

Some Basic Principles for Celebrating Masses with Children
*Grounded in the **Directory for Masses with Children***

The elements of liturgy:

Senses – what we see, taste, touch, hear, smell in the liturgy...

Word – *scripture/ prayer texts,*

Music – *acclamations/ songs/ instrumentation,*

Prayerful silence,

Intercessory prayer,

Praise and thanksgiving

Movement - *gestures/ movements/processions/ postures,*

Symbols – *cross/ water/oil/bread/ wine/light/ salt/ the community gathered...*

Environment – *the worship space & its elements, visual elements*

Seasons of the Church Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter-Pentecost,

Ordinary Time, Holy Days...

Ministries for children and families par 22:

- ❖ Preparing the place and the altar;
- ❖ Acting as cantor, singing in a choir, playing musical instruments;
- ❖ Proclaiming the readings;
- ❖ Responding during the homily;
- ❖ Reciting the intentions of the general intercessions;
- ❖ Bringing the gifts to the altar;
- ❖ Participating in processions – entrance, Gospel, accompanying the bringing of gift, communion...



The aim of these principles and guidelines:

1) To help children readily and joyfully to encounter Christ together in the Eucharistic celebration

(present worship)

2) So that they (the children) gradually may take a more active and conscious part in the full Eucharistic assembly. **(future worship)**



The Dynamic Starting Point of Liturgy:

- ❖ Liturgy as encounter with Christ.
- ❖ Liturgy as an event/action of the assembly in union with their God...
- ❖ Family Masses and Children's liturgies of the word are worship for all engaged, both adults and children.

The human values that are present in the Eucharistic celebration:

Par 9. ...even if children already have some feeling for God and the things of God, they may also experience in proportion to their age and personal development the human values that are present in the Eucharistic celebration, including:

- ❖ community activity,
- ❖ exchange of greetings,
- ❖ capacity to listen
- ❖ capacity to look for and give pardon,
- ❖ expression of gratitude,
- ❖ experience of symbolic actions,
- ❖ a meal of friendship
- ❖ and festive celebration.

A FAMILY MASS EXPERIENCE...

PARTS OF THE MASS

INTRODUCTORY RITE:

Par 40: (purpose of introductory rite) ... that the faithful coming together take on the form of a community and prepare themselves to listen to God's work and celebrate the Eucharist properly.

Minimum: some introductory element which is completed by an opening prayer—care should be taken that each one (element) is used from time to time and that none be entirely neglected.

Some Possibilities: Preparing the space, welcome ministry, use of a rich procession, incensing of altar, words of welcome & introduction, use of sprinkling Rite, Sung Gloria with simple refrain



WORD OF GOD:

Par 42 ...the reading of the gospel should never be omitted.



Some Possibilities: Introductory comments, sharing of readings among ministers, selection of readings, use of silence, singing of psalm & gospel acclamation, giving of the homily... Quality over quantity – the shorter reading isn't always the most appropriate.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Par 52 The Eucharistic Prayer is of the greatest importance in the Eucharist celebrated with children because it is the highpoint of the entire celebration.

Some Possibilities: Setting of the table, use of Eucharistic Prayers for Children, use of sung acclamations...



COMMUNION RITE

Par 53 When the Eucharistic prayer has ended, the Lord's prayer, the breaking of bread, and the invitation to communion should always follow, that is, the elements that have the principal significance in the structure of this part of the Mass.

Some Possibilities: Sung Lord's prayer, visual element of breaking of the bread, invitation to participate in communion procession with appropriate gesture.



DISMISSAL

Par 54 The comments that preceded the final blessing are important in Masses with children. Before they are dismissed they need some repetition and application of what they have heard, but this should be done in a very few words. This is the time to express the connection between liturgy and life.