

Liturgy of the Word with Children
General Information to Sundays in Ordinary Time,
Year A
Matthew

Catechist Background

'Ordinary Time' in the Church is not really ordinary at all! The term comes from the Latin word that mean 'numbered' and refers to the fact that we number (or 'order') the weeks in the Church's year.

Setting the Scene

Green is the usual colour for Ordinary Time, and if your Children's Liturgy space allows, you may choose to incorporate that colour into a centrepiece. In the Church, green signifies growth and it is the colour of Ordinary Time because we grow in faith not during festivals but in the everyday.

Note, however, that there are some Sundays in Ordinary Time every year which are special feasts and so they have their own colour.

We Say Sorry

In some parishes, Children's Liturgy of the Word begins before the Introductory Rite has finished. If you have been in the main body of the church for the Penitential Rite, there is no need to repeat it in Children's Liturgy.

Gloria

If you have been in the main body of the church for the Gloria, there is no need to repeat it in Children's Liturgy.

We Pray (1)

The Opening Prayer expresses the theme of the readings for the day. As above, if you have been in the main body of the church for the Opening Prayer, there is no need to repeat it in Children's Liturgy.

Gospel Acclamation

'Alleluia' is the normal Gospel Acclamation sung during Ordinary Time. For the Gospel Acclamation you might like to look at:

- *Music for Children's Liturgy of the Word* by Christopher Walker (Oregon Catholic Press);
- 'Halle, Halle, Halle' by John Bell (Wild Goose Publications), also contained in *Laudate*, no. 178;
- Some of the Gospel Acclamations used at your parish mass if suitable;
- Try writing your own words using tunes familiar to children (see suggestions in *The Complete Children's Liturgy* by Katie Thompson (Kevin Mayhew publishers).

Gospel

This year is year 'A,' and so most of the Gospel readings for Sunday Mass this year come from the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew's is the first of the four Gospels as they appear in the New Testament, although it is not thought to have been the first to be written. It is thought it was written for the Judeo-Christian community who were trying to break away from Judaism while preserving the continuity of the Old Testament. This is because it uses several Jewish concepts and terms such as Messiah (even though like the other New Testament texts it was written originally in Greek). Scholars suggest that this Gospel was written to show that Jesus fulfilled the history of Israel. To do this Matthew constantly refers to quotations from the Old Testament which showed how Jesus acted as if he were the Messiah for whom the Jews were waiting. Similarly he begins the Gospel by listing Jesus' historic Jewish family links – his genealogy through Joseph – which links him with many important Jewish figures.

Reflecting on the Gospel Reading with Children

Questions and ideas are provided to help draw out a greater understanding of the Gospel reading for the children, as well as to help focus on aspects which may be relevant for them.

Response

An activity has been provided to cement visually and actively the understanding the children may have gained from listening to and reflecting upon the Gospel and help them to own it in their hearts.

We Believe

A statement of belief is included, which is based on the Creed, to enable the children to affirm what they believe about God as that relates to that Sunday's Gospel reading.

We Pray (2)

'All liturgy is prayer and it is right that a liturgy of the word with children should end with a time of intercession. The prayer may arise from the children's reflection but it is always concerned with the needs of the whole Church and the world. It is important to remember that the petitions are invitations to pray not the prayers themselves, so a short phrase that invites the children to pray is better than a long or detailed list of concerns. This model of intercession is easily learned by children.'

(Liturgy of the Word with Children – Guidelines –Commentary ¶7)

