

Gather Faithfully

Inviting Teens into Liturgical Ministries

Leader's Guide

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Introduction

Two Cornerstones: A Vision for Ministry at the Eucharistic Liturgy

The Dance of Liturgy

A champion football team, a ballet production, a choir with perfect four-part harmony, and a Tony award-winning Broadway play: What do these things have in common? They each require that individual efforts be aimed toward the whole, not toward the individual. Similarly, the Eucharistic liturgy is not simply a time for the individual. It is a celebration that requires the entire Body of Christ and is for the entire Body of Christ.

At its best, the Eucharistic liturgy can be described as a beautifully choreographed dance; yet the various pieces of the liturgy can often be planned and prepared for independently of one another. Consideration for the way those pieces are connected to the whole can often be neglected. Readers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, servers, ministers of hospitality, and others are trained to carry out their tasks. However, ensuring that each liturgical minister understands that her or his individual ministry is connected to something more is rarely considered. Flowing through effective liturgical ministry training must be the understanding that each ministry serves the dance that is the Eucharistic liturgy.

Coordinating the Dance

Gather Faithfully: Inviting Teens into Liturgical Ministries is a resource to help you coordinate the liturgical involvement of young people in the liturgy through a comprehensive training program. It is comprehensive because it not only trains the aspiring minister in the skills required but it also forms the young person's spirituality. The complete program contains both a leader's guide and a participant's booklet.

Gather Faithfully: Inviting Teens into Liturgical Ministries, Leader's Guide

This leader's guide will provide you with clear direction for involving young people in the Eucharistic liturgy. However, as the trainer, you might find it helpful to familiarize yourself with the *General Instruction for the Roman Missal* (United States Catholic Conference, Inc., Washington, DC: 2003).

This is the Church's universal document guiding the Eucharistic liturgy. It contains comments and instructions for many of the ministries contained in this leader's guide. It can certainly serve as a cornerstone background document as you begin these sessions. This background can better inform you as you go through the structure of the leader's guide as it develops young people into liturgical ministers.

In this guide you will find the following:

An Introductory Session

This session is for *all* liturgical ministers who will go through the program. The purpose of this session is for the participants to see how their individual part will fit into the whole, at the liturgy and beyond.

Training Sessions

The program will provide training for six ministries: ministry of Reader, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, ministry of altar server, ministry of hospitality, ministry of sacristan, and ministry of cantor. Each ministry has three sessions:

- Sessions 1 and 2: Personal and spiritual formation for the ministry
- Session 3: Development of practical skills

Continuation

Finally, there is a guide for the ongoing formation of the liturgical ministers.

Gather Faithfully: Inviting Teens into Liturgical Ministries, Participant's Booklet

To accompany the training sessions, there is a participant's booklet. This booklet serves two purposes. First, it serves as a workbook for the training sessions. Much of the training will depend on processes contained in the workbook. It is essential that you have one of these booklets both during your preparation and also during the sessions. It will also be essential for each participant to have a copy of the booklet in order to go through the training program.

Second, the booklet will be the participants' guide for preparing for ministry. It will serve as a reference tool, containing the instructions necessary for confident service. It also contains a guide for spiritually preparing for ministry and a means to reflect on the ministry after the time is past. These guides for preparation and reflection are the last two chapters in the participant's booklet. Please be sure to direct the participants to these chapters.

Transforming the Dancer

Gather Faithfully is more than the practical “how-tos.” The larger vision of the program is to transform young people into more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ and for this discipleship to be celebrated in the Eucharistic liturgy. Like the river giving life to the desert, two graces can root the individual in a vision for true worship in Eucharistic liturgy: gift of self and prayer.

1. Gift of self. In liturgical ministry, the minister presents himself or herself to the community, for the community. In much the same way the whole community receives the gifts of bread and wine offered at the Eucharistic liturgy, so, too, the whole community receives the liturgical minister who offers himself or herself in service.

The liturgical minister, called from her or his Baptism as priest, prophet, and king, answers with the ancient words, “Here I am.” When God called to Moses from the burning bush, Moses said, “Here I am” (Exodus 3:4). When God called to young Isaiah in the Temple, Isaiah said, “Here am I” (Isaiah 6:8). When God calls the liturgical minister forth to serve his people, she or he responds, “Here I am.” They present themselves to God to be a gift for the community.

2. Prayer. Liturgy is prayer. In fact it is *the* prayer. In Eucharistic liturgy, the faithful are fully bound together to one another in Jesus Christ, and, in Jesus Christ, they are bound to the Father. The aim of prayer is to bring the person into greater intimacy with the God who loves him or her and to love others more deeply. As adults responsible for being a part of fostering a young person’s relationship with God, we are called to model such a relationship.

In order to teach these things, a campus minister or youth minister must search her or his own heart to be more and more authentic in love with the Church’s liturgical life. Since we desire young people to see that they do belong in the Church, our own connection to the Eucharistic liturgy must be visible to them. Authenticity is the primary calling card, and authenticity is critical to success.

Proceeding

Self-giving and prayer, skills and spirituality, the dancer and the dance, these images have been used as metaphors for the great call to be a servant at the great Eucharistic banquet. *Gather Faithfully* aims to impact you and your young people to ensure the full, lifelong involvement in the Body of Christ. Saint Paul wrote: “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4: 11–12). Gifts are given in order to build up the Body of Christ. The young people you are about to work with possess the gifts necessary to build up the Body and to serve as witnesses to the community. It is an exciting time, indeed.

Guide for Planning

Identifying Youth

But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”

(1 Samuel 16:7)

Choosing young people to participate in *Gather Faithfully* requires a look at both the practical and the spiritual. The prayerful choice of the campus or youth minister, made in collaboration with other school or parish leaders, may well call a young person out of their “shell” and assist him or her in overcoming self-imposed limitations.

With this in mind, a minister can be faced with a difficult question: how does a trainer know when to accept and when to challenge limitations? For example, it may seem natural to invite a young person with a quiet demeanor to be a sacristan rather than a reader. However, it is possible that the young person has carried the label of *quiet* so long that she or he now defines herself or himself with that label. It is possible that removing the label will reveal a remarkable proclaimer of the word.

The observant trainer looks for small indicators, such as the following:

- comfort in speaking one-on-one with adults
- knowledge of the answers when called on
- acuity for remembering things from one week to the next, such as topics discussed
- respect by peers for thoughts and opinions

In finding a quiet young person who possesses such traits, you might have found a young person ready to be challenged.

As you begin to select young people, look for young people of character in addition to young people of talent. Such young people live as witnesses to the Gospel both within the Eucharistic liturgy and outside of it. These ministries at the Eucharistic liturgy can be a powerful public expression of faith in Jesus Christ. It will be important not to have any stumbling blocks that would prevent the full impact of this witness.

As you begin to assemble the possible participants, it is important to do so in consultation with other adults in your community. In a school, confer with teachers who can offer fair, unbiased opinions. Many brilliant students have not been invited into the National Honor Society because of inappropriate behavior, despite their academic ability. Other adults who know the young people well, teachers, or catechists, will be able to alert you to any public

behavior that may not be congruent with public ministry. This is a careful line to walk. There is the risk that a young person could be unjustly excluded. Such decisions should be approached with prayerful wisdom.

Incorporating Adults

Other adults in the school or parish community may be willing to assist with liturgical ministries training. Considering that there are a total of twenty sessions, it will be vital for the program for you to identify other adults to assist you. You are urged to be discerning when choosing which adults to incorporate into a training program. The offer ought not to warrant an unreflective “yes.” The trainer must ask the same questions of potential adult assistants as he or she does for potential youth candidates:

- Does this person have a rapport with young people?
- Does he or she listen well?
- Does she or he enjoy helping young people?

As an advocate for young people, it is the trainer’s job to do all that he or she can do to ensure a positive, creative, respectful, and reverent training environment. Adults who are respectful of young people, who love the Eucharistic liturgy and are excited to be the bridge to help young people discover its richness are good candidates to assist with the training of young people for liturgical ministries.

Planning for Training

To find our starting point, we must know our ending point. The hope of *Gather Faithfully* is that at its end, young people will be integrated into the liturgical life of the Church as liturgical ministers. The purpose of *Gather Faithfully* is to equip young people to serve alongside their brothers and sisters regardless of age. As the Catholic Church is a universal Church, it is a rich reflection of the Church’s nature to have a sixteen-year-old distributing Holy Communion next to a sixty-year-old.

As you have set your vision, identified the right young people and adult assistants, you may find the following will help you in your preparation:

- Check with your diocesan worship office to ensure that your diocese permits young people to be involved in the liturgical ministries in which you hope to train young people.
- Check with your chaplain, sacramental minister, or pastor. Certain local policies regarding teenagers and liturgical ministries may be in place.
- Determine the right people from the school community or parish to involve. The school’s music teacher and the leaders of liturgical ministries

- at your parish are valuable assets to your training.
- Consult with teachers, administrators, and peer leaders in a school. In a parish, seek input from the parish staff, catechists, and youth leaders to see which young people might be good candidates for liturgical ministry.
 - How will the young people be invited to take part in *Gather Faithfully*? Meet face to face with the young person if at all possible.
 - Determine how, when, and where training will take place. Each of the six ministries has three training sessions. For a school, the sessions were designed so that they could be conducted during lunch or activity periods. At a parish, the sessions could be held on three consecutive evenings.
 - Gather pertinent information from your particular community. For example, principles of serving at the Eucharistic liturgy are laid out in *Gather Faithfully*. However, it will also be important to incorporate school or parish customs into your training.
 - What role will your chaplain, sacramental minister, or pastor play during the training sessions? He may wish to teach a session, or he may wish to observe only.
 - Read through all the sessions before beginning any training. Good training is a result of good planning.

An Important Note

As you seek to involve others in training liturgical ministers, one caution is in order. Appropriate and healthy relationship boundaries are real concerns anytime adults interact with young people. In light of heightened public awareness of and attention to child protection issues, we must ensure that a safe and healthy relationship is maintained between the adults and the young people who will spend time together. In fact, all dioceses have specific guidelines for adults who work with young people. Criminal background checks, references, and special training for those engaged in ministry are some of the tools that ensure the quality of the adults working with our young people. Check the diocesan requirements concerning criminal background checks and the use of volunteer covenants.

In ministry with youth, there are several practical guidelines to keep in mind:

- Providing a young person with an alcoholic beverage, tobacco, or drugs is never allowed.
- Touching must be age-appropriate and based on the need of the training session and not on the need of the adult. Physical contact must be avoided when an adult is alone with a young person.
- Adults should not be alone with a young person in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, restroom, dressing facility, or other closed room or isolated area that is inappropriate to a ministry relationship. Adults must always meet with young people in visible and accessible areas. One-on-one

- meetings with a young person are best held in a public area.
- It is always a safe practice to have two adults in the area where youth are present.
 - Driving alone with a young person should be avoided.
 - Engaging in physical discipline of a young person is unacceptable.
 - Taking an overnight trip alone with a young person from the parish or school community who is not a member of your immediate family is prohibited.
 - Topics, vocabulary, recordings, films, games, or the use of computer software or any other form of personal interaction or entertainment that could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents must not be used with young people. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is prohibited.
 - If anyone (adult or minor) abuses a young person in your presence, take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and to provide a safe environment for the young person. Report the misconduct to the appropriate authority in accord with the diocesan guidelines.
 - Be proactive in identifying young people who may be vulnerable or at-risk for unhealthy relationships. Adults can have a very positive influence on young people by sharing the message of how important youth are in God's eyes, and that they are created with dignity. This can reduce the possibility of them falling into the traps of those who tell them love is just physical.

Piecing Together the Puzzle

Overview

Session Goals

- To bring understanding concerning how the individual pieces of the liturgy connect to the whole
- To have the participants understand that they are vital members of the Body of Christ

Materials

- ❑ a candle
- ❑ matches or a lighter
- ❑ a photograph of the school or church and a photo of students or parish youth, enlarged to poster size, then cut into “jigsaw puzzle” pieces
- ❑ two pieces of poster board, large enough to hold the completed photographs
- ❑ bibles, one for each participant
- ❑ A copy of resource 1, “Quotes from the Acts of the Apostles 3:1–10,” cut apart with each quote on a separate slip of paper

Opening Prayer

Gather the participants around a candle. Select a leader and a reader from among the participants and give one participant the matches or lighter. Ask the reader to prepare to proclaim Ephesians 4:1–6.

Leader: We have arrived physically. Now let’s take a moment to arrive in our hearts and spirits as well. (Allow for a few moments of silence.)

Leader: As a reminder that we all received the light of faith at our Baptism, we will light the candle and begin. (At this point, the participant with the matches or lighter may light the candle.)

Leader: Let’s begin together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Reading: Ephesians 4:1–6

Leader: LORD our God, and Father of all, it is you who calls us together and gives us purpose. It is you who brings together our gifts and our hearts.

Unite us as a community of believers, that through our ministries, the people of God may experience your touch when we gather to worship. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus our LORD. Amen.

Activity

1. Divide the participants into ten groups. Ten groups is the optimal number for this session; if this is too large of a number for your group, please create smaller groups. After the participants are in their groups, prompt them with the following to help facilitate a conversation:

- Please go around and introduce yourselves. After the introductions, share with each other the answers to these questions about teams:
- What is your all-time favorite team? This could be a sports team, music group, or any other ensemble.
- When have you most felt like you were part of a successful team?

After allowing time for the participants to talk, distribute the bibles and invite them to turn to the Acts of the Apostles 3:1–10. Invite a young person to read the passage.

2. After the passage has been read, distribute one quote from the resource to each of the groups. Allow the groups enough time to respond to their question or statement.

3. Invite a person from each group to read their question or statement to the larger group and to share some of the responses provided.

4. After each group has offered their thoughts, draw out the following points:

- The Scripture passage from the Acts of the Apostles serves as a reminder that we are called to be ministers at times we don't expect.
- These unexpected times to be God's witnesses originate from our participation in the Eucharistic liturgy.
- In liturgy, we bring our life experiences to our prayer and leave that prayer ready to be a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ at every moment of the day.

5. After offering these reflections on the Scripture, distribute all but four of the pieces to the puzzles among the young people. Place the two pieces of poster board in the middle of the room and instruct the young people to put together the puzzles.

6. After all but the four pieces are in place, offer the following words to the young people:

- The Eucharistic liturgy is a harmonized work of God's people that becomes a gift to God.
 - In this coordinated harmonized work, every ministry and every person is important. (At this point, place the remaining pieces into the puzzles.)
 - The ministries we are about to be trained in are absolutely necessary for the liturgy to be a complete celebration.
 - In liturgical ministry, we are going to prepare our individual ministry toward the goal of building up our entire school or parish community.
 - As we go forward into these ministries, we should be changed into people who are ready to minister outside of the Eucharistic liturgy as well—ready to be a witness to the Gospel at any place or at any time.
7. To conclude the session, gather the participants in a circle and read Acts of the Apostles 3:1–10 once again. Offer this closing prayer:

Our savior and our healer, we do not have much. But you take what we have and make it into something far greater than we can imagine. As we have answered your call to be liturgical ministers, may we grow spiritually and grow closer to you. May we see ourselves as members of your body and see that we all have gifts to share. Bless us, our ministries, and the community we will serve. We ask this through Christ the LORD. Amen.

Quotes from the Acts of the Apostles 3:1–10

- “Peter and John. . .” Ministry is best when we work together with other people of faith. Share with other people in your small group a time when you worked on something that became better because you joined forces with another person.
 - “. . . at the hour of prayer, at three o’clock.” Life for the man at the gate changed because Peter and John were going to pray. When have you offered God’s comfort to someone in need?
 - “People would lay him daily at the gate.” The man had been placed at the gate by someone who hoped the man would get what he needed there. What are some things that young people need from the Church?
 - “Peter looked intently at him.” Instead of simply emptying out his pockets, Peter took a moment and really looked at the man at the gate. Peter didn’t look at the problem; he considered the person. When have you really felt listened to when you have had a problem?
 - “I have no silver or gold.” Peter recognized that he didn’t have what the man was looking for. Have you ever felt like you don’t have anything to offer the Church? Explain.
 - “. . . but what I have I give you;” Instead of reaching into his pockets, Peter reached into his heart. As a teenager with limited resources, what do you think you have to give to God and to the Church?
 - “And he took him by the right hand and raised him up;” Take a moment, and imagine friends or family members who have struggled. Describe a time when you have reached out and helped someone in need.
 - “. . . immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.” When we make a response in faith, God is ready to meet us. Have you ever seen a miracle or had a prayer answered in a way you had hoped? Explain.
 - “. . . he entered the temple with them.” Once the man at the gate experienced the touch of God, his instinctive reaction was to go and pray with Peter and John. Have you seen instances when prayers have been answered but then God was forgotten about? When God answers prayers, why do you think it is hard to remember to go back and thank him?
 - “All the people saw him walking and praising God.” When have you been impressed by someone’s faith or relationship with God?
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