

EUCHARIST AND YOUTH-FOCUSED LITURGY

EUCHARIST DEFINED

The word comes from the Greek word “eucharistos,” which means “grateful” and is usually translated as “thanksgiving.” It now refers to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, in which bread and wine becomes the body and blood of Christ. Eucharist has become essentially synonymous with “Communion” or “Holy Communion.” The earliest written account of the institution of the Eucharist is contained in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, written in the spring of the year 55 AD. The Didache, a church document from the end of the first century refers to the Eucharist by name, gives explicit instructions for the form of the prayers, and cautions, “Let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those baptized in the name of the Lord.” The earliest complete Eucharistic prayer is in a document from 225 AD identified with Hippolytus. It is identical (almost word for word) to the Eucharistic prayer used today by nearly all Catholic and orthodox churches.

CATHOLIC TEACHING ON THE EUCHARIST

Traditional Roman Catholic teaching on the Eucharist teaches that the Holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord’s own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.

At the Last Supper, on the night He was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This He did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet ‘in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.’

THE SOURCE AND SUMMIT

“The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life.’ The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ Himself. The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both of God’s action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship men offer to Christ and through Him to the Father in the Holy Spirit.”

-Catechism of the Catholic Church #1324-1325

“I would like to add a word about the Eucharist. In order to grow in our Christian life, we need to be nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ. In fact, we are baptized and confirmed with a view to the Eucharist as the “Source and summit” of the Church’s life, the Eucharist is a “perpetual Pentecost” since every time we celebrate Mass we receive the Holy Spirit who unites us more deeply with Christ and transforms us into Him. My dear young friends, if you take part frequently in the Eucharistic celebration, if you dedicate some of your time to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Source of love which is the Eucharist, you will acquire that joyful determination to dedicate your lives to following the Gospel. At the same time it will be your experience that whenever our strength is not enough, it is the Holy Spirit who transforms us, filling us with his strength and making us witnesses suffused by the missionary fervor of the risen Christ.”

- Message of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI to the Young People of the World on the Occasion of the XXIII World Youth Day, 2008

TEENS AND THE EUCHARIST

Our young people and our world are filled with what the Pope St. John Paul II called “the culture of death”. We have the bread of life; we have what can transform that death into life itself. We have the Bread of Hope in the Eucharist.

It is time for us to understand the gift of the Eucharist and pass that precious gift to the next generation. It is Jesus in the Eucharist that will transform hearts and lives. It is Jesus in the Eucharist that will lead teens to their vocation. It is Jesus in the Eucharist that will convert the world. Teens do not need us – they do need Jesus.

“Bring them to the Eucharist” said Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, in response to the question - “What should we do for our young people?” It almost sounds too simplistic. Of all the responses Blessed Mother Teresa could have given, as usual, she went right to the heart of it all - the Eucharist. The Eucharist is why we are Catholic. It is vital to our ministering to teens in the Catholic Church that we have a full understanding of what the Eucharist is and what it means for our lives.

We must not let ourselves become numb to the “Real Presence” of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. At no other time have teens been so drawn to the Eucharist. Summer youth conferences, retreats and Life Nights are experiencing the awesome power of the Eucharist. Teens are attending daily Mass and visiting Eucharistic Adoration Chapels before they head out to the prom on Prom Night. Why? Because youth leaders have had the courage to dedicate themselves to “Bringing them to the Eucharist.” This is done primarily through a vibrant youth-focused Liturgy.

WHAT IS A YOUTH-FOCUSED MASS?

A Youth-focused Mass is nothing more than a vibrant liturgy that speaks to young people and challenges them to live as Disciples of Christ. It is not limited to just teenagers, people of all ages can attend youth Mass.

The music, homilies and environment are set for youth and their families. There is an energy that teens bring to the celebration that is contagious.

MUSIC

Teens listen to a great deal of music everyday. Although some of it may be objectionable, it is all produced very well and has incredible sound quality. To inculturate the liturgy for teens, a youth Mass uses musical instruments that teens are used to hearing on a daily basis. The tone is still prayerful as teens respond by participating and actually singing at Mass.

HOMILY

The teens are addressed directly at the homily. The Scripture readings are broken open for the teens and show how relevant it is for their lives. Teens are drawn to the truth as the homily gives them the truth of our faith.

ENVIRONMENT

Teens know from the first time they attend a youth Mass that they are welcome there and that this is the place for them. They are greeted, embraced and encouraged. The teens are encouraged to serve in the various liturgical ministries. A community forms that supports the teens in their journey.

LIFE TEEN LITURGY PLANNING GUIDE

The Mass and the Eucharist is the center of the Life Teen ministry. We are committed to helping parishes develop dynamic youth-focused Masses. As part of Life Support we provide Liturgy Planning Guides. These books are filled with ideas on how to implement a successful youth- focused

Mass. Liturgy Planning Guides include:

- Key Words and Key Themes
- Song Suggestions for Music Ministers
- Homily Suggestions specific to teens
- Psalm Responses with sheet music

A Summit Discipleship Resource for teenagers is also included as part of the Liturgy Planning Guide. Summit invites small groups to dive into the Sunday readings while forming teenagers as disciples. These are discipleship gatherings designed around themes from the Sunday readings hosted by the Youth Ministers and Core Team Members.

LITURGY AND TEENS

You must believe that liturgy can speak to teens. And you must believe that teens are worth speaking and listening to. They are not the Church of tomorrow; they are the Church of today. We must talk openly with them about the issues that touch their lives. We cannot beat around the bush or have hidden agendas in these discussions. We must proclaim the truth with love to the teens. Good Liturgy can and will transform the youth of your parish. Here are some important reminders when building a solid Youth-focused Liturgy:

THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH IS RICH

Don't mess with the ritual. You do a disservice to the community by breaking the unity of the universal experience of the order and flow of the liturgy. Work at helping teens understand the central elements of liturgy. Try to do what you do with excellence, style and grace. Bring out the real elements of the liturgy and place emphasis where it belongs - on the Community, the Word, and the Eucharist.

TALK TO THE TEENS

In the homily, speak about morality, relationships, families, dating, etc. It's wrong for us not to speak about these facets of daily life because teens talk often about them.

Teens don't like to be preached at. Nobody does. It is never effective to come across sounding condescending. Speaking directly to the teens is an effective way to let young people know they are important and valued. While the entire homily does not have to be directed to the teens, it is vital that the homilist acknowledges their presence.

DON'T EVER WATER DOWN THE GOSPEL TEACHINGS

The way to the teens is not to say what you think they want to hear. Most teens have not been taught the teachings of the Church. They want to know what the Church stands for and what it is exactly that they belong to. We must talk honestly about doctrine, moral issues and relationships.

MUSIC IS ESSENTIAL

Music is essential; it can draw teens into an experience of true worship. Good liturgical music (simple, sing-able, and scriptural) should be chosen. It is essential, however, that the music be enriched with instruments, sparked with life and involve the community, not just the musicians.

CALL THE TEENS FORTH TO MINISTRY

Involvement is the key to the teens taking ownership of the liturgy. Give them clear directions, make them practice their ministries, and help them handle their mistakes calmly.

PARISH UNDERSTANDING

Make certain that everybody in the parish understands what the youth Mass is. Gently but firmly encourage those who disagree with its format to attend a different Sunday liturgy. We have found Sunday night to be an ideal time for the youth liturgy.

HOSPITALITY IS KEY

Think about the first time you attended your parish or visited another out of town. How welcoming was the community to you, a stranger? Was it what you expected? Did it exceed your expectations? The first impression a newcomer has can have lasting effects.

A study was conducted that shows when people visit a parish for the first time, they will decide within twenty minutes whether they'll come back or not. So treat everybody like it's their first twenty minutes at the parish. It'll go a long way to creating a warm, hospitable community.

Another sign of a hospitable community is the teens. A warm, welcoming environment is quick to acknowledge the presence and gifts of their youth. Many youth and young adults hold the stereotype that congregations are unfriendly. They may go so far as to say "rude." In a study by the Search Institute, the number one reason a young person would leave a church community is "not being made to feel welcome." To fight these bad feelings, a parish should focus on a spirit of hospitality in everything they do.

TEEN INVOLVEMENT IN LITURGY

We need to put the teens in position to be successful, as the people of God deserve the highest quality.

HOSPITALITY – Have teens greet parishioners and hand out song sheets. The goal is to make every person feel welcomed.

ALTAR SERVERS – Invite teens to become altar servers and include them in the parish training.

LECTORS – Have a training session for teen lectors. Talk about the Mass, why lay people have the dignity to lector, and practice reading to go over the technical aspects of reading at the parish. Assign 3 teen lectors for each Youth Mass - 1st and 2nd readers and an alternate, who could proclaim either reading in an emergency, but who is assigned to read the Prayers of the Faithful. If a Deacon is present, have him read the Prayers of the Faithful. Meet prior to Mass to discuss the readings and to practice them each Sunday. This is a great ministry for someone to coordinate who cannot make the time commitment for Core.

HOMILY INVOLVEMENT – Plan how the Liturgy can involve teens. Have the youth minister or liturgist be responsible for organizing. The teens can hold up signs, answer questions, etc.

GIFT PRESENTERS – Ask teens before Mass to present the gifts at Mass. Walk them through the responsibility. Try to get different teens or families with teens to bring forward the gifts every week.

USHERS – Have a group of teens who are trained in the duties of an usher. One teen or adult can organize the usher ministry each week.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION (check your diocesan requirements for teenagers) - Invite the teens who are eligible to participate in parish training.

MUSIC MINISTRY – This is at the discretion of the Music Minister. Most teens (even the musically gifted ones) are not spiritually mature enough to lead worship, but there are numerous exceptions. Quality and commitment are essential for this ministry so be sure that teens and adults are prepared to commit to the ministry.

MUSIC LICENSING AND RESOURCES

When planning the music for your youth Mass, you may want to seek out resources outside your church's current hymnal. Whether you purchase separate songbooks with contemporary music, prepare worship aids or project lyrics for your congregations use at mass, you'll need to observe copyright laws as they pertain to the reproduction of music and lyrics. Songs are the personal property of the composer/artist. The artists receive royalties based on the use of their songs. To use a song without permission is to rob the artist of what is rightfully theirs. And the 7th commandment says "You shall not steal."

CONTEMPORARY HYMNALS

One easy way around the copyright question is to purchase a contemporary hymnal to use at your Youth Mass. This gives you access to and permission to sing all of the songs within a particular collection with your congregation. Most of the major publishing companies have a contemporary music collection. Particularly noteworthy are the following hymnals that incorporate music from some of the best new Catholic artists as well as popular worship music from other denominations:

Spiritandsong.com, a division of OCP - Spirit and Song (Volumes 1 & 2) www.spiritandsong.com

WORLD LIBRARY PUBLICATIONS – Voices as One (Volumes 1 & 2) www.wlp.jspaluch.com

WORSHIP AIDS: SONG SHEETS AND PROJECTED LYRICS

While contemporary hymnals give you easy access to music, you are limited to using the songs in that particular collection. Making your own worship aid or projecting lyrics onto a screen can open up the possibilities of potential songs that can be used.

The copyright law is very clear on copying and projecting music and lyrics. If you do not have express permission from the composer of the song or someone who has derived rights through the composer (such as the publisher or copyright license holder), you cannot reproduce or project the song.

Fortunately, permission to reproduce or project song lyrics is fairly easy to attain by purchasing a comprehensive copyright license. The cost for purchasing a copyright license is usually based on the average weekly attendance of your congregation, or the number of copies you will be making. Various types of licenses can be purchased which include: Annual Reprint Licenses, Permanent Hymnal/Songbook Reprint Licenses, and One-Time Reprint Licenses. You will need to access what type of license best suits your needs.

Any time you reproduce or project lyrics to a song, you must site the composer, copyright year, publishing company and your church's copyright license number.

Example:

"Hallelujah" words and music by John Doe, ©2000 Good Music Co., License #0000.

Christian Copyright Licensing International (www.CCLI.com) is probably the most comprehensive, covering over 200,000 worship songs for congregational singing.

If you can only purchase one copyright license, this is the one. All of today's most popular Christian worship songs are covered by CCLI, including songs by popular Catholic artists under

the spiritandsong.com label. Since not all of the songs in the CCLI library are appropriate for the Catholic mass, you will need to use good liturgical judgment when selecting songs.

Because of the richness of the Catholic liturgy, you may at times want to incorporate songs of a more “Catholic” nature or songs from your current hymnal, particularly during special liturgical seasons like Advent, Lent and Easter. You might consider purchasing a secondary copyright license for this purpose. Most of the major Catholic publishing companies also have reprint licenses with purchase costs based on the size of your worshiping community. You might want to check with the publisher of your current hymnal for the types of reprint licenses they offer.

OCP - www.ocp.org

GIA - www.giamusic.com

WLP - www.wlp.jspaluch.com

CCLI - www.ccli.com

MUSICIAN RESOURCES

Sheet music for your musicians can be obtained a number of ways, but keep in mind that similar copyright laws apply to the copying of sheet music. Express permission is required from the artist, publisher or copyright holder to make copies of sheet music. Purchasing a single copy of an accompaniment book for your music ministry does not give you permission to run multiple copies of songs within that book for everyone in your ministry.

If you go with a CCLI Church License, this is a great resource. For under \$200/year, Song Select gives you online access to transposable Lead Sheets, Chord Sheets and Vocal/Hymn Sheets. You can print up to 200 unique lead sheets per year.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FORMING A SOLID MUSIC MINISTRY

Here are some thoughts for you to consider as you begin to form your music ministry or as you seek to take the existing music ministry to the next level:

We are after true talent and true prayerfulness:

- Auditions for music ministry are a must. Hold an evening or two of auditions to find the group that you can really work and pray with. It is impossible to assemble an effective ministry if your motto is “Come one, Come all!” Not everyone is called to join a parish’s team of music ministers. Utilize the “Worship Ministry Audition and Application Packet” available from your Parish Coach.
- The best music ministry comes from people whose hearts are hungry for the Lord. When everyone understands why you are there, it’s easier to make those tough decisions along the way to create a solid music ministry for your parish. The most talented musician can destroy the integrity of a music ministry with arrogance and pride. Yet a faithful person with lesser talent can contribute much more to your music ministry.

Once you have the pieces assembled in your music ministry, it’s time to move forward.

PLAN WITH A LITURGY TEAM

Initiate a Liturgy planning meeting, if there is not already one in place. Your Pastor, youth minister and Liturgist should all be there along with the music minister. Some parishes meet weekly, bi-weekly, even monthly. As long as you are getting together to pray about and for the Sunday Liturgy, you are taking a great step in improving the celebration of the liturgy. Remember that music has never been, and will never be the central focus of the Mass. Mass is

not good because the music is good, Mass is good because of the Eucharistic presence of Jesus. Utilize the “Sample Liturgy Planning Meeting Agenda” as well as the “Liturgy Planning Guide.”

PICK APPROPRIATE SONGS

Spend more time and thought into your song selections. The Life Teen Liturgy Planning Guides are great tools to get you started. The best Liturgies are those that celebrate our rich musical tradition as well as artists’ recent songs for worship.

It does a teen well to see that the Church has been alive and well for some time, and that it continues to flourish. Teens want to be a part of a larger story. Remember, songs that “worked” a couple of years ago may not be successful now. Choose music that is sing-able and well known, but intersperse some new music too! Don’t choose what you want, but what works and is liturgically correct!

THE “KEY” IS KEY

Just because the sheet music is written in G major doesn’t mean you have to do it in that key. Lower it, raise it, or do whatever it takes to insure your assembly can sing it.

REHEARSE

Don’t just stop rehearsing when the song sounds good. Work a bit more on the instrumentalists’ arrangements or the vocal performance. Work on your harmonies and dynamics throughout each of the songs. Practically speaking, it takes a long time for a group to begin to feel “tight.”

PRAY.

Pray before every practice and every Mass. Pray for each other, offer intentions, pray for the community and burdens among your brethren, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you through each Liturgy, laying aside all ego and pride for the sake of the Body of Christ.

QUALITY

Three well-prepared musicians are always better than eight or ten well-meaning yet musically questionable “ministers.” Start small and strong, and build from there.

GET OUT OF THE WAY

Once you have picked solid music (and solid musicians), chosen the appropriate key, tuned your instruments and yourself... then get out of the way. Encourage the assembly to sing in such a way that you are “drowned out” by their singing. When this happens you have done your job well.

GO WITH THE FLOW

The liturgy has a powerful “ebb and flow.” The celebrant most influences this flow; work as a team. A good celebrant can sense the need for more reverence, more “spiritedness” or whatever. Listen and watch! You are providing the “music score” for a holy, ancient and beautiful rite.

