

Diocese of Leeds

# Liturgy of the Word with Children



## Guidelines & Resource Pack

# Children's Liturgy of the Word

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## Foreword

This pack includes both guidelines for Children's Liturgy of the Word with Children (LOWC) and a variety of resources to help those who lead LOWC and other children's activities in parishes. The original idea to compile such a pack came from Lynn Cortis, from the parish of St Thomas More in Chickenley. Back in October 2003 Lynn wrote to all parishes in the diocese asking for good ideas and recommended resources for LOWC. A number of contributions were returned and these have been used to compile the pack. Some of the suggestions received were for activities other than LOWC but which would be suitable for children's workshops or liturgies and these also have been included.

Many thanks go to all the parishes who have contributed to the pack and especially to Lynn Cortis for all of her work on this project.

The pack will be placed on to the diocesan website (see page 25) and will be updated each year. Please send or email any ideas, suggestions and resources to Kieran Hughes ([kieran.hughes@dioceseofleeds.org.uk](mailto:kieran.hughes@dioceseofleeds.org.uk)) at the Vicariate for Education (see page 25)

# Liturgy of the Word with Children Guidelines

## Introduction

Each Sunday, God's people gather together to celebrate in Word and Sacrament the mystery of Our Lord's death and resurrection. The celebration of the Mass includes everyone, both young and old. In accordance with the *Directory for Children's Masses*, it is appropriate that young children are not neglected *because of their inability to participate or to understand what happens and what is proclaimed in the celebration*

In many parishes there is a Liturgy of the Word with Children, celebrated in a separate place by leaders and parents. The children and adults taking part then return to their families in the main body of the church for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The key aim of ***Liturgy of the Word with Children*** (LOWC) is to proclaim the gospel of the day following the principles of liturgy (see over).

- When parents are present with their children during LOWC, they obviously have full responsibility for them.
- When parents remain in the main body of the church, they will want to be confident that their children are safe and secure during the session.

The organisation of the LOWC sessions is the responsibility of the parish clergy together with the leaders of the LOWC group. As well as planning the content of the sessions, clergy and leader must also take into account two main considerations to ensure the safety of the children involved.

1. Are the premises safe and is the supervision adequate? There should always be a minimum of two adults present and the supervision ratios should take into account the numbers of children attending and their ages. As far as child protection procedures are concerned, there is no restriction on the age of children participating in these sessions as long as the number of supervisors is adequate. Particular considerations such as the access to the accommodation and the special needs of one or more of the children may also indicate a higher number of adults to supervise.
2. Have the leaders and their regular helpers clearly demonstrated that they are appropriate people to be running these sessions by completing the diocesan "safe recruitment" process, including a DBS check?

Any clarification or further information regarding safeguarding can be obtained from the Diocese of Leeds Safeguarding Office on 0113 261 8059. For information/training regarding Liturgy of the Word with Children contact Kieran Hughes (kieran.hughes@dioceseofleeds.org.uk) of the Vicariate for Education 0113 261 8043

# Liturgy of the Word with Children

## General Principles of Liturgy

- ❖ Liturgy is the praise and worship of God.
- ❖ Liturgy is the source and summit of the life of the People of God.
- ❖ Liturgy is the right and duty of all the baptised, both children and adults.
- ❖ The function of liturgy is to build up the members of Christ's body, to strengthen them in preaching Christ.
- ❖ Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the whole person, it involves all the senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell.
- ❖ Participating in liturgy forms our habits because we are ritual people and learn through repetition and copying.
- ❖ In liturgy we discover the riches of prayer, through word and gesture, silence and stillness.
- ❖ The purpose of adapting liturgy for children is to lead them into full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy of the parish.
- ❖ Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity and simplicity.

*Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Liturgy Office*

*Liturgy of the Word with Children: Guidelines, p. 5.*

## A Model Session

1. Children gather with their families in church for the introductory rites of the Mass. After the opening song and the greeting the children, together with their leaders, are called forward.
2. A book of the scriptures is presented to a child or leader.
3. All process to a nearby place, where a sacred space has been prepared (cloth to reflect the liturgical season, candle, cross, visual display).
4. When the children have gathered the leader introduces the scripture of the day.
5. In some places there is time for a short penitential/sorry prayer or song and the Gloria.
6. Before the gospel is proclaimed an acclamation is sung.
7. The Gospel of the day is proclaimed.
8. The scriptures are explored through reflection, discussion and other appropriate activity.
9. There is a time of intercession for the Church, the world, those in need and the local community.
10. All return to the main body of the church for the liturgy of the Eucharist.

*This model is based on: Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Liturgy Office - Liturgy of the Word with Children: Guidelines, p. 12.*

## Diocese of Leeds

### A Model “Job Description” for leaders of LOWC

*The Diocesan Child Protection Policy and Procedures states that all paid staff and volunteers in parishes should have clear roles (Guideline 5). This includes a description of the work they will undertake with children with the expectations of their tasks and responsibilities. This model “job description” has been compiled after consultation with a number of leaders of LOWC and parish Safeguarding representatives. It offers a framework but can be adapted for local use.*

**Parish of** \_\_\_\_\_

**Role:** Leader of Liturgy of the Word with Children (LOWC)

**Responsible to:** The Parish Priest and Parish Co-ordinator for LOWC

**We try:**

- To provide an appropriate liturgy of the word for pre-school and school aged children during mass on Sundays and major feasts.
- To follow diocesan and national guidelines for LOWC and Safeguarding.

**It is our role**

- To lead the celebration of the Word with the children
- To work with the priest presiding at the parish mass and any other appropriate ministers and to seek advice when needed
- To work with others to form and inform LOWC with regular planning meetings
- To work with others to ensure that the Liturgy of the Word with Children is conducted in accordance with the Diocesan Safeguarding Procedures
- To prepare the venue and to ensure the safety and well being of the children
- To use appropriate books and equipment, provided by the parish
- To attend, where possible, training and formation sessions
- To convey an understandable message to the children

**Good Leaders of Liturgy of the Word with Children will have:**

- The ability to relate with respect and ease to children and adults and to enjoy working with children
- A willingness to share faith and to pray with children
- A willingness to attend training and formation sessions
- Commitment to the essential teachings of the Catholic Church and the ethos of the parish
- A willingness to give time to the preparation of the LOWC sessions and the co-ordination of the group
- All volunteers responsible for the group must be over 18 years of age.

## Planning for Liturgy of the Word with Children

- Where time allows meet with the other leaders to reflect on the Sunday gospel, to pray and to plan your session (see planning sheet).
- Prepare the room/sacred space before mass begins
- Basic resources:
  - Book of scriptures/lectionary for children
  - Cloths/drapes to reflect the liturgical seasons – purple (Advent & Lent), gold/white (Christmas, Easter/Holy Days), red (Pentecost/Holy Spirit), blue (Feasts of Mary), green (ordinary time)
  - Candle
  - Cross/crucifix
  - Pens, pencils, felt tips, scissors, glue, paper, staplers
- Ensure that the guidelines for safeguarding and health & safety are in place.



# Liturgy of the Word with Children Planning Sheet

Sunday of the Year ..... Cycle A B C

Date .....

Age group .....

What is the message from this Sunday's Gospel?

How do I make this message appropriate for my particular age group?

- A. Preparation of room:
  - Sacred space
  - Seating
  - Visuals/display
  - Music/CD player
  - Resources
- B. Welcome & Introduction to the Word
- C. Penitential Rite
- D. Gloria
- E. Gospel Acclamation
- F. Proclamation of the Word
  - By Whom?
  - In parts?
  - Dramatisation
- G. Reflection on the Word ( Discussion/activity )
- H. Intercessions
- I. Creed
- J. Returning to Church

## **Returning to Church**

Some suggestions:

- A child, carrying the book of the scriptures, leads the offertory procession. The other children follow those carrying the gifts of bread and wine.
- Some parishes have a display board in the church to which items can be added each week.
- The children could learn a song and sing it at the offertory – with actions or signing.
- The children could bring in/display/talk about their work.
- The children could carry symbols of their work in the offertory procession.

## **The Liturgical Year**

**Which cycle is it?**

First Sunday of Advent 2018 – Christ the King 2019 - C

First Sunday of Advent 2019 – Christ the King 2020 - A

First Sunday of Advent 2020 – Christ the King 2021 - B

First Sunday of Advent 2021 – Christ the King 2022 – C

First Sunday of Advent 2022 – Christ the King 2023 – A

First Sunday of Advent 2023 – Christ the King 2024 - B

## Advent & Christmas

1. Advent Wreath – see appendices
2. Travelling Crib – see appendices
3. The Jesse Tree (Use for any cycle).

Resource: **The Jesse Tree-an advent activity book** by Katie Thompson ISBN 1840032308

The idea of the Jesse tree is inspired by Isaiah 11:1

### **"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse"**

Characters and events from the Old and New Testaments are represented by symbols, which illustrate the line of Jesus from Adam and tell the redemption story. These symbols can be displayed on twigs securely anchored in a pot or stand filled with soil, sand, or pebbles. Alternatively they can be hung on a banner. During each week of Advent more symbols are added to the tree. These can be produced in a variety of ways depending on the time and resources available. Ideas and clear illustrations are given in the book.

The symbols can already be prepared or made by the children at their Liturgy. These can be added to the tree as the children return to Church, and explanations of the various symbols given on the weekly bulletin or a short explanation given by the priest as the children are adding the symbols.

Each week the Jesse tree comes alive.

During the Christmas Day Mass the star can be added to complete the Jesse Tree.

4. Christingle – see websites below

[www.request.org.uk](http://www.request.org.uk)

[www.primaryresources.co.uk](http://www.primaryresources.co.uk)

5. Build up a nativity scene on the display board
6. During the weeks of Advent hang drawings and figures on the Christmas tree
7. The children could make a nativity to take home
8. The children could make cards for the elderly /presents for disadvantaged children
9. The children could participate in the parish Carol Service

10. Hold an advent party and make tree novelties, decorations and cards

### **11. Blessing Of the Cribs**

The children can be invited to make a nativity scene in a biscuit tin or shoe box and on the last week of Advent asked to bring them to Church where they are blessed by the priest at an arranged time during the Mass. These can then become part of the children's Christmas festivities.

### **12. Church Crib**

If the church crib is erected early, each week the children can put a small amount of hay/animal figures into the crib. This helps them to prepare for the coming of Jesus as they see the nativity scene building up.

## **Christmas Vigil Mass**

- Nativity play/tableau during mass
- Encourage children who play instruments to join in with a special carol
- Children process into Church with priest and place baby Jesus in crib
- Children bring wrapped empty boxes to place on the altar to symbolise the gift of love
- Symbols of Christmas in Offertory Procession
- Children gather around the altar for the consecration and take the sign of peace to their families.
- Have a basket of sweets by the crib and distribute at the end of mass

## **Epiphany**

Three children dressed as kings and carrying Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, could participate in the offertory procession.

## **Baptism of the Lord**

Materials: candle for each child, stick on shapes, glue glitter pens

Discuss baptism with the children especially any services to which they have been. Talk about the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the River Jordan and point out the similarities with the baptism ceremony today. Using props explain to the children what happens at baptism and why. Remind them of their own baptismal candles and of the light of Christ that burns in us all if we allow it.

Provide each child with a candle about 5 inches tall, (smaller children may need extra help with this activity). Decorate the lower half of the candle with shapes and glitter.

Each child can take their own candle back into church where they can be displayed in a container full of sand or gravel, which has already been placed in a prominent position in church. An older child can light the candles, which remain burning through mass as a sign of our baptism. The children may like to take them home after mass.

*For safety it is important to have a jug of water near by.*

### **Baptism Welcome Card**

Let a child present a welcome card to each new baby who is baptised. These can either be hand-made or bought.

## **Lent & Easter**

- Ideas for Lent – Cycles ABC – see appendices
- Palm Sunday Liturgy – see appendices
- Stations of the Cross and Holy Week booklets for children to write in /colour. See The Complete Children's Liturgy Book, Katie Thompson, pages 45 & 47.
- Participation in Stations of the Cross
- A crown of hawthorn (can also be used at Christ the King)
- Mothering Sunday – Flowers for Our Lady and all ladies in church
- An Easter party including activities such as making Easter biscuits, nests and cards.
- Easter garden - start off dead and build up with living plants
- Easter garden on display board in Church
- On Easter Sunday go outside to celebrate the Risen Lord
- Easter Sunday Mass – children carry a cross decorated with white cloth and paper flowers. All children come to the altar and announce to the congregation their name at Baptism and place a daffodil at the foot of the cross.
- Encourage children who play instruments to join in with a special hymn.
- A basket of Easter Eggs

## Good Friday

Read the passion from the children's lectionary or Bible

Draw and colour the different Stations of the Cross or these could already be printed and ready for the children to colour. They can make them into a booklet to take home.

Another idea to help the children to understand the meaning of Holy Week is to have six treasure finding eggs {the plastic ones with the screw middles} filled with objects relating to Holy Week

For Example:

1. Coins relating to the thirty pieces of silver.
2. A piece of purple clothes.
3. A thorny branch. {From a rose tree.}
4. Two small wooden sticks {to represent the cross}
5. A stone
6. Piece of cotton wool soaked in vinegar

After some discussion a prayer could be said.

On returning to Church the children can bring with them items relating to the Passion. For example a crown of thorns {this can either be made by a local florist or make one yourself by soaking branches with thorns in hot water so they become pliable and then weaving them into a circle and anchoring them at regular intervals}, nails and hammer, the purple cloth and vinegar and sponge. These can either be displayed in front of the altar or in the empty Easter garden.

## Easter Garden

The base for the garden could be a thick piece of plywood {about 16" by 24"} or similar sturdy material. The caves and tomb can be made from chicken wire covered with strips of paper mache painted grey or spray-painted. An old bucket cut in half-length wise is also ideal or a plant pot laid on its side. The characters can be made from old-fashioned pegs with pipe cleaner arms, pieces of plasticine can be added to the bottom to form a secure base, small scraps of fabric can be used for clothes and decorated with sequins.

The main characters would be - Jesus, Mary Magdalene, soldiers in capes with toothpick swords, apostles and an angel.

On Good Friday the beginnings of the garden can be prepared and the stone put in place over the entrance. Soldiers could be left on guard.

The crosses can be made out of twigs and should be positioned near the back on top of a hill opposite the tomb.

Sometime before the Easter Vigil the garden can be improved with small plants, flowers and grass. The stone can be rolled away and a piece of white material illustrating the shroud draped over the stone. An angel can be placed near the entrance.

The garden can be left in place throughout the Easter season but if real plants have been used these should be watered regularly, you may need to change a few of the plants.

Seeing how the garden changes throughout the Easter period effectively illustrates the story for all groups of children.

### **Easter Sunday (Any cycle)**

A small piece of bark or a log can be placed in front of the Lectern on Easter Sunday morning. The children can decorate previously cut out shapes of butterflies, with symbols of new life e.g. eggs, chicken, the sun, flowers and rabbits. The wings can be folded by creasing them at the middle. *{Making the wings stand up}*. The butterflies can then be displayed on the logs or bark and secured with a piece of blue tac.

Alternatively the butterflies can be mounted and displayed on an Easter wreath made from strong cardboard and painted green, *{similar to the advent wreath}*.

Another idea, which is effective for smaller children, is to have already prepared cut out shapes of chickens, which the children can decorate with feathers for the tails and wiggly eyes. A stick is attached to the back, which can then be stuck into half a potato covered in silver foil. This makes an effective window display.

This idea can be used for the parables involving sheep. It can be extended for the prodigal son, where the pigs can be done in the same way and displayed in oasis covered with straw and surrounded by a fence made from lollipop sticks. The children can write how they can show forgiveness before decorating their pigs.

## May

- Flowers for Our Lady
- Rosary for the children

## Pentecost

To help to celebrate this colourful season below are a few ideas:

The children could perform a small tableau of the story in Church. The younger children could wave flame-coloured ribbons or strips of paper tissue giving the impression of the wind and flames. The older children could take the parts of the disciples, crowd's etc. No elaborate costumes are needed; if any of the children can speak a foreign language this can also be included at the appropriate time.

If a children's liturgy is to take place the younger children can make and decorate flame head bands which they can then wear to return to church streamers could be made which the children wave as they return. Older children can cut out doves or flame cut outs and decorate them with the fruits of the Holy Spirit and how they can be incorporated into their everyday life These can be hung on a tree which as already been placed in a prominent position. {A few twigs securely held in a pot or vase would be sufficient.}

Flame shape cut outs could be prepared earlier and a small group of children could ask people to sign them as they enter church these can then be placed in a basket and taken down at the offertory, bringing the congregation into the liturgy.

Have either flame or dove shapes drawn onto card with a two inch border all-round cut out but keep the card whole the children can then decorate the dove or flames with pieces of tissue paper which can then either be secured striate onto a window or linked together. This gives a stained glass window effect and is another way of displaying the children's work.

## Trinity Sunday (Any cycle)

This is often a difficult topic to explain to children who find it hard to understand three people can be one. One idea we found helpful and that the children enjoyed was to prepare a large shamrock shape. The children were asked to screw small pieces of tissue paper, which had previously been prepared and stick them on the shamrock.

The three leaves representing the three persons of the trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit can be decorated using different colours of tissue paper but then combined on one stem showing the children that although they may be three people they combine to become one like the shamrock.



## **October**

- Make a large rosary out of conkers, pine cones, acorns etc
- Rosary for the children

## **Harvest Festival (Any cycle).**

### **International harvest festival:**

The children with the help of their parents should be encouraged to choose a country from around the world. On the designated day they can be asked to come in the national costume for that country, bringing with them a product or produce from their chosen country.

After communion, an older child can introduce the different countries all the children in turn place their produce in front of the altar, saying a little bit about their chosen country.

The gifts can then either be auctioned and the money raised sent to charity or food parcels can be made up and given to needy families in the area.

### **Food parcels.**

The week before the celebration the children can be asked to bring in tins and groceries in decorated parcels or boxes. These can be taken into church and form part of the offertory possession. After mass they can be distributed to needy families within the parish. If the Church has an SVP they could be asked to help with the distribution.

### **Bean and seed pictures.**

Using a collection of different seeds and beans such as lentils, butterbeans etc., the children can create a collage either separately or as part of a large picture, showing a harvest theme.

### **Corn Dollies.**

**Materials:** Dried grasses  
Wheat  
Raffia  
Pieces of ribbon or string  
Scraps of ribbon lace and fabric {for decoration}  
Small pieces of felt or felt tip pens for eyes.

Give each child a bundle of dried grass or raffia and two pieces of thin ribbon. Show the children how to tie two pieces of ribbon or string tightly about 1 and 2 inches from the top of the bundle to create the neck and hair thus creating a face.

Separate two smaller bunches for arms and tie for wrists.

Decorate the body with lace, scraps of material and bows.

Make eyes out of scraps of felt or draw using felt tips.

*The corn dollies can be brought into church at the offertory and displayed in the Church. While the children are making them they can discuss God's harvest and how it is delivered to us. Encourage the children to say how they can protect the environment, e.g. pollution and the part they play in protecting God's world.*

## **November**

### **All Saints**

Is a day for remembering the saints and Christians who have died. The children can be given pictures of well-known saints, with a small amount of information, for them to colour. Help to find out more about their church or school or name saint.

**All Souls** (Any cycle and could be used through out November)

### **Prayer or Remembrance tree.**

A branch can be securely placed in a pot or vase and cross-shaped cut outs placed near, with purple threads for attaching to the branches. The children can be encouraged to write the names of people who have died and who they want to remember and pray for.

Alternatively they can write their own prayers on the cross. This helps the children to understand the feast of The Holy Souls and the remembrance of the dead during November.

Another idea is to use the branch for Lenten/Advent promises. The children can write or draw their promises for the coming season.

In a suitable book, the children can write the names of their deceased relatives and friends. This can then be brought back into Church when the children return and taken to the alter at the offertory.

### **Seed display.**

Collect autumn leaves, seeds, old seed cases and pods from flowers and trees. The children can then each make a collage that on returning to church can be displayed with a candle burning in front to represent Christ- NEW LIFE.

Explain to the children that in November when the nights are getting darker and longer, trees are losing their leaves everything around is changing. The seeds that have tumbled from their seedpods are a reminder of new life. The candle burning is a sign that Christ's light and love will shine brightly for everyone who believes in him to follow.

## Creative Activities

**Suggestions for an activity box:** sharp pencils, felt tips that work, white and brightly coloured paper, card, squared paper for cross words or word searches, stickers, glue sticks, colouring pencils, pens, magazines for cutting out pictures, glitter.

**Music Box:** containing percussion instruments bought and made.

**Book Box:** Bible stories for smaller children

### Ideas for home-made worksheets

Write out the gospel but leave some words out – children fill in the missing words

A quiz about the gospel of the day

Word search

Crosswords

Words mixed up which children have to unscramble

Two columns of statements – children draw lines to match them up.

### Things to Make

Badges

Prayer cards

Book Marks

Fish – attached to short stick (eg. doweling from hardware shop) by a piece of string

Sheep – children stick on cotton wool

Grow mustard & cress in little plastic dishes on cotton wool pad. Seed trays and sunflowers also.

Sign posts – lollypop sticks

Masks eg donkey for Palm Sunday

Mobiles

Rosettes – Jesus puts children first

### Models and Props

- Have two boards, one covered in green and the other blue. The green can be a background for many gospel stories eg The Good Shepherd, Feeding of the 5000, The Sower etc. The blue board can be the Sea of Galilee. A little wooden boat is useful.
- A reusable figure of Jesus
- Playmobile/Lego/Duplo figures and bricks
- Shoe boxes covered with white paper/fablon with a few doors and windows on can be used for street scenes eg Zacchaeus up a tree, Palm Sunday etc.
- Collect 'Roman-looking' things such as oil lamps (wise virgins), coins (render to Caesar, paying the labourers in the vineyard)
- Posters and pictures of Bible stories
- Gift bags/boxes – What's inside? Eg The 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit or the props for a story.
- 'Feely' bags containing items to touch but not see
- Broken jewellery to suggest that material things are not important
- A train set to illustrate keeping on the right track
- Bandages to illustrate caring

### **Making Posters**

- A straight forward picture that can be drawn or painted (water-colour paint is best)
- An enlarged picture
- Gradually build up an idea. Different parts can be stuck on, eg characters, objects, speech bubbles, jigsaw effect.
- A written gospel with words missing – children have to think of/write a missing word or draw a symbol/picture
- A poster which has a title and background – children have to make/decorate cut out shapes and stick onto poster, eg people, trees, leaves, sheep, hearts, hexagons, hands, notes with a message or prayer.
- Collages

### **Drama/Plays**

- Hot Seating
- Scripted story
- Tableau
- Costumes/cloths for dressing up
- Sharing food

### **Useful Shops**

- Early Learning Centre
- W.H. Smith
- Bombay Stores in Bradford: Shearbridge Road, BD7 1NX
- Garden Centres

## Home – School – Parish

It is good practice to advertise the Liturgy of the Word with Children sessions in the parish so that families know at which mass the sessions happen. This can help families with young children to feel welcome at mass and within the parish community. Some further ideas are listed below

- The parish and primary school/s can send out regular, joint invitations to the primary school/s asking families to mass & LOWC.
- Welcome booklet for all new people to the parish - include a section on LOWC.
- Copies of this booklet or similar could be left at doctors' surgeries, toddler groups, playgroups, nurseries, schools, shops, library etc.
- Churches Together could produce a booklet with details of Sunday services especially those for families, church toddler groups, children's and family activities etc.
- Ministry of Welcome & Hospitality at Church – welcomers can ensure new families know about LOWC.
- Coffee morning after mass.
- Social events for families.
- Toddler group in school or parish
- Support through Family Life Ministry.
- Family Masses/Liturgies
- Toddler group liturgy/prayer/singing
- At Mass – crèche for babies & under threes

# Resources

## Essential

### Lectionaries for Masses with Children

- **Sunday, Book of Readings** – The Lectionary adapted for children, Years ABC
- **Sunday, Leader's Guide** – Years ABC. Both of these can be bought from Viewpoint Resources Direct, 21 Point Hill, Greenwich, London, SE10 8QW. [www.viewpoint24.com](http://www.viewpoint24.com)
- **The Columba Lectionary for Masses with Children – Years ABC** (Study Edition)  
Liturgy Training Publications, ISBN: 0-948183-60-8
- **Lectionary for Masses with Children – Years ABC** (Study Edition)  
Liturgy Training Publications, ISBN: 1-56854-003-5

### For Background Reading / Information

- **Liturgy of the Word with Children: Guidelines**  
Liturgy Office, Bishops' Conference of England & Wales  
<http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/LOWC/index.shtml>
- **A Child Shall Lead Them – A Guide to Celebrating the Word with Children**  
Treehaus Communications – Pottebaum ISBN: 0-929496-65-5
- **A Handbook for Children's Liturgy**, Barbara Mary Hopper,  
Canterbury Press, ISBN 1-85311-511-7
- **Leeds Diocesan Directory**

### Highly Recommended Resources

- 1 **The Complete Children's Liturgy Book** – a comprehensive programme for every Sunday of the Lectionary – Katie Thompson – Kevin Mayhew Publishers:  
ISBN: 0-86209-636-7
- 2 **The Liturgy of the Word with Children** – a complete three-year programme including a CD of Acclamations and Glorias; Katie Thompson  
Kevin Mayhew ISBN 1-84417-188-4
- 3 **Step by Step** – Katie Thompson
- 4 **Footprints in Faith** – Katie Thompson
- 5 a **Welcome the Word** – Joan Brown ISBN: 0-225-66525-5
- 6 b **Welcome the Word: Worksheets** – Joan Brown ISBN: 0-225-66650-2
- 7 **Living Water, a creative resource for the Liturgy** – Susan Sayers  
Years A, B, C - Kevin Mayhew,
  - a. Treasure Seekers – pre-school age
  - b. Pearl Divers – 6-10
  - c. Gold Panners – 11 -14

- 8 **Guided Scripture Meditations for Children** – how to teach children to pray using the Scriptures – Jane Reehorst – Brown-Roa Publications  
**Volume I:** ISBN: 0697-022013  
**Volume II:** ISBN: 0697-029883
- 9 **Faith Map**, Redemptorist Publications  
Resources for children based on the Sunday readings, Years A, B & C
- 10 **Look in the Gospel Today**, Redemptorist Publications  
Weekly Gospel activity sheet
- 11 **Story Cards: Sets 1, 2 & 3**, Redemptorist Publications
- 12 **Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons**, published each year  
Liturgy Training Publications
- 13 **Guided Scripture Meditations** – how to teach Youth to pray using the Scriptures  
Jane Reehorst – Brown-Roa Publications, ISBN: 0697-17596-0
- 14 **Welcome**, Jenny Pate
- 15 **The Jesse Tree**, Katie Thompson
- 16 **Children’s Liturgy of the Word**, Diocese of Arundal & Brighton, Portia Press Ltd.  
Available from Christian Education Centre, 4 Southgate Street, Crawley, RH10 6HD.

### **Bibles**

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| B1 | <b>The Beginner’s Bible for Toddlers</b><br>Word Publishing | (Children 1-5 years)<br>ISBN:0-8499-1198-2    |
| B2 | <b>The Pre-Schooler’s Bible</b><br>V Gilbert Books          | (Children 3-5 years)<br>ISBN: 1-56476-317X    |
| B3 | <b>The Puffin Children’s Bible</b>                          | ISBN: 0-14-034448-9                           |
| B4 | <b>The Lion Children’s Bible</b>                            | ISBN: 0-85648-288-9                           |
| B5 | <b>The Bible for Children</b><br>Darton, Longman & Todd     | (New Jerusalem Version)<br>ISBN:0-232-52149-2 |

### **DVDs**

- D1 **The Miracle Maker**
- D2 **Jesus of Nazareth**

## Posters

- P1 Jesus, Our Light Series – The early life of Jesus
- P2 Jesus, Our Hope Series – The ministry of Our Lord
- P3 Jesus, Our Way – The final events in the life of Jesus, including Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost  
Each series has an accompanying booklet of notes and reflections for children.

The Benedictine Nuns of Turvey Abbey,  
McCrimmon Publishing Co Ltd,  
[www.mccrimmons.com](http://www.mccrimmons.com)

- P4 Life of Jesus Mafa Posters – [www.jesusmafa.com](http://www.jesusmafa.com)
- The themes of these poster sets include the Childhood of Jesus, the Life and Teaching of Jesus, Miracles & Parables, Passion & Resurrection



## Websites

<http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/LOWC/index.shtml>– includes Spirit of the Season

[www.wednesdayword.org](http://www.wednesdayword.org)

[www.cafod.org.uk/worship](http://www.cafod.org.uk/worship) - Sample sessions for every Sunday from the First Sunday of Advent until Easter Sunday (Year A) with questions to help the children reflect on the Gospel story as well as ideas for prayers, songs and other activities.

[www.sermons4kids.com](http://www.sermons4kids.com)

[www.teacherhelp.org](http://www.teacherhelp.org)

[www.request.org.uk](http://www.request.org.uk)

[www.primaryresources.co.uk](http://www.primaryresources.co.uk)

**Diocese of Leeds  
Vicariate for Education**



Members of the Vicariate for Education are available for general help and advice. Information on how they can be contacted is below.

Vicariate for Education, Hinsley Hall, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds, LS6 2BX  
Tel: 0113 261 8040

Telephone numbers & Emails

Emma Nicholson Tel: 0113 261 8040  
[evangelisation.admin@dioceseofleeds.org.uk](mailto:evangelisation.admin@dioceseofleeds.org.uk)

**Website:**

[www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/evangelisation](http://www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/evangelisation) - click on Catechesis and then Children's Liturgy

For specific advice and training for Liturgy of the Word with Children please contact

**Kieran Hughes Tel: 0113 261 8043**  
**[kieran.hughes@dioceseofleeds.org.uk](mailto:kieran.hughes@dioceseofleeds.org.uk)**

Training and support for clergy and leaders of LOWC can be arranged for individual parishes, groups of parishes or whole deaneries.

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## Appendices

The appendices include further ideas and activities for CLOW and also ideas for other parish and family activities.

- ❖ Advent - Cycles A B C – including Advent Wreath
- ❖ Live Advent Wreath
- ❖ Travelling Crib
- ❖ Lent – Cycles A B C
- ❖ Children's Celebration to prepare for First Eucharist

## ADVENT

### CYCLE A

#### Theme: The Advent Wreath

#### First Sunday of Advent (A)

##### Gospel:

The children will have gathered around the Advent Wreath in Church while the priest blesses it and then lights the first candle. In the Children's Liturgy session the Advent Wreath can be referred to as the theme for Advent. The first part of the wreath is the ring.

The reading for the day refers to Noah and the fact that the flood swept people away. From this we can draw out the dangers of water e.g. at the seaside or swimming baths and that we have to be careful around water. However, we do have some ways of protecting ourselves eg lifejackets, swimming rings, lifebelts and armbands. Lifebelts, rings and armbands are all circles, which leads us into the first part of the wreath.

This can be linked back to the readings. Jesus is our "lifesaver" and we should always be ready for his return

##### **Activity.**

The activity will be to draw some pictures of the protection against the dangers of water.

When the children come back into Church they bring with them

- a card ring, which will form the centre of the display
- their pictures of lifesaving objects
- armbands and a swimming ring

A child can be asked to read the following:

**Jesus reminds us today about Noah and the flood. We know that water is dangerous and we use life-belts and swimming rings to keep us safe. The first part of the Advent wreath is a circle and this reminds us that Jesus is our life safer.**

## **Second Sunday of Advent (A)**

### **Gospel:**

Continuing the theme of water the reading this week is about John the Baptist baptising people in water. Water is an essential part of our lives. It gives life to plants, animals and people.

The Advent Wreath is made from greenery which requires water (John was baptising in the desert where nothing would have been growing) and red berries which contain much water.

We were baptised with water in a font and became members of the family of Jesus. God sends the Holy Spirit to us which gives us eternal life with him.

### ***Activity***

Explore the ways in which different fruits contain different amounts of water, eg squeeze lemons/oranges or compare grapes with raisins?

The children could be asked to draw things which contain water and which are life giving.

On returning to church the children can bring greenery and berries to form part of the wreath and their pictures.

A child can read the following:

**John baptised people in water. Plants, animals and people all need water to live. The green leaves and the red berries on our wreath contain lots of water and are living things. God sends the Holy Spirit to give us eternal life.**

## **Third Sunday of Advent (A)**

### **Gospel:**

Today's reading tells us of some of the miracles that Jesus performs. These include helping the blind to see and this can be the focus today. Begin by exploring how difficult life would be if you were not able to see. Perhaps try a game of Blind Mans Bluff or put some items in an envelope and ask the children to identify them by touch. Of course even when we are sighted we cannot see in the dark and need some form of light eg candles. These are the third element of our wreath and link to Jesus being the Light of the World.

### ***Activity***

Using card or similar material the children can make candles, five of which should be used for the wreath - three purple one pink and one white. Pictures of other forms of light sources can be displayed.

The candles and pictures can be brought back into Church and a child can read

**Jesus helped blind people to see. We light candles so that we can see when it is dark, but they also remind us that Jesus is the light of the world.**

## **Fourth Sunday of Advent (A)**

### **Gospel:**

The reading this week is about Mary and Joseph becoming betrothed, Joseph's hesitancy on finding that Mary was pregnant and his reassurance from God that they should still marry. Explore the different relationships that exist using the term binding. Mary was bound to Christ because through pregnancy he lived within her and Mary and Joseph were bound together through marriage. Talk about the ties that exist within our own families. In some Eastern Orthodox churches the bride and groom are bound together with ribbon as part of the wedding service. That brings us to the ribbon that completes our wreath. The ribbon is red, which represents the Passion of Christ. If we want to follow Jesus then we are bound to him.

### ***Activity***

Try tying together two children to demonstrate the wedding ritual or ask them to perform a simple task like walking together to illustrate the impact of being bound together so closely.

The children could draw pictures of a bride and groom / a pregnant Mary / Mary holding a baby / Mary and Joseph together.  
Make some red ribbon bows.

The children can bring back into Church their pictures and red bows and one of the children read

**We put a red ribbon on our wreath. It shows us how we are bound to Jesus if we want to follow him.**

*During each Sunday Eucharist the advent wreath can be built up and the children's pictures displayed either near or around the wreath.*

## **CYCLE B**

### **Theme: The Christmas Tree**

#### **First Sunday of Advent (B)**

##### **Gospel:**

Discuss with the children how they would welcome and prepare for unexpected visitors. What would their families do?

Explain to them that as we do not know when Jesus will be coming back we must always be alert and ready. Can the children give suggestions as to how they can prepare and get ready for the coming of Jesus?

##### ***Activity***

This is a colourful project for the advent season, and helps the younger children to understand that Advent is the four weeks before Christmas, and that the season is a time of waiting and expectation for Christmas.

- Prepare a large Christmas tree cut from green card.
- Use white cardboard to make either squares or window shapes.
- Draw rays on the window shapes by making a central point on the paper roughly 2-2.5 inches from the top. Then using a ruler draw lines radiating out.
- Outline the lines in black.
- Colour in the rays using two felt tip colours only for maximum effect.
- On a separate piece of paper ask the children to draw/colour a picture of Mary praying. Cut it out and stick in the middle of the card so the coloured rays shine out from behind. These could then be glued onto pieces of coloured card slightly larger than the original.

The cards are then brought into Church and attached to the tree, at a convenient time.

*The children decorate one part of the tree each week of Advent. In the first week they put their contributions along the bottom and then each week slowly build it up until it is fully decorated. The tree can either be displayed on a board or free standing.*

#### **Second Sunday of Advent (B)**

##### **Gospel:**

God sent John the Baptist to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus. This message is as important today as it was then

Explain to the children that we can prepare by putting right things we have done wrong. Ask the children to give their own ideas. Most important of all explain that God will always forgive us when we are sorry.

### ***Activity***

Give the children a luggage label each. Ask them to either draw or write about the 'good news' they want to spread in Advent. The labels can then be decorated and displayed on the second level of the Christmas tree.

### **Third Sunday of Advent (B)**

#### **Gospel:**

Talk to the children about baptism and how the use of water washes us clean. Tell the children about John the Baptist who preached to the people telling them about Jesus and then baptising them in the River Jordan. Let the children explain how we can stay friends with God.

### ***Activity***

Let the children design their own baptismal cards, which can be decorated with a variety of materials such as ribbon, paper, fabric and sequins etc. These can be displayed on the third level of the Christmas tree. The older children can write a prayer inside the card.

### **Fourth Sunday of Advent(B)**

#### **Gospel:**

Discuss with the children about angels and how they are messengers of God. Help them to recall stories from the Bible, which have involved angels. Explore how Mary would have felt when an angel came to her to ask if she would be the mother of God's Son.

Discuss with the children that, although, sometimes we may feel God isn't listening to us, he always knows what is right for us.

### ***Activity***

Give out angel shapes for the children to colour. Glitter and sequins may be used. These can be added to the top of the tree.

## **CYCLE C**

### **Theme: The Advent wreath**

The theme can be introduced to the children explaining that materials will be gathered to make the wreath week by week

### **First Sunday of Advent (C)**

#### **Gospel:**

The first part of the wreath is the circle, which is used as the base. This links with the Gospel, which talks about the sun, moon and stars. We live on a round earth, which orbits around the sun. This circle is continuous and is, therefore, never ending – just like God's love for us. Ask the children to bring some green leaves and red items e.g. scraps of red ribbon, berries or sweet paper for the following week.

The offertory possession would include the ring.  
One of the children could say

**The circle is the base of our Advent wreath. It represents the round earth on which we live and God's continuous love for us all.**

### **Second Sunday of Advent (C)**

#### **Gospel:**

Continuing the theme of the Advent wreath the donations of red items should be collected from the children and displayed in a basket.

Discuss the meaning of the holly leaves and red ribbons and berries on the wreath. The red berries and ribbon represent the passion of Christ, that Jesus was born on this earth to die, to free us from our sins. The holly leaves on the wreath have two meanings. The green leaves remind us that Christ offers everlasting life to all people. The prickles on the holly represent the crown of thorns, which Christ was given on Good Friday, that ultimately became his crown of victory.

The children could be asked to bring in some candles for the following week.

The offertory possession will include the basket of red items and one of the older children could say:

**The red ribbons and berries on our advent wreath represent the Passion of Jesus Christ who died to free us from our sins. The holly leaves are prickly to represent the crown of thorns of Jesus Christ, which became his crown of victory, and green to show that through Him He offers us eternal life.**



### **Third Sunday of Advent(C)**

#### **Gospel:**

Continuing the theme of Advent the candles the children have brought can be collected and placed in a basket.

The meaning of the candles on the wreath can be discussed. The different colours of the candles represent different things. The purple candles {weeks 1 2 4} show our need for Christ and our waiting. The pink colour in week 3 (Joy/Gaudate) reminds us that Christ wants to be close to us and that his arrival is becoming more imminent. The white candle lit on Christmas day represents Christ's birth, and reminds us that he is living within us.

On returning to Church one of the older children can say:

**The candles on our advent wreath remind us that we need Jesus Christ who wants to be close to us and live within us.**

### **Fourth Sunday of Advent (C)**

#### **Gospel:**

The children can design a Christmas card with scraps of material using the design of the advent wreath. The cards can be placed at the crib.

## **LIVE ADVENT WREATH – All Cycles**

*(For older children aged 11 and above)*

To bring this symbol alive for older children, discussions can be made as to how they are not only able to produce light by lighting their individual candles but by their loving actions each day.

*This celebration can take place each week in the Sunday liturgy or as part of an Advent service*

Arrange the children in a circle. Explain the significance of no beginning and no end; the circle is continuous like God's love. Each person in the outside circle is to hold a votive candle. In the middle place four people evenly spaced holding the three purple and one pink candles. In the very centre have a large white candle representing Christ, already lit.

### **First Sunday of Advent**

As the first purple candle is lit from the Christ candle, everyone thinks of the preparation needed for Advent and asks God to prepare their lives for His coming. One quarter of the candles on the outside of the circle are now lit from the first purple candle.

Encourage the children to finish each celebration with a prayer; a different child could be picked each week to write a few lines.

### **Second Sunday of Advent**

As the second purple candle is lit we think about God's peace in the world. Thinking about the poor and persecuted areas and how the light of Jesus can help to bring them peace and guidance in their troubles.

One half of the candles around the outside edge of the circle are now lit from the second candle. The light is now becoming brighter.

### **Third Sunday of Advent**

As the pink candle is lit on the Advent wreath we think of the joy we have because Jesus is still present in our world and lives today. We pray that everyone may hear and listen to the message of Jesus.

Three quarters of lights around the outside circle are lit from the pink candle.

### **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

As the fourth candle is lit giving a full circle of light we think of Mary who had complete trust in God. Let us also trust God to answer our prayers, to give us help in difficult situations, personal problems and all our needs.

All of the outside candles are now lit from the fourth candle.

*If this is to be used as a weekly liturgical celebration a brief summary of the previous week will be needed.*

## **The Travelling Crib or Posada**

This is an activity that can be co-ordinated to forge links between the home, school and parish.

### **Introduction**

To help us all to learn about the Christmas story we are inviting you to take part in a special project called the *Travelling Crib*:

Everyone will be invited to take our nativity crib into their homes for one night. It will be brought to them by one of their friends. Together they will unpack the box and set up the crib scene. There will be a candle for the adults to light and a story book for the younger children telling the Christmas story. Children and their parents and other family members may wish to sing a simple song and say a prayer, which will also be included in the box.

The following day the crib scene will be carefully packed away and taken to the next home where the process will be repeated. Finally when the crib has travelled to all the homes on our list it will return to church on Christmas Eve where we will set up the crib for the last time so that it is ready for the Christmas services. There will be a small celebration as the crib arrives at church before the first Mass on Christmas Eve.

**This is to help us remember the journey Mary and Joseph made to Bethlehem, and as a family to take time to stop and think about the true meaning of Christmas.**

The night you have the crib in your house you will unpack the box and set up the crib scene. An adult will light the candle and the simple song enclosed can be sung. The enclosed prayer can be said and the Christmas storybook read.

The following day the crib scene will be carefully packed away and taken to the next home where the process will be repeated.

Finally when the crib has travelled to the homes on our list it will return to church on Christmas Eve.

**Please encourage your children to do a picture or write about the night the travelling crib was in your home. (A blank house picture is included in the box). Please bring any pictures or stories to church the following Sunday so that these can be displayed around the church.**

## **Contents of Travelling Crib**

### ***Please find enclosed:***

- Nativity Crib
- Candle (light and extinguish with care)
- Candle Song (see below)
- Prayer (see below)
- Nativity story book
- Photocopy of the outline of a house.

*Please encourage the children to draw/write about the night the crib was in your home. Bring the picture/story to church on the following Sunday where we will display it.*

- Cloth to place the crib and candle on.

## **Travelling Crib Song & Prayer**

*A song to sing when you light the candle:*

**Candle, candle standing tall  
Jesus' love is for us all.  
See it standing oh so fine  
Now we're going to make it shine  
(*Light the candle*)  
Candle, candle burning bright  
Jesus is the world's true light**

(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle)

*A prayer to use when your candle has been lit*

**Dear God**

**Please bless our home and family on  
this special night as we remember  
the journey to Bethlehem  
where Jesus was born.**

**Amen**

## Christmas Vigil Mass – Travelling Crib

The priest will invite the families with the travelling cribs to come up to the altar and place the cribs by the font and at the same time invite the children who want to take part in the nativity activity to come up and explain that they will (if they want to) remain on the altar during the Mass.

### NATIVITY ACTIVITY

- This is baby Jesus who was born
- In a stable
- In Bethlehem
- And laid in a manger
- This is Mary, the mother of Baby Jesus who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger
- This is Joseph the husband of Mary, the mother of Baby Jesus, who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger
- These are the stars that lit up the sky on Joseph, Mary and Baby Jesus who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger
- These are the shepherds who heard the good news of the birth of Baby Jesus who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger
- These are the sheep that the shepherds were looking after when they heard the good news of the birth of Baby Jesus who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger
- These are the stars that lit up the way to the Baby Jesus who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger
- These are the three wise men who followed the stars that lit up the way to the Baby Jesus who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger
- These are the camels that brought the wise men to see Baby Jesus who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger
- These are the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh that the wise men brought to Baby Jesus who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger
- These are the children of \_\_\_\_\_ Church who have come to celebrate the birth of Jesus who was born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger

*The children then walk back towards the font and sit down around the font area and the travelling crib until the end of mass.*

# LENT

## LENT: CYCLE A

### Theme: Transformations

Throughout Lent in this cycle there is the general message that we are all sinners and that Jesus came to US - we are his special people - he can transform our lives. All the readings for Lent are people-centred and Jesus is central throughout.

Place a large cardboard figure of Jesus in the centre of a display board. During each week of Lent the figures relating to the characters of the readings can be added to the display.

The cardboard figures should be made in advance. The children can then be given one or more figures to “dress” as part of their activity each week.

### **First Sunday of Lent (A)      The sin of Adam and Eve**

#### **Gospel:**

Adam and Eve became aware of their ability to make choices. They responded to temptation by making a bad choice. Help the children to compare themselves with Adam and Eve. What choices do we make? For example, do we find it easier to hide and keep our sweets to ourselves rather than share them with others? Adam and Eve made the wrong choice and so, sometimes, do we.

#### ***Activity***

Some of the children could help to dress/decorate Adam and Eve. The older children could make speech bubbles for the characters.

### **Second Sunday of Lent (A)      The Transfiguration.**

#### **Gospel:**

When the normally confident disciples see Jesus in glory they do not know how to respond; they are frightened. Jesus tells them not to be afraid. *This is a nice follow on from the week before because one of the greatest barriers we have with closeness to God is sin -we try to hide away if we think we have done something wrong. Although we commit sins we should not be afraid or hide -Jesus will help us, and help us sort things out. Our lives with Jesus ‘help can be transformed from the sinful to the beautiful.*

Activities for the children can include decorating the disciple figures and making speech bubbles using simple words to describe how we feel when we realise we do not need to be afraid. --I.e. happy, loved, wanted, gentle, kind, forgiving.

### **Third Sunday of Lent (A)                      The Women at the Well.**

#### **Gospel:**

Jesus had a profound respect for the Samaritan women who would have been despised and hated by the Jews and he treated her with kindness. Jesus welcomes all of us equally with respect and kindness even when we have made bad choices and hurt other people.

#### ***Activity***

Decorate the figure of the Samaritan women at the well. All the children can draw and cut out pictures of themselves. Make speech bubbles to go with the pictures. Display the pictures of the women and the children around the well with speech bubbles.

### **Fourth Sunday of Lent (A)                      Jesus heals the blind man.**

#### **Gospel:**

Once again, we are reminded how physical and practical Jesus was. He mixed his own spit with mud to make a paste to put on the blind man's eyes. Jesus comes to touch our lives in a practical way too. Encourage the children to think about how they like to be looked after when they are ill or have hurt themselves. Think of the practical ways in which Jesus helped people especially by helping them to feel forgiven.

#### ***Activity***

Decorate the figure of the blind man. Make speech bubbles with simple words describing practical ways of helping and healing others.

### **Fifth Sunday of Lent (A)                      Lazarus comes back to life.**

#### **Gospel:**

This story highlights the central message throughout Lent of ***transformations***. We should really be letting Jesus transform us so that we can work for God's kingdom and one day be with him in heaven. In this story we are being given a sign that Jesus has the power to raise people from the dead. We are also thinking about separation and reunion. Many children have no experience of death but they have some experience of separation - divorce, grandparents might live a long way away, moving house and losing friends etc. The opposite of this is reunion seeing grandparents again, making new friends etc. Heaven is the joy of being reunited with God and our family

Try to get the feelings of happy reunions, i.e. excited, warm, and cosy.

#### ***Activity***

Decorate the figure of Lazarus in risen form (say trailing a piece of bandage from his ankle) with figures of Mary and Martha looking excited at being reunited with Lazarus. Make speech bubbles with simple words as above -excited, warm, cosy etc.



## **LENT CYCLE B**

**Theme: To build an Easter garden**

### **First Sunday of Lent (B)**

#### **Gospel:**

What would the wilderness be like? Jesus was alone; he fasted and would have been thirsty. Jesus spent a lot of time talking to God.

If there is time discuss the temptations

Introduce the idea of the garden - it will start as a wilderness.

What could we do to make it better? This will give a chance to explain how the garden will develop in future weeks.

Conclude by thinking of our relationship with God - what makes it empty and like a wilderness {all the wrong choices that we make} and what makes it good and helps it to grow {all the good choices we make}

#### **Activity**

Prepare the base for the garden, which will involve lining a tray with polythene and filling it with either play sand or soil.

The younger children could plant some seeds. Explain to them that the soil looks like a wilderness but things can grow with the right care.

*An explanation can be given to the congregation about what is happening; an older child could read the following words:*

**During Lent we are going to make an Easter Garden. Today we have made the base like the wilderness where Jesus stayed for forty days.**

### **Second Sunday of Lent (B)**

#### **Gospel:**

The Transfiguration is a foretaste of the resurrection. Jesus wanted to show his disciples that subsequent events would lead to glory.

Our garden will include a mould that is the tomb in which Jesus was placed. It will have a stone over its entrance, which will be removed on Easter Sunday to show that he has risen.

We will also introduce a white cloak that eventually will be draped over a cross in the garden. This can be described in a number of ways. It is the cloak that was wrapped around Jesus' body. It is subsequently discarded because when Jesus rose from the dead his body was perfect and he no longer needed the burial clothes. We can also link this back to the dazzling white clothes that Jesus wore at the transfiguration.

Encourage the children to look forward. Although our lives may not be as good as we would like them to be, {illness, family problems etc.}, if we put our trust in Jesus he will help us to cope.

## **Activity**

A tomb can be made from an old plastic bucket cut in half lengthways and spray painted grey; the children can then glue on scrunched up paper boulders. If possible use different tones of grey. Depending on the size of the garden, height can be added to the mould using scrunched up newspaper. A stone to fit the entrance is also needed. These can be brought up at the offertory and placed in the garden.

*To explain to the congregation an older child could read the following:*

**Today we have made a tomb out of stones to add to our garden. We remember that although Jesus died and was placed in the tomb, He wants us to know that He will come alive again.**

Once it's in position smaller stones can be placed around the base.  
*Don't forget to water the seeds.*

## **Third Sunday of Lent (B)**

### **Gospel:**

Today Jesus tells us the story of the gardener who, when hearing the owner wanted to cut a fig tree down because it had not produced fruit for three years, asked the owner to leave it for another year while he fed and watered it. If however, it had still not produced fruit then he could cut it down.

### **Discussion**

Discuss with the children forgiveness and how they and others can change their ways if they truly want to. God is always ready to give us another chance whatever we have done. With the older children the Sacrament of Reconciliation could be discussed.

### **Activities**

Give the children a selection of stones, which they can decorate with felt tips. On a small piece of paper attached to the stones the older children could write a prayer. These could then be placed in the Easter garden or form a border at the front.

*To explain to the congregation a child could read the following:*

**In today's Gospel we have been thinking about prayer and forgiveness, and how we are always given another chance if we are truly sorry.**

## **Fourth Sunday of Lent (B)**

### **Gospel:**

The Gospel of the day begins with a reference to Moses lifting up the serpent, which then changed into a staff and was subsequently used to find water for the Israelites in the desert.

## ***Discussion***

Remind the children of Jesus as the light of the world. Light helps us to see things clearly; darkness helps us to cover things up. Jesus helps us to become closer to God. He is our light and helps us to turn away from the dark things in life.

We received the light of Christ when we were baptised and the baptismal candle is a symbol of this.

Jesus is also the water of life, "anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again" {John 4}. This life comes to us through the Holy Spirit.

These two elements readily tie into the garden theme, as they provide the two essential elements for growth.

As it is Mothers' Day, the younger children could compare the daffodils they will be giving to their mums with the sun.

## **Activity**

Prepare a water feature to put in the garden. This could be formed from coloured paper or a mirror or it could be real water in a shallow tray. The latter could be coloured blue but will need to be changed to prevent it becoming stagnant.

The younger children could make a sunshine stick for the garden; they could use canes, yellow plates and yellow paper. The small plates or yellow card sun shaped cut outs can be decorated and secured onto the canes.

*To explain to the congregation a child could read the following:*

**In today's Gospel we are thinking about Jesus as the light of the world and the water of life. We are adding water and sunshine to our garden to help it grow.**

## **Fifth Sunday of Lent (B)**

### **Gospel:**

The Gospel reading today compares Jesus to a grain of wheat, which must die to produce a harvest of many grains. The Son of God must die so that many can live.

## ***Discussion***

Was Jesus afraid? He probably knew what was going to happen, but he faced it and turned to God for help.

Discuss the way a seed grows into a new plant.

Explain the analogy with the seed. It has to die in order for a new plant to grow and live. Jesus had to die so that we can have everlasting life.

## **Activities**

Hopefully the seeds, which were planted on the first, Sunday of Lent, will have started to grow and they can now be planted into the garden. If not some cheap colourful plants can be purchased from a garden centre and planted or left carefully disguised in their pots.

Another alternative activity would be to make some paper plants and flowers with the children to plant in the garden. These can be made out of tissue paper on cocktail sticks.

*Before doing the above, it is better to check with the priest as to his preferences during Holy Week. He may not mind or prefer the garden stays empty until Easter Saturday, when it will only take a short time to prepare the garden with colour for the Saturday Easter Vigil.*

*To explain to the congregation a child could read the following:*

**In today's Gospel Jesus compares himself to a grain of wheat, which must die to produce lots of wheat. We are planting some flowers in our garden today.**

## **LENT CYCLE C**

**Theme: To create and move along a path towards Jesus. To encourage the children to look at the good and bad choices they have made each week throughout Lent and to link this to the Gospel reading for each Sunday.**

The ongoing activity through Lent is to build a path, stage by stage, of rocks, cobblestones or footprints. The path base can be made from a large roll of wallpaper or similar strong paper. The rocks can be made from paper, cardboard or small real pebbles {or any thing else suitable} and will be added to the path week by week. Each rock or footprint will need to be A4 sized and can be illustrated showing something the children have done that week. Good/right choices should be stuck on the main path and bad/wrong choices on the diversion off the path. It should be marked on the path how much space has been allocated for each week. The rocks/footprints should be brought back into Mass at the Offertory Procession and the children will then place them on the path. At the end of Mass every thing should be made secure. The pathway should be even while the rocks can be rugged. It would be a good idea for the priest to explain to the congregation what the meaning behind the pathway is in relation to Lent

On Easter Sunday the path will then lead to something appropriate such as the Easter candle or floral cross.

### **First Sunday of Lent (C)**

#### **Gospel:**

The Gospel speaks of the temptations of Christ. Discuss with the children the things that tempt them.

### **Second Sunday of Lent (C)**

#### **Gospel:**

The Gospel tells of light and darkness and the way in which Jesus fills our world with light. The children can be encouraged to examine different ways in which they have let Jesus' light into their lives this week and what they might have done to bring darkness to others.

### **Third Sunday of Lent (C)**

#### **Gospel:**

Today's Gospel speaks of giving other people a chance {or indeed an infinite number of chances}. It also deals with being sorry for doing wrong things.

### **Fourth Sunday of Lent (C)**

#### **Gospel:**

Today's Gospel Again this involves giving people another chance and looks at

### **Fifth Sunday of Lent (C)**

#### **Gospel:**

In today's Gospel Jesus shows us how He treasures everyone, no matter who they are. Discuss with the children what they would keep their special treasures in, who or what do they treasure the most. Explain to them how everyone is an individual and we, like Christ, should try not to judge anyone. Sometimes we can hurt people

with unkind words or unfriendliness. Give out stone shape cut outs, on which the children can write or draw about what Jesus treasures about them.

**An alternative plan for the season could be:**

Have a small group of pebbles displayed on a purple cloth, with a small bowl of ashes from Ash Wednesday. In a separate place create a path with twists and turns {indicating Lent is not a straightforward path} with small pieces of gravel. Place bigger rocks on the pathway to represent the five Sundays in Lent. Each Sunday the children can display their work on the appropriate stone leading to Passion Sunday or Palm Sunday where palms can be added.

This helps the children to visualise the total journey through Lent beginning at Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday with the white cloth and a Easter candle or floral cross.

**Palm Sunday (Any cycle)**

*The children go for their liturgy in the usual way.*

The children could listen/participate in a reading of the Passion, suitable for their age group,

To facilitate their return into Church the children will need to prepare and be told of the arrangements.

Each child will need a green palm. These can be bought from a local florist or made from green construction paper. {These *should be prepared in advance*} Readers should be chosen so they can practise their readings and an explanation given to all of the children about what is going to happen.

Summary: the congregation will have heard a re-enactment of the Passion followed by a two-minute silence. The children will then burst into church from different directions singing and waving palms and being joyful. An exchange will then go on between the children and priest.

In order to make this work; organisation is important and timing right. Any parents helping need to be encouraged to take part.

Children will enter from different directions of the church waving their palms as the congregation starts singing a hymn. The readers will go straight to the altar, waving their palms too, and form a line facing the altar, together with the children carrying the gifts. The children all then make their way to the front, extending the line which may need to be two deep to avoid pushing.

The priest then asks the children what they are doing and one by one the readers step forward and say their piece. As they finish they should step back into line. The gifts that a group of designated children have brought are now handed to the priest who should make a reference to the Last Supper. At the end the children should lay their palms on the floor {in front of the altar} and then return to their seats.

**Priest**

What's all this fuss and commotion? Why have we got all this jolly singing? You were with us at the beginning. This is Palm Sunday, the day when Jesus went up to Jerusalem, where later he was beaten and whipped and then died a horrible death on the cross. We grown-ups are feeling sad.

**Reader 1**

And we are sad too! But we can be happy as well.

**Reader 2**

We all still have our palms, which are the great Christian symbol to remind us that although Jesus suffered and died, he also rose from the dead.

**Reader 3**

We are sad because on Friday we will remember that Jesus died to free us from our sins.

**Reader 4**

We can be happy because we know that after Jesus died, he came back to life on the third day.

*Those children carrying the offertory step forward*

**Reader 5**

We are also happy because on Thursday we will remember Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. He shared bread and wine with them.

**Reader 6**

This bread and wine becomes Jesus himself - Jesus who comes to us in communion. Jesus frees us from bad things and helps us to be filled with love for our Father God and for everyone.

**All readers together**

We all still have our palms, which are the great Christian symbol to remind us that although Jesus suffered and died, he also rose from the dead.

## CHILDREN'S CELEBRATION TO PREPARE FOR FIRST EUCHARIST

### Part One

#### Preparation:

- Choose a child for each task - Make sure everyone has something to do.
- Talk about this celebration.  
Remind children of the transformation of the bread and wine, which takes place at Mass, but not at this celebration.
- Prepare readings.
  - One child to read the "Last Supper" from the children's Bible or lectionary
  - Children to read bidding prayers.
  - Children needed:
    - To take something to dress the altar.  
5 candles, 1 plate, 1 glass, tablecloth, poster of Last Supper, bibles.
    - To take the offertory
    - Jug of wine/Ribena, pitta bread.

### Part Two

#### Celebration

*Start by Holy water stoop*

**Catechist/Priest.** By our baptism we become members of this church, now we come together to celebrate. Let us make the sign of the cross using the water.

*Hymn*

*Process into church, carrying the church banner. Make a semi circle - children with tablecloth set the table - children with candles place them in the candleholder.*

**Priest** We have come here to celebrate our community, but before we start we must be friends with each other, so let us bring our sins, worries and concerns and turn our footsteps towards God and each other.

*Child gives footsteps poster to priest.*

**Priest** Let us praise God and ask him to make our hearts shine with love.

*Sing: One chorus of clapping Gloria.*

#### Readings:

**Catechist/priest** In the bible there are stories about our God. Let us hear some now.



**Child reads** *Last Supper/washing of feet.*

**Catechist/Priest** Now as we hear a story about Jesus, let us ask his words to come into our heads, our mouths and our hearts.

*Make the sign of the cross on head, mouth, and heart.*

### **The Gospel**

**Priest:** 'Jesus makes the children welcome' story.

*Children sit down.*

**Priest:** Homily

Now let us stand and say what we believe - **The Creed**

### **Bidding Prayers**

**Priest** We now pray for other people and ourselves.

*Child/children to say bidding prayers.*

**Child:** Let us say together, Hail Mary.

### **Offertory**

**Catechist:** We bring these gifts, bread, wine, prayers, our hearts and other gifts we have.

*The children bring up the gifts including bread, juice, and heart shaped cut outs and gift boxes.*

### **Preparation of Gifts**

**Priest.** Blessed are you Lord, who made this world and have it always in your hands. Because of you we have this bread and wine to offer. Food for our stomachs which will become food for our hearts so we will be transformed and take your love into the world.

Although we cannot see or understand, we TRUST that we will be able to share in Jesus' body and blood TRANSFORMED from bread and wine.

We ask that by eating and drinking it You will TRANSFORM our hearts, making them golden with your LOVE.

### **The Last Supper.**

**Priest:** When we come together we remember the night before you died. The bread was raised high, blessed and broken and shared when you come to mass we say:

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME

The cup was raised high; drink this, for my blood will be shed for you:

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

**Priest:**

When your body was broken and your blood spilled on the cross it meant that you live in our hearts forever, healing them, making them shine with your love.

When you come to mass you will hear me say:

THROUGH HIM, WITH HIM, IN HIM, IN THE UNITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ALL GLORY AND HONOUR IS YOURS ALMIGHTY FATHER FOREVER AND EVER.

**Everyone:**AMEN.

This is because everything that happens at mass can only happen because of Gods love for us.

**Priest:** Now let us say the prayer that Jesus taught us.  
Our Father. ....

**Priest:** Jesus is called the Lamb of God who takes away all the things we are sorry about.

**Communion.** Like Jesus and the disciples at the Last Supper, we share our food together.

*Children pass around the plate with the bread on it  
Then pass around the cup with the juice in.*

*Quiet time*

**Priest:** Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All. Thanks be to God

*Hymn.*

## **Disability Sunday**

This is usually celebrated on the first Sunday in October but the story of the Cure of the Paralytic is the Sunday Gospel reading for **Year B (Mark) on the Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time.**

### **Children's Activities age 5-11**

#### **Through the Roof – The Cure of the Paralytic (Mark 2:1- 12, Matt 9:1- 8, Luke 5:17- 26)**

##### **Introductory activity**

Using a chocolate bar and what appears to be an empty crisp packet (but the packet actually contains a £1 coin hidden in the corner), offer the children a choice between the two – being careful to hide the coin in the packet by that corner.

Hopefully the children will choose the chocolate bar!

You can then reveal that the better choice would actually have been the crisp packet because of its hidden contents.

Link this activity to 1 Samuel 16:7 and the truth that God looks more at what we are like on the inside than at our outward appearance.

##### **Discussion**

Divide the children into age groups for a short discussion about how we feel when we first meet someone with a disability.

**NB.** Remember to emphasise that not all disabilities are obvious on the outside.

##### **“Feelings” activity**

This activity should be done while the children are still divided into age groups. Give each child a large plain paper bag on which they can draw a face. On the outside the children can write words to describe feelings we show on the outside. On the pieces of paper the children can write words to describe the feelings we hide on the inside. These pieces of paper can be placed inside the paper bag.

**NB.** Younger children may find it easier to draw simple pictures to describe feelings.

During this activity ask the children to consider especially how those with disabilities might feel. Encourage them to think about positive feelings as well as the more negative ones.

## **Through the Roof**

Act out with the children the story of the disabled man lowered through the roof to Jesus. All the children can be involved because those without key parts can form the crowd in the house.

Bring out the following points from the story:

- Sometimes it can be difficult for those with disabilities to come to Church or to feel included
- We can help one another like the four friends helped the disabled man
- Jesus forgave the man and helped him to feel better inside before He healed him on the outside

## **Disability awareness activities**

Give out a wrapped sweet (eg Starburst) to each child. Ask the children to put their “good” hand (the one they write with) behind their back and unwrap the sweet with the other hand. Talk to the children about the difficulties experienced by those who do not have the full use of their hands.

Play a game of “Chinese Whispers”. Talk to the children afterwards about how it feels not to know what others are saying and use this to raise awareness of difficulties of hearing impairment.

Put out two or three chairs in various parts of the room. Blindfold a child and ask another child to guide them to a chair. Make sure there are some narrow ‘pinch points’ (which can be made with extra chairs) and other obstructions. Discuss the difficulties experienced by those who are visually impaired.

Consider inviting someone from your parish who has a disability to talk to the children about how God helps them.

## **Conclusion**

Conclude with a prayer time, in groups, encouraging the children to pray about what they have learned and for those they know who are disabled.

*These ideas are from [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org) which is a Christian website designed to support people with disabilities*