

ST. BONIFACE CATHOLIC CHURCH CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

SUGGESTED PLANNING GUIDE

Created by Dawn Turner

Thank you for considering serving as a leader for Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) at St. Boniface!

Communications

Once you volunteer to serve as the leader for a given week, email familyfaith@stbonifacechurch.org to request that that week's materials be emailed to you (or printed for you to pick up).

Reviewing the Materials

As you review the leader materials, you'll see that the structure is designed to mirror what is happening during the Mass - it's simply designed to be relatable for young children. The materials provided basically walk you through the process of leading a session!

Sunday Morning Preparation

On Sunday morning, arrive to church 20-25 minutes early, allowing time to set up the space. The alcove in the SW corner of the Parish Hall is where CLOW takes place. There is a small table there with a candle, a cross, and the leader materials. Nearby are containers of crayons, as well as laminated "mats" that can be used to create "rows" so that, when the children come into the area, they can find a mat to sit at.

Once you have prepared the area, ***please check in with Father*** to let him know you are here and ready to lead CLOW. At that point, you can join the rest of the community in the sanctuary for the beginning of Mass.

After the Opening Prayer

Right before the *Liturgy of the Word* begins, Father will move to the front of the altar and invite the children to come up for Children's Liturgy. At that time, you should go to the front of the altar as well. Father will say a prayer over the children and then give the *Children's Book of the Gospels* to one child. That child leads the procession back to the Parish Hall.

In the Parish Hall

Once you are in the Parish Hall, and all children are seated, you can follow the outline in the leader materials you've been given.

Opening Activity

The materials always start with a simple activity, followed by an opening prayer. Feel free to adjust the activity if you don't feel the kids will understand it, or do something else if you have a different idea that ties to the Gospel's theme.

Readings and Gospel

Next, move into the readings and the Gospel.

- The readings in the book the children are given by Father at Mass are worded more simply for younger ages to understand.
- A "kid-friendly" explanation is also provided in the leader materials that can be read to the group before each reading.

- When it is time for the Gospel, I replace the Alleluia sequence with the song *Awesome God*. This is a song that is recognized by the older children who used to attend Sunday school a few years ago, and it has VERY simple gestures that are easy to pick up. I simply play a version from YouTube on my phone. I find that this is a great way to break up a longer period of sitting/listening time, and then the children are already standing for the reading of the Gospel. (*Note that this is just a tip and is totally optional!*)
- The Gospel is then read, and the children are seated again.
- The leader then shares a short message - which is provided in the leader guide as well).

Worksheet Activity

Now is a good time to move into some type of worksheet activity, and there are several options:

- There is a “Children’s Leaflet” worksheet that accompanies each week’s materials. However, they often require reading and writing that is too advanced for the 3-to-7-year-olds in our program. If you are interested in this option, email familyfaith@stbonifacechurch.org to ask for it.
- The <https://thekidsbulletin.com/> is another great option to check out. They have a “kids’ bulletin” available for download each week. Reading is required, but the activities are often very suitable for younger children, so you could lead the younger children through the activities found in the kids bulletin, while older kids could read and work on the activities at their own pace.
- Find a coloring page online (Pinterest is a great place to start) that ties to the week’s overall theme.

Materials

With any of the above options, if you email familyfaith@stbonifacechurch.org (during the weekday office hours) a PDF of what you want printed, an office assistant may be able to make photocopies and have them printed and ready to go for you on Sunday morning when you arrive for setup.

Closing

If time allows, once the children have completed their worksheet activity, have them return to their spots and complete the *Profession of Faith* and *Prayers of the Faithful*, as outlined in the leader guide. If there is not enough time for that, while the children are working on their worksheet, you can ask who they want to pray for in the week ahead. Or, if there is extra time at the end, you can also invite prayer requests and basically stretch that out as needed until Father has finished his homily.

Return to Church

Once Father’s homily is finished, the children then return to their parents in the sanctuary, and once all children are back with their parents, you can return to the sanctuary as well.

Cleaning Up

It’s helpful if you’re able to tidy up the CLOW area in the parish hall after Mass.

Your job is now done and you can feel good knowing you did your best to help bring children closer to Jesus and their faith that morning!

Thank you and God bless!