

Liturgy *Formation* Pathway

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

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The contents of this 'Liturgy Formation Pathway' publication is available on the diocesan website and as a downloadable document.

If you require an electronic version, please contact the diocesan Liturgy Office.

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Contents

Liturgical formation	4
Life experience	5
Foundational courses.....	5
Liturgy Formation Pathway	6
Step 1: Celebrating the Liturgy	6
Step 2: Introductory Workshop.....	6
Step 3: Initial formation and discernment.....	7
Step 4: Commissioning	9
Step 5: Ongoing formation.....	9
Step 6: Formation for specific ministries	11
Additional liturgical formation opportunities.....	12
Liturgical information	14
Diocesan website	14
LiturgyHelp.....	15
Dio Update eNewsletter	15
Contact us	15

Liturgical formation

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the nature of the liturgy and is their right by reason of their baptism. For the liturgy is the primary and indispensable source from which they derive the true Christian spirit.

The Church desires that the faithful when present at the eucharist should not be there as strangers or silent spectators. Rather, with a good understanding of the rites and the prayers they take part conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration, learning to offer themselves.

In order that the liturgy produce its full effects, - that the faithful are made holy in Christ and God is glorified - they must come to it with proper dispositions, with their minds attuned to their voices.

Refer, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy a. 7, 10, 11, 14, 47, 48

In the liturgy, particularly the eucharist, the Church is formed for life and mission in Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the formation of all who participate in the liturgy is of great importance.

The Liturgy Formation Pathway outlined here seeks to offer guidance and support to the diocesan community. The pathway is flexible and opportunities can be accessed according to individual and communal need. That said, ideally, new liturgical ministers would progress through Steps 3 to 5 as outlined, and complete the 'Christian Ministry: Integrity in the Service of the Church' course (refer next page).

Life experience

Essentially, we are formed by life experience. More structured or formal formation opportunities, at their heart, help us to reflect on our experience from the perspective of Christ and the gospel. Ultimately, all the opportunities outlined below invite us to uncover and explore the Christian meaning of our lives and so shape us to live with more and more integrity as disciples, as members of Christ's body, the Church, and as ministers of the Gospel.

Foundational courses

One of the following foundational courses, or other similar options, is encouraged. This diocese offers two foundational courses for those exercising any form of ministry, including liturgical ministries.

Christian Ministry: Integrity in the Service of the Church (CM:ISC) is a general introductory course and is a requirement for all ministers. It comprises eight units run over four days and is offered at least once every year.

Christian Formation Course (CFC) is a twelve-month course offered by the diocese. All liturgical ministers would benefit from it.

Information on the above courses is available on the diocesan website www.mn.catholic.org.au under *Related Documents* on the *Adult Faith Formation* webpage.

Adult Faith Online, run by the Broken Bay Institute (BBI), offers a series of five short online courses focused on central aspects of our faith. Participants are invited to read, listen and reflect. For more information, go to www.bbi.catholic.edu.au/adult-faith.

These more comprehensive courses might be undertaken by some as part of their preparation for ministry or as ongoing formation. The experience of ministry may be what draws people to deepen their

understanding of the life and mission of our Church and what liturgy has to do with that.

There are many other opportunities that exist, both face to face and online. Everyone is encouraged to make the most of all opportunities.

Liturgy Formation Pathway

Step 1: Celebrating the Liturgy

The most effective formation is participation in the celebration of the liturgy. In the liturgy, when celebrated well, Christ shapes us through word and sacrament, transforming us to be the Body of Christ in the world today. In the liturgy we are anointed, forgiven, healed and nourished, as time and again we return to 'put on Christ'.

Small groups who gather to reflect on the experience of the liturgy can deepen the formative power of liturgy. In our Catholic tradition we call this 'mystagogy'. This type of reflection develops our faith, deepens our participation in and appreciation of liturgy, and forms us as missionary disciples.

A guide for such a mystagogical reflection is available from the diocesan Liturgy Office.

Step 2: Introductory Workshop

What on earth are we doing in liturgy? is a three-hour introductory workshop offered by the Diocesan Liturgy Council to parishes, schools and other groups.

The workshop explores the Catholic understanding of liturgy and prayer, providing participants with an opportunity to:

- read two brief articles
- consider the particular nature of liturgical prayer and personal prayer within the Catholic tradition

- explore the meaning of the key liturgical principles
- deepen their appreciation of what the Church is doing when it gathers for liturgy
- reflect on and discuss their experience of liturgy in their community
- reflect on their personal prayer life and their own participation in liturgy

This workshop functions both as a basic introduction and a refresher for more experienced ministers. It provides a foundation for community discussion, future planning and more specific formation for liturgical ministers.

Participation in this unit will provide credit for the 'Catholic Worship and Prayer' unit of the foundational course 'Christian Ministry: Integrity in the Service of the Church'.

To organise this workshop to run in your community, please contact the diocesan Liturgy Office. An editable flyer can be provided for local promotion of the workshop.

Step 3: Initial formation and discernment

The Assembly is *the* celebrant of the liturgy. The Assembly includes everyone who has gathered, including the presider and other ministers. All liturgical ministries serve the worship of the Assembly.

Those called by the community to exercise an additional liturgical ministry:

- are fully initiated members of the community
- have the gifts and skills to exercise the ministry
- are willing to engage in discernment, formation and mentoring.

Initial formation is a time of discernment when the prospective minister and the community, the latter often represented by parish leadership or liturgy team members, discern whether there is a good fit between the person's gifts and the ministry.

Companioning

Ideally, initial formation starts with the prospective minister being given a companion, an experienced minister who will accompany them during their initial formation and discernment. This would involve observing the companion when s/he ministers, followed by a time of discussion and reflection. Such a process is mutually beneficial: the prospective minister learning about the spirit and skills of the ministry, and the experienced minister deepening his/her own sense of call and insight into ministry. A reflection guide is available to support ministers in this accompaniment process. Contact the diocesan Liturgy Office for an editable version of this guide.

Powerful Points for Liturgical Ministers

A comprehensive CD resource from Liturgy Brisbane. It is recommended that Powerful Points be used as the more formal aspect of the initial formation for liturgical ministers in parishes and schools. It provides excellent workshops for all the major liturgical ministries:

- Liturgical Ministers: Introduction
- Ministers of the Word
- Extraordinary Ministers of Communion
- Ministers of Music
- Ministers of the Sick and Dying
- Ministers of Hospitality
- Altar Servers – including an alternative for Junior Servers
- Lay Leaders of the Liturgy
- Ministers for Children's Liturgy of the Word
- Liturgy Preparation Teams

There are two sessions for each ministry with three for music ministers.

The intention is that members of the local community facilitate sessions. Support for local facilitators is available and can be organised by contacting the diocesan Liturgy Office.

Powerful Points is available for online purchase at <http://liturgybrisbane.net.au/store/publications/liturgy-preparation/powerful-points-for-liturgical-ministers.html>.

To find out more you might like to read the article at <https://liturgybrisbane.net.au/liturgylines/powerful-points-for-liturgical-ministers/>.

Step 4: Commissioning

It is recommended that the parish leader commission liturgical ministers in the local community, for a specified period of time, ideally two years. It is further recommended that a 'commission' include:

- the expectation that the minister participate in ongoing formation during his/her term of ministry;
- an indication that a process of reflection and discernment will take place toward the end of the term, prior to being recommissioned, if that is desired and appropriate.

It is also recommended that the accompaniment relationship continue at least for the first year, if not term, of ministry, depending on how often the new minister exercises her/his ministry.

For a commissioning, refer to the Book of Blessings, Part VI, which contains 'Orders of Blessings' for most liturgical ministries.

The Book of Blessings is available via parish/school subscription to *LiturgyHelp* at <http://public.liturgyhelp.com.au/>.

Step 5: Ongoing formation

Ongoing formation is of vital importance and can take a variety of forms. The following suggestions may be helpful.

Reflection gatherings

Regular local gatherings provide the opportunity for liturgical ministers to reflect on their experience of ministry. Ideally this would be in the company of a parish/school leader, or a member of the liturgy team.

A suggested process for such a gathering is available. Contact the diocesan Liturgy Office for an editable version of this guide.

Reading material and publications

Explore relevant articles, documents and books, individually or with others, including your liturgical colleagues. Some resources to assist include:

- **Liturgy Lines**, an expansive collection of brief articles is available online from Liturgy Brisbane at <https://liturgybrisbane.net.au/liturgy-lines/>. Search for articles about topics and issues you want to think about.
- **The Summit Online** from the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne provides commentaries, liturgical notes, music suggestions and weekly reflections on the Sunday gospels. It is freely available at <http://www.cam.org.au/evangelisation/Summit>.
- Subscribe to liturgical journals. We recommend:
 - **Liturgy News** is an excellent Australian journal available from Liturgy Brisbane at <https://liturgybrisbane.net.au/store/liturgy-news>.
 - **Celebration** is an excellent American journal available at <http://celebrationpublications.org/article/welcome-celebration>.

Ideally over time, liturgical ministers, particularly liturgy teams, would become familiar with the foundational liturgy documents, especially:

- The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL)
- The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) and the instructions to the various rites
- The Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass
- The Introduction to the Book of the Gospels
- The Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar

If your liturgy team would like support to start reading one of the documents listed above, please contact Louise Gannon rsj at the diocesan Liturgy Office.

Diocesan provided opportunities

Participate in the many formation opportunities offered by the diocese and other groups, including visiting speakers and reflection days.

Information about all adult faith formation opportunities is available in the 'Adult Faith Formation Handbook' found on the diocesan website www.mn.catholic.org.au under *Related Documents* on the *Adult Faith Formation* webpage and also via free subscription to the weekly Dio Update eNewsletter.

Ongoing formation needs to focus broadly, not just on liturgy.

Diocesan Liturgy Council formation opportunities

Participate in formation opportunities facilitated or recommended by the Diocesan Liturgy Council. Even if these are not focused on your particular ministry, many workshops such as those on the Easter Triduum or Sacraments of Initiation have a general application for all liturgical ministers.

Tailored formation

Formation opportunities, tailored to suit a community's particular needs, can be organised by contacting Louise at the diocesan Liturgy Office.

Step 6: Formation for specific ministries

Some ministries have a significance that requires ministers to participate in a more extensive formation process. Currently the diocese requires this for those who lead Sunday Celebrations of the Word (with Communion) and those who minister with the dying and the bereaved. Ideally, those seeking to engage in these ministries would be experienced liturgical ministers.

Remaining Faithful is a parish-based formation process that both prepares parishes for Sunday Celebrations of the Word (with Communion) and forms those who will exercise liturgical ministries in these liturgies, particularly Lay Liturgical Leaders. Detailed information about Remaining Faithful is available on the diocesan website <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/catholic-life/liturgy/remaining-faithful/>.

Stepping Stones is a formation process for those discerning their call to ministry with the dying and the bereaved. It involves three key formation experiences which are offered by a variety of facilitators in different forums and venues according to need. Detailed information about Stepping Stones is available on the diocesan website <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/catholic-life/liturgy/stepping-stones/>.

Initial formation & discernment for Assistant Masters of Ceremony

This formation is in process and runs according to need. Further information is available at <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/catholic-life/liturgy/liturgical-formation-opportunities/>.

Ongoing formation is also important for those who participate in *Remaining Faithful* and/or *Stepping Stones*. Suggestions for ongoing formation in these ministries are found at the links provided above.

Additional liturgical formation opportunities

Gathering, Proclaiming, Breaking, Sending

A short course in the exploration of Catholic Liturgy. This four-unit course is part of the Christian Formation Course (CFC) and can be run as an independent course upon request.

Looking through the lens of 'structure and elements', this course supports participants to deepen their understanding of what we are doing when we celebrate Catholic liturgy. It provides practical assistance to those who prepare any form of liturgy.

Each unit runs for three hours. Participation in this course will provide credit for the liturgy unit in the Christian Formation Course, as long as the CFC is begun within two years.

To organise this course in your community please contact the diocesan Liturgy Office.

Reflection Days

In any given year there is a feast of reflection days offered by different groups in the diocese and also at various retreat venues. Participation in all such days is encouraged.

In addition to such general days, there has been a number of requests over recent years for liturgical formation that is more reflective and focused on deepening ministers' relationship with Christ.

The following opportunities invite participants to focus on our encounter with Christ in different moments of the liturgy. How are we being transformed in and through the liturgy to live more deeply as disciples and as members of Christ's body? These include:

- We gather: Reflecting on the experience of the Introductory Rites
- We proclaim: Reflecting on the experience of the Liturgy of the Word
- We are taken, blessed, broken and given: Reflecting on the experience of the Liturgy of the Eucharist
- We are sent: Reflecting on the experience of the Concluding Rites
- Praying Eucharistic Prayer 1
- Praying Eucharistic Prayer 2
- Praying Eucharistic Prayer 3
- Praying Eucharistic Prayer 4
- Praying the Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation
- Praying the Eucharistic Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions

At times the Liturgy Council will schedule these reflection opportunities around the diocese, inviting the participation of people across the

community. Alternatively, parishes, regions, schools and other groups can organise for any of these to run locally. All reflections can be scheduled to suit the local community as either half-day or whole-day experiences.

To organise one of these reflection opportunities for your community please contact the diocesan Liturgy Office.

Retreats

Retreats provide people with time apart, praying and reflecting. They vary in style and length. More people are choosing to make a retreat. Such an experience enriches life and ministry.

Some information about retreats and venues is available on the diocesan website www.mn.catholic.org.au at *Spirituality Centres* on the *Spirituality* webpage.

Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Direction is also an invaluable support for Christian life and ministry. A list of directors is available in the diocesan website at www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/catholic-life/spirituality/spiritual-directors-and-ministry-supervisors/.

Liturgical information

Diocesan website

The *Liturgy* section of the diocesan website is the best starting point when looking for information about liturgy. Go to www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/catholic-life/liturgy/.

Information on upcoming liturgy formation opportunities is promoted on the website's calendar of events.

LiturgyHelp

All parishes and schools have access to *LiturgyHelp*, a web-based service that provides a feast of information and resources, official liturgical texts and liturgy planning tools.

Dio Update eNewsletter

Other liturgical formation opportunities are offered from time to time in response to specific needs and requests by local communities. These are always promoted online via the Dio Update eNewsletter which is accessible by free subscription and delivered by weekly email. Go to www.mn.catholic.org.au/news-events/dio-update-enewsletter/.

Contact us

This Liturgy Formation Pathway publication is a living document which will continue to be shaped to meet the needs of the community.

The Diocesan Liturgy Council is keen to receive feedback and suggestions from the community. Please let us know if you have developed a formation opportunity in your local community that might be of benefit to other parishes or schools. The more we share our ideas and resources, the better.

Please direct all comments and ideas to Louise Gannon rsj, Diocesan Co-ordinator of Liturgy.

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