

A GUIDE TO CLASS AND SCHOOL LITURGIES FOR THE SEASON OF CREATION



1. Preparation

When we gather together to pray in school, it must be different from anything else in school life, and the less teacher input, the better. If there's a running commentary or questioning or discussion, it becomes an assembly! Liturgy happens. The signs, symbols, words and gestures should speak for themselves. Therefore, preparation is essential. But the good news is, it should be simple!

2. Create a Sacred Space

The way we gather should be different from anything else in school life! It should be different from assembly time or the way we sit for lessons. In a circle or semicircle with a focal point/altar in easy sight. Have a change of lighting and move the furniture.

This is a perfect opportunity to use pupils artwork. Photos, pictures, posters, slogans. They will all help set the scene.

3. Use symbols

The Catechism tells us that we meet Christ 'through signs perceptible to the senses.' We can't see God physically, but we meet Him through what we see, hear, touch and smell. Candles, incense, a feely cross for young children, colour, music. All these things create a sense of the sacred which helps us to meet God in Scripture and prayer.

4. The Word of God

The Word of God must be at the heart of any Liturgy. It is God speaking to us! There can be extra readings from other sources; poems and words written by the children. But make the key message be from Christ!

5. Prayers

It is our duty to pass on the rich heritage of Catholic prayers. But this is also a great opportunity for pupils to express their thoughts, hopes, desires, concerns and praise to God in creative ways. ***See below for some ideas.

6. Silence

Silence is an integral part of liturgy. It needs to be taught and practiced and used frequently. Some guidance may be needed (but as few words as possible!)

Eg. *'We'll now listen to how God created the world. Then, we'll have a minute of quiet to think quietly of all the things we enjoy in nature, for which we'd like to say 'thank you.'*

7. Music

Quiet reflective music is great for reflection time. Songs and hymns are great but not always essential.

8. Participation

Active Participation was the most important feature of the Second Vatican Council. It didn't, as many people thought, mean that everyone had to be doing something. It DID mean that they should understand what was going on! This is why preparation is so important because there is the time to explain.

Explain the issue being prayer for, the pictures in a powerpoint, the meaning of a scripture passage, or the words of a prayer, then they will be more meaningful when they are encountered in the liturgy.

- EXPLORE THE PSALMS. Some great creation poetry! Have a look at psalms 19, 29, 65, 67, 95, 98, 104, 139, 145, 146, 148
Use a line or phrase as a repeating prayer;
Let us praise the name of the Lord
For he made the rivers and seas
Let us praise the name of the Lord
For he made the waterfalls and streams
Let us praise the name of the Lord
For he made the clouds
Let us praise the name of the Lord
For he made the lakes
- WRITE A PRAYER WITH A RESPONSE
Help us to look after your world
By recycling and re-using
Help us to look after your world
By thinking twice of we need something new
Help us to look after your world
By not dropping litter
- AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE
Have I dropped litter?
Have I harmed nature?
Have I wasted food?
- WRITE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL
These are normally used at Mass, but great for any liturgy. They can be very simple. Older pupils might like to add more detail.

We pray for..

That...

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

*Eg. We pray for those people who work in governments.
That they will make decisions that protect the environment.
Lord in your mercy...*



- WRITE A COLLECT-STYLE PRAYER

This is the most advanced kind of prayer, found in the collects of the Mass.
It follows 4 stages:

1. Address God

God of all creation...
Lord of all Creation...
Almighty God...
Father of all living things...

2. Give God an attribute, beginning with 'who.'

Who made the heavens and the earth...
Who watches over all plants and animals with love
Who gave us all gifts and talents...

3. State the petition of the prayer

Help us to appreciate the beauty around us...
Guide those people who make decisions for the good of all; help them to understand the importance of protecting the world around us...
Help us to use the gifts you have given us to look after our world. Help us to stand up to actions we know are harmful. Give us the strength to

4. End the prayer through the Trinity.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.
Through our lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever, Amen.



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Further resources and guidance online at www.mariahall.org/season-of-creation

Please contact me if you'd like staff training or classroom workshops on all aspects of prayer and collective worship.