



Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry
Directory for Catechesis

GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

1. Dismissal of younger children from the assembly during a weekend liturgy is intended to offer an experience of sharing the Sunday Readings on the child's own level, in a prayer environment.
2. "When children are to participate in the liturgy of the word in a space separate from the main assembly, they must first gather with the rest of the assembly to celebrate the introductory rites. At the conclusion of the opening prayer, but before the first reading is proclaimed, the presiding priest may formally send the children and their ministers to the place where they will celebrate their own liturgy of the word. This may be done by presenting the Lectionary to the one who will preside over the liturgy of the word with the children and/or words of dismissal" (Liturgy Documentary Series: Masses with Children pp. 34-35).
3. More than one adult accompanies the children. In addition, Middle School or High School age youth may serve as assistants and lectors, on a rotating basis, to allow them to participate with the greater assembly on most weekends.
4. Catechists for Children's Liturgy of the Word will participate in formation on the basics of liturgical year, proclamation of scripture, and basic homiletics for children.
5. Catechists will select an appropriate resource for their preparation and will proclaim Readings and Psalms from the Children's Lectionary. The *Directory for Masses with Children* clearly sets forth the Church's desire that children, no less than other members of the community, be formed by the same word of God. Therefore, at masses with adults in which children also participate and at Masses with children in which only a few adults participate "biblical reading should never be omitted" (Liturgy Documentary Series: Masses with Children p. 34).
6. Catechists will use the same order of worship and movements, and follow the same cycle of readings, as the adult assembly. "In order to engage children's authentic participation, liturgy must respect their need for physical involvement. They should be invited to participate in the actions of the liturgy whenever it is appropriate and possible" (Liturgy Documentary Series: Masses with Children p. 38).

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7. “Because the explanation of the Scripture readings is so important at Masses with children a homily should always be given. However, in order that they may not be deprived of the riches of God’s word...with the consent of the pastor or rector of the church, one of the adults participating in these celebrations may speak to the children after the gospel” (Liturgy Documentary Series: Masses with Children p. 35).
8. Music enhances the celebration of the word and is selected to connect with the readings and/or mirror the music used in the general assembly.
9. During the Prayer of the Faithful, written petitions or the children’s own spoken petitions can be used.
10. At the conclusion of their liturgy of the word, and before the liturgy of the eucharist begins the children return to their families (Liturgy Documentary series: Masses with children p.35).