Liturgical Resources

Teacher Background

Church Liturgical Resources
Liturgy is the term used to describe the official public worship of the Catholic Church. It is the action of Christ and the people of God to give praise and thanks to God and celebrates the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This is called the paschal mystery – the focus of all liturgical celebrations. In the liturgy, we, as a Christian community, express who we are through words, symbols, gestures, music and movement, expressing our faith and having our faith nourished and strengthened.

The Church’s liturgical resources are found in the official books or Rites of the Church:

- **The Roman Missal** (sometimes called The Sacramentary)
- **The Lectionary** (Volumes I, II and III, containing the readings for all the liturgical celebrations)
- **The Rites of the Catholic Church** (Rite of Initiation of Adults, Rite of Baptism for Children, Confirmation, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, Ordination, Order of Christian Funerals)
- **The Book of Blessings**
- **The Liturgy of the Hours** (also called the Prayer of the Church).

Official Liturgy Documents
These include:

- **The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy** (1963)
- **The Directory of Masses with Children** (1973)
- **Introduction to the Lectionary for Masses with Children** (1992)
- **The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar** (1973)
- **The General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours** (1971).

These documents may be found in *The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource* (3rd edition) Volumes 1 and 2, published by Liturgy Training Publications Inc. Chicago IL. They are also available online at [www.adoremus.org/ChurchDocs.html](http://www.adoremus.org/ChurchDocs.html).

The celebration of Eucharist, also called The Mass, is the ‘source and summit’ of our lives as Christians. Such celebrations call for ‘full, conscious and active participation of all the faithful” (CSL #14). It consists of two main parts – the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. These are so closely connected that they form one single act of worship ... the table of God’s word and of Christ’s body and blood is laid for the people of God to receive from it instruction and food. (GIRM #8)

The Shape of the Eucharist:

**Introductory Rites:**
- Entrance Song
- Sign of the Cross
- Greeting
- Penitential Rite/Sprinkling Rite
- Glory to God
- Opening Prayer
The purpose of these Introductory Rites is:
- to make the assembled people a unified community
- to create a sense of celebration
- to form a worshipping community
- to prepare the assembly to listen to the Word of God
- to give a sense of occasion, a sense of expectancy of what to listen for in the Word of God
- to sum up the prayer of the community in the prayer of the day

The Liturgy of the Word:
- First Reading
- Psalm
- Second Reading
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel
- Homily
- Profession of Faith
- Prayer of the Faithful

The purpose of the Liturgy of the Word is:
- to have the treasures of the Bibles opened up for us
- to proclaim God’s story
- to listen to the message of Christ made present
- to encounter the early church living its faith
- to respond to God’s Word with the Word (psalm) and the profession of faith, and the prayer of the community

The Liturgy of the Eucharist
The four-fold actions of Jesus at the Last Supper – Take, Bless, Break and Share – unfold in this element of the celebration.

TAKE  –
Procession and preparation of gifts
- gathering and presenting of bread and wine
- placing of gifts on the altar
- prayer during the preparation
- prayer over the gifts

BLESS and BREAK
The Eucharistic Prayer
This prayer is the great prayer of thanksgiving, it is the ‘centre and summit of the entire celebration’ (GIRM #78); its purpose is to give thanks to God for all that has been accomplished for us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the sending of the Holy Spirit. This prayer is the public proclamation of our baptismal faith.
The chief elements of the Eucharist Prayer are:
Thanksgiving, Acclamation, Epiclesis, Institution Narrative and Consecration, Anamnesis, Offering, Intercessions, Final doxology
The Eucharistic prayer is prayed by the priest in the name of the assembly who confirms and approves this action by its AMEN given in song!
The acclamations are ‘songs of the assembly’ responding in faith to the mystery present and is a manifestation of the active participation by the assembly in the prayer.
In our liturgy, the church has given us several Eucharistic Prayers from which to choose. These may be chosen according to the particular season or focus of the liturgy; e.g. during the seasons of Advent and Lent, the Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation may be prayed.

Our Eucharistic prayers are:
- Eucharistic Prayer I, II, III and IV
- Eucharistic Prayer of Reconciliation I & II
- Eucharistic Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions
- Eucharistic Prayers for Children I, II & III.

SHARE –
The Communion Rite
The eating and drinking of the body and blood of Jesus is the climax of the Eucharistic celebration. The entire liturgy of the Mass comes to completion in Communion—this is the great gift that Jesus has left us. We take up the invitation to eat and drink from the table of the Lord. This is why Communion at Mass should be from bread and wine consecrated at that particular Mass. (GIRM #85)

Communion is prepared for by several rites:
- The Lord’s Prayer
- Sign of Peace
- Breaking of bread and the pouring of wine (Fraction Rite)
- Communion procession
- Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rite
The primary elements are:
- Blessing
- Dismissal

The worshipping assembly is called to go forth to be Eucharist to each other and to the world. They are to be bread broken and wine poured out for their sisters and brothers. They are to be the living Word of God, to be transformed into the person of Jesus – to welcome the stranger, to be the gift of hospitality, to be bearers of peace and compassion, to witness to his mission in the church and in the world. The Eucharistic liturgy ends with our taking up our place in the world as a Eucharistic people.
**Lectionary Translation**

The present Lectionary is the Jerusalem Bible translation. The *New Revised Standard Version* translation is approved by the Australian Bishops’ Conference for use in liturgical celebrations, and in due time will be published in a Lectionary form. The *Lectionary for Masses with Children* uses the *Contemporary English Version* of the Scriptures. This is a fresh translation from the original languages and is not a paraphrase of the Bible.

**Liturgy of the Hours or Prayer of the Church**

From earliest times, the Church has prayed according to the rhythm of the day – morning and evening are the times that are ‘ripe for prayer’; they are the ‘hinges’ on which the rhythm of daily prayer turn! This prayer is a liturgy of time – it is ‘time made holy’ and is based on the Church’s long tradition of praying at certain times of the day, morning, noon, evening and nighttime. Those praying this prayer are praying as the Church, the Body of Christ and are praying on behalf of all peoples – hence its power to unite the praying community with all peoples of the world.

It follows a particular pattern of Psalms, Scripture readings and intercessions. The usual structure is as follows:

- Invitation to Prayer
- Hymn
- Psalm (s)
- Scripture Reading
- Gospel Canticle (Morning-Canticle of Zechariah; Evening-Canticle of Mary)
- Intercessions
- The Lord’s Prayer
- Concluding Prayer
- Blessing

This structure may be adapted for use with children, but its essential elements are Psalms, Scripture reading and intercessions.

**The Liturgical Year**

The liturgical year celebrates the paschal mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection - this mystery of Jesus Christ unfolds throughout the liturgical seasons and provides the Christian community with a rhythm of time. The liturgical year enables the Christian community to think and move with the mind of the Church and is celebrated as:

**Sunday** - The foundation and core of the whole liturgical year. It is the weekly celebration of the Lord’s day, the day of resurrection, the day Christ’s faithful gather together to hear the word of God and take part in the Eucharist. (CSL #106)

**Seasons:**

**Advent** – is the season of ‘devout and joyful expectation, preparing for the Christmas when Christ’s first coming is remembered, and when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to Christ’s second coming at the end of time.’ (GNLY #39)

**Christmas** - celebrates the memorial of Christ’s birth and early manifestations (GNLY #32). It has own octave (8 days), including feast of Holy Family, Mary, Mother of God (1 Jan.) Epiphany and Baptism of the Lord.

**Lent** – is preparation for the celebration of Easter, when catechumens prepare for the sacraments of initiation and the faithful prepare for the renewal of their baptism promises at the Easter Vigil. The
season calls the faith community to conversion of heart through reflecting on the Word of God from the Sunday Scriptures, to prayer and to almsgiving.

The Easter Triduum - is the celebration of the ‘passion and resurrection of Christ and is the culmination of the entire liturgical year’ (GNLY #18). It begins with the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper (Holy Thursday), through to Good Friday, Holy Saturday to Easter Vigil “the mother of all vigils” closing with evening prayer on Easter Sunday.

Easter – is the ‘great fifty days’, from Easter Sunday to Pentecost and is celebrated ‘in joyful exultation as one feast day, as one ‘great Sunday’ (GNLY #22). The period of fifty days ends on Pentecost Sunday.

Ordinary Time – celebrates the mystery of Christ in all its aspects. It is made up of two periods: the first is the time between Christmas season and the beginning of Lent and the second begins after the Easter season and concludes at the beginning of Advent. There are 33 or 34 weeks of the season, depending on the time of Easter. The focus for this season comes from the gospels – in year A, the gospel of Matthew, year B, the gospel of Mark, and year C, the gospel of Luke; John 6 (Jesus as the Bread of Life) is read in the middle of year B, because Mark’s gospel is much shorter than the other gospels.

Solemnities, feasts and memorials – ‘the church celebrates the mystery of Christ, venerates with a particular love Mary, the Mother of God and sets before the devotion of the faithful the memory of the martyrs and the saints.’ (GNLY #8)

Resources for The Liturgical Year

The Liturgy Documents - A Parish Resource.
Contents include: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy; General Instruction of the Roman Missal; Directory of Masses with Children; General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar; Music in Catholic Worship; Liturgical Music Today; Environment and Art in Catholic Worship, The Prayer of the Church

Other Resources - www.litcom.net.au. This website is very helpful in that it lists and sells the following and other resources:
LabOra; Break Open the Word; The Daily Missal; Ordo; One Bread, One Cup; Prayers in Common Use; Reborn in Christ- The Rite of Infant Baptism; Eucharistic Prayers for various Needs and Occasions; The Way of the Cross; Life is Changed, Not Ended (Catholic funerals) (Archdiocese of Brisbane).