Guidelines for



CHILDREN'S LITURGY LEADERS

St. John Henry Newman Parish

Contents

Page 2: What is Children's Liturgy of the Word?
Page 2: When does it take place?

Page 3: Who runs it?
Page 3: What should a child expect
Page 3: What happens at the end?
Page 3: What Age is Children's Liturgy aimed at?
Page 3: Can someone older accompany a child?

Page 4: What if a child has special needs?
Page 4: What if a child needs the toilet during Children's Liturgy?
Page 4; What if a child is upset and doesn't want to attend?
Page 4: Rules for Children's Liturgy.

Page 5: Role Description for Children's Liturgy of the Word Leader & Volunteer.

Page 6: Person Specification.

Page 7: The Use of Identification Badges.

What is Children's Liturgy of the Word?

Children's Liturgy of the Word is a form of the Liturgy of the Word that empowers children to participate in the Mass as fully as possible. Young children (over the age of 3) with the leaders, leave the main body of the church during the Liturgy of the Word, to hear the scripture readings proclaimed and explained at an age-appropriate level. After it is finished the children rejoin their parents for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Our aim is to make the children's experience of church meaningful, whilst helping them to grow in the faith of the Catholic Church and develop as full and active members of our Parish Community.

When does it take place?

In this parish we have Children's Liturgies at the following Masses

- St Joseph's Darlaston - Saturdays at 4pm
- Holy Trinity Bilston - Sundays at 10am
- St Joseph's Wolverhampton - Sundays at11.30am

Who runs it?

Children's Liturgy is run by a dedicated team of volunteers across the parish. All our volunteers are safely recruited in line with Catholic Church of England and Wales' Safeguarding Policies.

If you would like more information on the process then please click on this link to the Safer-Recruitment-Flowchart-DBS-Role.pdf for further information, but please don't worry, our Parish Safeguarding Representative will guide you through the whole process.

They all have various backgrounds and are not necessarily school teachers for their day jobs. They all however love working with children and sharing the faith with our younger members. Please see page 5 for the Role Description for Children's Liturgy Leader / Helper.

What should a child expect?

A child can expect a caring, safe and engaging environment where children can listen to Gods word. They hear the same gospel as at Mass that day. They take part in prayer and complete a small activity such as colouring in/wordsearches. Whilst in Children's Liturgy the leaders will be responsible for their safety.

What happens at the end?

At the offertory hymn children will be bought back into the main body of the church.

Volunteers will ensure all children return back to their parents/guardians. Parents should ensure that they make sure their child knows where they are sitting and keep an eye out in case they have difficulty finding them.

What Age is Children's liturgy aimed at?

Our Children's Liturgy are for children over the age of 3. We cannot have children younger, due to safeguarding and health and safety guidelines. The activities are also not designed for those under the age of 3 and are more suited to those of school age.

Whilst there is no official older age limit for Children's Liturgy, we ask that once children have undergone their First Reconciliation that they remain in the full Mass.

The activities we use are also designed for younger children up to the age of 8. Older children who have not had First Holy Communion may wish to attend to learn more about the faith but you must speak with the priest/liturgy leaders to see if this is suitable first.

Can someone older accompany a child?

To begin with if a child's older family member wants to accompany the child for the first few sessions, they are more than welcome. However this cannot be for more than a couple of weeks (due to safeguarding policy).

What if a child has special needs?

Whilst we are not all teachers/experts with special needs training we will do all we can to ensure our Children's Liturgy is inclusive. If a child has additional needs and needs extra support when learning it is important that the parent/guardian speaks to one of the leaders so that the child can be appropriately supported.

It may be that a parent is asked to accompany a child in the first instance to help the leaders in understanding what best works with supporting that individual.

What if a child needs the toilet during children's liturgy?

We ask that all children use the bathroom prior to attending Children's Liturgy. If a child asks to use the toilet they will be allowed.

At Holy Trinity and St. Joseph's, Darlaston they will be allowed to attend unattended (as it is next to where the Liturgy takes place). They should be asked to use the Disability Friendly toilet and leaders should ensure that no one else is present whilst they use the toilet facilities.

At St. Joseph's, Wolverhampton they will be supervised back to the parent/guardian and can then return to the session when they are ready. Leaders need to ensure that correct child: adult ratio is maintained in the room where the Liturgy is taking place.

What if a child is upset and doesn't want to attend?

Children's Liturgy is a voluntary activity, and it is up to the Parent / Guardian and the child whether they wish to attend. A child should never be forced to attend Children's Liturgy.

If a child becomes upset and wants to return to a parent, they will in the first instance be encouraged to stay but if they wish they will be supported in returning to their parent/guardian.

Rules for Children's Liturgy

Children's Liturgy is a space for all and to ensure that all feel safe and included during the session we have a number of rules:

Children are expected to:

1) Arrive with listening ears and a willingness to learn.
2) Be friendly and particularly welcoming to new members.
3) Be respectful, helpful and trustworthy.
4) Behave and listen to all instructions from the leaders and helpers and stick to the rules.
5) Respect group leaders/helpers;
6) Kind safe hands - children should keep their hands (and feet) to themselves and refrain from rough play.
7) Refrain form 'bad language' or language that is discriminatory/offensive as this will not be tolerated.

Children have the right to:

1) Be safe and happy in this activity.
2) Be respected and treated fairly.
3) Ask for help.
4) Be listened to.
50 Have any concerns taken seriously and acted on.

Role Description for Children's Liturgy of the Word Leader & Volunteer.

Appointed by and Responsible to: The Parish Priest

Function: To provide an adapted Liturgy of the Word for pre-school and primary school children during Mass at weekends in order to lead them to Worship and a relationship with Christ.

Main Responsibilities

1) To Conduct the celebration of the Word with the children in accordance with Guidelines for Children's Liturgy of the Bishop's Conference.

2) To collaborate with others in the running of a Children's Liturgy Group.

3) To inform the parents of the children and parish community of the work of the liturgy group.

4) To prepare the venue, to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and to conduct the Celebration of the Word with them.

5) To liaise with the presiding priest and any other appropriate person prior to the liturgy.

6) To monitor good practice and implement any changes where necessary to enhance the quality of Liturgy and ensure the safety of children. To minimise risks of abuse and take action to report concerns and /or allegations.

7) To ensure that the Children's Liturgy of the Word is conducted in accordance with the safeguarding policies and procedures of the Catholic Church in England and Wales as administered by the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

8) This therefore means that no adult must ever be alone with children [anyone under the age of 18] and where appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.

9) To ensure that any safeguarding concerns are reported to the Diocesan safeguarding Team

10) To undertake appropriate training as deemed necessary for the Diocese and Parish.

Person Specification

1) Be a person of faith and prayer, aware of the call to service and ministry in the Church.

2) Love the Scriptures and want to communicate and share them with children.

3) Be committed to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and the ethos of the parish and keen to proclaim the message of Christ in all its fullness.

4) Have good communication skills and experience of talking to children.

5) Be over 18 years of age if expected to take responsibility for the group

6) Be willing to undergo the pre-recruitment checks and training required by the Church and to adhere to safeguarding guidance.

   If you would like more information on the process then please click on this link to the Safer-Recruitment-Flowchart-DBS-Role.pdf for further information, but please don't worry, our Parish Safeguarding Representative will guide you through the whole process. An enhanced DBS check will be required.

   You will need to undertake the Level Three Training.

   Level 3 Safeguarding for Volunteers in the Catholic Church (DBS)

FOR LEADERS ONLY:

To be responsible for the supervision of other volunteers and to ensure that they are providing a safe working environment and following safe working practices.

Leaders would be expected to take part in the role on a regular basis e.g. 3 times a month or more.

The Use of Identification Badges

We ask all those who undertake the role of Children's Liturgy Leader within our churches to wear an identification badge while carrying out this ministry. As this role involves working with children and their families, it is particularly important that leaders can be easily recognised and clearly identified as people who have been appointed to undertake this ministry on behalf of the parish. The badge helps give parents, carers, children, other parishioners and visitors confidence about who is responsible for leading and assisting with Children's Liturgy.

Each badge will include the leader's photograph, their name and the parish they represent, and will clearly state "Children's Liturgy Leader". This provides a simple and immediately recognisable means of identifying those who have been authorised by the parish to undertake this role.

The details provided on the badge may also be used to contact the Parish Office should a parent, carer or anyone else wish to verify the identity of the person wearing it or confirm that they are authorised to undertake Children's Liturgy on behalf of the parish. Such a check should not be regarded as a sign of mistrust or as questioning the integrity of the individual. Rather, asking questions and checking the identity and role of those working with children can form an important part of good safeguarding practice, which we actively encourage and support.

The reverse of the badge will also include contact details for the Diocesan Safeguarding Department. These details are available should a Children's Liturgy Leader, parent, carer, parishioner or anyone else need safeguarding advice or support, or wish to raise a safeguarding concern. Having this information readily available is part of our commitment to ensuring that safeguarding is visible, accessible and taken seriously throughout parish life.

The badges are professionally produced and are supplied complete with an official parish lanyard. Both the badge and lanyard are issued specifically to the named individual for the purpose of carrying out their assigned role. They must not be lent, given to, or used by another person, even temporarily. They should only be worn or displayed when you are undertaking your assigned Children's Liturgy role and must not be used at any other time or for any other purpose. Wearing the badge identifies you publicly as someone authorised to undertake this ministry on behalf of the parish, and it is therefore important that it is used responsibly.

Badges and lanyards should be treated with care and kept securely when not in use. If a badge is lost or stolen, this must be reported to the Parish Office immediately so that appropriate action can be taken. If you cease to undertake the role of Children's Liturgy Leader, for whatever reason, the badge and parish lanyard must be returned promptly to the Parish Office.

These arrangements provide a clear and consistent way of identifying those entrusted with leading Children's Liturgy. They form part of our wider commitment to good safeguarding practice and help provide reassurance to children, parents and carers while also supporting our Children's Liturgy Leaders in carrying out this important ministry on behalf of the parish.