

LITURGY

United In Love

Resource for
Parish Liturgy Groups

Archdiocese of Perth
Liturgical Guidelines

Centre for Liturgy



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Centre for Liturgy Archdiocese of Perth gratefully acknowledges all who have contributed to the development of this resource.

Desktop Publishing: Centre for Liturgy
Graphics: Copyright © www.pixabay.com
Revised Edition 2022

Published by

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Contents

Introduction	4
What is liturgy?	5
The principles of liturgy	7
Why liturgy committees?	9
Assessment Sheet 1: Some needs of good liturgy	11
Membership of the liturgy committee	13
Assessment Sheet 2: Needs of the liturgy committee	16
The role of the liturgy committee	17
Assessment Sheet 3: Evaluation and review of a liturgical ministry	21
Liturgy committee meetings	22
Assessment Sheet 4: Evaluation and review of a liturgy committee	24
Commissioning of liturgy committee members	25
Resources	28
Archdiocese Policy and Legal Requirements	30

Liturgy—United in Love

Resource for Parish Liturgy Groups



Introduction

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal sets clearly before us the purpose of liturgy committees - participation in the liturgy by all the baptised.

...with due regard for the nature and particular circumstances of each liturgical assembly the entire celebration is arranged in such a way that it leads to a conscious, active, and full participation of the faithful both in body and mind... to which the Christian people have a right and duty by reason of their Baptism. GIRM 18

A liturgy team provides the structure that allows for definition of the tasks and methods for accomplishing them. It has a vital role in assisting the assembly to pray primarily at Sunday Mass but also at other liturgical celebrations. This is achieved through effective preparation and enhancement of the rites that encourage full, active and conscious participation by all.

This resource is offered as a guide to parish liturgy teams in their formation, management and planning. It contains some background information on liturgy, suggests ways of implementing the directives of the liturgical documents and poses questions for reflection and discussion.

Good liturgy doesn't happen by chance but rather when a parish takes serious responsibility for it.

Abbreviations

GIRM The General Instruction of the Roman Missal
Final Text with Application for Australia

CSL Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

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What is Liturgy?

'Liturgy' comes from the Greek word *leitourgia* that means the work of the people for the people. Our work by reason of our baptism is to make Christ present in the world. This is done through the liturgy which is both the high point and the source of our Christian life, for it is through the liturgy that we become the Body of Christ. Liturgy enables our tradition and beliefs to work in our lives and in the world.

The early church understood liturgy as worship, proclamation and charity. These aspects are central to our principal liturgy, the Mass. When we gather each Sunday as a community we worship God, listen to the Word and are sent out to serve God and neighbour. Other liturgical celebrations are the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Hours, the sacraments and ritual blessings.

The Constitution on Sacred Liturgy states:

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. CSL 14

This is also the focus in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal:

Full participation requires that the assembly takes part in the preparation and celebration so that the liturgy is truly theirs.

Conscious participation in the celebration should enable the assembly gathered to hear God's word and to sense God's presence working in their lives. The people are entitled to adequate instruction and preparation.

Active participation engages the mind and spirit by engaging the body and its senses.

The encouragement of participation through effective catechesis, preparation and enhancement of the rites is the main purpose of the liturgy committee.

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What is Liturgy?

Questions for reflection and discussion:

Is there full, conscious and active participation of the assembly?

What exactly does this mean?

What is your understanding of liturgy?

What is the theme for every liturgy?

Are the parish liturgies well prepared?

Who is involved in the preparation?

What is meant by enhancement of the rites?

Who is responsible for this process?



The Principles of Liturgy

The following principles need to be kept in mind when considering the liturgical practice in the parish.

- Liturgy is always a celebration of the paschal mystery. CSL 5
- The liturgy of the Church is the public worship of the whole body of Christ that includes all its members by right of their baptism. CSL 6
- The whole assembly celebrates the liturgy.
- The priest through his ministerial priesthood has prominence in presiding over the gathering.
- The people share in the *'royal priesthood'* in their roles in the liturgical celebration as ministers at the altar and in their full participation in the liturgy. GIRM 5
- Christ is always present and active in the liturgy. CSL 7
- Liturgy takes the form of ritual prayer.
- The Word of God always has a place in liturgy.
- Liturgy calls for the full, conscious and active participation of the faithful. CSL 14
- Liturgy is *the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed and at the same time it is the fount from which all the Church's power flows.* CSL 10
- The form of the liturgy is always to be carefully prepared and presented respecting its nature as the Church's expression of the prayer of Christ.
- The liturgy is able to be adapted to the authentic cultural identity of the participants.

Chapter 1 CSL



The Principles of Liturgy

Questions for reflection and discussion:

Is Jesus the centre of our liturgy?

What is the role of the priest celebrant/ presider?

What is meant by '*the royal priesthood of the faithful*?' GIRM 5

Do our liturgies meet the needs of the whole parish?

Is the assembly assisted to pray through enhancement of the rites?

Is the assembly aware of its vital role in the celebration?

Does the ritual flow?

How is the Word celebrated?

Have the church guidelines regarding environment, music and gesture been read and respected?

Are the liturgical roles exercised by people with gifts and skills that allow for the best possible experience of Word, music and prayer?



Why Liturgy Committees?

Liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed... the fount from which all her power flows. CSL 10

Liturgical celebrations belong to the whole church so that every effort must be made within the parish to develop a sense of community that culminates in the shared celebrations on Sunday. Since liturgy belongs to the faithful through their Baptism, the committee members are ultimately servants of the entire faith community.

Good liturgy doesn't happen by chance. It happens when a parish takes serious responsibility for it. The work is not the exclusive responsibility of the priest although his role is pivotal. A liturgy team made up of members of the community provides the structure that allows people to define the tasks of developing good liturgy and discover methods of accomplishing them. The team evaluates the liturgies and makes recommendations for greater participation. They communicate these suggestions to the relevant ministries.

A workable understanding of what is 'good' liturgy is an essential component of developing prayerful liturgical practices. This includes knowing the structure of the liturgy, the flow of ritual celebrations and the requirements of good liturgy as outlined in the liturgy documents.

Ministers, resources and environment are the basic needs of good liturgy.

- The priest/celebrant has a '*prominent place and function*'. GIRM 4
- There are many ministries associated with the liturgy.

These include Ministers of the Word, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Ministers of Music, Ministers of Hospitality, Altar Ministers and Acolytes, Children's Liturgy of the Word teams to name a few. Insight into the various liturgical ministries and how they function is important for liturgy committee members. Formation, both initial and ongoing is the concern of the committee.

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Why Liturgy Committees?

- Decisions made by the committee need to be communicated to the different ministries.
- Many resources are available for planning liturgy. There are official ritual books and documents – Roman Missal, Ordo, Lectionary, the various rites and the liturgy documents that are the basic resources for planning liturgy. Background information is available from liturgy journals and electronic resources while assistance may be provided by the diocesan liturgy office and personnel with specialised expertise. See page 28 for a list of resources link.
- Since liturgy involves the whole person (engaging all of the senses) the environment is an important aspect for consideration. This includes the space as well as the nature of the actions that take place there.

Preparation of the liturgy is important to encourage full participation. Much of the planning is already done – the liturgical year, the structure of the liturgy, liturgical texts, gesture, ritual and symbol – but the sense of community needs to be developed especially through participation in the Sunday liturgy.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

Are our liturgies worthy enough?

What are the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of our liturgies?

Who is doing the work?

Do the leaders of the ministries have the skills required?

What needs to change?

Does the assembly need formation?

How are decisions made for our liturgies coordinated?

Who communicates the decisions made?



Preparing Good Liturgy

Assessment Sheet One

Ministries and Duties in the Mass

Presider Sacristan Cantors Musicians
Psalmists Greeters Readers/Proclaimers Senior and Junior Servers
Acolytes Deacon Environment Collectors
Leaders of Children's Liturgy of the Word
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Questions for reflection and discussion:

What ministries are represented in our parish?

For which ministries is there initial training?

For which ministries is there ongoing training?

Is evaluation part of the ministry? How?

Is there a term of commitment? How long?

Questions for reflection and discussion:

What resources are readily available to ministers in the parish?

Is there a budget to cover resources?

Who should have access to resources?



Preparing Good Liturgy

Assessment Sheet Two

Environment

Topics/Items to consider

Quality liturgical objects, vestments, altar linen
Art and environment appropriate to the season , feast or special occasion.
Good sound system
A worship space that is attractive and well maintained.
A worship space that enables ordered, graceful movement and gesture.
Music appropriate to the liturgical season
Music that promotes unity and active participation for the worshipping assembly.
Adequate storage for all liturgical equipment.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

What are the strengths and weaknesses in each area?

Who is responsible for these aspects?

Is there a budget to cover expenses in this area?

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Membership of the Liturgy Committee

Among all who are involved with regard to the rites, pastoral aspects, and music “there should be harmony and diligence in the effective preparation of each liturgical celebration in accordance with the Missal and other liturgical books... This should take place under the direction of the rector of the church and after consultation with the faithful in things that directly pertain to the.... the priest who presides at the celebration, however, always retains the right of arranging those things that pertain to him.” GIRM 111

To be of service the liturgy team needs to know the needs of the people who make up the assembly.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

What ethnic groups are represented by the parish?

Does your committee represent all age groups?

What are the needs and concerns of the people?

What are the traditions of the parish?

How are people presently participating in the liturgy?

Knowing these things about the parish, its people and their traditions enables assessment of the needs and the setting of long term goals for the liturgical life of the parish.



Membership of the Liturgy Committee

- A working understanding of what is good liturgy is an essential component of developing prayerful liturgical practice. This includes knowing the structure of the liturgy, the flow of ritual celebrations and the requirements of good liturgy as outlined in the liturgy documents. Insight into the various liturgical ministries and how they function can be found in the liturgical documents. This is pivotal to the good order and reverence of all liturgies.
- When considering to form a committee, it is advisable to get started and to start small. Members should agree to a two or three year commitment with an overlap of tenure for continuity. Many will consider their level of knowledge to be insufficient but a willingness and an openness to formation will ensure confidence and knowledge is nurtured.
- The committee should be made up of people interested in and informed about liturgy. The presiding priest has a pivotal role in directing, guiding and forming the group.
- All members should support the priest who in turn should be open to ideas from the group.
- Those who have a leadership role in liturgies and representatives of different ministries and groups should be included.
- Extra members may be called on at different times for special celebrations.
- Cooperation and respect between and among members of the committee and parishioners are essential.



Membership of the Liturgy Committee

Questions for reflection and discussion:

What is the current composition of the team?

Is the group representative of the parish?

Are all ministries represented?

What is the term of office?

How are new members recruited?

What aspects of liturgy are the team most experienced or excited about?

In what aspects do the team require formation?

Would it be helpful to have teams for specific purposes and occasions?

How are members recruited?



Needs of the Liturgy Committee

Assessment Sheet Two

Indicate with an **X** whether you currently **have** or would like to work on an aspect of each statement.

An understanding and implementation of the liturgical year.

Have..... Still need.....

A focus based on liturgical concerns and on serving the assembly.

Have..... Still need.....

A process for decision making acceptable to everyone.

Have..... Still need.....

General enthusiasm.

Have..... Still need.....

Process of ongoing formation for committee members.

Have..... Still need.....

Provision for regular meetings at a particular time and place.

Have..... Still need.....

Ministry coordinators in the parish.

Have..... Still need.....

A method of communication between the committee and each ministry.

Have..... Still need.....

Provision of a parish budget for liturgy.

Have..... Still need.....



The Role of the Liturgy Committee

The 5 core tasks of the liturgy committee are:

1. Sunday celebrations
2. Formation of liturgical ministers and the assembly
3. Coordination and communication
4. Evaluation
5. Setting goals

Individual reflection sheets are available on website for a focused approach.

1. Sunday Celebrations

The Sunday Mass is the main focus for preparation though there are other liturgies such as sacraments and funerals to be prepared. For every liturgy the theme is the paschal mystery. Much of the preparation is already done in the framework of the church documents, the liturgical year and seasons. The work of the liturgy team is primarily to assist the assembly to pray. This is achieved through the effective preparation of liturgies that enhance the rites and encourage participation by the people.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

What is the feast/season or special occasion?

Are there alternate texts?

Are the gestures and movements adding to the prayer?

Is silence valued?

How can parish worship be enhanced?

What happens with the planning and celebration of special masses or celebrations such as First Communion or Second Rite of Reconciliation?



The Role of the Liturgy Committee

2. Formation

The liturgy committee considers which liturgical ministries are present in the parish and the nature of their training and ongoing formation. Formation begins with the members of the team. It should occur at every meeting and be ongoing. The members need an understanding of the liturgical documents and ministries.

Liturgical ministers, new and experienced, require initial and regular formation. The committee may advise on this formation.

Finally, formation of the assembly involves helping the people to worship well.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

What formation has already been received?

In what areas of the liturgy would ministers like formation?

How can time be spent on formation at meetings?

What people or resources could be used for formation and training?

3.Coordination and Communication

The work of liturgy involves the cooperation of many different ministries. Coordination of and communication with these ministries and the worshipping community is important. The liturgy committee holds 'the big picture' and directs and empowers certain groups such as music ministry and creative groups but doesn't take over. These ministries have their own expertise and need to be allowed to do what they do best within a framework. There needs to be balance between independence and supervision. It may be helpful to have a representative from each ministry in the liturgy team to promote better understanding of issues and improve communication.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

What information needs to be conveyed to the assembly for greater participation?

What information needs to be conveyed to liturgical ministers and others?

How does communication happen?

Is there coordination between ministries?

Are the masses coordinated differently?

How is the coordination between the parish and school managed?



The Role of the Liturgy Committee

4. Evaluation

The entire liturgical environment needs to be evaluated regularly by those attending the liturgical celebrations, after special occasions and particularly at the end of a season. The key criterion for evaluation is whether or not the people were able to participate fully, consciously and actively.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

Do we have good liturgies?

How do we know they are good?

What is good liturgy?

Do our liturgies serve the needs of all the people?

What can we do better?

How do liturgical seasons develop and hold together?

Is there full, conscious and active participation by the assembly?



The Role of the Liturgy Committee

5. Setting Goals

The liturgy committee's task based on a consideration of the worshipping group is to set goals, directions and standards for the overall liturgical life of the parish. Short, medium and long term goals need to be determined. They need to be stated in specific, measurable terms with a time limitation. In this way the goals are concrete and can be evaluated.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

What are the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the liturgical life of the parish?

Set 3 short term goals.

Set 3 long term goals.

Who will implement these goals?

When will the goals be implemented?

How will these goals be implemented?



Evaluation and Review of Liturgical Ministry

Assessment Sheet Three

This evaluation could be undertaken by each ministry in the parish.
Focus on a particular ministry.

List 3 things that are going well in the ministry.

List 3 things that need improvement.
How could they be improved?

Comment on the usefulness of any formation (initial and ongoing) received.
Comment on the usefulness of any resources (books, articles) consulted.
What would you like included in your formation?

Is the present method of rostering working well?

What would help you in your ministry?
Training, spiritual formation, socialising, other.

Do the ministers have access to the ritual resource books

What expectations do you have of a liturgy committee?

Other comments.

Ministry review sheet is available for download from website

A sheet with the parts of the mass and the GIRM reference is available on website to review how the liturgy is celebrated in your parish in relationship to the GIRM .



Liturgy Committee Meetings

Members of a liturgy committee need to value structure for what it will enable. For this reason regular meetings that follow a set procedure are held. The group is then able to accomplish those things that are agreed to be important.

Practical issues to be implemented

Appoint a Chairperson and Secretary

- The chairperson is responsible for keeping the discussion focussed.
- The secretary will record the minutes of the meeting and circulate the agenda together with the minutes before the following meeting.

The Role of the Secretary

- The secretary draws up an agenda before the meeting that includes reports of ministries and long and short term items for discussion.
- Keeps track of decisions.
- Communicates the decisions to the relevant people in groups and in the assembly.
- Sets the meeting times for a given period. All meetings should be scheduled, regular and frequent. They should begin and end on time.
- Decides on the procedure to be followed.
- Basic rules for meetings should be set and followed. Group maintenance is everybody's responsibility.

Attendance on a Regular Basis is Expected

- Members need to be present and involved.



Liturgy Committee Meetings

Meetings

- Keep discussion focussed.
- Look ahead to the next season or special feast.
- Formation of the team and the worshipping assembly is to be considered.
- Consider the budget for materials and formation that will allow good liturgy to happen.

Committee Models

There are different models of liturgy committees. They may operate alone or in combination.

A core committee that prepares all liturgies.

A coordinated team of various ministries that facilitates communication and ensures the group works together for a common purpose.

Other groups may be convened for particular purposes or occasions.

Members are invited by the core group and are responsible to it. They have a short term commitment.

A sample agenda is available for download from website



Evaluation and Review of the Liturgy Committee

Assessment Sheet 4

What is the role of the committee in parish liturgy?

Do all members contribute to the role?

What formation do we give ourselves?

What formation and guidance do we give to people's spirituality?

Does this committee represent the people of the parish?

Does the committee answer the liturgical needs of the parish?

What are the areas of responsibility of the committee?

Does this committee support and work well with the priest and staff of the parish?



Commissioning of Liturgy Committee Members

The Book of Blessings contains blessing outlines for many different occasions.

Part VI: Blessings for Various Needs and Occasions

Chapter 60: Order for the Blessing of Those who Exercise Pastoral Service

Chapter 61: Order for the Blessing of Readers

Chapter 62: Order for the Blessing of Altar Servers, Sacristans, Musicians and Ushers

Chapter 63: Order for the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

There are blessings for the commissioning of liturgical ministers but there is no specific blessing for parish liturgy committees. Attached is a suggestion as to how a liturgy committee may be commissioned during a Sunday liturgy. It would be important to keep the commissioning prayer short so that it does not intrude into the ritual form of the Eucharist.

This commissioning could take place during the Introductory Rite, after the Homily or before the Final Prayer of the Mass.

Those to be commissioned could be called on to the sanctuary, by name, one by one.

The members of the committee are then asked to respond loudly and clearly to the following questions.



Commissioning of Liturgy Committee Members

Prayer of Commissioning

Priest: You have been chosen to serve the community of ... Parish as a liturgy committee.

Are you prepared to make a commitment of time and a contribution of your talents towards the preparation and formation of liturgical ministries and practice here in our parish?

Committee: We are

Priest: Are you prepared to spend time together and individually in informing and forming yourselves about all aspects of liturgical celebrations?

Committee: We are

Prayer of Blessing

The priest extends his hands and may invite the congregation to do the same.

Priest: Ever living God,
You gather us together as the parish of... to carry the Gospel of Christ to all people.
Bless the members of the parish liturgy committee.
Let your Spirit enlighten their minds and guide all their actions, that they may be renewed in faith, united in love, and bring to fulfilment the work of your church to your greater glory and honour.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.



Commissioning of Liturgy Committee Members

Prayer of Commissioning

Universal Prayer

One of the following prayers may be chosen to be included in the Universal Prayer.

For all concerned with preparing and ministering in the liturgical celebrations of our parish.... *Pause*

That they may be open to the movement of the Spirit and always be ready to carry out God's will. We pray to the Lord.

[Pause] Lord hear our prayer

For all members of parish liturgy committees.. *Pause*

That they will be witnesses of the presence of Christ in their lives through faith, hope and love.

[Pause] Lord hear our prayer



Resources

Link to comprehensive list of liturgical resources

<http://liturgy.perthcatholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Liturgical-Resources-Updated-Mar-2019.pdf>

OFFICIAL CHURCH TEXT

General Instruction to the Roman Missal Final Text with application for Australia ;St Pauls Publication

The Australian Ordo, The Liturgical Commission, Brisbane.

Church Documents

The Book of Blessings, International Commission on English in Liturgy (A joint commission of Catholic Bishops Conferences), Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, 1989.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Final Text with Australian Applications, St Paul's Publications, 2012. Cited as *GIRM* in the text.

Archdiocese of Perth

Celebrating the Gift of the Spirit, Liturgical Guidelines for Confirmation in the Archdiocese of Perth, Archdiocesan Centre for Liturgy, Perth, 2006.

Guidelines for Altar Ministers, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist and Acolytes, Archdiocesan Centre for Liturgy, Perth, 2007.

Training Manual Altar Minister Senior and Junior, Archdiocesan Centre for Liturgy, Perth, 2018.

Live and Proclaim God's Word, A handbook for Readers, Archdiocesan Centre for Liturgy, Perth, 2008.

O Come let us adore Him! Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass, Archdiocesan Centre for Liturgy, 2005.

Raise your voice to God, Liturgical Guidelines for those preparing Eucharistic Celebrations, Archdiocesan Centre for Liturgy, Perth, 2007.



Archdiocese Policy and Legal Requirements

Archdiocesan Policy and Legal Requirements

All church workers (paid and unpaid) are required to adhere to the policies, guidelines, and procedures of the Perth Catholic Archdiocese.

A 'Working with Children Check' card is required by Western Australian State Government legislation for all who are considered to work with children in the course of their duties, that is, for those who are working with any person under eighteen (18) years of age.

Information is available from your parish Safeguarding officer or the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Office regarding policies, guidelines and procedures.

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