

Texts

Scripture A starting point may be the readings of the day from the Lectionary. Alternatively the section (in Volume 3) for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions offers a more thematic selection. Though it would be usual to have a proclamation of the Gospel it is not obligatory nor is there a required number of readings.

Other Writings Non-scriptural texts may be used as long as they are consonant with the Catholic Faith and are not used in such a way so that they may be confused with scripture, e.g. a first scripture reading, a second non-scriptural reading followed by a Gospel reading could suggest equivalence which would be not be appropriate.

Prayer The Roman Missal may provide suitable texts including the section for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions. Care should be taken that the Missal texts do not presume a celebration of the Eucharist. They may need to be edited accordingly.

Elements

Season Whatever the celebration it would be appropriate consider how it might be affected by the liturgical season.

Attention will need to be paid to the liturgical **Environment**, the use of **Symbol** and **Music**.

Ministry Though in many cases it will be an ordained minister or presides it need not be. All ministers should be provided with the materials for them to prepare properly.

In the celebration of the liturgy the word of God is not voiced in only one way nor does it always stir the hearts of the hearers with the same power, Always, however, Christ is present in his word; as he carries out the mystery of salvation, he sanctifies us and offers the Father perfect worship.

Moreover, the word of God unceasingly calls to mind and extends the plan of salvation, which achieves its fullest expression in the liturgy. The liturgical celebration becomes therefore the continuing, complete, and effective presentation of God's word. That word constantly proclaimed in the liturgy is always, then, a living, active word through the power of the Holy Spirit. It expresses the Father's love that never fails in its effectiveness toward us

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**Liturgy
Office**
ENGLAND
& WALES

One of a series of resources prepared by the Liturgy Office of the Bishops' Conference to accompany the publication of *The Gift of Scripture* a teaching document of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and of Scotland. The document can be downloaded from www.catholic-ew.org.uk and is published by the Catholic Truth Society [www.cts-online.org.uk]. Further resources are available from www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Scripture. Leaflet ©2005 Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. S003

Celebrating the Word

Celebrating a Liturgy of the Word

*Your word is a lamp for my steps
and a light for my path*

Ps 118:105

A Resource for
THE GIFT OF SCRIPTURE



Introduction

Bible Services should be encouraged.

Sacrosanctum Concilium 35.4

Liturgies of the Word are also celebrated to provide additional occasions for people to come together in order to receive Christ, the Word of the Father. Such celebrations, in church, in schools, in homes, or in other places where people gather, allow us to be nourished and strengthened by the gift of God's word for our daily living of the gospel.

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This leaflet is intended to offer guidance about celebrating a Liturgy of the Word. The foundation for such a celebration is the Liturgy of the Word at Mass but there is degree of flexibility of format depending on the purpose of the celebration and the group celebrating.

A Liturgy of the Word can be celebrated in many different ways. It can be a simple time of prayer as part of catechesis; a prayer vigil for peace; an Advent carol service or a (non-sacramental) penitential service in Lent. What is common to all of them is the centrality of the proclamation of the Word and the opportunity for prayerful response.

This leaflet cannot address all the possible occasions but many of the issues and principles will be the same.

Preparing a Liturgy of the Word

The following questions maybe helpful:

- Who will be celebrating?
- Where will you be celebrating?
- What are you celebrating?
- Is there a particular reading or set of readings you wish to use?
- Any other significant elements you wish to include? (a song, an action etc.)

Model Structure

This structure uses the familiar pattern of Gather – Word – Symbolic Action – Send Forth. The first column gives the outline of a liturgy based on the first part of Mass, the second column offers some notes

Gather	Entrance Procession — Song Greeting Penitential Act Opening Prayer	<i>Before listening to the Word there is a need to draw people into one and to 'open their ears'.</i>
Word	Readings from Scripture Responsorial Psalm Gospel Acclamation Gospel	<i>In some celebrations there might be just one reading followed by silence as a Symbolic Action. A more developed structure might be: Scripture – Music – Silence – Prayer repeated a number of time as at the Easter Vigil.</i>
Symbolic Action	Homily Profession of Faith Prayer of the Faithful	<i>The response to the proclaimed Word can be anything from silent reflection through reflection and intercession to gesture and symbol such as the reverencing of the Book of the Gospels or the use of candles or incense.</i>
Send Forth	Blessing Dismissal	<i>What we hear proclaimed and respond to in prayer should touch our lives.</i>

For more information about individual parts see *Celebrating the Mass* (Sacred Scripture, Homily 69–71; Introductory Rites 139–150; Liturgy of the Word 151–173).