



## **Our Lady of Perpetual Help Standard Operating Procedures for Children's Liturgy of the Word Ministers**

REVISED JULY 21, 2010

### **Prayer for Children's Liturgy of the Word**

Lord, we thank you for the gift of our children.  
They are the youngest of our seeds planted in the soil of our church.  
Open their eyes so they may see the love of their community.  
Open their ears to hear the good news of your Word.  
Open their hearts so they may feel your loving embrace.

We pray that our children may find nourishment and refreshment in the Liturgy of the Word provided by our Catechists. May our words, prayers, songs, and actions quench their thirst for you so that their roots may take deep hold in the soil of your church.

In your name we offer this prayer,  
Amen.

*“Sometimes, moreover, if the place itself and the nature of the community permit, it will be appropriate to celebrate the liturgy of the word, including a homily, with the children in a separate, but not too distant room. Then, before the Eucharistic liturgy begins, the children are led to the place where the adults have meanwhile celebrated their own liturgy of the Word.”*

*-Directory for Masses with Children, #17*

As a ministry within our parish, Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) directly supports "providing a sense of belonging to all God's people through prayer, service, and the sharing of gifts for the praise and glory of God." (*OLPH Parish Mission Statement*)

The Church must show special concern for baptized children who have yet to be fully initiated through the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist as well as for children who have only recently been admitted to Holy Communion. (*Directory for Masses with Children*)

Adult leaders and assistants involved in CLOW are truly stewards of God in that they are entrusted to bring God's word to one of our most precious resources, our children. Through the use of a specially adapted and approved Lectionary of Masses for Children especially prepared by the U.S. Conference of Bishops, CLOW affords children an opportunity to hear and learn about the Sunday readings in an interactive setting appropriate to the attention span and comprehension level of young children.

## **CLOW CELEBRATION**

CLOW is celebrated at the 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 5:00 p.m. masses on Sunday. Children ages three through eleven are encouraged to participate, although children under the age of four must be accompanied by a responsible adult or older sibling. After the Opening Prayer, the children are invited forward, blessed by the congregation, and led to the breezeway by an adult leader.

Though the sequence may vary because of time constraints or other factors, CLOW involves three steps:

1. Listening to God's Word. The readings are adapted to the language of the child while maintaining the integrity of the Word.
2. Reflecting on God's Word. Through the use of a scripture guide provided, the children are asked questions or given situations to help them relate the weekly readings to their own lives and reflect on the blessings God's Word brings to them.
3. Responding to God's Word. CLOW Ministers explore with the children some of the things they can do to practice the Word of God in their daily lives. CLOW Ministers conclude with the Creed, Prayers of the Faithful, and a closing prayer. The children return to their families before the Preparation of the Gifts when the congregation is seated.

This special Liturgy of the Word, while not intended to be catechesis, opens them to the treasures of Scripture. CLOW Ministers seek to show each child that they are important participants in the liturgy. By its interactive nature, the children bring to us the simplicity of God's Word as they provide their individual interpretations of the readings.

## **TO BECOME A CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD MINISTER**

- Like to work with children
- Must take mandatory safety and ethics training. (See next paragraph.)
- Be properly trained for their ministry.
- Periodically participate in spiritual enrichment programs, such as ministerial retreats.

## **TRAINING**

- **Regardless of your level of participation, training is required.** The Diocese mandates that all volunteers over 18 years of age working with children be screened and take a safety course that

can be accessed on line. The screening and safety training can be accessed through [www.shieldthevulnerable.org](http://www.shieldthevulnerable.org).

**Note:** Before you go online to take the training, you must contact Julia Torres, Director of Ministries, Tel: 689-8681, Ext. 201; Email: [jtorres@rcchawaii.org](mailto:jtorres@rcchawaii.org);

The entire process takes about 90 minutes, and costs are covered by the parish. Volunteers are required to be screened every five years, and the safety training must be done annually. Screening and training must be completed within 60 days after beginning your work with the children.

Volunteers under 18 years of age are **not** required to take the on-line course, but are required to submit a signed parental consent form and view a video on child safety.

## PARTICIPATION

There are three ways to participate in CLOW:

**CLOW Leader.** The CLOW leader has the following responsibilities during his or her scheduled mass:

- Arrive at least 20 minutes prior to Mass. Ensure the breezeway is prepared for CLOW. All the necessary supplies (table, candles, tablecloth, Lectionary, plants, write board, etc) are in Julia's office. This includes setting up the "altar," unrolling the rugs for the children to sit on, and preparing any necessary props (if applicable).
- Provide direction to assistants as needed.
- The children are called up immediately following the Opening Prayer. Then lead the children to the breezeway.
- You will have, on average, about 25 minutes to get through the readings, present your homily, recite the Profession of Faith, and pray General Intercessions.
- Proclaim the readings from a child's perspective. Ensure the Scripture readings are proclaimed in a meaningful way. The Scripture readings are found in the Lectionary of Masses for Children.
- Based on the liturgy guide provided, present a short, preferably interactive, homily to the children.
- Lead the children back to the Church after the Prayer of the Faithful for the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Concluding Rites. Someone will come out to signal to you when you have a couple of minutes left (usually they will come out immediately following the Profession of Faith). Finish whatever section you're on (sometimes you won't get to the Profession of Faith or General Intercessions, but that's okay), then distribute the activity sheets (if any) for the day. Have the children line up quietly outside the church by the far side door, and have them file in immediately following the General Intercessions.

**Note: It is very important that the children are brought back in *before* Father begins the Liturgy of the Eucharist.**

**CLOW Reader.** The CLOW reader has the following responsibilities during CLOW:

- Before Mass, inform the CLOW leader that you are present and prepared.
- Prior to mass, review the Scripture readings from the Lectionary of Masses for Children. Practice reading the text out loud, slowly and distinctly, as many times as necessary. (Practicing the readings can help you gain confidence in proclaiming the Word.)
- Proclaim the Scripture readings in a meaningful way, remembering that proclaiming is reading aloud what CLOW Ministers believe to be true, and reading in such a way that others will believe

it, too. (Pace yourself--pause wherever there is punctuation or a break in the text. Do not rush through the reading.)

**CLOW Assistant.** CLOW assistants have the following responsibilities during CLOW:

- Before Mass, inform the CLOW leader that you are present.
- Assist in preparing the breezeway if needed.
- Assist the leader in handing out materials to the children during and at the conclusion of CLOW.
- Aid in maintaining control of the children. This includes:
  - Accompany a child to the water fountain or restroom if needed.
  - Reseat or remove a disruptive child. If a child needs to be removed from CLOW, accompany the child back to the parent(s).

### **CLOW LEADER PREPARATION**

- Sunday background sheets and Liturgy Guides for the each month's readings can be picked up on the last Sunday of the preceding month. You will also receive copies of the readings from the Children's Lectionary.
- If possible, review the readings, Sunday background sheet and Liturgy Guide at least one day prior to preparing your homily for CLOW. Sometimes—but not often—the readings from the Lectionary will differ from those referenced in the Liturgy Guide, so you will need some time to make appropriate adjustments to your homily if necessary.
- You can work directly from the Liturgy Guide but you may find it beneficial to write yourself a script. But using a script is *optional*.
- The Internet has some great resources for additional discussion or alternate homilies if you want to do something different. The following are some useful Internet links to help you prepare:
  - [www.childrensermons.com](http://www.childrensermons.com): A Catholic website which provides short stories relating to the week's readings.
  - [www.sermons4kids.com](http://www.sermons4kids.com): Provides short useful homilies that can be used in lieu of or in combination with the Scripture Guide.
  - [www.sadlierreligion.com](http://www.sadlierreligion.com): Catholic resource with lots of links for children's activities.
  - <http://faithfirst.com/html/catechist/lectionary/lectionary.html>: Catholic resource for catechists and lectionary that provides great background information for the weekly readings.
- There are also many religious story books to illustrate the points of a particular week's Gospel message.

Remember, though, that using any or all of these additional resources is *optional*; the Liturgy Guide itself is a wonderful tool.

## **CONCLUSION**

- You may serve in more than one liturgical ministry but you may serve in only ONE liturgical ministry at a Mass. Liturgical ministries include: Altar Servers, Children's Liturgy of the Word, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHCs), Lectors, Music Ministers, Sacristans, and Ushers. Be certain your ministry coordinator knows on which ministries you serve and at which Masses. That coordinator will provide this information to the persons creating the liturgical ministry schedules so there be no scheduling conflict.
- The preceding pages may seem be overly detailed to those who have been active in the ministry for many years, but it serves both new and established CLOW Ministers to help create a more standard process. By striving for procedural consistency among CLOW Ministers, the assembly will feel more at ease, enabling them to be free from distractions and enter more deeply into the celebration.
- At times you will make mistakes in these procedures. What is most important is to maintain an attitude of reverence and worship towards the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and be warm and hospitable to members of the assembly.

## **POINT OF CONTACT**

If you have questions or for more information, contact

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