

Let the Children Come: Family-Friendly Liturgy

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Selected Quotes

CSL / SC – Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy / *Sacrosanctum Concilium*
STL – Sing to the Lord **DMC** – Directory for Masses with Children
MCW – Music in Catholic Worship **GIRM** – General Instruction of the Roman Missal

Liturgy - Full, Conscious, Active Participation

...the whole public worship ...performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members. (CSL 7)

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. In the reform and promotion of the liturgy ... full and active participation by all the people is to be considered before all else. (CSL14)

To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs as well as by actions, gesture and bearing.... (CSL 30)

Liturgical Adaptation

Provisions shall also be made, when revising the liturgical books, for legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions, and peoples, especially in mission lands, (CSL 38)

Masses with Children

There is a fear of spiritual harm if over the years children repeatedly experience in the Church things that are barely comprehensible. (DMC 2)

From the beginning of liturgical reform it has been clear to everyone that some adaptations are necessary in these Masses (with children). (DMC 20)

It is necessary to take great care that the children present do not feel neglected because of their inability to participate or to understand ... Some account should be taken of their presence: e.g. in the introductory comments and at some point in the homily. (DMC 17)

If the number of children is large, it may at times be suitable to plan the Mass so that it corresponds more closely to the needs of the children. Wherever the bishop permits ... adaptations described later in the Directory (for Masses mainly with children) may be employed in a Mass celebrated with adults in which children also participate (Parish Masses.) (DMC 19)

The principles of active and conscious participation are in a sense even more significant for Masses celebrated with children. (DMC 22)

Children & Music

Singing is one of the primary ways that the assembly of the faithful participates actively in the Liturgy. (STL 26)

Singing must be given great importance in all celebrations but it is to be especially encouraged in every way for Masses celebrated with children (DMC 30)

The use of musical instruments can add a great deal in Masses with children, especially if they are played by the children themselves. (DMC 32)

In view of the nature of the liturgy as an activity of the entire person and in view of the psychology of children, participation by means of gestures and posture should be strongly encouraged in Masses with children. (DMC 33)

Children & Liturgy of the Word

If three or even two readings appointed on Sundays or weekdays can be understood by children only with difficulty, it is permissible to read two or only one of them, but the reading of the gospel should never be omitted. (DMC 42)

When the text of the readings lends itself to this, it may be helpful to have the children read it with parts distributed among them, as is provided for the reading of the Lord's passion during Holy Week. (DMC 47)

The homily explaining the word of God should be given great prominence in all Masses with children. Sometimes the homily intended for children should become a dialogue with them (DMC 48)

Vital Ingredients (In ALL Liturgies)

Homilies: Brief words which set hearts on fire... using the language, signs, symbols and questions of actual people...positive, offering hope, not negativity,
(Pope Francis in *The Joy of the Gospel*)

Hymns: Well chosen, well prepared, well led, liturgically appropriate, vibrant, inclusive, engaging.

Hospitality If a person doesn't feel welcomed, nothing else about the parish, no matter how wonderful, will matter. Welcome ALL including children.

3 Judgments for Liturgical Music

(STL 126-136, MCW 25-41)

- **Musical:** Is the music technically, aesthetically & expressively good?
- **Liturgical:** Does the piece fit this celebration and fulfil the liturgical needs of the different parts of the ritual? Is the music within the capabilities of the Assembly?
- **Pastoral:** Does the music in this celebration allow **these people** to express **their faith in this place, in this age, in this culture?**

Liturgical Music v Catechetical Music

- Not all "God" songs are suitable for Liturgical use.
- Some children's religious songs were composed for catechetical purposes and were never intended to be used in liturgy.

Music Ministry - (Ministerium - to Serve)

Music **serves** the Liturgy - enabling the Assembly to do their liturgical "work."

- **Can the Assembly sing this song?**
- **Is this the best key for the Assembly?**
- **Are we PERFORMING or LEADING?**
- **Is our music ministry helping this Assembly pray in community today?**

TEMPO: Playing too slowly "kills" vibrancy, energy & participation.
(Listen to recordings where possible to get the tempo & "feel" right.)

Principle of "Progressive Solemnity":

Singing the most Important parts of the Mass

- 1. Acclamations:** **Gospel Acclamation**
Holy, Holy, Holy
Mystery of Faith
Amen
- *Are the acclamations joyful and easily sung by the Assembly?*

Dialogues with Presider e.g. "The Lord be with you ..."

& "Litanies" **Kyrie** (Lord Have Mercy)
Universal Prayer (Intercessions)
Lamb of God

2. Processionals & Hymns:

Gathering Song: Open the celebration, Foster Unity,
Highlight Season or Festivity,
Accompany the Procession (GIRM 47)

- *Is it singable? Does it UNIFY the Assembly?*
- *Does it use corporate language "we", "us", "our"?*
- *Does it help us enter into the liturgical season?*

Glory to God: Sundays & Solemnities *Not sung in Advent or Lent*

Communion Song: Express union of spirit through unity of voices,
Shows "joy of heart." (GIRM 86)

- *Is it Singable? Using corporate language - "we", "us", "our"?*
- *Are we beginning as the Priest receives Communion?*
- *Is it a song of UNITY rather than a song of adoration?*

- 3. Responsorial Psalm:** Are we at least singing the people's Response?
Have we considered using a Common psalm for a whole season? (GIRM 61)

- 4. Other Parts may be sung but are less important:**
Offertory/Procession of Gifts
Song of Praise (After Communion)
Recessional Song