

Introduction to the Liturgy

Core Activity

The Liturgy: Praying to the Father, Through the Son, in the Holy Spirit

1. Before class, assemble sacramentaries, and missals or missalettes, one for each student.

2. Begin the activity by presenting the information about the Trinity in the liturgy from pages 173–174 of *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition (CFH)*. You may want to also review the Church’s teaching of the Trinity on pages 56–58. Answer any questions that arise from this presentation.

3. Explain that the students will be searching for the presence of the three Persons of the Trinity in the liturgy of the Eucharist. Review the parts of the Mass with the students, looking over the order of the Mass with them. Direct your class to the section “Parts of the Mass,” on pages 443–444 of the *CFH*, which provides a helpful outline of the Mass, or to the outline for the Eucharist on pages 220–221 of the *CFH*.



4. Divide the students into four small groups, and tell them that they will be looking in the liturgy for references or prayers to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Give the groups each the handout “The Holy Trinity” (Document #: TX003190) to help them discover the activity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the liturgy. Then make these assignments:

- Give half of the groups the task of looking at the introductory rites and the liturgy of the word. These groups will need copies of the Sunday readings and the order of the Mass in the *Roman Missal*. Many missals and missalettes contain both.
- Give the other half of the groups the task of looking at the liturgy of the Eucharist and the Dismissal. These groups will need the order of the Mass in the *Roman Missal* or in a missal. Instruct one group to look at Eucharistic Prayer III and instruct the other group to look at Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation II.

5. Give the students a fair amount of time to work on their tasks. You will likely need to move around and answer questions about the order of the Mass. Once the groups are finished, ask a representative from each group to share what the group found. Suggest that the students listen carefully for activity of the Holy Trinity in the Eucharistic liturgy.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

Core Activity Extension

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Refer the students to the Prayer to the Holy Spirit, in the “Catholic Prayers and Devotions” section of the *CFH*. Ask the students to prepare for the upcoming Sunday’s celebration of the Eucharist by doing the following things:

1. Pray the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.
2. Read the Scripture readings for the liturgy.
3. Review the role of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy.

Tell the students to follow up that preparation by writing a prayer to the Holy Spirit seeking help with more fully participating in the liturgy and with living the specific message contained in the readings. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

Additional Activities

Liturgical Year Assessment

Tell the students you are going to give them an assessment to determine their knowledge of the Liturgical Year. Explain that they are to write their answers to your questions on a blank sheet of paper. The questions and answers are listed here:

Question 1. The calendar year begins on January 1. When does the Church’s Liturgical Year begin?

Answer. The first Sunday of Advent.

Question 2. What is the beginning of the Christmas season, and what is the end?

Answer. The feast of Christmas begins the Christmas season. The baptism of the Lord, the third Sunday after Christmas Day, ends the season.

Question 3. What is the primary focus of the Liturgical Year?

Answer. Easter and the Easter season are the primary focus.

Question 4. Why do some Catholics exchange gifts on January 6?

Answer. January 6 is the feast of the Epiphany, the day that celebrates the visit to Jesus of the Magi from the east bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Question 5. After the high of the Christmas season, what Church season do we enter?

Answer. Ordinary Time.

Question 6. What are the three Lenten practices or disciplines that prepare us to celebrate Easter?

Answer. Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving (giving to the poor).

Question 7. There are forty-six calendar days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, but we say Lent is forty days long. What days do we leave out?

Answer. We do not include the Sundays between Ash Wednesday and Easter when we say there are forty days in Lent.

Question 8. According to Church teaching, how many days of the year are Catholics in the United States obligated to attend Mass?

Answer. Six holy days of obligation plus fifty-two Sundays. (See page 442 of the *CFH* for a list of the holy days of obligation.)

Question 9. Which Sacraments are commonly celebrated during the Easter Vigil?

Answer. Baptism, Confirmation, and the first Eucharist of catechumens.

Question 10. How long is the Easter season, and with which feast does it end?

Answer. It continues for fifty days, beginning with Easter Sunday and ending with the feast of Pentecost.

Question 11. What event is commemorated by the feast of Pentecost?

Answer. We remember the birth of the Church in the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.

Question 12. Which feast occurs forty days after Easter?

Answer. The solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord.

Question 13. Which Church season follows the Easter season?

Answer. After Pentecost, the second period of Ordinary Time occurs.

Question 14. What do we celebrate on saints' feast days?

Answer. We remember in a special way those people's lives and faith in God.

Following the assessment, provide the correct answers to the students and discuss the questions and answers as appropriate. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

Liturgical Year Match



1. Distribute the handout "Liturgical Year Match" (Document #: TX003191) and divide the class into pairs. Explain to the students the following information about the material on the handout:

- Column 1 lists the holy days of obligation and several other feast days of the Liturgical Year. Column 2 lists the days on which the feasts are celebrated. The task of each pair is to match each feast day with its date, and then to list the feast days and dates in the order of the Liturgical Year in column 3.

2. Once the pairs have completed the task, reveal to them the proper matches and order:

- first Sunday of Advent, the fourth Sunday before Christmas
- Christmas, December 25
- Epiphany, the Sunday after January 1
- Ash Wednesday, six Sundays and forty weekdays before Easter
- Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter
- Holy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter

- Good Friday, the Friday before Easter
- Holy Saturday, the Saturday before Easter
- Easter Sunday, the Sunday after Palm Sunday
- Pentecost, the seventh Sunday after Easter
- feast of All Saints, November 1
- feast of All Souls, November 2

Be sure to discuss why the days in this list are important in the life of the Church. If time allows, consider using the following questions for further discussion or exploration:

- How is each holy day or feast day celebrated in the Church?
- What is the importance or significance of each holy day or feast day?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* manual.)

(The material labeled *TC: Liturgy and the Sacraments* is adapted from *Total Catechesis: Catechetical Sessions on Liturgy and the Sacraments*, by Therese Brown, Laurie Delgatto, Mary Shrader, and Christine Schmertz Navarro, in the Total Catechesis series [Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2004]. Copyright © 2004 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved.)