

FOR THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUTH

Be well formed in the liturgy and integrate its richness into your ministry.

Attend workshops, study the liturgy, and deepen both your understanding and appreciation of it. Regularly include in your ministry prayer experiences and activities that help young people to connect to the symbols, actions, and signs of the liturgy.

Lead young people in preparation for and reflection upon the liturgy, or find someone who can do this well.

During youth meetings, or in intergenerational groups, lead young people in discussion and reflection that will help them to actively participate in the celebration of the Eucharist and connect the liturgy with their lives.

Connect liturgy with life through comprehensive youth ministry.

Integrate youth into the life and ministries of the faith community. Provide opportunities for adults and youth to share faith in the context of retreats, prayer services, faith formation, service activities, and social gatherings. Such experiences connect youth to the life of the community, and so enrich what it means to gather, to hear God's Word, to share the Eucharist, and to be sent forth.

Help young people know how to pray.

Prayer is both a gift and a skill. From the rosary to guided meditation, from spontaneous shared prayer to ritual prayer, youth can and do pray. They need capable adults to guide them as they grow into praying people.

FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING THE LITURGY

Prepare!

Prepare every celebration with the full assembly in mind, children, young people, and adults. Active participation of the entire assembly is a primary goal. Regularly evaluate the preparation of the worship environment, proclamation of the Word, selection and execution of music, and content of the homily for their impact on all who are present, and include young people in this evaluation.

Include youth in homily and liturgical preparation teams.

Inclusion of youth provides preachers and liturgy planners with valuable input from a variety of perspectives, which provides a richness to the Sunday celebration. Such preparation can be a wonderfully formative experience for all who participate.

Include youth in liturgical ministries whenever possible and appropriate.

Many ask if there is an age requirement for liturgical ministry in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Pastors and worship commissions determine the age considered appropriate for their communities, remembering that the individual comes to liturgical ministry by virtue of his/her baptism, reception of the Eucharist, and discerned skills for ministry. The sacrament of Confirmation is not a requirement for participation in liturgical ministries.

Ensure that liturgical ministers are well-formed and take seriously their responsibility to prepare adequately.

Those who serve as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, music ministers, altar servers, and ministers of

hospitality must continue on-going formation in the liturgy and continued development of their skills.

FOR ALL IN PARISH LEADERSHIP

Make worship a priority in parish planning, budgeting, and hiring.

Remember that the celebration of the Eucharist is central to the life of the community of faith. Adequate resources must be made available to ensure that worship is well prepared and celebrated.

Regularly invite and encourage youth to take an active role in all of parish life.

Include youth in the parish advisory structure, such as worship commissions, liturgy preparation committees, parish council, and youth ministry core teams. By giving young people an active role in the advisory process, youth are encouraged to participate fully in parish life, and the community grows in awareness of the needs and gifts of youth.

Listen to youth.

Encourage youth to speak honestly. Listen carefully and help youth to articulate their concerns. Make certain that youth are heard, understood, and respected.

Provide trained youth ministry leaders who have the vision and skills to incorporate young people into all aspects of our life of faith.

Youth groups are not enough – in fact, they can be a big part of the problem if they separate youth from rest of the faith community. Trained adult youth ministry leaders strive not to build youth groups, but to build comprehensive youth ministry, leading to broad-based participation of youth in the faith community – including our Sunday worship.

For Pastors, Liturgy Coordinators, Musicians, Youth Ministers, Worship Commissions, and DREs

Youth and Sunday Mass: Preparing Youth for Liturgy and Preparing the Liturgy Well

Parents and parish leaders struggle to find ways to encourage youth to actively participate in the Mass. They share a heartfelt desire for the youth of our Church to be involved in the celebration of the Eucharist each Sunday and in the life of the parish community. Accomplishing this is no easy task.

To assist parishes in meeting this challenge, the Archdiocesan Offices of Worship and Youth Ministry offer here:

- foundational principles for understanding the liturgy,
- practical strategies to include youth in the life and worship of the parish,
- ways to prepare the hearts of young people for worship through liturgical catechesis, and
- answers to frequently asked questions about youth and the liturgy.

It is our hope that young people will find a place in worship that is rightfully theirs by virtue of their baptism.

We invite pastors, youth ministers, DREs, liturgy coordinators and worship commissions to read, reflect upon, and discuss how best to implement the principles and practical strategies that follow.



Understanding Ritual: Is the Mass Really Boring?

Youth often complain that the Mass is boring because it is a ritual: we do the same things over and over. Ironically, the lives of young people are filled with rituals, not only religious ones.

Take for example all of the ritual elements in a football game: ritual clothing (uniforms), ritual enactors (players, cheerleaders, spectators, band, referee), ritual music (Star Spangled Banner, Alma Mater), ritual gestures (the wave, signals for scoring and penalties), ritual language (touchdown, field goal, quarterback, holding). What if the way we played football changed on a weekly basis, including rules, language, music and uniforms? The spectators and players would find themselves confused and disoriented without the ritual aspects of the game.

Stability, consistency, and repetition are crucial to the positive experience of ritual. Moreover, participants need to understand and appreciate basic ritual elements, both on the football field and in worship. Ritual itself is not the problem: rituals of all sorts enrich the lives of young people.

Our liturgies are ritual — they are essentially the same week in and week out. The pattern and repetitive nature of the liturgy enable the worshiping assembly to enter fully into prayer, provided the assembly is properly prepared, and the liturgy is well-celebrated.

Ritual prayer can lead us to a profound sense of the awe and mystery of God. Our Eucharistic gatherings on Sunday are meant to be an experience of the

heavenly kingdom that is to come, an experience of Christ present among us.

We must prepare the hearts and minds of our young people so that they may be engaged in this most profound experience.

Equally important, our liturgical celebrations must be prepared and executed well to nourish and foster the faith of young and old.

It is imperative that we prepare youth for liturgy and prepare the liturgy well.

Questions for Discussion

Pastors, youth ministers, musicians, liturgy coordinators, worship commissions, and DREs should gather to discuss:

- How can we further involve youth in the life of our parish, including the liturgy?
- How can we enhance our homilies and liturgical music?
- How can we better provide opportunities for young people to deepen their understanding and appreciation for the liturgy?
- How can our liturgies become more inclusive?
- How do we regularly evaluate our liturgical practices and implement changes where needed?
- How will we implement the principles and practical strategies presented here?

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