

A SCHOOL'S GUIDE TO PREPARING THE MASS

IMPORTANCE OF PREPARATION

Every celebration of Mass should be prepared carefully. It is important that the priest is involved at an early stage.

There are always choices to be made. Careful preparation helps ensure that the choices are made wisely so as to best support and encourage the prayer participation of those with whom the Mass is being celebrated.

WHAT FACTORS SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION?

A wide variety of factors can and should be taken into consideration.

The day of the celebration

What is the focus of the day in the Church's calendar? Sometimes this determines prayers/readings that must be used. But once the character of the Church's day is known you might ask:

What options are provided in the Lectionary and in the Missal?

The gathered community

Often what is proper for a celebration with 30 eight-year-olds will not be so suitable for a celebration with a congregation of adults and teenagers.

The musical repertoire

This should be known by the congregation and by the music ministers. Often it will be appropriate to learn a new setting, hymn or chant for a particular Mass, but the planning starts with knowledge of what is already known and what is the musical competence of the congregation.

Opportunities and restrictions

These maybe imposed by the time/place of celebration - e.g. is there a noisy activity taking place next door?

A SIMPLE PROCESS TO FOLLOW

1 Establish the context

What is the particular reason for the celebration?

What are the expectations of the style of celebration – e.g. a quiet celebration of the Mass of the Day or something more particular and festive?

Who will take part in the celebration?

Where will the celebration take place?

What dates/times are available?

- 2 Once basic decisions have been made, about the who, what, where and when of the celebration, the work of researching the options can begin.**
How will this be done? By one person or a group working together?

Who will make the final decisions, having consulted with the priest?
- 3 Agree who will be involved in the practical preparation of the place of celebration.**
Notify them and give them the information they need to take responsibility for the tasks allocated to them.

Agree when arrangements need to be concluded and necessary information passed on to the central coordinator, such as the names of readers, copies of Prayer of the Faithful.
- 4 After the celebration gather the principal people responsible for the preparation to review how things went, so that there can be effective learning from the experience in preparation for the next time.**
- 5 Create a process to review what the children experienced – how will they feed this back?**

PREPARATION WORKSHEET

THE CONTEXT

What is the particular reason for the celebration? Be sure to advise the priest.

What are the expectations of the style of celebration? Is it a quiet celebration of the Mass of the day; a leavers' Mass with missionary 'sending out'?

Who will take part?

Where will we celebrate?

What dates/times are available?

RESEARCHING THE OPTIONS

How will this be done? By one person or a group working together?

Who will co-ordinate with the priest?

INVOLVEMENT

Who will be involved in the practical preparation?

What information do they need? Who will give it to them and deal with questions?

Who do they need to feed back to and when?

REVIEWING

When/where will the review meeting take place?