

Some principles that inform liturgical preparation:

- Liturgy is an action of the whole Church – Christ and the assembly of the faithful. (SC a. 7, 26, 48 GIRM a. 16, 27. The Assembly which includes the Presider/ Leader is the celebrant of the liturgy. (SC a. 26, 30, 33, 48)
- The liturgy proclaims and celebrates the Paschal Mystery. (SC a. 6, 26)
- In the liturgy God acts in Christ to change us. Our part is to join ourselves to Christ and open ourselves to the Spirit to allow ourselves to be changed. Liturgy is formational. (SC a.14)
- The nature of the liturgy demands the full, conscious and active participation of all the faithful. (SC a. 14, 48)
- The celebration of the liturgy aims to foster both the internal and external dimension of the faithful's full, conscious and active participation. (SC a.19)
- All liturgical ministries serve the worship of the whole Assembly. Liturgical ministers do all and no more than is required by the ministry. They prepare well and exercise their ministry with respect and competence. (SC a. 28-29)
- There is an integral connection between liturgy and the life of the community and the world, particularly the mission of the Church as that is carried out by the faithful in their daily lives. (SC a. 2, 10)
- Sacred Scripture is the heart of the liturgical celebration. All other aspects of the liturgy – homily, prayers, petitions, music – draw their inspiration from the scripture readings. (SC a. 24)
- Liturgy is sacramental in nature. (SC a. 2, 5, 33)
 - It is an experience that appeals to our human senses. It is meant to be seen, heard, felt, touched and tasted. It involves movement and stillness, music and silence, stories and action, prayers said together and by the Presider/ Leader on behalf of the Assembly.
 - It has a ritual pattern which is repetitive in nature. (GIRM a. 28)
- As an action of the whole Church the liturgy belongs to and is regulated by the Church. Therefore no one person or group is able to change the liturgy beyond the adaptations allowable. Those preparing liturgy therefore need a sound understanding of the rites and documents regulating the liturgy they are preparing. (SC a. 22)

It is also important to consider the following:

- Liturgical preparation -
 - involves prayer and reflection focused on the community and the key texts, particularly the readings;
 - takes time and is best done collaboratively, drawing on the wisdom of a group;
 - takes account of the reality of the community celebrating – what is happening in their lives and in the wider world – so that the liturgy gathers all this in, celebrates it, and missions people to live in that reality as the Body of Christ.

- Because liturgy is an experience, any liturgy aids such as booklets and powerpoints, ideally include only those parts of the liturgy for which the Assembly needs the words e.g. hymns and unfamiliar prayers said together.
- It is as important to review a liturgy as it is to prepare it. This ensures that the liturgical life of the community continues to develop from strength to strength.
- The preparation of a significant liturgy can take at least 3 months. Such a time frame allows for good processes of consultation, collaboration and communication.
- A liturgy often requires the preparation of a Master and Booklet version. The Master Copy includes every detail of the liturgy and is needed by the Presider/ Leader and other key ministers e.g. the MC, servers, musicians, the co-ordinator etc. The Booklet copy is for the Assembly.

A suggested Process to Prepare Occasional Liturgies

The following is a suggested process for the preparation of occasional liturgies. It is offered to help communities review and clarify the process they use. It imagines the preparation of a diocesan liturgy so amend personnel suggestions as relevant to your community e.g. Parish Liturgy Council, parish personnel, school liturgy committee, member of the school executive ... etc.

1. Identify a group who will plan the liturgy

This group would need to include: members of the Diocesan Liturgy Council (DLC) (in the case of the diocese), key personnel representing the community which is the focus of the celebration (e.g. CatholicCare); other key people as appropriate such as musicians, diocesan personnel, the Presider/ Leader if appropriate, the MC if there is to be one involved in the liturgy ...

It will be important that a person within this group (from the DLC) takes responsibility for the co-ordination and overseeing of the liturgy through to its review.

2. An initial planning meeting of the Planning Group

Call a meeting, the purpose of which is to -

- Listen to the story or experience the liturgy is to mark and clarify the purpose of the liturgy – as told by those who are the focus of the celebration.
- Identify key aspects of the story that may need to be included or referenced in the liturgy e.g. logos; Vision, Mission, Values Statements; the history etc.
- Decide on or clarify the logistics of the liturgical celebration: date, time and timeframe, venue, / Leader, who will be there – who is invited? Are there RSVP's? How might these realities influence the nature and shape of the liturgy? Are there other dimensions of the event e.g. supper.
- Begin to shape the liturgy and your checklist:
 - What form is the liturgy to take? Mass? Liturgy of the Word? Another ritual form?
 - Readings? Symbols? Ritual actions? Music?
 - What needs to be done and said in the liturgy and by whom?
 - Who needs to be involved in the various ministries?

- Identify any other relevant issues.
Clarify who beyond the Planning Group has input into the shape of the liturgy and how that is negotiated e.g. DLC? And/ or ...?
Clarify the role of the person co-ordinating/ drafting the liturgy e.g. Who has a final say when that is needed? In such situations, what recourse to the whole Planning group is expected/ required?
Who will be involved in the Review of the Liturgy: only DLC? DLC and Planning Group? Others?
The date is set for the review and given to those to be involved.
- Allocate tasks:
Drafting of liturgy;
Contacting of people to ascertain their involvement;
Invitations and RSVP's;
Co-ordination with other 'event management' aspects of the celebration;
Ensuring all relevant liturgical bookings are made – if not already done.
- Clarify the next steps in the preparation process – for example:
A liturgy will be drafted and sent to members of the group for their consideration;
A second meeting for all to consider and amend the draft;
If the Presider/ Leader is not a member of the group the 'co-ordinator' will check the draft with the Presider/ Leader prior to the next meeting, making any amendments as requested. It is important that the Presider/ Leader is comfortable with all aspects of the liturgy he/ she is to lead.

3. The liturgy is drafted

This is done by the co-ordinator or other designated person.

Other members of the group pursue their tasks.

Ideally the draft liturgy is circulated to members of the planning group prior to the second meeting.

Consultation with others beyond the group takes place and the fruit of that is brought to the second meeting.

4. A second meeting of the Planning Group

The draft liturgy is discussed and amended.

Finalise your checklist (See checklist in *Liturgy Preparation Template for Sunday Eucharist*)

Liturgical ministries are allocated.

Practice times are negotiated as needed.

Any other issues are dealt with and final decisions made.

Tasks are allocated:

Finalising of the liturgy Master and Booklet copies; negotiating with liturgical ministers; running practices; final RSVP's to liturgy co-ordinator.

Processes for dealing with unforeseen issues are clarified.

5. The liturgy is finalised and final preparations made.

6. The liturgy is celebrated.

7. The liturgy is reviewed.

The Review is minuted and a copy sent to all participants and others as appropriate.

Logistical Details

Liturgy:

Venue:

Date:

Time:

Presider/ Leader:

Ministers:

Diocesan Liturgy Council

