we have a wide variety in Sunday experience. For some Sunday, every Sunday, means being at Mass. For others it is a somewhat less regular experience, perhaps monthly or longer; and for others being at Mass is not part of Sunday at all. It is for all our pupils perhaps a Sabbath of some kind, a day of rest, or at least of doing something different.

What should we be doing in school in this area? Understanding the diversity of experience of Sunday, how do we acknowledge its importance?

Do we need to prepare our pupils for Mass on Sunday by what we do in school during the week, or is our reflection on Sunday a retrospective one?

For some the experience of Mass in school is a very different one to their experience of Mass in the parish. In school the celebration will seem to be entirely around them, more is demanded (and allowed) of them in 'full, active and conscious participation' than seems to be their experience in the parish. How do we ensure that they recognise it as the same celebration?

One more question we might ask ourselves is how do we live Sunday through the week?

Perhaps one focus is the concluding words of the priest 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.' We are fed and nourished at our celebration of the Eucharist to carry out the task. It is important that we help our pupils and each other to hold onto these words during the week so that they are not meaningless.

We need perhaps too to reflect on what children's

experience of Sunday Mass has been. For many they will have experienced the Liturgy of the Word in their own group, away from the adults in the church. The experience of the Liturgy of the Word for Children is often lively and active. It is important that in our celebrations of the Eucharist in school we consider this – particularly for Key Stage 1. Is it appropriate, or helpful, to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word in a more formal way?

If many parishes on Sunday offer children a different experience of the Liturgy of the Word, perhaps we could consider how pupils experience it in school. It might even be helpful for teachers in school to perhaps visit the parish Liturgy of the Word for Children to see what the experience is.

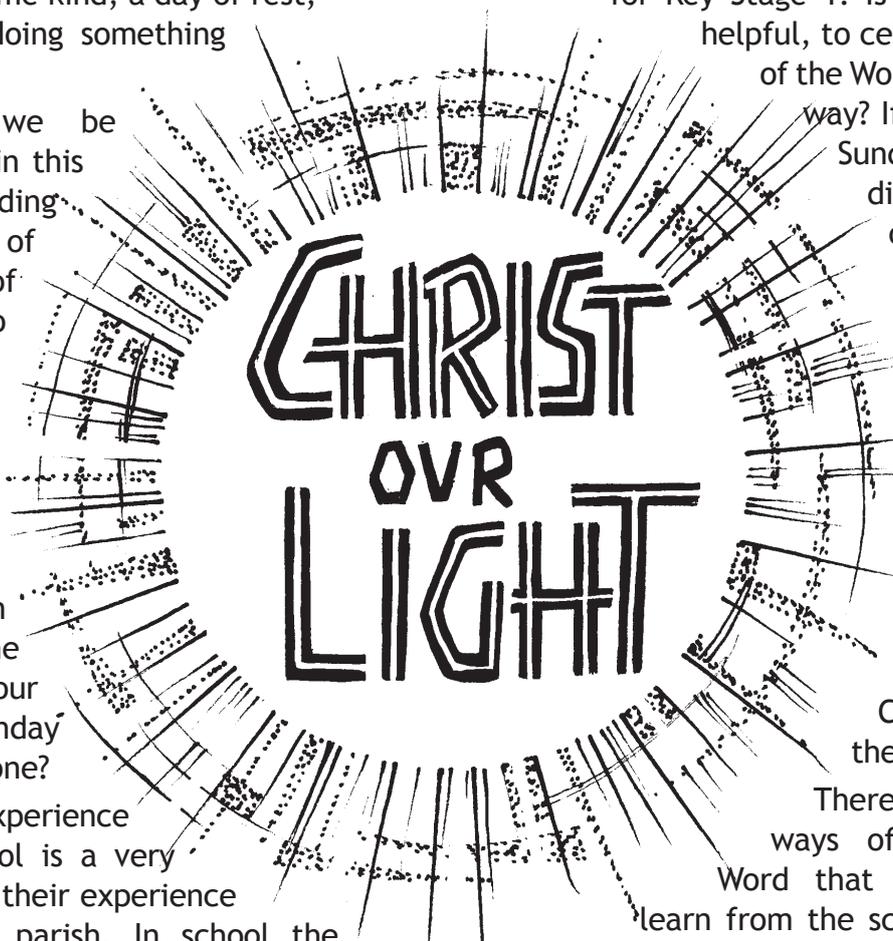
There might also be ways of celebrating the Word that the parish could learn from the school – how to do the Gospel procession well, for example.

Points for reflection

- Can we prepare with the children for Sunday's Mass? Perhaps by using the Sunday Gospel each week. Next Sunday's readings might be used on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Last Sunday's readings on Mondays and Tuesdays.
- Is there music the parishes) are using on Sunday we might use? What in the school's repertoire might be suitable for parish use?

Points for Action

- Are copies of parish newsletters brought to the school to help coordination? Do we copy our newsletters to parishes so they can know what we are doing?



Who Sings?

Ask around your colleagues to see if any of them had the experience of being told either not to sing or that they could not sing while at school. This experience can be common to a lot of adults. The strength of feeling these memories can evoke suggests the power music has to bring people together and the sense of exclusion felt by those unable to participate.

Singing in the liturgy is a different experience to the careful, polished music sung by a school choir at an end of term concert. This does not mean that in the liturgy we should not strive to offer our best to God but it does mean we start from a different place. The liturgy invites all present to participation. The baseline for singing is music that is shared by everyone. This will particularly apply to the priorities for singing in the liturgy (see box).

Music helps brings texture to the liturgy so if every piece of music is sung relentlessly by everyone the texture will be uniform.

It can help to look at the different roles or ministries of music in the liturgy.

- **The Assembly** – everyone present. Is it a challenge to get your staff to sing, to participate in the liturgy? What message does this give?
- **Cantor** – a solo voice or it can be a small group. They can proclaim a text, such as the verses of a psalm, invite people to respond in song or lead them into prayer and reflection.
- **Choir** – to support the song of the assembly, to provide harmonies and descants that enrich the music. There may also be occasion when the choir will sing a piece as a reflection.
- **Accompanist** – to support the singing of the assembly providing both melody and rhythm. There is often a fine balance between necessary support and overwhelming volume.
- **Instrumentalist** – can be part of an accompanying group, leading or supporting the singing. Instrumental music can bring a different dimension to the prayer, which we will explore in a later issue.
- **Priest or leader** – through their words and own participation can encourage others to do likewise. There should be a good communication between the person leading the prayer and whoever is leading the music both before and during the liturgy.
- **Leading the music** – there will often be two distinct roles of leading the musicians and inviting the assembly to sing. As with all ministry there is a need to draw people in to what is being celebrated rather than to draw attention to oneself. This will have implications for the liturgical space.

Questions for Reflection

- What are the different ways children are involved in the music?
- How do you balance the tension between wishing to perform well for God and prayerful participation?

What shall we sing?

Eucharistic Acclamations

Holy, Holy, Holy, the Memorial Acclamation and the Great Amen make up the Eucharistic Acclamation. They form our response within the Eucharistic Prayer which is at the centre of every Mass. In the Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children there are further acclamations.

Form

They are acclamations – short songs of praise. The Memorial acclamation (Lord, by your cross etc.) and the Amen are easy to sing as an acclamation. The Holy, Holy, Holy as a longer text can be set as they it were made up of two verses with the same music. Sometimes the Hosanna is used as a refrain.

Singing the Seasons

Though the texts does not have to change with the liturgical seasons (unlike the Gospel Acclamation) it is possible to choose the text of the memorial acclamation according to the season. For example the phrase 'Lord Jesus, come in glory' would be suitable in Advent.

Other Uses

A sung Amen can be useful on many other occasions – as a response to a series of prayers, for example.

The Memorial Acclamation, as a proclamation of the Paschal Mystery (Christ has died...) can be used as a song to accompany the Communion Procession. Note however that the acclamation is about this rather than a text about Holy Communion and so other texts should not replace it in the Eucharistic Prayer.

The Acclamations in the Children's Eucharistic Prayers can be used in a variety of ways.

- For Music ideas see website,

Putting it Together - Classroom/Tutor Group

The class group or tutor group is a group who will know each other fairly well, who are already established as a smaller community within the bigger community of the school. This allows for the possibility for a class liturgy to be more intimate, to focus on what they need to bring to God. How will your liturgy reflect the intimate nature of the group? It may also provide opportunities for the pupils to lead each other in prayer, in a safer environment where appropriate support can be given to the preparation and leadership of the liturgy.

However, it may also be the case that class/form prayers have to be accommodated in the 5 minutes at the start of the day, during which they also have to be registered, sort out their books and equipment for the day etc. It is important

to make sure that, if this is the case, there is a way of separating the time of prayer from this. Below are some ideas you might wish to use during classroom/tutor group prayers, using the liturgical structure of Gather-Word.... They are not intended to all be used in a single liturgy, or to be used every time you pray as a class/tutor group, but they are intended as a starting point to inspire you to create your own ideas.

Gather

- Acknowledge the presence of each person by name: We gather together with.../We welcome.../We join in prayer with...
- Light a candle to highlight the prayerful nature of the gathering
- Spend a moment being silent

Word

- Have a variety of voices reading different parts of the scripture
- Have the same scripture reading read by different voices
- Use the scriptures as a basis for a guided meditation

Symbolic Action

- Invite the pupils to write anything they want to pray for in a book of class prayer intentions. These can then be read out with a time of prayer for each intention.
- Ask them to share a word or phrase from the scriptures that struck them
- Share the sign of peace

Send Forth

- End with the sign of the cross
- End with a 'Glory be'
- End with a prayer written by the class, or the school prayer

Journeying with Mary

Here are some ideas to inspire you. They offer you the opportunity to adapt them to suit your needs and situation. This might work as one liturgy or flavour the prayer of the whole season. You will also have your own ideas. Don't use every idea in a single liturgy as it will be too much. Music ideas on website.

Gather

- Use the colour blue as part of the focus Use icons or images of Mary, on Powerpoint
- Gather from different parts of the school to represent journey
- Have a processional liturgy where each part is celebrated

in a different place - sing a processional song.

- Reflect on different journeys we make

Word

- Use the Gospel of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38) or the Visitation (Luke 1:39-44)

Symbolic Action

- Move the nativity figures around the school on their journey
- Make a connection with Lourdes, and other places of pilgrimage
- Pray for those making life changing decisions or

travelling.

- Use an Advent Calendar

Send Forth

- What can we say yes to?
- Sing the 'Magnificat'



Getting in touch

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