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CHILDREN AND LITURGY
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Liturgy is the worship of the entire Church, head and members. Liturgy is primarily an adult and communal action of worship, but children can take part in it as well. The past few years have seen many efforts to adapt liturgy to the needs and abilities of children.

In this issue of the Bulletin, we go beyond the question of liturgy with children, to its roots and foundations: atmosphere and preparation are important at home, in school, and in church if children are to be able to enter liturgy and grow in its spirit.

• **At home:** Helps for parents who want to teach their children to love God's word, to grow in prayer, to become active members of the Church.

• **At church:** Positive suggestions are offered for parish communities that want to work with parents in preparing children to participate in liturgical worship.

• **Liturgies with children:** A look at the Directory for Masses with children, and at some of the ways it can be used in your community.

The children of today are the young adults of the Church in the 1990s, and the parents, teachers, and clergy of the twenty-first century. They can grow through liturgy now, and become adult members of the worshipping community in the future. This issue can help your parish in this important effort.
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LET THE LITTLE ONES COME TO ME

The synoptic gospels tell us that Jesus was not pleased when his disciples tried to keep parents and children away from him. Jesus told them to let these children come to him, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are like them. If we want to enter the kingdom, we must receive it as children do. Then he laid his hands on the children and blessed them. (See Mk. 10: 13-16; Mt. 19: 13-15; Lk. 18: 15-17.)

Today Jesus is present to us in many ways: in other people, especially those in need (see Mt. 25: 31-46); in any gathering of two or more in his name (see Mt. 18: 20); when we listen to his Church and the teachers he has sent (see Lk. 10: 16); when we take part in liturgy (see Liturgy constitution, no. 7).

As parents and parishes struggle to make the faith viable in family life in our rapidly changing culture, the Church reminds us that the liturgy is a strong teacher. We need to take advantage of its riches, and gain what the Church is offering us.

The liturgy can teach us to pray. It can teach us to love and worship God our Father, and can help us to meet and recognize Jesus our brother. Celebrated and used well, the liturgy is the school of the Spirit for Christian living, helping us to grow individually in Christ, and building up his body, the Church. Until we recognize and act on this truth in our homes, parishes, and schools, the extensive fruits of the liturgy will not penetrate our hearts and be seen in our lives.

Liturgy does not happen in a vacuum in a parish church: it takes place there, but reflects and affects the lives of priests, ministers, and other parishioners. In this issue we look at some of the ways that liturgy and family life can influence each other as we move forward in the footsteps of Christ.

The Church offers us the key to the true Christian spirit through full participation in the liturgy. If we are to let children come to Christ, the liturgy is the way to teach them to pray and to give them his blessing.

* * *

All praise to you, Lord Jesus, lover of children.
Bless the little ones in our parish family, and help us to lead them to you.

All glory and praise are yours, Lord, for ever and ever. Amen!
PREPARING AT HOME

A SPECIAL TASK

The task entrusted by God to the family is immense. Some of its spiritual and religious responsibilities are outlined here.

Relationships with other people: The first way we meet God is in the love and care of other people — in our family, our friends and neighbors, those in authority, and others.
- Their love and concern reflect God's loving care for us.
- Their willingness to listen to us, to teach us, to be patient with us, to forgive us: these are reflections and signs of our Father's love for each of us.
- Their attitudes toward others, their dedication to serve and minister, their concern for those who suffer: in such a way we learn to feel for others and to be ready to help them. Jesus' love for his brothers and sisters is seen through their actions and words.

Relationships with ourselves: From others' attitudes toward us come our feelings of our self-worth and dignity. Self-respect can be present only when others respect us and love us.
- Through others we can learn to be honest: to be realistic, seeing ourselves as we are: weak, prone to fail, always in need of God's grace, but capable of great things if we are open to his action in us.
- A positive view on life comes more readily when we see such an attitude in the lives of those around us.
- A willingness to do our best in everything, in co-operation with God's grace, leads us to a stronger sense of the dignity he has given us.

Relationships with creation: If others help us to recognize creation as God's handiwork, we will be able to work in accord with God's plan, and help to redeem creation and restore the kingdom of Christ more fully.
- Creation is good, because God made it good. It is beautiful. Others need to help us to recognize the creator's goodness and beauty behind both the wonders and the ordinary things of this universe: the beauty of the skies at night, the varied patterns of land and sea, the marvels of life in its many forms.
- Others help us to see that creation is a gift, belonging to all. We are to use it well, and to share it with others. Hard work for all is part of our calling — and we learn this from those around us.

Relationships with God: If we are well guided by our parents and others who are close to us, we can learn the basic attitudes of true religion (see James 1: 27):
- Thanks and praise to God, for he is great, and has done wonders in his love for us.
- Love in response to his love for us, especially as shown in Jesus our Lord and our brother. Our love must be expressed and proven in our love for others.
- Obedience: We are ready to obey our Father because we love him. We continue to listen to his voice, and seek to discern his will for us.
- Openness: We are ready to receive his gifts, and ask for his help for ourselves and others.

It is the responsibility of the people of God, particularly as gathered in the diocese and parish, to help families to carry out this important work of helping their children to grow in Christ.
Jesus and his apostles taught us to *pray always* (Lk. 18: 1; 21: 36; Rom. 12: 12; Eph. 1: 5-6). The way in which Christians have worked out this command through the centuries makes fascinating reading: see Bulletin 58, pages 73-87, on the history of Christian prayer.

The Christian people inherited prayer forms and practices from the Jewish people, of which Jesus was a faithful member (see Bulletin 58, pages 68-74). Our tradition provides for regular moments of prayer, while being open to other occasions and opportunities. Overemphasis on one or the other tends to distort and weaken the prayer life of an individual or community.

**Regular and specific times:** These have varied considerably through history, and yet a distinct pattern is visible throughout. In Jesus' time, the Jewish people prayed three times a day, as well as at meals. By the year 215, Hippolytus describes a complicated schedule of prayer for Christians (see Bulletin 58, pages 83-84). Monastic prayer enshrined most of these moments in formal hours of worship (Bulletin 58, pages 90-95).

What has remained constant through twenty centuries of Christian prayer is that *morning*, *evening*, and *mealtimes* are privileged moments for prayer. *Sunday* is the Lord's day, the greatest day of the week, the day of Jesus' resurrection; on *Friday*, we remember his obedient and saving death for us.

**Morning prayer:** In our tradition, morning prayer celebrates the rising of Jesus from the dead, and our sharing in his victory over sin. We thank and praise the Father for saving us in Christ. We offer our entire day to God, and ask for strength to do his work today. After praying the canticle of Zechariah (Lk. 1: 68-79), we pray for ourselves, for others, and for the entire Church. We conclude our intercessions with the *Our Father*.

**Evening prayer:** Toward the end of the day, we thank our heavenly Father for his gifts to us, and for what he has helped us to do well during this day. We recall Jesus' evening sacrifice, his saving death on the cross for us. We ask that his light will always remain with us, especially during this night. We pray the gospel canticle of Mary (Lk. 1: 47-55), and intercede for the Church and the world, including a prayer for the dead. These intercessions conclude with the Lord's prayer, as in the morning.

*These elements, which are present in the Church's hours of prayer in the morning and evening, should be reflected in our individual and family prayer.* (See pages 87-89.)

**Mealt ime prayers:** We follow Jesus' example and bless (praise) our Father over the food he has provided for us. As we praise him over this food, it is blessed, and we eat and drink for God's honor and glory (see 1 Cor. 10: 11). We give thanks to our Father in the name of Jesus (Col. 3: 17; Eph. 5: 20).

At the end of the meal, it is fitting to thank the Father once more, and to pray for his people, the Church. We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus our Lord. (This form of prayer was developed by the Church and became the basis for the eucharistic prayers.)

PREPARING PRESCHOOL CHILDREN FOR PRAYER

Parents are the first teachers of the faith to their children: it is during the first five years of a child's life that basic attitudes are formed. This article presents some considerations on preparing preschoolers for prayer, thus helping them to enter into community worship when they are older.

Atmosphere of love: Prayer is something that is more easily caught than taught. When young children feel that they are loved, they are supported and comforted. Such reassurance is important if they are to realize later that God our Father has even greater love for them. They need to be loved now in order to be able to learn to love others.

Prayer by parents: In order to prepare their children for prayer, parents must first of all be people of prayer. Their children have to be prepared for prayer by seeing and hearing their parents pray. Mother and father can help their children to see that prayer is what we all do as God's children.

When preschool children are brought to church, they are able to imbibe some of the attitude of respect shown by their parents and the other adults around them. This is a part of their religious experience that can have a deep influence on their whole life as Christians.

Opportunities and guidance: In order to help their preschoolers to prepare for a lifetime of prayer among God's people of prayer, parents should seek to provide opportunities for prayer and guidance in their first steps:

Opportunities for prayer: Parents should take advantage of various moments and occasions for prayer: see "Times and occasions," below.

Guidance in prayer: The example of parents and older brothers and sisters is important. Seeing that their elders take prayer seriously, and that they pray at major moments, is a good experience for younger children. Parents may also encourage their children to pray, and help them to express in very simple words and gestures what they want to say.

Times and occasions: Our Christian tradition provides for regular moments of prayer — particularly in the morning, at mealtimes, and in the evening (see Privileged moments for prayer, on page 69).

Open to other opportunities: As well as the regular moments, Christians pray at other times: in a moment of joy, wonder, or thanks; when tempted, in need of guidance or help, in danger or in despair. We pray for others and for ourselves. We give thanks and praise for God's wonderful works in creation, and for giving us his salvation in Christ.

When parents are open to other opportunities for their own prayer — to moments of wonder, of thanks, and of need — they will be able to lead their children to be sensitive to these times as well. Thus, when a brother or a playmate is sick, parent and child could say a brief prayer for his recovery: "Let's ask Jesus to help John to get better" is a sufficient invitation. When they hear sirens, for example, or learn of disasters on the news, children can be encouraged to say a brief prayer for those in trouble or need. They will learn this practice from their parents' example.
The wonders of a spring day, of a growing plant, of a snowflake or a caterpillar: we can use such moments to say a brief \textit{thank you} to our heavenly Father. When we see a rainbow, we may praise God who made it (Sir. 43: 11; on God's glory in nature, see Sir. 42: 15 — 43: 33).

Particular occasions may prompt a moment of prayer: birthdays, holidays, liturgical feasts and seasons (see \textit{Year of praise and prayer}, on pages 103-110). All these may provide an opportunity for a brief prayer. Wise parents will know how to let the Spirit guide both themselves and their children in prayer, without forcing the children or stifling the Spirit's action in them.

- \textit{Quite brief}: Preschoolers have a short and fleeting attention span. Because prayer is abstract and the child of this age is so ruled by images and feelings, ten or twenty seconds may be sufficient. When prayer is combined with action or gesture, it may last a little longer.

- \textit{Family blessing}: Parents may give their children a blessing at night, at New Year's (a French-Canadian custom: see page 103) or when someone is going on a trip. Some examples of these blessings are given in Bulletin 49, pages 173-176, and in \textit{Sunday Mass Book}, pages 1327-1328.

\textbf{Words and gestures}: While worship and prayer come from the heart; humans must express them in words and actions.

- \textit{Words}: At this age, spontaneous prayers are to be encouraged. At the same time, simple phrases from the scriptures and tradition may become part of the child's prayer language, as long as he or she understands them.

- \textit{Actions}: For adults, actions and gestures help to express and reinforce what is said. For a child, action and movement can be more important to convey the fullness that words alone cannot handle. Clapping, dancing, and singing can show joy and wonder more effectively than mere words. Standing, sitting, raising the hands in prayer (an age-old tradition), bowing or kneeling, holding hands in friendship — these are part of human prayer. (Around 200, Clement of Alexandria mentions some of the gestures that Christians make while praying. In the doxology or conclusion of prayer, they raise head and hands toward heaven, standing on tip-toe as they lift their prayer to God.)

- \textit{Reverence}: In all these actions, it is reverence that is most important. The actions and gestures may vary according to circumstances, but they should always be reverent. Again, children will learn from their parents.

\textbf{Human values}: The family has the first responsibility in teaching human and Christian values. Among the human values which are part of every child's formation — and part of the eucharist and liturgical prayer as well — are these: being able to celebrate, to listen, to express thanks; to forgive and ask forgiveness, to greet and welcome others; to take part with a group in an activity; to share in a friendly meal, and to experience actions which are symbolic.\footnote{See Directory for Masses with Children (Congregation for Divine Worship. November 1, 1973), nos. 10, 9. This text is contained in the sacramentary (Canadian edition, pages 55-64), and also in \textit{Masses with Children/Masses of Reconciliation} (1975, CCC, Ottawa), pages 11-20.} To these we might add the beginning of an ability to share, to be generous, to give, to be a friend. Gradually we might consider others: moderation in all things, doing one's best, working hard for the
Lord, a feeling for the dignity of work; self-respect (a sense of our worth), a sense of honesty, concern for others, respect for law.

Christian values: Jesus and his apostles also teach us his values. The sermon on the mount (see Matthew’s gospel, chapters 5-6-7, and parallels) is a good mirror in which to view our ways and Christ’s. Parents, teachers, and the rest of the Church in this community should be asking themselves how they are helping children to open their minds and hearts gradually to Christ’s values, and to join his people in celebrating his paschal mystery.

Parents should try to make sure that these values are part of their family life, so that their children may be more able to take part in daily events as well as in the community’s worship as they move toward maturity.

Prayer to the Father: the Christian tradition is prayer to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. This is particularly evident in the liturgy, which serves as a good model for family and personal prayer.

When his disciples asked him to teach them to pray (Mt. 6: 9-13; Lk. 11: 1-4), Jesus gave them the Our Father as a model for their prayer. It is a prayer that we offer with Jesus and all God’s children to our heavenly Father. While preschoolers are not able to pray it with understanding (particularly in the early 16th century English approved by Henry VIII), they may be helped to make a simpler prayer, such as this: “Father, I love you. Help us to love other people.”

A problem may arise in a home with only one parent — a situation that is increasing in our times. Parishes which are concerned about the prayer life of all their families will keep such homes in mind: see pages 84 and 99.

Prayer to Jesus: Jesus is our brother, one of us in every way but sin (Heb. 4: 15); he is at the same time our Lord and savior, the Son of God. He is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1: 15), our only way to the Father (Jn. 14: 6), our way of knowing the Father (Jn. 14: 8-10). He is the only bridge and mediator by which we come to the Father (1 Tim. 2: 5). The Father draws us to himself through Jesus (Jn. 6: 44, 65).

While the liturgy is primarily addressed to the Father, it does have some prayers addressed directly to Jesus. Popular devotion, however, places much emphasis on prayer to our Lord: in fact, the first signs of this are seen in the New Testament (see Acts 7: 59). Bulletin 62, Liturgy and Devotion, looks at this subject more fully: see pages 16-23.

Christian devotion needs to maintain a balance between our Lord’s two natures: he is at the same time Son of God (he is our Lord, the Word of God, one whom we love because he became one of us to save us) and Son of Mary (he is one of us and gave his life in obedience to save us).

We must always remember that the Jesus we pray to is the risen Lord, who died freely because he loved us, who was raised by the Father, and who is now seated at the Father’s side in glory. The Lord Jesus is an adult. While we can remember who he was and what he did as a child, we cannot pray to him as a child. “Baby Jesus” prayers are not in accord with our faith: they are not where the Church is at, nor where our Lord himself is at. (See Bulletin 62, pages 20-21.)

See Mediation on the Lord’s prayer in Bulletin 44, pages 154-159.
What about the memory? The Christian people are a Church that remembers: we remember what God has done in Christ, and we continue to ask him to help his people.

Most adult Catholics today remember the way they “learned catechism” — by memorizing set answers to set questions. The theory behind this was that eventually they would understand and live the words they were memorizing (Socrates’ dictum, Knowledge is not virtue, was not recognized in the catechetics of those years.)

Anyone who has been near educational circles for the past two decades has seen theory after theory sweep through, switching from old math to new and back again, from spelling by sound to (mis)spelling by sight. . . . The same winds have affected liturgy, catechetics, and other religious topics, for we are people of our times.

Memory is a human faculty, perhaps neglected somewhat in these days of print and electronic media, of files and retrieval systems. But we are still able to remember. Start any commercial jingle or slogan today, and most five-year olds can complete it, even though slightly off-key.

There is a place for remembering in the prayer of preschool children: they can sing and understand and pray some of the seasonal responsorial psalms with the rest of the Church (see Sunday Mass Book, pages 679-685; Catholic Book of Worship, nos. 172-200).

Blind memorization of prayers and lists is not desirable at this or any age, but encouragement to learn and use some simple prayers and songs is both valuable and within the capability of young children. This may serve to help them grow to full stature in Christ our Lord (Eph. 4: 11-16).

- Celebrating special days: At particular times of the year, we may celebrate and remember. Many examples of these days are contained in Year of praise and prayer: see pages 103-110. Two other examples for family consideration:

    — At Thanksgiving, which is a harvest festival, we give thanks to God for his providence, for his gifts of good food, and for all his benefits. It could be a time for remembering how this particular family came to this country, whether recently or centuries ago. It is also a time for giving thanks to God for his specific gifts to this family during this past year: for the birth of a baby, for recovery from sickness. . . .

    — A similar type of remembering could take place on New Year's day: see Bulletin 36, pages 268-269.

*  *  *

Helping little children to grow — be it in manners or self-esteem — is not a one-time, one-day task. It requires years of love, prayer, and patience. There are no facile formulas or instant recipes: only prayer, suffering, love, patience, and understanding will enable parents, teachers, and parish ministers to help children to grow at their own pace.
We cannot force rosebuds to become roses by pulling or tearing their petals: they have to grow slowly, sedately, calmly, in their own time and rhythm. The same is true of children: we are here — not to mold or form or force them — but to uphold and nourish and strengthen and encourage them on the slow and narrow way of eternal life.

May God our Father help us all on the long and rocky road of growing to our full stature in Christ.

* * *

Helpful reading:

* National Bulletin on Liturgy: Past articles and book reviews on children and liturgy are listed in Bulletin 61, pages 291-292. See in particular:
  * Tell me a story, on bible stories for preschool children: Bulletin 37, pages 57-62.

  “Spiritual Development in the Beaver Program,” by Patrick Byrne, in The Leader, April 1974 (Box 5112, Station F, Ottawa, Ontario K2C 3H4).

A PRAYER FOR PARENTS

All members of the parish may wish to pray for the parents in their community of faith:

Heavenly Father, giver of all good gifts,
look with love and mercy
on the parents in our parish.

Bless their lives,
and help them to reflect Christ's love for us.
Fill them with your love,
and let them bring your light into our community.

Help them to bring good children into this world.
Guide them as they raise their families.
Bless their children as they grow in wisdom, age, and grace.

Loving Father,
give your Spirit to each family in our parish,
and help us to follow your Son.

Father, we give you praise and glory
as we ask this grace through Christ our Lord
in the love of your Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen!
Over the centuries, the Christian people have developed many signs, images, and symbols to express our faith and to remind us of the place of religion in our daily lives. This article discusses some of the ways in which a family may use these signs in preparing their children of all ages to take a full part in the liturgy.

Introduction

As human persons, we Christians are a unique combination of the spiritual and the material, filled with life and nourished by the grace and help of God. While we can pray to God without resorting to words — indeed the Spirit himself expresses what we cannot say (see Rom 8: 26-27) — we cannot communicate our thoughts or wishes to other people without using some physical signs to indicate our meaning. Words, sounds, gestures, or facial expressions are necessary if we are to express our meaning, our feelings, our needs: this is true whether we are eight minutes or eight months old, eight years, 18, or 80.

Our human nature is incarnate. We cannot express our thoughts unless we do so in words or actions. And at the same time as such expressions clothe our thoughts in perceptible form, they are making these thoughts more a part of us and of others who perceive them.

An example helps us to see this more clearly. Because we respect God, we express this on entering the church by making a bow or genuflection. If we think about what we are doing, and try to do it well, this will in turn reinforce our attitude of respect for God. Others can benefit from seeing us, and in turn move toward deeper personal reverence.

In a similar way, of course, the opposite is also true: sloppy actions betray and deepen our lack of conviction.

This is not something new in our tradition. It is clearly evident in the scriptures, and in the actions of Christ and his apostles. It is also seen in the actions and gestures included in the Christian liturgy from the first centuries, and in the art which has come down from the early years of Christianity.

Signs of Faith in our Homes

In the first three centuries of the Christian era, when life as a follower of Christ could be precarious at times, believers decorated their homes, places of assembly, and tombs with Christian re-interpretations of pagan images. After the edict of Constantine, the building and decoration of churches became public and much more splendid.

There are many ways in which the Christians of today may use signs to express and build up their faith and that of their children. While not every believer is expected to use all these signs at every occasion, some of them should always be present, and some should be used on particular occasions.

God's word: The first sign of our faith in our home is the book of the word of God. This is discussed in *A book for God's people*, pages 79-85.
Images: From the early centuries, Christians have employed the art of their time in the service of the faith. Some of the ways in which families may use images in their homes are suggested below. Living in an era which makes countless reproductions of cheap or worthless images, we need to make sure that what we display is truly uplifting and in good taste: it is far better to have one reasonable piece of Christian art than a dozen pieces of plastic rubbish and dime-store trinkets in our home. A good reproduction or photograph of a masterpiece is more desirable than a cheap copy.

Children learn from their surroundings. Good Christian art in the home, as in the church, is a strong teacher of the faith we profess and live. Art, music, poetry, and dance are part of our rich heritage, and can contribute to our living a full life to the glory of God.

○ Images of Christ: The first representations of Jesus in Christian art show him as a young man and as the good shepherd. While the cross was portrayed in art, the crucifix did not become a common subject of art until the sixth and seventh centuries. The Lord was shown as alive, until the middle ages began to portray the dead Christ.

Today the trend is to use a glorious cross — a return to the bejewelled cross (crux gemmata) of the fifth and sixth centuries — or one which shows the glorified Christ as high priest or king.

○ Images of the saints: Christians decorated the catacombs and houses of worship with biblical scenes and images of some of the saints. After 313, they built many basilicas with statues, mosaics, and paintings of Christ, Mary, and the saints — a tradition still continued in the Latin Church. In the Eastern Churches, the use of icons has been a strong feature of their worship and of their family life. In our homes today, a good picture or sculpture of Mary, and of saints who have meaning for the family (perhaps the patron saint of each member, and of the family's country of origin), can be helpful in encouraging devotion to these saints. Francis of Assisi is a popular saint.

○ Biblical scenes are always appropriate, especially when family members are familiar with the story behind them.

1 For this reason, Sunday Mass Book includes good contemporary religious art. An important feature of this book is the Canadian art commissioned for it by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Artists from every province, and from the native peoples of the north, east, and west, interpret the gospel message in a fresh, Canadian idiom for the people of today. Nineteen full-color reproductions and seven in black and white make this a unique example of the Church's traditional patronage of the arts.

Sunday Mass Book ($10.95) and Art Collection/Collection d'Art ($3.50) — a booklet reproducing and explaining this art more fully in the words of the artists — may be obtained from Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario KIN 7B1.

Banners and posters: These are a temporary type of sign. Each one may be used effectively for a brief period of time, especially to mark a particular occasion such as a birthday, a feast, or a season. These can be purchased, but are better if made at home, at school, or in the parish by the children or by the family. (See A fresh look at banners, in Bulletin 48, pages 108-113; further references are given in no. 61, page 285.)

Books: When parents read worthwhile books and magazines, and keep a reasonable library in their home, their children will usually grow up as readers. A plentiful supply of good material encourages children to expand their minds and interests. Frequent family visits to the parish and public libraries, as well as occasional trips to a good bookstore, are means of developing a sound taste in good reading, both in general areas and in matters about the Christian faith.

As well as books and papers of religious interest, parents can use quality publications to help their children grow in their appreciation of God's world: the marvels of creation are portrayed in geographic magazines, for example, and may be a starting point for wonder and prayer. A sense of wonder is the beginning of worship.

Music: As with books, taste in music can be built up with good records or tapes and occasional attendance at worthwhile musical events. One or more copies of a hymn book such as Catholic Book of Worship around the home will provide a useful resource for family prayer and celebrations.

Seasonal symbols: These are discussed in Year of praise and prayer: see pages 103-110.

Prayer room: See A place for prayer at home, page 86.

Religious gifts: At least one religious gift of quality might be included among those given and received on the occasions of birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, and graduation days (see page 81).

Other Notes

Sense of wonder and beauty: Children need help to deepen their innate sense of wonder and beauty, which is at the root of the ability to worship. Parents, teachers, and clergy have to be careful that this sense is nourished and fostered, and allowed to grow. It should not be numbed by plastic flowers, shabby, cheap “holy trinkets,” and other shoddy articles.

Signs of reverence: A genuflection is a sign of reverence to Christ, who is the Son of God and our brother (Phil. 2: 10). If a child is not able to genuflect gracefully (and most are not), it is better to make a reverent bow. If a little child cannot make the large sign of the cross well, it is proper to make a small one on the forehead, in memory of the baptismal signing. In both cases, the simpler gesture is older in our tradition, and is quite proper as a stage of learning.

Role of imagination: Children have vivid imaginations, and often, until they are about seven, they cannot distinguish between what we call reality and what is imaginary. Because they are exposed to so many images on television and in printed matter, it is good to help them develop their imagination. Homilies could include
more images, so that religion becomes a part of the whole person and not just of the mind.

**Use of all the senses:** In the liturgy, the church appeals to our sight with color, motion, and action; to our sense of smell with incense, wine, perfumed oil, and flowers; to our hearing with music, singing, varied voices; to our sense of feeling with actions, postures, gestures, bathing, anointing, laying on of hands, the kiss of peace; to our taste in eating and drinking the eucharistic meal under both species. We should not neglect these, but seek to enhance their sign value by the use of good quality materials, and by avoiding all sham and sleaziness: few are led to God by plastic flowers.

**Basic symbols:** Symbols which are basic in our human nature have been adopted by the liturgy. If they are understood in our daily life, they will have more meaning in liturgy. These include light and darkness, warmth and cold, fire, water; see also the values described on page 71.

* * *

**Helpful reading:** As well as the two books mentioned in note 1, page 76, the following ones are useful:

* * *


**Art and Faith:** Letters between Jacques Maritain and Jean Cocteau (1948, Philosophical Library, New York).


**Christianity and the Arts,** by Donald Whittle (1966, Mowbray, London).

**Catholic Art and Culture,** by Edward Ingram Watkin (1944, Sheed & Ward, New York).


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**TWO OR THREE TOGETHER**

When two or three believers gather together, Jesus tells us, he is with us (see Mt. 18: 20).

Writing sometime after the year 202, Clement of Alexandria applies these words to the family.

We might ask ourselves two questions:

- *As families,* do we realize that Jesus is with us when we gather for prayer?
- *As parishes,* what are we doing to help our families, school classes, and other groups to become more aware of Jesus' presence?
A BOOK FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

The bible is the book of God's word for his people, his truth for our salvation. Composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the bible has both the Old Testament and the New: it leads us up to the coming of the Messiah in Israel; through the birth, teaching, death, and rising of Jesus; and prepares us for his second coming in glory.

The early centuries of the Church had great respect for the word of God, proclaiming it in the liturgy, and basing its preaching on the scriptures. It took several hundred years for the Church to discern the exact number of inspired books, but gradually this was completed on the basis of those which were usually read in the liturgy.

Down through the ages, the Church has continued to teach and preach, study, and expound the scriptures. There were times when allegorical interpretations tended to overwhelm other approaches, and times when preaching was neglected during the Mass. In the 1200s, the growth of mendicant orders led to increased preaching. (A brief outline of Christian preaching is given in Bulletin 60, Liturgical Preaching, pages 202-206.) The place and importance of devotion to God's word in the scriptures is discussed at length in Bulletins 50, 56, and 62.

The Protestant Reformation placed strong emphasis on the reading and preaching of the word of God. Gradually this witness has begun to come back into the Catholic Church today, as the Second Vatican Council has reminded us. Today, our liturgy has given a more important place to scripture; now Catholic parishes and families are beginning to realize the place that scripture should have in their daily lives.

Selecting Bibles for Family Use

The bible was the first book printed by movable type in Western civilization. Around 1450, Gutenberg printed the Latin bible, and before long, many editions were available in many languages. Printing and increased literacy gradually made it possible for every literate home to possess a bible.

The importance of the scriptures for the family is described in 2 Tim. 3: 15-17: From his childhood, Timothy was familiar with these writings; they have the power to teach us and lead us to salvation through faith in Jesus; God has inspired these writings to teach us, to correct us, and to train us to be holy; if we are to be God's people, able and eager to do his works, we need the scriptures.

Today: The first sign of our faith in our home is the book of God's word. It is not sufficient to have a fancy, illustrated "family bible" on the coffee table or bookcase, waiting to be shown off during the pastor's annual visit. It is far better to have a six-dollar bible or a dollar New Testament in daily or weekly use than an expensive bible gathering dust; it is much better to have paperback New Testaments in regular

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1 See Vatican II, Decree on ecumenism, no. 21; Dogmatic constitution on divine revelation, nos. 21-26; Constitution on the liturgy, nos. 24; 35: 1 and 4; 51, 90, 92a, 121.

2 For the fascinating story of printing in the Western world, see Five Hundred Years of Printing, by S.H. Steinberg (1955, 1974, Penguin, Harmondsworth, Mdx.).
use than more expensive tomes undisturbed on a shelf. Bibles are intended to be used for reading and for prayer rather than for decoration.

A large family bible may be a fine symbol, provided that the reality it symbolizes is truly present. In a family which does read the bible each day, an ornate family book can be a sign of their faith, and may be used for reading. Such a book may also be used for recording the members of the family and the important dates of their pilgrimage through life.

For daily use: What most families need — and especially those beginning to read the bible each day — is not an elaborate book but a practical one. This can be one of several books: a New Testament; New Testament with psalms; one book of the bible; a reader’s edition; a full bible. Several translations are available: The Jerusalem Bible (JB), New American Bible (NAB), Revised Standard Version (RSV), New English Bible (NEB), and Good News Bible (Today’s English Version, or TEV) are the most popular. These come in a wide variety of bindings, from pamphlets and paperbacks to large, expensive leatherbound editions.

- One gospel: Some will find a simple pamphlet edition of St. Mark’s gospel by TEV a good way to begin. Costing less than a quarter, it is small, illustrated, and not at all formidable. After a month or so, the family can be ready to move on to another book of the gospels, or to one of the books described below.

- New Testament: A simple paperback edition of JB, RSV, NAB, or TEV provides an inexpensive NT for the family. Some editions are also available with the book of psalms at the end. Good illustrated editions are available in several versions.

- Full bible: Rather than spending $20-30 on a large and fancy bible, it is better to spend up to $10 on a simple edition of one of the bibles mentioned above, or to buy two or three different translations in a less expensive binding.

Personal bibles: Each member of the family should have his or her own bible or New Testament, suitable for the age and ability of each person. Thus preschoolers could have an illustrated book of bible stories (see page 82). Children able to read may enjoy their own paperback copy of a single gospel, or of an illustrated edition of the New Testament. Older children could have a paperback or clothbound NT, perhaps with the psalms as well.

High school students and adults may benefit from owning and using a copy of various translations: JB or NAB; the full or ecumenical editions (with the “apocrypha” or deuterocanonical books) in RSV or NEB. Some families may prefer to have the same version for everyone, while others may prefer a variety of translations.

As an individual matures in age and grace, it would be helpful to have various versions of the scriptures (including other languages in which he or she is reasonably proficient), and various commentaries.3

3 Those who are studying other languages in high school or university may appreciate a copy of the New Testament and psalms in these languages. Families whose heritage includes another language would do well to have a bible in that language. In Canada, it would be good for English-speaking families to own a French bible or Testament; Spanish is also a common language in this hemisphere. Many inexpensive editions in other languages are available from the Canadian Bible Society, 1835 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M4S 1Y1.
Gifts: Bibles, Testaments, psalters, and books about the bible make appropriate gifts for spiritual events (anniversary of baptism or of other sacraments, first communion, confirmation, wedding, feast day of patron saint), as well as at Christmas or Easter. When an individual has an adequate bible, a record or tape of psalms or other bible songs will make a good gift that can be shared. Older children or adults may appreciate a concordance or bible dictionary. Another guide to bible reading with the Church is Sunday Mass Book. (Many of these are listed under “Helpful books” at the end of this article.)

How to Read the Bible

Most Catholics who have given up on bible reading have done so because they went about it the hard way, and were soon discouraged. If one begins the bible with the first eleven chapters of Genesis, or the genealogical tables of Matthew’s gospel, or the book of Revelation, confusion can easily result.

What is a gospel? Jesus came to tell the world the Good News: God our Father loves us, and wants to save us. This Good News is the gospel (from the Anglo-Saxon godspell, or “Good News”). Jesus sent his apostles out to preach this Good News to all nations, and to help them to become his followers by obeying him and by being baptized (see Mt. 28: 19-20).

A gospel is one account of Jesus’ life, teaching, death-resurrection, ascension, sending of the Spirit, and of his promise to come again. It is the inspired word of God, in which the author has given us the teaching of the Good News to a local Church. Thus the gospel according to Mark may be described as his summary of what Peter preached as bishop at Antioch and later at Rome. Mark is the first gospel to be written out, and has influenced Matthew and Luke. Together these three are called the “synoptic” gospels: most events are parallel in the three accounts, although the approaches are somewhat different. John’s gospel is written later.4

Daily reading: Each day, it is good to read, pray, and then discuss what is read. A paragraph or two is sufficient at first: the headings indicate a sufficient unit. Thus in TEV, Mk. 1: 1-8 (Mark, chapter 1, verses 1-8) is entitled “The preaching of John the Baptist.” The next day’s selection would be verses 9-13, “The baptism and temptation of Jesus.”

Ten minutes could be set aside for the daily family reading. After reading the passage, all could pause for a minute of prayer in silence; then one person may offer a brief prayer on the passage. All could spend a few moments discussing what Jesus’ prayers or actions mean for this family today. (Where children are older, they could prepare for this ahead of time by reading a simple commentary, as listed at the end of this article.) A final prayer — Glory to the Father or other doxology, berakah, psalm, or appropriate collect — could close the period of bible reading.

Sunday gospel: The most important bible reading of the week is the Sunday gospel. We would do well to remember the advice of St. John Chrysostom: I ask one favor of you: each of you should take the section of the gospels which is to be read among you on the first day of the week... and before that day arrives, sit down at home and read it through (Homily on the gospel of St. John, no. 10).

4 See The Church’s catechism, Bulletin 56, pages 293-295, for an outline of each gospel’s approach.
In preparation for the following Sunday, it is good to read the gospel as the bible reading on Saturday (or on Friday if the family goes to Mass on Saturday evening). During the week, the Sunday gospel story can be told or referred to. Older children may be encouraged to read the gospel passage themselves in their New Testament or in Sunday Mass Book. On Sunday evening, it could be helpful to read the gospel — or one of the other readings from that day’s Mass — during the family’s time for scripture reading.

**Telling bible stories:** Parents or older brothers and sisters may share the riches of the scriptures by telling bible stories to preschoolers. Helpful suggestions on the art of telling stories from the word of God are given in *Tell me a story* (Bulletin 37, pages 57-62).

In telling bible stories to young children, we need to make sure that they will be able to understand the true meaning of these stories, without being confused or upset. The stories must be within their limited experience for children to be able to grasp them.

In bible stories, it is the message and meaning — rather than many details and wonders — that are important. Many parents find it simpler to place their emphasis on gospel stories rather than on the Old Testament. Stories are better read from a simple bible text (such as TEV — see page 80) rather than from a book of bible stories. If a bible story book is used, however, care needs to be taken that the stories reflect the Catholic teaching on the last supper, the sufferings, death, and rising of Christ, and on other essentials of the faith.

**Preparing for Sunday**

As well as telling or discussing the gospel story, the family may prepare for the celebration of the Lord’s day by some acts of penance on Friday (see page 108). Another way is to hold a family vigil service or celebration at least before major Sundays, either on Friday or Saturday at a suitable hour. A similar service may be held before special feasts.

**Simple celebration:** This outline may be adapted according to family needs and desires, ages of members, and so forth. The family assembles in the prayer room (see *A place for prayer at home*, in this issue) or other place. No special arrangement of chairs is needed. If possible, members are chosen beforehand to carry out certain roles: leader of song, reader, one to preside and lead the prayers, one to prepare the intercessions.

- **Hymn:** All sing a seasonal hymn, or one of praise, or one referring to the Lord’s day, from *Catholic Book of Worship*, or another hymnal. It is chosen and led by the member who is responsible for singing. Families who are completely tone deaf could use a record or taped hymn, and attempt to sing, clap, or hum along with it.

- **Prayer:** The one who is leading the service says a prayer, preferably the opening prayer or collect of the Sunday Mass, with “Let us pray” and a distinct pause for silent prayer at the beginning. At the end of the collect, the leader adds a simple ending, such as “We ask this, Father, in the name of Jesus our Lord.” On occasion, the person presiding may use a berakah or other brief form of prayer.

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• **Silence:** A moment of silent prayer should be encouraged at several moments during the celebration, in order to allow the Holy Spirit to continue to speak to the individuals present. This silence would come after the “Let us pray” of the opening prayer, after the reading, after the discussion, after the final petition of the intercessions. Gradually, as the family grows in familiarity with this form of service, these silences could become a little longer, at least on occasion.

• **Gospel reading:** The one chosen as reader proclaims the gospel. When most of the children are preschoolers, it may be desirable to tell it in the form of a bible story.

• **Discussion:** A few moments of reflection on what Jesus is saying to this family and to its individual members; to their parish community; to the Church in our country and around the world.

• **Prayer for all:** An informal but longer prayer of the faithful could mention the needs of the Church, the world, the poor and suffering, civil leaders, the diocese, the parish; prayers could be offered for peace, for people involved in particular disasters; the pope’s monthly intentions; for teachers, catechists, religious, priests, bishop; for the sick; for neighbors, friends, relatives; for vocations to all forms of ministry. Finally, a petition may be made for each member of the family.¹

• **Our Father:** The intercessions conclude with the Lord’s prayer, sung or said by all (SMB, pages 672-673).

• **Simple blessing:** The leader or one of the parents may end the celebration with a simple blessing:

  *May God bless us and keep us in his love.*

  All answer, *Amen!*

  If desired, another form of blessing may be used, including the blessing from Num. 6: 24-26 (contained in the first reading for January 1: see SMB, page 120).

• **Hymn:** If desired, a final hymn may be sung.

• **Kiss of peace:** The vigil may end with an informal sign of peace.

• **Gestures and postures:** It is desirable to use various gestures during the service: a sign of the cross at the beginning and during the blessing; a small sign of the cross on forehead, lips, and heart at the gospel; raised hands during the Lord’s prayer; sitting during the discussion; bowing during the blessing, and if a doxology is sung at the end of a hymn. On weekdays outside the Easter season, or on days of penance, the family may wish to kneel for the intercessions (prayers for all).

  Families may add to this outline if desired, especially for major Sundays and feasts.

¹ Further intentions are suggested in *Sunday Mass Book*, page 1335, and in Bulletin 58, page 128. Other formats for this prayer include the litany form, brief petitions, and a more solemn form (as on Good Friday: SMB, pages 401-410; see also Bulletin 48, pages 130-133). The intercessions of morning and evening prayer are discussed in Bulletin 58, pages 101-103.
More developed celebration: For more solemn occasions, other elements may be added to the simple service:

- **More readings:** One of the first two readings may be taken from the Sunday Mass texts. An appropriate non-scriptural reading may be chosen from *Liturgy of the Hours*. Silent prayer could follow each reading.

- **Responsorial psalm:** The Sunday responsorial psalm may be included, or one of the seasonal psalms may be prayed, with a sung antiphon.

- **Alleluia** may be sung outside Lent, before and after the gospel reading (see SMB, page 587; CBW, nos. 201-207); during Lent, another acclamation is used: see SMB, page 588; CBW, no. 208.

Very simple service: A very simple service would include the opening prayer, the gospel reading or story, a brief discussion, silent reflection, prayer for others, the Lord's prayer, and a blessing.

Including other people: After a family has become accustomed to a vigil service for Sunday, it may wish to invite others — neighbors, playmates or friends of the children, visitors, relatives, one-parent families, elderly couples, and persons living alone — to join them, at least on special occasions. In this way, a believing family can begin to share the faith and joy the Lord has entrusted to them.

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**Helpful books:**

Scriptures: Among the many editions available, we would recommend:

- **New Testament:** editions by JB, NAB, RSV, TEV. These are readily available in various bindings from religious stores and good bookstores.

- **New Testament with psalms:** This combined book is available in several bindings in RSV and TEV, and possibly in other editions. Ask your bookstore or the Canadian Bible Society for further information.

- **One book of the bible:** The TEV version has produced a number of pamphlets containing one gospel or other book of the bible, for a very low price. Enquire from the Canadian Bible Society for full details. (These booklets are also excellent for parish or neighborhood study groups.)

- **Full bible:** Various editions are available from JB, NAB, RSV, TEV, and NEB. In buying RSV or NEB, a Catholic family is wise to get an edition with the "apocrypha" or deuterocanonical books (accepted by the Catholic Church, but not always by others); TEV omits these from its 1976 edition. Clear headings, adequate notes and cross-references, good binding, and reasonable type size are features to be considered in purchasing a full bible. In general, it is better to buy two or three inexpensive paperback editions of different translations than to invest in one large, lavish, illustrated leatherbound edition.

- **Children's Bible:** For many years, The Liturgical Press (Collegeville, Minn.), has published a useful book by this title.

- **Illustrated New Testament:** This book is available with the scripture text in one of various versions. It is a good book for young people in intermediate and high schools.

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7 The first reading and its responsorial psalm are always related to the gospel in Sunday Masses. In ordinary time (when green vestments are used), the second reading is independent; at other times of the year, the second reading is related to the other two. See Bulletin 50 on the lectionary, especially pages 246-247.

Other useful books for those who want to grow in their knowledge of the bible: these are available in various editions, including paperbacks, and are found in most religious bookstores.

- Bible dictionary: A book that explains key ideas and facts from the bible, and gives important references on each subject.
- Concordance: A book that helps the reader to find a text when he knows some of its key words.
- Bible atlas: A geography book of the Holy Land and other biblical territories, with many maps.

- Correspondence course: Further information on Journey, a correspondence course in the scriptures, may be obtained from Guided Study Programs in the Catholic Faith, 260 Colborne St., London, Ontario N6B 2S6; telephone (519) 439-7211.

HAiku PRAYERS

The haiku is a brief Japanese poem form which consists of 17 syllables, with five in the first and third lines, and seven in the second. For some years now, this form has been used in English poetry.

It may also be adapted for prayer by individuals, families, or classes who wish to develop their own prayers for particular occasions. Some examples were given in Bulletin 62, page 64, and more are given here. See also page 97.

Evening prayer:
Thanks, Lord, for this day:
forgive my faults, and bless us
with peace through the night.

Night prayer:
Thank you, Lord, for night —
time to rest and pray, in peace.
Protect us always.

Before reading scripture:
Lord, open my heart:
Let your Spirit speak to me
as I read your word.

After reading scripture:
Father, I thank you
for speaking to me today
through your holy word.

For my parents:
Jesus, you grew up
with parents to guide you on:
help me understand!

For my teachers:
Lord, I know you speak
through my teachers at my school:
help me to listen.

A young person’s prayer:
Lord Jesus, help me:
help me to grow up with you
and live for you, Lord.

Thanks for feet:
Thank you, Lord, for feet —
for walking, running, dancing:
let me move with you.
A PLACE FOR PRAYER AT HOME

We have a room for taking a bath, one for cooking, one for eating, rooms for sleeping, a room for recreation, a place for doing the laundry. What about a place for prayer?

Room for prayer: If we hope to teach young people to pray, then the importance of prayer has to be evident in the way we plan and arrange our homes. A prayer room is at least as important as a bathroom in a Christian dwelling.

Some characteristics of a place for prayer — be it a room or a corner of a room — are suggested below. Individual families and parish communities could use these points in practical discussion about their own needs.

- Quiet: Today's society tends to wrap us in a cocoon of sound and noise. More and more, Christians need to find moments of silence for reflection, prayer, listening. A family prayer room can provide this necessary space for listening to the Lord in silence and meditation.

- Symbolic: Since we are human, we need symbols and signs to express our faith and to remind us of it. General symbols, evocative images, provocative words from the scriptures, and sacramental symbols may help us to remember what prayer means. Pictures, posters, banners, a cross, and other visual signs can be useful in developing an environment for Christian prayer. Soft background music, live or recorded — songs, hymns, psalms, quiet instrumental music — may also be useful at times.

- Light and darkness can be powerful symbols in Christian prayer life. A flickering candle, a dim light, a spotlight may help us to focus our attention. The symbolism of light and darkness in morning and evening prayer must not be ignored (see Bulletin 58, page 110). A window — uncovered, with curtains, with designs, even with stained glass — can bring a new focus into a room set aside for prayer.


- With suitable accommodation: The family should give reasonable consideration to the furnishing of the room. If members are able to sit on the floor, carpet, or cushions, what about visitors, relatives, friends? Stools, chairs, or a bench or two may provide reasonable alternatives. Place is needed for standing, for movement, even for prostration.

Helpful books:


Other helpful books are listed in Bulletin 58, pages 115-116.
MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

Pope Paul tells us that the celebration of the liturgy of the hours is the highest type of family prayer; next to it comes the family rosary. Family prayer is more necessary than ever today if the Church is to carry out its vocation of prayer. "Families which want to live in full measure the vocation and spirituality proper to the Christian family must therefore devote all their energies to overcoming the pressures that hinder family gatherings and family prayer in common" (Apostolic exhortation, February 2, 1974).

Morning and evening prayer: In the Christian Church, morning and evening are the chief times for community and individual prayer. God's people continue to pray to him in the name of Jesus the Lord.

- Morning prayer: At the beginning of the day, we turn to God to praise him and to thank him for the resurrection of his beloved Son.
- Evening prayer: Toward the end of daylight, we thank God for all he has done for us during the day. We bless him for redeeming us in Christ, who is the light of the world.

The examples of morning and evening prayer given here are in accord with the traditional prayer forms of the Christian Church. (See Privileged moments for prayer, on page 69.)

Morning Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Listen to our prayer, O Lord, Ps. 102: 1
and hear our cry for help.

Morning psalm: Ps. 63 is the traditional psalm for morning prayer.

Psalm of praise: It is traditional to end the morning psalmody with a psalm of praise; if possible, the psalm — or at least its refrain — is sung. One of these psalms may be chosen: Ps. 47; 66; 100; 117; 145-150; or the group may choose another psalm of praise for their worship. Each psalm and canticle concludes with the Glory (be) to the Father.

In this way we begin the day with praise of God, which is the meaning and purpose of morning prayer. Psalms of praise are the heart of the psalter, and the gateway to his holy presence.

Reading: A brief passage may be read from scripture. God speaks to his people, and tells us how to live and give him glory as we serve him. All pause for silent reflection after the reading.

Canticle of Zechariah: The group may pray Zechariah's song of praise (Lk. 1: 68-79).

1 Based on the material in Sunday Mass Book, pages 1298-1302. Psalm references are to the Hebrew numbers, as in The Jerusalem Bible.
Prayers for the world: The Church of God praises him and prays for the world. We consecrate this day and all we do to the Lord. The group may sing or say another response.

Heavenly Father,
help all people to work for your honor and glory.

Teach us to sing your praises.

We praise you for making the world,
and we thank you for letting us be your people. R.

Bless us as we do our work for you today,
and help us to be kind to all we meet. R.

Bring peace to the world,
and joy into the hearts of all who love you. R.

(Other petitions may be added.)

Let us pray.

(All pause for a moment of silent prayer.)

Our Father . . . (sung, if possible).

May God bless us and keep us in his love,
and lead us to eternal salvation.

Amen.

(It is fitting to conclude morning prayer with a sign of peace.)

Evening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Listen to our prayer, O Lord,
and hear our cry for help. Ps. 102: 1

Evening psalm: Ps. 141 is the traditional psalm for evening prayer. The evening sacrifice we recall is Christ's saving death.

Psalm: The group may choose a second psalm; if possible, the psalm — or at least its refrain — is sung. One of these psalms may be chosen: Ps. 4; 8; 10; 11; 15; 16; 67; 84. The group may choose other psalms.

Reading: A brief passage may be read from scripture. God speaks to his people and tells us how to live.

Canticle of Mary: The group may pray Mary's song of praise (Lk. 1: 46-55).

Prayers for the world: The Church of God thanks him, and prays for the world. We ask him to bring salvation and peace to all. The group may sing or say another response.
Father in heaven,
help all nations to live in your peace and love:

**Listen to us, Lord, we pray.**

Forgive us, and free us from sin,
so that we may lead holy lives in your sight.  R.

Bless your Church throughout the world.
Guide our bishop and priests,
and teach us your love by their example.  R.

Have mercy on all who try to do their best for you,
and grant them your peace and joy.  R.

Show your love for all who suffer,
and comfort them with your Spirit.  R.

(Other petitions may be added.)

Let us pray.

(All pause for a moment of silent prayer.)

**Our Father . . .** (sung, if possible).

May the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
bring us love and joy for ever.

*Amen.*

(It is fitting to conclude evening prayer with a sign of peace.)

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**GROWING IN PRAYER**

Prayer — of praise and of petition — is one of the most important tasks of the people of God.

In order to promote a deepening of the prayer life of Canadian Catholics, fifty pages at the end of *Sunday Mass Book* are devoted to *Growing in prayer.* Pages 1285-1335 provide many prayer forms from our 2,000 years of Christian tradition, and invite us to use the scriptures, the liturgical texts, and other inherited forms in our prayer life.

These may be used in our personal and family prayer, both during the week and in preparation for the Lord's day.

What are you doing about *growing in prayer?*
SOME QUESTIONS ON FAMILY PRAYER

The National Council for Liturgy has suggested that the National Liturgical Office might consult parents on what they are doing about prayer, and on what assistance they want. Council members drafted this questionnaire1 as a means toward knowing and meeting the needs of families across the country.

Parishes, parish councils, liturgy committees, and diocesan commissions may wish to promote this survey both for their own understanding of the prayer life of the community, and as a contribution to the national picture.

Instructions for use of this survey form:

○ Duplicate these pages (including the copyright notice in the first paragraph of footnote 1), or type it on stencils, with the copyright notice.

○ Ask each family to answer and return the form, either to you or directly to the National Liturgical Office, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.

○ All answers received by June 30, 1978, will be reported on in Bulletin 65. (Answers received after that date will be studied, but will be too late to be tabulated for publication in September.)

* * *

Please print or type your answers.

Family prayer:

1. Does your family gather to pray regularly? ______ yes ______ no

2. How often each day? ______ times

3. How often each week? ______ times

4. How often each month? ______ times

5. Please list the special seasons of the year when you gather to pray:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

6. Please list other occasions when you pray as a family:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

7. At what times of day do you gather for family prayer?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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In your family prayer:

8. Do you use the bible or New Testament for readings? _____ yes _____ no
9. Do you use the bible for praying a psalm? _____ yes _____ no
10. Do you have singing? _____ yes _____ no
11. Please note the types of music that you sing:
   ____ hymns ____ psalms ____ antiphons ____ songs ____ folk songs
   ____ traditional songs ____ others: Please specify:____________________________

12. Which member of your family leads the prayer?

       ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______ ______

13. Do you have any spontaneous prayer? _____ yes _____ no

Books for prayer

Please list the books which you find helpful in your family prayer:

14. Bible: _____ yes _____ no
   Preferred editions: _____ JB _____ NAB _____ RSV _____ NEB _____ TEV
   If you use another, give version: ____________________________

15. New Testament: _____ yes _____ no
   Preferred editions: _____ JB _____ NAB _____ RSV _____ NEB _____ TEV
   If you use another, give version: ____________________________

16. Sunday Mass Book: _____ yes _____ no

17. Other book for Mass: _____ yes _____ no
   If so, give title: ____________________________________________

18. A form of the liturgy of the hours or divine office: _____ yes _____ no
   If so, give title: ____________________________________________

19. Catholic Book of Worship: _____ yes _____ no

20. Sunday lectionary — study edition: _____ yes _____ no

21. Weekday lectionary — study edition: _____ yes _____ no

22. Other books: please give titles:
   _________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________
New resources

What elements would be useful in a book for celebrating prayer in your family?

Daily and weekly prayer:

23. Morning prayer 
   Yes — no
24. Evening prayer 
   Yes — no
25. Mealtime prayers 
   Yes — no
26. Preparation for Sunday Mass 
   Yes — no
27. Prayers for use on Sunday, the Lord’s day 
   Yes — no

Seasonal prayer:

28. Prayers for use in Advent 
   Yes — no
29. In Christmas season 
   Yes — no
30. In ordinary time 
   Yes — no
31. In Lent 
   Yes — no
32. In Holy Week 
   Yes — no
33. In Easter season 
   Yes — no

Special occasions:

34. On special feast days (please list them):

__________________________  __________________________

35. Waiting for the birth of a child 
   Yes — no
36. After a new member is born into the family 
   Yes — no
37. Birthdays 
   Yes — no
38. Anniversary of baptism 
   Yes — no
39. Engagement 
   Yes — no
40. Wedding anniversary 
   Yes — no
41. Sickness of a member of the family 
   Yes — no
42. Return to health of a member of the family 
   Yes — no
43. Family reunions 
   Yes — no
44. When visitors are present 
   Yes — no
45. When someone leaves home 
   Yes — no
46. Prayers for a person who is dying 
   Yes — no
47. Prayers for the dead 
   Yes — no
48. Other anniversaries
   ______ yes  ______ no
49. Time of reconciliation
   ______ yes  ______ no
50. Beginning and end of school year
   ______ yes  ______ no
51. Beginning and end of holiday periods
   ______ yes  ______ no
52. Graduation
   ______ yes  ______ no

Your family:
Please help us by giving the following information about your family:

53. Who lives at your home?
   ______ father
   ______ boy aged ______ years  ______ girl aged ______ years
   ______ boy aged ______ years  ______ girl aged ______ years
   ______ boy aged ______ years  ______ girl aged ______ years
   ______ grandfather
   ______ other

54. Do you have a place in your home (room, corner, shrine) where you usually gather for prayer?
   ______ yes  ______ no

55. We live in ______ city ______ suburbs ______ town ______ village ______ country ______ elsewhere

56. We live in the province/territory/state of ________________________
   country ________________________

Other elements
Please list other elements you would want in a book for celebrating prayer in your family:

57. ________________________
58. ________________________
59. ________________________
60. ________________________
61. ________________________
62. ________________________
63. ________________________
Other comments on family prayer:

COURSES IN PASTORAL LITURGY

There are now a number of good courses in liturgy being offered in North America. Some of these are given during the summer, some during the school year, and some in shorter institutes.

Further information may be obtained by writing to the following:

- Program of Liturgical Studies
  Department of Theology
  University of Notre Dame
  Notre Dame, Indiana 46556
  U.S.A.

- The Graduate School
  St. John's University
  Collegeville, Minn. 56321
  U.S.A.

- School of Religious Studies
  The Catholic University of America
  Washington, D.C. 20064
  U.S.A.

- Program of Church Music and Liturgy
  St. Joseph's College
  Rensselaer, Indiana 47978
  U.S.A.

- Aquinas Institute
  2570 Asbury Road
  Dubuque, Iowa 52001
  U.S.A.

- The Center for Pastoral Liturgy
  The Catholic University of America
  Washington, D.C. 20064
  U.S.A.

- Irish Institute for Pastoral Liturgy, approved by the Irish hierarchy: A one-year program, beginning each September. Four areas of specialization: the Church at prayer, the eucharist, the sacraments, the theology of liturgy.

  The curriculum includes lectures in the related subjects of scripture, theology, the human sciences, music, art, architecture.

  Applications should be made early to Rev. S. Swayne, Director, Mount St. Anne's Liturgy Centre, Killenard, Portarlington, Laois, Ireland.
ROLE OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY

This article is directed to the pastoral team and parish council of your parish, as well as to the liturgy and education committees. It suggests many areas where the parish community may be of assistance to parents of children of all ages as they try to help their families to grow in a Christian way. Parishes which take this responsibility seriously are doing the work of the Lord.

This article and the following one present many ideas for parishes to discuss, explore, and undertake in the years to come.

Parish goals: The Second Vatican Council described its four goals quite clearly in paragraph one of the Constitution on liturgy. Of these aims, three apply to the parish community as well:

- Help Catholics to deepen their Christian living each day;
- Strengthen everything that contributes to unity among Christians;
- Make the Church more attractive to all people.

What goals does your parish have?

Experiencing community: If young people are to learn to know Christ, they need to experience a friendly and encouraging community which gives them some examples of people who live as true Christians. Young people need to be with those who have Christian values; they need the experience of honoring Christ as a person, and the support of a community of Christians who seriously commit themselves to Jesus and his gospel.

As with catechumens (see Bulletin 64), the parish should be providing this experience of a community of faith and love for young people and for all in its midst.

Building on our baptismal faith: Our baptism is the foundation of our faith, the moment when we are made Christians, members of the people of God, and sharers in Christ's priesthood: see Baptism: basis of our spirituality, in Bulletin 62, pages 4-8. In working with parents to help them raise them in the faith, the parish must always keep this in mind. A good preparation for baptism, a joyful community celebration, a baptistry worthy of the celebration taking place in it, concerned follow up with those who neglect baptism for their children or who are not ready to nurture their children in the faith — these are part of the work of the parish. All other activities discussed in these articles are undermined if the baptismal aspects of parish life are neglected or considered as nothing special.

Celebrating Sunday more beautifully: Every parish in the land has to start now to make Sunday Mass a better celebration. Only by good liturgy — the best that we are able to give to God — can we hope to touch the lives of the believing community. Great improvement is needed in preparation, music, preaching (see Bulletin 60), reading (see no. 56). Better training needs to be given to all ministers (see Bulletins 53 and 56). Moments of silence are necessary, and should be included at the required
times: penitential rite, opening prayer, after readings and homily, after communion. People and priests need to be taught to listen with faith to God's word and to the prayers of the celebration.

The Sunday eucharist is to be the center of the Christian life for the family and for the parish community. Instead of trying to find new gimmicks, communities should seek to celebrate Mass according to the Roman rite, following the norms in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and in the order of Mass. These are contained in the sacramentary, and are summarized for practical consultation in Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy — Liturgical Calendar (1977-1978 edition: pastoral notes 2-9, pages 7-25). These norms encourage sound and responsible creativity.

Sunday Masses can also be improved by increasing the attention paid to the children who are present: see the suggestions in Adult liturgies with children present, page 115.

Helpful articles in past issues include Checklist for Sunday liturgy (no. 35, pages 207-213); Making Mass more prayerful (no. 44, pages 135-142); Taking part in the eucharist (no. 62, pages 31-39). A complete list of articles on the Mass is given in Bulletin 61, pages 315-324.

Preparation for first communion: Parishes need to help families as they prepare their children to receive communion for the first time. This communion must be seen as part of the process of Christian initiation, which is celebrated in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist. Where a family is lax, the priest should invite the parents to conversion. It is wise to do this some years before the child's first communion, as well as during the time of preparation. Unless children grow up with the experience of seeing their parents worship regularly and receive communion frequently, they will have little chance of being fervent in their own lives as they grow older.

It is the practice in many parishes to have first communion more family-centered. The main preparation — prayer, study, discussion, home celebrations, conversion according to their age and ability — is done by the children with their parents and family; the parish and the school co-operate by assisting the family during this period. When the child, parents, and priest agree that the child is ready for communion, he or she goes with the family at a convenient Mass (preferably on Sunday), and continues to do so from then on.

Parish bulletins: A resource that is unexplored in many communities is the Sunday bulletin. Well prepared and neatly presented, it can be a strong and constant teaching instrument. The bulletin can help continue the effects of the Sunday celebration and preaching throughout the week.

In the bulletin the people should be able to find suggestions for their prayer, ideas for home celebrations, and proposals for living the liturgy this week.

Dull, dreary, routine bulletins do nothing to build the faith of the community. Make sure yours is helping the families of the parish to grow in their knowledge and love of God and his people.

Works of love: Parishes need to encourage all their members to practise the works of mercy or love in their daily lives (see Bulletin 42, pages 23-25). Children will
learn to do these works only if they see their parents and their parish community doing them. In the same way, children will be able to avoid the common prejudices against people of other colors, nationalities, languages, and religions if their parents and parish have a positive, Christian approach. In the past few years, the Church has begun to remove some of the unfortunate expressions about Jews from the lectionary texts.

**Vocations**: God our Father has chosen each of us in love from all eternity. He has called us in Christ to carry out a unique role in the coming of his kingdom on earth. While all are called to the general vocation of being God's holy people on earth (see Constitution on the Church, nos. 39-42), each of us is called to be an individual reflection of God's glory and beauty — as unique in our service as in our fingerprints — for none of us can grasp God's essence, beauty, power, and love.

It is the responsibility of the parish community to help all its members to understand and appreciate God's love in choosing them to carry out a particular vocation in life. It is also the work of the parish to help all its members to discern their vocation by prayer and suffering.

In helping people to know their vocation in life, the parish can lead them to certain basic Christian attitudes:

- **Attitudes toward creation**: Our attitudes toward creation reflect and influence our attitudes toward God, our creator. Positive and reverent attitudes toward the universe, the world, people, and matter lead to respect and worship of God, who made all these from nothing. (See Attitudes toward creation, in Bulletin 50, pages 262-264.)

- **An attitude of service**: Jesus came as the servant of all: he came to serve us and to save us. Love for others is what identifies his followers. An attitude of loving service should also be the identifying characteristic of each community of believers, especially those gathered in a parish. The works of mercy are a primary form of ministry or service: see Bulletin 53, pages 115-116; no. 42, pages 23-25. Both formal ministries and many other opportunities of service are discussed in Bulletin 53: see especially pages 117-119. (On human and Christian values, see pages 71-72, above.)

- **Prayer for vocations**: Jesus himself told us to ask the Father to send more workers into his harvest (Mt. 9: 38). A prayer for vocations to all ministries is included in Bulletin 60, page 251; prayer and action for vocations is urged in Bulletin 50, pages 265-266; see also no. 37, page 64. Parents and parishioners should be praying that all the people in the parish, especially the young, will be open to whatever vocations God calls them to share: single life, marriage and family life, religious life, other ministries, diaconate, or priesthood. This should be part of each person's daily prayer, and should also be included often in the general intercessions on Sundays and weekdays, as well as in the liturgy of the hours.

A young person may want to use this prayer:

*Lord Jesus, help me:  
help me to grow up with you  
and live for you, Lord.*

**Helps toward maturity**: Parishes should also be ready to help parents in guiding the developing attitudes of their children (and also their own attitudes)
toward material things; toward their own body (see Bulletin 62, pages 32-33); toward sexuality; toward modesty. These will be part of their foundations for a mature adult life.


Bible celebrations: A parish which desires to deepen the biblical spirit in its community (see A book for God's people, pages 79-85) will also make sure that bible celebrations are part of its annual prayer life:

- Penance celebrations are recommended in Advent and several times in Lent. Examples for parish adaptation are included each year in the Bulletin. Similar services may be celebrated at other times.

- Solemn annual exposition: On this occasion, which replaces the former forty hours' devotion, one or more bible celebrations may be added. (See Bulletin 62, pages 44-46.)

- "Celebrations" promoted by the Canadian catechetical program may serve as models for home celebration.

- Home celebrations: Parishes may encourage a celebration at home during the major liturgical seasons by including a simple outline in the parish bulletin. The essence of a bible celebration is quite simple:
  - A reading from scripture, while all listen;
  - A response by all: by reflection, prayer, song, or action.

Further elements may be added as desired.

Benefitting from ethnic customs: In most parishes there are families from various national, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. The parish may encourage these families to continue some of the religious customs from the old country (including celebrations, greetings, special foods, songs, decorations, costumes, practices, prayers), and to share them with others. In helping other people to learn about these customs, the parish needs to discern the religious basis of the customs and place the emphasis on their positive aspects.

Learning to make bread suitable for eucharistic celebrations, and other foods for other parish events may be an activity shared by many families. As well as being interesting and fun such activities can be beneficial to all who take part in them.

Sick children: The parish may encourage parents to use a prayer of blessing when one of their children is sick (see Bulletin 49, pages 174-176). When the illness is more serious, they may invite the priest to visit and bless their child, and perhaps celebrate the sacrament of anointing.

When a child is dying, the priest should make sure that he or she receives the sacraments of initiation, and others according to the circumstances. If the child is old enough, the priest will pray with him or her. He will also pray with the parents and family, and help them to accept the sacrifice that God is asking of them.

Helping children with handicaps: In every parish there are children with physical or mental handicaps. What are you doing in your parish to help them take as full
a part as possible in the liturgy and prayer life of the community? How are these children being helped to learn to pray, and to prepare for and celebrate the sacraments?!

Among the organizations which work with youth in Canada, the Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements encourage people with handicaps to take part in their activities. For further information, contact Mr. Patrick Horan, Relationships Services, Boy Scouts of Canada, National Headquarters, Box 5151, Station F, Ottawa, Ontario K2C 3G7; or Relationships Services, Girl Guides of Canada, National Headquarters, 150 Merton Street, Toronto, Ontario M4S 1A3. Outside Canada, contact the local or national offices of the movement.

One-parent homes: Children in homes with only one parent may need particular help. A working mother or father has little time to spend with the children, and finds little energy left to teach them prayer and Christian practices. A parish which is concerned about the prayer life in every home will try to be of more assistance to one-parent families who wish this help. A parish visitor — perhaps a mother who has raised her family — may be of help in encouraging a parent in deepening the children's prayer life.

Families who pray together and who hold celebrations could invite one-parent families to join them on a number of occasions during the year.

Teach the people some psalms: Members of the parish need help to understand the language, themes, and images of the scriptures. It is the responsibility of the priests to see that their people are being taught in season and out, through the homily, parish bulletin, good publications, parish school, adult education programs, and by every other means available.

Your parish may benefit from discussing these suggestions for teaching people to pray and sing the psalms as Christian prayers (see Bulletin 58, pages 96-100):

- **Four basic psalms:** As a beginning, high school students and adults may be invited to learn to sing and pray these four psalms: Ps. 23 — a prayer of confidence (CBW, nos. 227-228); Ps. 100 — a prayer of praise (nos. 238-239); Ps. 130 — a lamentation (nos. 245, 247); Ps. 121 — a prayer of confidence.

- **Add some others:** Once they are familiar with the basic psalms, they can go on to Ps. 8 (CBW, nos. 224, 226), and Ps. 51 (no. 235).

- **Learn a doxology:** There are many forms of the doxology: this is a song of praise to the holy Trinity, and is usually sung after a psalm; it may also be used to end an activity or time of prayer (see SMB, page 1291). The *Glory (be) to the Father* is a doxology. The parish choir can help the community to learn and use a doxology in its worship.

- **Penitential psalms:** the Church encourages us to pray for sinners (including ourselves first of all) by using the seven penitential psalms (Ps. 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143). In words inspired by the Holy Spirit, we ask God for mercy and pardon.

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1 See *Celebrations for the deaf*, Bulletin 10, pages 17-18; *Liturgy and the handicapped*, no. 38, pages 106-110; *Sunday for the shut-ins*, no. 39, pages 185-186; no. 33, pages 70-73. While written primarily about adults, these articles contain many ideas that may be adapted for children.
The penitential psalms have been used in the Church for many centuries, and are appropriate for prayer on penitential days, and particularly during Lent; when preparing for the sacrament of reconciliation; on days of fast, retreat, or renewal. On these days, the parish may encourage families and groups to celebrate a liturgy of lamentation, with the penitential psalms and a litany of intercession for the needs and agonies of the Church and the world. (See Bulletin 37, page 29; no. 48, pages 103-107; SMB, pages 1309-1316.)

- *Learn a dozen psalms of praise:* The psalms of praise are the heart of the psalter. They are used in morning prayer to begin each day in God's worship. Priests may preach on these psalms and encourage families to know them and use them. Praise psalms include Ps. 8, 19, 29, 33, 46-48; 76, 84, 87, 93, 96-100; 103-106, 113, 114, 117; 122, 135, 136, 145-150.

- *Psalms of thanks* include Ps. 18, 21, 30, 33, 34, 40; 65-68, 92, 116, 118; 124, 129, 138, 144. People should be encouraged to use some of these at home and in church on occasions of thanksgiving, such as the birth of a child.

- *Responsorial psalms:* Parishes should make a greater effort to help their people to sing the refrain while the cantor or choir sings the psalm. This should be a normal part of the Sunday celebration. Psalm tones are provided for the cantor or choir in the choir or complete edition of *Catholic Book of Worship.*

- *Problem:* English-speaking Christians face a problem today in learning the psalms: there are many official and unofficial translations and some paraphrases. While discussions go on about the possibilities of a common psalter for liturgical use, we can encourage the use of the Grail psalter (used in the Canadian lectionary and in the liturgy of the hours) and the RSV. Neither of these is perfect, but both are adequate for good prayer.

**Encouraging family prayer:** Parishes should be helping parents to fulfill the promises they made during their children's baptism. One of the ways of doing this is by encouraging families to pray together, to sing hymns, and to honor God with thankful and joyful hearts. Parents will help their children to grow in love by introducing them to the practice of including the needs of other people in their prayers. Many articles in this issue of the Bulletin discuss prayer in the life of the family and of the parish.

**Formation of conscience:** What is the parish doing to help parents in their work of teaching their children the way of Christ? The Canadian bishops' statement on the formation of conscience (December 1973) is reprinted in Bulletin 52, pages 40-50, and may be used by pastors in their work.

**Further education:** What opportunities does your parish offer to help parents grow in their understanding of the Catholic faith?

- *Methods:* There are many ways of doing this: displays, workshops, courses, one-day learning events, discussion groups, bible study groups; parish lending library, inserts in the Sunday bulletin, cassettes, pamphlets, books.

- *Some topics* that could be of interest and value are: learning to pray (see Bulletin 44, pages 168-175); teaching children to pray; psalms; meaning of a particular liturgical season; how to celebrate the seasons with children at home; human values (see page 71); postures and gestures in prayer; Christian symbols (see pages...
75-78); morning and evening prayer; sacraments today; using blessings (see Bulletin 49); home celebrations. Past issues of the Bulletin provide many topics and resources for further education in the practice of the faith.

- **Correspondence course:** A parish could organize a group to take part in correspondence courses in the Old and New Testaments. Further information may be obtained from Guided Study Programs in the Catholic Faith, at the address on page 85.

- **Occasional speaker:** Once or twice a year the parish or liturgy committee could arrange for a speaker who could help parents with different forms of home celebrations during the liturgical seasons.

- **Take-home teacher:** Simple and practical explanations of the sacraments, the liturgical year, the eucharist, and aids for growing in prayer are found in *Sunday Mass Book*, available from Publications Service.

**Media education:** If a parish wants to help parents to do their job well, it would be wise to offer some form of media education once every year or two. This would be a brief workshop of several sessions on the effects of television on adults and children, on how to judge what is good and bad, and on how to use it for the benefit of all.²

**House of prayer:** The parish church should be a house of prayer for God's people. Sunday and daily Mass should deepen the prayer life of the community (see *Making Mass more prayerful*, Bulletin 44, pages 135-142; *Taking part in the eucharist*, no. 62, pages 31-39). The Church is encouraging us to restore morning and evening prayer, our traditional hours of prayer, to parish life (Liturgy constitution, no. 100): see *Moving toward a parish office*, in Bulletin 58, pages 112-116.

- **Eucharistic devotions outside Mass** have been revised, and need to become a part of parish life once more in their renewed format.³

- **Visits:** The Church now recommends that the eucharist should be reserved, in a chapel, for the sick and dying. Such a chapel may also be used for individual and family visits. Parishes need to find ways of promoting these visits and of keeping the church open at least several hours each day. See *Visits should be restored*, in Bulletin 44, page 163.

**Many other areas:** There are many other ways in which a parish may help parents as they work to raise their families well:

- **Art:** Help people to recognize, appreciate, and obtain good art. What sort of art is presented to the community in their church?

- **Books:** Make useful books available to parents and teachers. A parish lending library may provide practical books on prayer, family life, vocations, Christian sex education, liturgical year, Mass, sacraments, liturgy of the hours, and other areas

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² *Television Awareness Training:* This new program is being developed to aid parishes that wish to help their people to become more aware of the effects of TV. It covers eight study areas: television overview; television and children, . . . and stereotypes, . . . and violence, . . . and sexuality, . . . and news, . . . and advertising, . . . and change. For further information, contact: Rev. Keith Woollard, Television Awareness Training, United Church House, 85 St. Clair Ave. East, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M8.

³ See Bulletin 62, pages 43-46. The National Liturgical Office is presently preparing a practical book for these celebrations of eucharistic worship.
of Christian living. Education rather than entertainment should be the goal of the parish lending library.

Once a year, a parish organization or council committee may arrange for a display of religious and family books by a local bookstore or religious bookstore.

- **Music:** At present much good music is being made available on records and tapes. A parish could look at this, and recommend helpful material to parishioners who want to hear and learn new psalms and hymns at home. Hymn books, such as *Catholic Book of Worship*, could also be suggested for home use.

The parish may also help parents to buy their own copies of useful books and records by arranging to order them.

This article includes many ideas for the parish community's consideration. Every family should be able to ask for help in these matters, and should expect to receive it from their parish and their diocese, of which they are an important part. The diocese and parish should be offering this sort of guidance and assistance to families that want it.

**Helpful reading:** As well as the books mentioned in the next two articles, these are useful for parishes:

- *Let's Celebrate,* by Don Laing (1974, Boy Scouts of Canada, Box 5151, Station F, Ottawa, Ontario K2C 3G7): $1.75. This 151-page book provides many resources for spiritual activities with young people from five to twenty-three years of age. (This book was reviewed in Bulletin 46, page 320.)

- *Scouting for Boys with Handicaps — A Leader's Guide,* (1975, Boy Scouts of Canada, Ottawa) This is available for $3.95 from the address in the paragraph above.


- *Catechesis in Our Time:* message of the 1977 Synod of Bishops.


- *Helping Young Children Learn,* by Evelyn G. Pitcher, et al. (1966, Merrill, Columbus, Ohio).

- Audio-visual kits for helping people to learn to celebrate along the lines suggested in this Bulletin are available from Twenty-Third Publications, P.O. Box 180, West Mystic, Ct. 06388:

  - *Family Celebrations for Religious Education:* Discusses why we celebrate, and suggests ten ways to celebrate home celebrations: two filmstrips, records or cassettes, support material.

  - *It's All in the Family:* Helping parents to see their responsibility as the first religious educators of their children: filmstrip and record or cassette.

  - *The Formative Years:* Helping parents to learn about the intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional-social growth of their children: four filmstrips and cassettes.
YEAR OF PRAISE AND PRAYER

This article goes through the liturgical year briefly, and suggests some activities for each season. These are intended to trigger further ideas about ways in which the parish may encourage families to do similar things with their children. Past issues of the Bulletin offer many suggestions for parish use.

All seasons: In every season, children may be encouraged to make simple prayers; to prepare table decorations and posters; to color pictures; to make simple banners; and to do other crafts appropriate to the season being celebrated.

Advent: Among the activities suitable for this season are Advent calendars and wreaths, and the preparation of home cribs. Families with older children may use the O antiphons in their prayer (see Bulletin 55, pages 200-204); for Advent blessings, see Bulletin 55, pages 210-215. Three Bulletins concentrate on Advent: nos. 36, 41, and 55. A complete index of seasonal references is given in no. 61, pages 305-307.

A penance celebration for use by parishes and communities is given for Lent and Advent each year in the National Bulletin on Liturgy. These may be adapted and simplified for use in homes and classrooms. For Lent, see Bulletins 32, 37, 42, 47, 52, 56, and 62; for Advent, nos. 36, 41, 46, 51, 55, 61, and 66.

• Christmas cards should reflect the meaning of the feast (see next paragraph). They should be religious, and of reasonable quality in their reproduction. Trees, cuddly puppies, Santa Claus, and winter scenes are distractions from the real meaning of this celebration (see Bulletin 36, page 259).

Christmas and its octave center on the great truth of the incarnation: God loves us so much that he sent his Son to be one of us, that we might believe and love and have eternal life (see Jn. 3: 15-16). The eternal Son of God, made man, crucified, risen, seated at the right hand of the Father, sending his Spirit to us, and living among us: this is the Lord we celebrate at Christmas. We pray with the Church to the risen Lord. We do not pray to Jesus as a baby: see Bulletin 62, pages 20-21; see also page 72 in this issue.

A cross made of lights may be placed in the window during this season (see Bulletin 55, pages 211 and 213).

A simple way of making figures for a crib set involves the use of construction paper in various colors. A convenient height for the models is about 10 cm. (4½ inches). See pages 104-105.


Many French-speaking Canadians continue the tradition of a parental blessing on New Year’s day. At a suitable time that day, the family gathers and kneels as the father — using his own words — asks the blessing of God the Father on this family, and makes the sign of the cross over them.

Some parents continue this practice at other special occasions during the year; some make the sign of the cross on their children’s foreheads at bedtime. (See also Bulletin 49, pages 173-176; Sunday Mass Book, pages 1327-1328.)
ROLLOF FORM A CONE FOR THE BODY
• Christmas:

• Epiphany:
Further references for the Christmas season are given in Bulletins 36, 41, and 55. Index: see Bulletin 61, pages 306-307.

**Ordinary time:** The few weeks of ordinary time between the feast of the Lord’s baptism and the beginning of Lent may be used to emphasize *family prayer*. A little prayer booklet may be made up and colored. The book could present pictures of various persons, events, and things for which we can thank and praise God. Older children could help by preparing or stencilling sketches and key words to go in these books.

![Alleluia!!!](image)

**Lent:** The parish or family may want to “bury the Alleluia” at the beginning of Lent: our song of joy is set aside until the believing community has undergone conversion and we are ready to sing this chant with renewed meaning during the Easter vigil. A family may invite each child to color or cut out an *Alleluia* (already outlined by an adult) and place them in a small box on Ash Wednesday.¹

Lent is a good time for the parish to help parents remember and carry out their obligation to introduce their children to the practice of penance (see Bulletin 10, page 7; no. 42, page 6). All Christians are called in baptism to share in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ.

During Lent, reminders of baptism are appropriate as we prepare for its renewal. Adults and children may write or draw what they will do as penance during Lent (see *The top ten*, in Bulletin 42, pages 20-33). Each person may place his or her penance in an envelope, seal it, mark it with his or her name, and pin or stick the envelope to a large cross (perhaps cut out and placed in a prominent place: prayer room, living room, refrigerator door; on Easter, these unopened envelopes are burned as described below.) Younger children may be invited to share in this activity.

Lent is also a good time for frequent bible stories (see Bulletin 37, pages 57-62); some of these may be taken from the daily lenten gospels. (For further references on Lent, see Bulletins 37 and 42, and the list in Bulletin 61, pages 307-308.)

**Holy Week:** A little procession with each child carrying a blessed palm, may mark Passion Sunday at home. The story of our Lord’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem may be retold simply, and a simple *Hosanna* sung by all. Then the palms may be placed in the prayer room or in individual rooms around the house. A lighted cross may be placed in the window for the week. (Further references: Bulletin 61, pages 308-309.)

• **Holy Thursday:** The story of the last supper may be retold in a simple way at dinner. Where possible, the children may take part in baking and serving a loaf of bread; a cake or cookies made in the shape of a lamb may be served. A simple *Lord, have mercy* or *Lamb of God* may be sung. (Further references: Bulletin 61, page 309.)

![Cross](image)

• **Good Friday:** Little children may cut out or color a large cross. Signs of reverence may be shown to the family cross or crucifix in its place of honor (see pages 76, 86). The family may have a brief procession in their home, carrying a cross or crucifix. The parents may make the sign of the cross on the foreheads of all the family members. Younger children may be invited (but not forced) to share to some extent in the paschal fast of the entire Church on this day. The significance of hot-cross buns may be explained to them during Lent and on Good Friday. (Further references: Bulletin 61, pages 309-310.)

![Cross](image)

• **Holy Saturday:** This is a quiet day of prayer and reflection before the Easter festivities begin: like Good Friday, it is not a day for shopping and excitement.

For children who are unable to take part in the Easter vigil, a brief service of light may be held Saturday at bedtime: a candle is lighted in the darkness, all sing *Alleluia*, and the candle is put in a place of honor.

**Easter cards:** The note on Christmas cards on page 103 applies also to cards sent at Easter time.

![Easter Cross](image)

**Easter Sunday:** A family Easter candle may be prepared on Saturday or Sunday, with the help of all. The current year may be cut out from a calendar. A simple form of renewal of baptismal vows may be made: for preschool children, “I love you, Jesus,” may be adequate. This may be accompanied by the sprinkling of all with the new Easter water.

“Gems” of colored foil may be added to the cross made on Friday (on the *crux gemmata* or jewelled cross, see Bulletin 62, pages 27-28).

The box in which the *Alleluia* was “buried” at the beginning of Lent may be opened, and the *Alleluia* placed on each jewelled cross. At the same time, the penance envelopes may be burned.

Common symbols, such as the Easter egg and rabbit, may be seen with Christian meaning as signs of new life in the spring. Ukrainians decorate Easter eggs (*pysanky*) with painstaking care.

• **During the Easter season,** the family may continue to praise and thank the Father for saving us through Jesus. On Sundays holy water may be used, and the baptismal promises renewed as on Easter. Psalm 117 (*Praise the Lord, all you nations*) may be sung or said. During this season, it is appropriate to stand during prayer.
On Ascension day, a suitable activity would include making a crown, or a chair or throne (decorated with a cross or crown).

The Jewish custom of leaving a chair vacant at table, in preparation for Elijah’s expected return, appears in Christian art by the fifth century as a chair occupied by the monogram XP or the jewelled cross. This is a sign of Christ’s continued, though glorious and invisible, presence among his people, and a reminder of his imminent Appearing.

On Pentecost, a flame (as on the front of the rite of confirmation) or a stylized dove (see the cover of Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy) may be cut out and colored, and used that day.

Ordinary time: A greater understanding of Sunday in the life of the Christian people is important for families who wish to think and pray with the Church. Ideas on the meaning of Sunday are contained in Bulletin 43, and in Sunday Mass Book, pages 19-20: these may be used as a basis for drawings or banners. A simple one-line prayer of praise may be used at home on Sundays, or an Alleluia sung. An ambitious parish may want to help families prepare a simple booklet for preschoolers to bring to Mass.

○ Friday: From the early centuries the Church has kept Friday as a special day for remembering that Christ died for us to save us. We thank him for his love, and try to do some act of penance or of extra kindness as a way of responding to Jesus’ love for us. Each family could develop a prayer, a special form of grace (see Bulletin 49, page 196; SMB, page 1329), or another way of marking this day. (Other references on Friday are given in Bulletin 61, page 312.)

○ Saints’ feasts: Not every saint in the calendar need be observed: it is sufficient to celebrate the feasts of the patron saints of each member of the family. A feast of Mary and a few other patrons — of the parish, the family, or of their national background — may also be celebrated. These days could be marked by a cake or symbolic cookies; a brief litany (as at baptism: see Bulletin 29, page 80, no. 48; SMB, page 1075) could include the saint of the day.

Other occasions: A few other occasions are suggested here for celebration by families:

○ Birthday: Added to the usual festivities could be a “birthday berakah” by all for the one who is celebrating the birthday, and — as the child grows old enough — a

2 In the past forty years, all too many children were dubbed with the name of some passing movie or TV star. What do you do if your parents did not give you a saint’s name? When old enough, a person may wish to pick a saint as his or her particular patron.

Parishes should continue to encourage the choosing of a saint’s name as part of their program of general Christian formation (see Bulletin 59, pages 148-155), and of baptismal preparation (see Bulletin 38, page 128; no. 48, pages 134-137).
personally composed prayer of thanks, with a petition to know and carry out God's will. The parish might suggest or compose some simple prayers for a birthday celebration.

- **Anniversary of baptism:** This day should be observed for each member of the family, and could include a prayer for his or her growth to Christian maturity. A personal prayer is included in SMB, page 1085. This would be an appropriate day for asking a blessing from the priests of the parish.

- **Wedding anniversary:** The family may celebrate the wedding anniversary of the parents or other members in a similar way. A suitable prayer for the couple to use is given in SMB, page 1127.

- **Other occasions** that may be celebrated in this way include the beginning or end of a season, of the school year, or of other similar periods in the life of the family or community.

**Dramatizations:** Children love to act, and can learn much about a story from the bible when they act it out. This can be done at any time during the year. Once in a while, the parish liturgy committee or education committee may wish to help parents by offering them suggestions on bringing out the actor in their children.

* * *

**Parish planning:** To help interested families to move gradually into some of these areas, a parish needs to plan some months ahead. Co-ordination is necessary if resource people, parents, and priests are to be able to work out plans together. The resources needed have to be ready and available in adequate quantities and in good time.

Not every project suggested in this article needs to be undertaken every year. A parish which is serious about helping parents and children will begin at once to plan for some of these projects in the coming year.

* * *

**Back to our roots:** The Jewish people retain a beautiful custom at the time of the Passover. As they gather around the table to eat this sacred meal, the youngest child present asks what these rites mean. In answer, the father of the family describes how the Lord God brought his people out of Egypt, and commanded them to observe these rites each year (Exod. 12: 26-27; Exod. 13: 8-10; Deut. 6: 20-25; see also Esther 4: 17m).

This custom could be adapted and used by Christian families at some of the major times described in this article. Thus a child will learn the meaning of our faith in the bosom of his or her family, which is the first school of faith (see Esther 4: 17m).

- The question and answer could well be part of the homily, and could be included in the parish bulletin as well. (Some ideas for the answer are contained in the seasonal references; in the introduction to Sunday Mass Book, pages 20-22, and in the brief notes at the beginning of each season's Masses.)

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3 Helping parents to be the first teachers of the faith to their children is a ministry needed in today's Church. It was suggested as a possibility for further service in Bulletin 53, page 117.
• The parish liturgy committee could prepare an answer for each season as a model for the parents' response, and put it in the Sunday bulletin.

• It is suggested that both parents share in giving the answer. About one or two paragraphs in length would be adequate. The words should be simple, and may echo the scriptures. No attempt need be made to memorize the answer: it should simply provide ideas for the parents to use when they answer the child's question.

• The one who asks the question is the youngest child able to ask it intelligently.

* * *

Helpful reading: There are many good ideas in these publications, but sometimes they have to be sifted out from ones that are dated or less useful. A concerned parish would see that these or similar publications are made available to parents and those who work with them.

_Homemade Christians_, by Mary Reed Newland (1964, Pflaum, 38 W. Fifth Street, Dayton, Ohio 45402).


_The Year of the Lord in the Christian Home_, by Francis X. Weiser, SJ (1964, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn.).


LITURGIES WITH CHILDREN

There are two distinct situations to be considered when we speak of celebrating liturgy with children:

- Adult liturgies with children present;
- Liturgies celebrated with children.

These are discussed in the next four articles, which are a summary of and commentary on the 1973 Directory for Masses with children.

INTRODUCING THE MASS TO CHILDREN

In this article, the numbers in parentheses refer to the paragraphs in the Directory for Masses with children.¹

General Notes

Age group: The Directory on Masses with children affects:

a) Children who are baptized, but who have not been fully initiated through confirmation and eucharist (no. 1);

b) Baptized children who have recently been admitted to holy communion (no. 1);

c) Children with physical handicaps: the Directory does not deal with these directly, and indicates that wider adaptations are needed (no. 6). This is left rather vague.²

d) Children who are mentally retarded: the Directory may be applied to these children, with required changes (no. 6).

The Church shows special concern for these groups of children (no. 3). They are described as not having reached preadolescence (no. 6): that is, for children up to grade 6, or 12 years (approximately).

Special needs of this age group: The document notes that the general conditions of life today are not always helping the spiritual growth of children. Sometimes parents do not carry out their responsibility to give their children the Christian education which they promise during the baptismal rite (no. 1).


Adult liturgies have the power to teach God's people, but children cannot understand the full meaning of the eucharist and other liturgical celebrations. The words and signs used in these rites have to be adapted more fully if children are to be able to grasp them.

Our religious experience as little children has a deep effect on our formation. Constant experience of not understanding liturgy is harmful (no. 2).

Adapting the liturgy for children: The Church accepts its responsibility to care for children, and is ready to adapt the liturgy for them as for other groups. In 1967, the first synod of bishops looked at the question of liturgies for children. A basic principle stated then was that a totally new rite was not desired; rather, the Church would keep, shorten, or omit some elements, and make a better choice of texts (no. 3).

Directory issued: The 1973 Directory for Masses with children is considered as a supplement to the 1969-1970 General Instruction of the Roman Missal (no. 4). Any adaptations desired by the bishops' conference are to be submitted to Rome for its approval (no. 5).

Outline of Directory (no. 7):
- Introductory notes (nos. 1-6) — as discussed above in this article;
- Introducing the Mass to children (nos. 8-15) — below;
- Adult liturgies with children present (nos. 16-19) — see the following article;
- Masses with children (nos. 20-54): see pages 116-122.
- Conclusion (no. 55).

Introducing the Mass to Children

The Directory gives many positive suggestions to parents, teachers, and the Christian community on helping children to become able to participate ever more fully in the eucharist (nos. 8-15):

Religious formation of children is intended to lead them to a full Christian life, which includes full participation in the liturgy. The Church wants to help baptized children to grow in their loving union with Jesus and with all his brothers and sisters: participation in the eucharist is both the sign and the cause of this communion. Children need to be prepared for sharing in the eucharist, particularly by communion, and have to be led to understand its meaning more fully.

A proper formation in liturgy and eucharist needs to be related to and based on the general education — both natural and Christian — of the children (no. 8).

Purpose of liturgical and eucharistic formation: Parents, priests, and teachers should be leading children to respond more fully to the gospel of Jesus Christ in their life each day (no. 15).

Role of the Christian family: The primary role in teaching human and gospel values belongs to the believing family. Families and other teachers need to recognize that liturgical formation is an important part of the process of Christian education.
In baptism, parents take on the responsibility of teaching their children to pray. This is a gradual process: they have to pray with their children each day, and introduce them to personal ("private") prayer. If they so desire, children may take part in the Mass along with their family, joining in the song and prayer of the community. In this way they will begin to have their first taste of the paschal mystery we celebrate (no. 10).

When parents of weak faith want their children to be formed as Christians, the Church should encourage them to help their children to develop the human values described in the following paragraph. The parish should also encourage these parents to take part in parents' meetings, and to share with their children in celebrations which do not involve the eucharist (no. 10).

**Human values:** In order for children to experience God and his values, they need to experience human values found in liturgy. The values which they should experience according to their age and individual capacity are: being able to celebrate, to listen, to express thanks; to forgive and ask forgiveness, to greet and welcome others; to take part with a group in an activity; to share in a friendly meal, and to experience actions which are symbolic (no. 9: see page 71).

**Christian values:** Children should be led gradually beyond these human values to understand gospel values. In this way, according to their age, mentality, and way of life, they will slowly become able to celebrate the Lord's paschal mystery (no. 9).

**Responsibility of the Christian community:** The believing community is intended to be the best school for the formation in Christian living and in liturgical celebration for all its members. Adult members can influence the children in their midst by living the gospel in love and by celebrating the paschal mystery well. (See *Role of the parish community*, pages 95-102.)

- **Godparents:** The Directory points out how godparents and other zealous members of the parish can help children in families which are not giving a Christian education to their children. These zealous people will also be able to help families which are living up to their responsibilities. Suggested means are classes or schools for children, and special programs for preschoolers (no. 11).

**Catechesis on the Mass:** The liturgy has the power to teach all, including children. It is important for parish, schools, and family to continue to teach them about the Mass, and to help children to take a full and active part in its celebration (nos. 12, 9).

- **Liturical catechesis** (teaching through the liturgy) requires:
  - Adapting the liturgy to the children's age and ability;
  - Teaching through the main prayers and rites, especially the eucharistic prayer and its acclamations;
  - Handing on the meaning of the Mass;
  - Sharing in the total life of the Church of Christ (no. 12).

- **Preparation for first communion:** Children need to know the teachings of our faith about the eucharist. After their first communion, they take part in the Mass
with God's people, and share both in the eucharistic banquet and in the work of the believing community (no. 12).

**Various celebrations:** Different types of celebration help greatly in forming children according to the liturgy and in preparing them to take part in the liturgical life of the Church:

- *Litururgical elements* which children can grasp as they celebrate include the greeting, silence, praise in common (especially when sung).

- *Word of God:* As children grow older, they should hear more of the word of God in celebrations, and thus begin to appreciate his word more deeply. Celebrations of the word should be held more frequently, particularly in Lent and Advent. They should not be too didactic (no. 14).

* * *

Parishes have both a responsibility and a privilege in helping parents to introduce the Mass to their children. Children who begin to meet the Mass in the ways described above will have a strong foundation for a life of participation in Christian worship.

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**NEXT ISSUE**

Throughout its 2000 years of history, the Christian Church has provided a rite for the initiation of adults who wished to enter the community of believers. Strong and predominant in the early centuries, this rite was reduced to a minimum for many years. Only in the past decade or so has the rite of Christian initiation begun to emerge once again as an important part of the Church's life.

As well as the full initiation of adults, the Church now provides for reception of baptized persons into full communion with the Church. Following a suitable period of "catechumenate," these people are received into full union and communion with the Catholic Church.

**Bulletin 64, Christian Initiation: Into Full Communion,** is concerned with people in three situations: baptized Christians who no longer practise their faith, and who now wish to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church; baptized Catholics with little instruction, or with a desire to return to full practice; baptized children who have had little or no Christian upbringing.

This issue of the Bulletin suggests an adaptation of the rite for the Christian initiation of adults for these cases, and is intended for use in ordinary parishes and communities.

**LIFE TO RITE**

The Atlantic Liturgical Congress will be held in Halifax on October 6-8, 1978. Intended primarily for members of parish liturgy committees, it will consist of workshops on baptism, marriage, reconciliation, and sacraments of the sick. Participants are expected to follow one subject through the weekend.

Further information may be obtained from Mrs. Joseph Mansour, 2851 George Dauphinie Avenue, Halifax, N.S. The next issue of the Bulletin will carry more details on speakers and topics.
The fullest sign of the Church is seen when the people, united in prayer and worship, gather around the altar with the bishop, his priests, and his ministers. The next most powerful sign is the gathering of the parish — men and women, young and old — around the altar with the pastor, especially for Mass on the Lord's day. (See Liturgy constitution, nos. 41-42; General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 7, 74-75.)

The Directory for Masses with children makes a number of suggestions for parish Masses, particularly on Sundays. In these ways the children are recognized as part of the gathered community, and may be helped to grow in their participation.

Mutual benefit: Adults may benefit from the sincerity and participation of the children. Children may be touched by seeing adults take worship seriously. When the whole family participates in the Mass together, their spirit as a Christian family is deepened (Directory, no. 16).

Speaking to the children: The priest may help children to feel that they are part of the community by speaking to them at the beginning of Mass, during the homily, and at the end of Mass (no. 17).

Separate liturgy of the word: It may be suitable to celebrate a separate liturgy of the word with the children (readings, silence, response, homily, creed, general intercessions), while the adult community is celebrating the liturgy of the word in church. The children return to the church for the liturgy of the eucharist with the adults, beginning at the preparation of the gifts (no. 17). (Further notes on the liturgy of the word are included in the following article, Masses with children, on pages 116-122.)

Ministries: The children may carry out some of the ministries during the Mass, such as bringing the gifts to the altar or singing some parts of the celebration (no. 18).

Large numbers: When there are many children present, the Mass may be adapted in several ways:

- The priest may address the homily primarily to the children, but without neglecting the adults who are present.
- One or two of the adaptations provided for Masses with children (see the next article) may be permitted by the bishop (no. 19).

Infants and young children: Children who are not willing or able to participate in the Mass may be cared for by other adults or young people in a separate place. At the end of Mass, they may be brought in to receive the blessing given to the whole community (no. 16). (A similar provision is made for the liturgy of the word in the rite of baptism for children.)

*   *   *

There are many ways of participating in the Mass: eleven ways are discussed in Taking part in the eucharist (see Bulletin 62, pages 31-39). Parents, priests, and teachers will find helpful suggestions for their personal participation as well as for that of the children.
MASSES WITH CHILDREN

This section of the Directory is the longest, and is contained in nos. 20-54.

The use of the interim translation of the three eucharistic prayers for Masses with children and the two for Masses of reconciliation has been extended until 1980.

Introduction: Masses celebrated with children with only a few adults present (see no. 24) are encouraged, particularly on weekdays (no. 20). The Church seeks to preserve the unity of the Sunday assembly as much as possible.

Leading to adult participation: Masses with children on weekdays are intended to lead children to participation in Sunday Mass with the believing community. Celebrations with children are to resemble those with adults. While some adaptations may be needed because of the age of the children, the meaning and purpose of each rite are to be in accord with the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (Directory, no. 21).

Roles and Ministries

Increased and intense participation: Full participation is most important in Masses with children, and is to be intensified in every way possible (no. 22).

Many with special roles: It is important to have as many children as possible carry out particular roles. These include preparation of the room or church and of the altar (no. 29); acting as cantor, choir member, musician, or reader (see nos. 24, 37, 47); they may give the intentions in the general intercessions, respond during the homily (no. 48), carry the gifts to the altar, and perform other actions (see no. 34) according to local circumstances (no. 22).

Purpose of external activities: External actions are intended to deepen the internal participation of the children who take part. Silence is an important form of participation (no. 37). The highest form of sharing in the Mass is reached in receiving the body and blood of Christ as spiritual food (no. 22).

Responsibilities of the priest: The presiding priest should set the tone of the Mass, making it a festive and meditative celebration by Jesus' brothers and sisters. He needs to prepare carefully for the celebration, and to make sure that his actions and words are more than adequate for the situation.

○ Actions and gestures: These need to be clear and simple, and done with dignity.

○ Words: When the priest speaks to the children, they should be able to understand him easily. Childish speech should never be used. He may use brief introductions during the liturgy to lead the children to deeper participation, but should not be overly didactic.

When inviting the children to pray or reflect (some examples: penitential rite, opening prayer, after the readings and homily, prayer over the gifts, Our Father, sign of peace, communion), he may use his own words and thus reach them more directly (no. 23).
Adult participation: Some adults may take part in Masses with children, and help in various ways:

- **Representatives of the Church community:** It is desirable to have some adults take part in the celebration, since each eucharist is the action of the whole Church. Adults should take part as worshippers rather than as supervisors, joining the children in prayer and giving them help as needed.

- **Homilist:** Particularly if the celebrating priest finds it hard to adapt himself to the children's way of thinking, an adult may give a homily after the gospel to the gathered children; the consent of the pastor or rector of the Church is required. (The nature of the homily is discussed in detail in Bulletin 60, *Liturical Preaching*, especially pages 210-220.)

- **Ministries:** Various ministries are to be used in order to show that the liturgy is a community celebration. Readers and cantors should always have a part in the Mass, providing a welcome variety of voices (no. 24). It would seem that competent children should take precedence over adults in these Masses: see no. 22.

### Place, Time, and Preparations

**Place:** It is preferred to have children's Masses celebrated in church, but in a space which is particularly suitable for the number who take part. The children should be able to move about freely as they participate in the liturgy. (See Bulletin 48, pages 108-113, on the use of banners to create space.) If the church does not meet these needs, the eucharist may be celebrated in another suitable and dignified location (no. 25).

**Time:** The hour chosen for the Mass should be one when the children are fresh and ready to hear God's word and take part in the eucharist (no. 26).

**Weekday Masses:** Daily Masses are not recommended for children. A longer time between Masses is suggested so that careful preparation may take place, thus making the celebrations more effective and avoiding the danger of boredom (no. 27).

**Smaller groups:** Participation is easier in smaller groups than in large assemblies of children. It is better to form several groups according to their level of religious development and preparation. These groups may take part in the eucharist on different weekdays (no. 28).

**Other celebrations:** See the following article, page 123.

**Internal preparation — of mind and heart —** is most important and is aided by good preparation of the celebration (no. 29).

**Texts:** The readings, prayers, songs and petitions for the general intercessions should be prepared with care. Adults working with them and children carrying out various ministries in the Mass discuss these texts and work on them ahead of time (no. 29).

**Place:** It is also good for some of the children to prepare and decorate the place where they will be celebrating Mass. They may also prepare the chalice, cruets, and other things needed for the celebration (no. 29).
**Music and Singing**

**Importance:** Singing is encouraged in every liturgical celebration, but particularly in Masses with children. The culture and ability of the children who take part should be considered in choosing and preparing music. The children should sing the acclamations, particularly those in the eucharistic prayer (no. 30).

**Familiar chants:** To increase their participation, children may sing the common chants — *Glory to God*, *creed*, *Holy, holy, holy Lord*, and *Lamb of God* — using suitable and accepted texts, even though these may not be fully in accord with the approved texts (no. 31).

**Musical instruments** may be helpful in children's liturgies, particularly when they are played well and by children. Instruments may support the singing or provide an atmosphere for reflection or praise and joy. Music is not to overwhelm the singing or distract the children in their celebration, and should always be in accord with the actions and parts of the Mass it accompanies.

Under the above conditions, recorded music may also be used in eucharistic celebrations with children, as long as proper care is taken. If the country's bishops have set up norms for this practice, these are to be observed (no. 30). The bishops of Canada have accepted the norms issued by Rome, and have not given further directives in this matter.

**Actions, Gestures, and Postures**

**Importance:** Since liturgy is celebrated by the whole person, it is important to have suitable actions and gestures in the celebration, particularly for children. The age of the children and local practices need to be taken into consideration. By his actions, the priest gives leadership to the assembly formed by the children (no. 33).

**Adaptations:** The episcopal conference may adapt the actions and gestures of the Mass for their people; in doing so, the conference should also consider the needs of children, or may make adaptations only for children's liturgies (no. 33).

**Processions:** and other types of physical participation are important ways of taking part in the Mass. (Banners may also be carried in these processions: see no. 36.)

- **Entrance procession:** When the children enter with the priest, they may experience the community which is being established by their common entrance.

- **Gospel procession:** At least some of the children take part in the procession with the gospel book, expressing the presence of Jesus, who speaks to his people in the gospel.

- **Procession with the gifts:** The children may bring the gifts and the chalice to the priest, continuing the ancient practice in which the people brought bread and wine from home.¹

¹ The text of the directory is not clear here, but may be more easily understood in the light of GI, no. 49. The General Instruction has the chalice placed on the altar by the ministers, and only the elements of bread and wine (along with the collection of money for the poor and for the Church) are brought forward in procession. Perhaps the chalice is included in the children's procession as part of their liturgical education.
• *Communion procession:* When done well, this can be an act of brotherhood and joy (see GI, no. 56i), and will help the children to deepen their piety (no. 34).

**Visible Elements**

**Importance:** The use of visible elements in the liturgy — colors, lights, vestments, decoration of the church — is important for children. During the Church year, these elements include the ceremony of venerating the cross on Good Friday, and of blessing the Easter candle, and the candles on February 2.

The liturgy is not to be dry and abstract. It is good to bring in other visual elements that will help the children to see God's great works in creation and redemption, and thus aid them in their prayer (no. 35).

**Pictures:** In preparation for the celebration, the children may prepare pictures to provide illustrations for the homily or general intercessions, or to lead the group to greater reflection (no. 36).

**Silence and Proclamation**

**Silence and reflection** are called for at various points in the Mass: penitential rite, before the opening prayer, after the readings and homily, and after communion (GI, no. 23). Silence is necessary to balance external actions. Children are able to reflect and meditate, but need some introduction to this, so that they may learn to reflect in silence, and pray to the Father and praise him in their hearts (nos. 37, 22).

**Careful proclamation:** Priest, readers, and ministers should take special care to speak slowly and intelligibly. They should pause as required while speaking (no. 37). Further suggestions in this line are given in GI, no. 18; 1973 letter on eucharistic prayers, no. 17 (see Bulletin 40, page 201).

**Order of Mass**

**Structure:** The order of Mass has a definite structure: introductory rites, liturgy of the word, liturgy of the eucharist, concluding rites. In Masses with children, this general structure is to be followed. Adaptations in various parts of the Mass are described below, and are considered necessary for helping children to experience the mystery of our faith through the prayers and rites (no. 38).

**No adaptation** is permitted in some rites, in order that Masses with children may not be too different from those with adults. The parts which are not to change are the acclamations, people's responses to the priest and ministers, *Our Father*, and the trinitarian blessing at the end of Mass (no. 39).

**Introductory rites:** It is necessary to have some rites to begin the celebration, before the liturgy of the word (no. 38). The introductory rites build the sense of oneness in Christ by helping the individuals who have assembled to become one community in worship and praise. In this way, all are ready to hear the word of God and to celebrate the eucharist more devoutly. It is important to help children achieve this disposition.

At least one of the introductory rites should be used, with the collect or opening prayer as its conclusion. In order to avoid too many rites at the beginning, it
is permitted to omit some of these elements, or enlarge one of them. Care should be taken to use all these elements over a period of time, without neglecting any of them completely (no. 40).

- **Opening prayer:** The priest may choose another collect from the sacramentary texts, particularly from seasonal Masses (no. 50). If necessary, he may adapt this prayer for the children, keeping the purpose and nature of the prayer and avoiding childish speech or exhortations, which are alien to the literary genre of presidential prayers (no. 51).

**Liturgy of the word:** The scriptures are the main part of the liturgy of the word. For this reason, reading from the bible is always part of Masses celebrated with children (no. 41).

- **Number of readings:** If the children find it hard to understand three or two readings, it is permitted to reduce these to two or one. The gospel is always to be read (no. 42).

- **Suitable readings:** If the assigned readings seem unsuitable for children's understanding, others may be chosen from the bible or lectionary, but with regard to the current liturgical season. Episcopal conferences are urged to develop a lectionary for celebrations with children.2

An individual verse may be omitted if beyond the children's capacity, but without mutilating the meaning of the reading or the style of the bible (no. 43).

- **Length of text:** A shorter reading is not always a better one: quality is more important than quantity. The first consideration is the spiritual benefit to the children from the reading (no. 44).

- **Avoiding paraphrases:** The Father speaks to his people in the scriptures, and the Lord Jesus is present through his word among the assembled believers. Paraphrases of the bible should not be used. Translations approved for the catechesis of children are recommended (no. 45). (No particular translation has been approved for catechesis in Canada.)

- **Helping children to understand the readings:** Every possible means should be used to help the children grasp and assimilate the scripture readings and to value the word of God more highly:

  - An introductory comment before the readings to introduce the reading or explain its context may help children to listen with greater benefit.

  - On a saint’s day, a brief story of the saint’s life may be given before the readings or in the homily.

  - Reading in parts: Some suitable readings may have different parts distributed among several children, as done for the passion narrative on Passion Sunday and Good Friday (no. 47).

2 The National Liturgical Office is working in conjunction with The International Commission on English in the Liturgy and other English-speaking nations in the preparation of a suitable lectionary for liturgies with children.
• *Response to the word:* There are various ways of having the children respond to the word of God:

— A carefully chosen psalm or some psalm verses with a simple refrain, sung after the first reading; the children should always take part in this song.

— Silent reflection may replace the singing of the psalm.

— When only the gospel is read, the children may sing after the homily (no. 46).

• *Homily:* The homily unfolds the word of God for the children, and should have an important place in the liturgy. The children may listen in silence, or sometimes dialogue with the one who preaches (no. 48). As noted above, another adult may speak to the children under certain circumstances (no. 24).

• *General intercessions:* see nos. 22 and 36.

• *Profession of faith:* When required by the rubrics, the apostles’ creed may be used with children (no. 49). It is important to help them to become familiar gradually with the Nicene creed as well (no. 39).

**Liturgy of the eucharist:** Several of these elements have already been mentioned above.

• *Preparation of the gifts:* Procession with the gifts: see no. 34. Prayer over the gifts: the priest may use his own words to invite those present to pray (no. 23), and may adapt the prayer over the gifts, as noted for the collect (nos. 50-51).

• *Eucharistic prayer:* This prayer is the most important of the Mass (no. 52). The priest is to proclaim the prayer with clarity and dignity (no. 23). Before beginning the preface dialogue, he may mention several reasons for giving thanks to the Father (no. 22).

Children participate by listening to the eucharistic prayer and by making acclamations (no. 52); these should be sung (no. 30).

The eucharistic prayer should be proclaimed in a calm and reverent atmosphere, to help the children to be able to give their attention to Christ's offering; to the thanks being given to the Father through, with, and in Christ; to the Church's offering; with the Church they should be offering themselves and their life with Jesus to the Father in the Spirit. They are also to be attentive to the presence of the Lord Jesus under the species of bread and wine (no. 52).

When the document was written in 1973, there were only four eucharistic prayers approved for the Roman rite (no. 52). In 1974, three more were approved for Masses with children, and two for Masses of reconciliation. Participation in these Masses is to continue to lead children to celebration with adults (no. 21): it is for this reason that the new prayers are substantially the same in nature as the four prayers in the sacramentary.

• *Communion rite:* The priest should always include the *Our Father,* break the bread, and invite the children to communion (no. 53). He may use his own words to invite them to pray the Lord’s prayer and make the sign of peace (no. 23).

The communion procession should be calm and recollected, with singing (nos. 54, 34).
Concluding rites: There should always be some concluding rites (no. 38). Before dismissing the children, the priest may speak to them very briefly, repeating and applying what they have heard, and connecting the liturgy and their life (no. 54). On occasion, he may use the more solemn blessings, concluding with the trinitarian formula and sign of the cross (nos. 54, 39).

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Summary: This Directory seeks to help children to meet Jesus Christ early and joyfully in the Mass, and to stand with him in the presence of our heavenly Father.

Children who are formed by full participation in the eucharist should learn each day to proclaim Jesus Christ to other people, both at home and elsewhere, by living their faith and by expressing it in their love: see Gal. 5: 6 (no. 55).

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Helpful reading:

Celebrating Mass with Children, a commentary on the Directory for Masses with children, by Edward Matthews (1975, Collins, London): reviewed in Bulletin 51, page 335. (Father Matthews was the only English-speaking member on the commission that prepared this Directory.)


Catechesis in Our Time, a message of the 1977 synod of bishops to the people of God.

Les Enfants Célèbrent: applying the Directory for Masses with children in French-speaking Canada: Pastoral guide, 92 pages; Celebration booklet, 144 pages; Supplement of songs, 16 pages: available as a complete kit (not sold separately) for $8.00 from Publications Service of the CCCB.

Other books are listed in Bulletin 61, pages 291-292.

TRAINING IN GENEROSITY

How do children learn to be generous? They learn from the example of those around them. If their parents are generous with their time, their money, and themselves for the benefit of others, children will grow up in a spirit of helping others.
OTHER CELEBRATIONS WITH CHILDREN

The Directory for Masses with children concentrates on participation in the eucharist, and speaks only once of other celebrations. In no. 27, it notes that, instead of Mass, it is sometimes better to have a common prayer service in the form of a bible celebration or a group meditation. As well as celebrating some event or theme, these celebrations are seen as continuing the eucharist and leading the children to greater participation in future Masses.

The principles and ideas on participation that are discussed in the Directory are equally valid for non-eucharistic celebrations. These celebrations would benefit greatly from the advice given in the Directory about gestures, movement, song, visual elements, variety, sharing in ministries, and preparation.

Many types of celebration are possible:

- Celebrations: as in the Canadian catechetical program.
- Penance celebrations: the sacrament of reconciliation may always be celebrated at another time.
- Blessings of people, places, and things: see Bulletin 49.
- Family celebrations of all kinds.
- Celebration of morning and evening prayer.

Parishes, schools, and families may explore these ideas further if they wish to grow in worship and prayer.

CHRISTIAN MATURITY

Christian maturity comes about by:

- a gradual growth in the faith,
- adoration of God as Father, especially through participation in the liturgy,
- growing more perfect in Christ, and
- contributing to the building up of his mystical body.

— A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy, no. 24

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(This booklet may now be obtained from the Publications Service of the CCCB, at the address on the inside front cover.)
OTHER NOTES

BRIEF BOOK REVIEWS


In the past fifteen years, we have experienced many changes in the liturgical rites, with new or revised prayers and actions. At the same time, our age is undergoing a change of attitude toward ritual in our worship.

Father Mitchell, who teaches liturgy at Notre Dame University, explores the use and power of symbol in worship and liturgical rites. Ritual is considered from its primitive beginnings, and in the history of the Christian people from the first century to the present. The book brings together the findings of many experts, and helps the reader to have a good understanding of the meaning of ritual in our daily lives and in our liturgical worship.

Recommended for members of parish liturgy committees and diocesan commissions, for clergy, and for all who want to deepen their understanding of ritual in our worship.


This is a book of evening prayer, drawn from the Jewish, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions. Four brief arrangements of evening prayer and various thoughts, litanies, and prayers provide a welcome variety of good prayers for family use. Prayers for the Sabbath eve may be used at dinner on Saturday or Sunday. Prayers are also given for the eves of Christmas and Easter.

With its prayers and uncomplicated drawings, this book is a desirable addition to each home’s prayer room, as well as for those who work with young people. Highly recommended.


*The Pope’s Family Prayer Book* (1976, Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Ind. 46750; available from McDonald-Dwyer Canada Ltd., 1 Silverwood Road, Ottawa, Ontario K2E 6Y4). 96 pages, colored illustrations. $1.85.

“The celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, the high point which family prayer can reach” (Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, February 2, 1974, no. 51): so much for theory! Instead of proposing a form of prayer akin to the Church’s traditional praise, this book provides many individual prayers, but no order of prayer. There is no sign
of the restored intercessions (see General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours, no. 179) in morning prayer, and only one passing mention in the ninth option for evening prayer. Many prayers of intercessions are included in the book, but without any relationship to morning and evening prayer, which are the hinge hours of the Church's prayer (Liturgy constitution, no. 89a). The Lord's prayer is not included at the end of the intercessions, as in the Church's tradition (GILH, no. 194). Little attention is paid to the requirements for popular devotions given by the Vatican Council (Liturgy constitution, no. 13).

One whole psalm is provided — Ps. 130. So much for the ideas in GILH, nos. 100-102! The only vocation for which one is invited to pray is the priesthood.

Only one nice element can be found in the book: there are 24 miniatures of the life of Christ in full color, taken from liturgical books of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries.

It is a tragedy that the opportunity was missed to restore family prayer in the spirit of the liturgy. This book, intended to lead families back to prayer, does not reflect the spirit of the renewal, and could have been written in 1926. It is a disappointment.

* * *


This collection of 264 brief prayers gathers texts from the scriptures, liturgical books, hymns, writings of the saints, and other sources. It can be useful in personal moments of prayer. The piety expressed in many texts from the middle ages may not be comfortable for many persons today.

* * *


This booklet, jointly published by the Catholic Truth Society and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, provides a collection of prayers from different ages and traditions in the Church. Prayers are from liturgies, saints, poets, and other individuals, known and unknown. These prayers are intended for private use.

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This book contains the talks given in May 1975 at Worship '75 in Hamilton, Ontario. The five speakers are Godfrey Diekmann, David Hay, Eugene Fairweather, Howard Hagemen, and Joseph Cunningham, representing the Anglican, Presbyterian, Reformed, and Roman Catholic traditions.
The conference talks show the close connections between the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist, and encourage an ever-growing understanding and celebration of the word. Recommended as a basis for study and discussion by parish liturgy committees, teachers, and clergy, as well as in ecumenical meetings.

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This colorful, illustrated review provides positive helps for parish clergy and musicians. The December 1977-January 1978 issue, on the musical, liturgical, and pastoral judgments required in our celebrations, provides eleven articles and several columns and reviews.

Full information on membership and practical resources may be obtained by writing to Rev. Virgil C. Funk at the address given above. Recommended.

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In this collection, 39 composers offer 139 recent compositions. A wide scope is evident: chants for the order of Mass, psalms, acclamations, spirituals, and songs for liturgies with children, as well as music for various seasons and celebrations. Many of the songs reflect or echo scriptural phrases (see Liturgy constitution, no. 121).

The format of this book is 8½ by 11 inches, and it opens flat. The music and print are clear. Since the selections do not have any apparent order in the book, the indices on pages 91-97 are important and useful. Information is also provided on copyright and in obtaining permission to reprint material for local publications.

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This report presents the results of a single stage competition for the design of a parish church in the new areas of the city. Of 193 entries from Irish architects, five won equal prizes, five were highly commended, four were commended, and three architecture students received prizes. The plans and elevations of these designs show a positive approach to building a parish church in a modern city.

The idea of a competition may be one that could be adapted to many situations in North America.
It Is Your Own Mystery: a guide to the communion rite, edited by Melissa Kay (1977, The Liturgical Conference, 1221 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005): 46 pages, photographs, $4.75 (prices are reduced substantially when two or more copies are purchased).

The communion rite of the Roman Catholic Mass is studied carefully and with sensitivity in this book. The history of the rite through the centuries brings us to the present, and many ideas are offered for restoring the meaning of the communion rite today. The role of music and the work of catechizing the community on the meaning of the rite are discussed, and suggestions are offered for "the ministry of bread-making" in the parish.

While some ideas in the book go beyond or contrary to the General Instruction, the book is recommended for serious study and discussion by diocesan commissions, parish committees, clergy, catechists, and bakers.

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This Far by Faith: American black worship and its African roots (1977, National Office for Black Catholics, 1234 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005; and The Liturgical Conference (address in above review): 104 pages, illustrations. $7.95.

During the past few years, the unique gifts of black culture have become more evident to North Americans of every background. In this book, nine writers bring out the special character of black worship, and share this with us. The sense of worship involves the whole person in harmony with creation; God is praised and preached with the whole body. Black ritual celebrates and affirms community, and means involvement and touching the lives of others.

Christian worship in America has much to learn from the articles in this publication. Every diocesan commission and many liturgy committees, as well as teachers and clergy will benefit from a study of the ideas and facts presented in this book. Recommended.

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This booklet was prepared to help priests to catechize their people on the eucharist, in preparation for the introduction of communion in the hand in the United States last November.

* * *

Written to help adults update their understanding of confirmation today, this booklet describes it within the context of the sacraments of initiation: baptism, confirmation, eucharist. The history and development of this sacrament in the Church is outlined, and the meaning of the present celebration is explained clearly. Recommended for liturgy committees, catechists, and parents.

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Theology Confronts a Changing World, edited by Thomas M. McFadden (1977, Twenty-Third Publications, P.O. Box 180, West Mystic, Ct. 06388). 255 pages. $4.95.

As an annual publication of the College Theology Society, this book contains ten papers and essays by members. Its major sections are concerned with how theology is confronting social upheaval, future needs, sexism in the Church, and new morality. It deals with social changes and global development, the shape of tomorrow's Church, a more balanced view of women in the Church and its ministries, and the developments within the sacraments of marriage and penance.

These papers show us some of the directions in which theologians are moving today in their studies and teaching. Recommended for all who want to keep up to date in these fields.

BULLETINS FOR THIS YEAR

For 1978, The National Council for Liturgy has chosen these topics for the National Bulletin on Liturgy:

- No. 62: Liturgy and Devotion
- No. 63: Children and Liturgy
- No. 64: Christian Initiation: Into Full Communion
- No. 65: Essays on Liturgy: I
- No. 66: Diocesan Commissions and Parish Committees

The annual subscription is from January to December (nos. 62-66): $6.00 in Canada; $7.00 outside Canada, and may be obtained from Publications Service, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1.