

# Eucharist Intergenerational Program

## “Listening to God’s Word”

### Liturgy of the Word

#### Learning Objectives

“Listening to God’s Word” guides learners of all ages to...

- develop a deeper understanding of the Lectionary and its message as it is proclaimed and interpreted throughout the Liturgical Year (*know-what*)
- listen, interpret, and apply the Word of God as it is proclaimed in the Lectionary each Sunday (*know-how*)
- develop an appreciation for the significance of the Scriptures and, in particular, the Lectionary for their daily lives as Catholics (*know-why*)

#### Catechism Connection

1322-1405

#### Background Readings

Committee on the Liturgy, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. “Hearing the Word of God.” Washington, DC: USCCB, 2002.

DeGidio, Sandra. *The Liturgical Year: How Christians Celebrate Time*. Catholic Update (C1195) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.

Richstatter, Thomas. *The Lectionary and the Liturgical Year: How Catholics Read Scripture. Scripture from Scratch* (N0795) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.

#### Potential Uses

- Sacramental preparation session for children and parents preparing for First Eucharist
- Sacramental preparation session for adults in the RCIA
- Catechetical program on Liturgy of the Word connected to the Lectionary readings for a particular Sunday, such as the Parable of the Sower, or a season, such as Lent (Be sure to align all age groups around the same Sunday readings.)

#### Resources

##### Lectionary Readings

[www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) (United States Catholic Conference of Bishops): for the Sunday and daily Lectionary readings. Go to “readings” on the menu bar; for the Liturgical calendar go to: [www.nccbuscc.org/liturgy/current/litcalindex03.htm](http://www.nccbuscc.org/liturgy/current/litcalindex03.htm).

## Lectionary Commentaries

- At Home with the Word*. Liturgy Training Publications. Chicago: LTP, annual.
- Bergant, Diane, with Richard Fragomeni. *Preaching the New Lectionary*. (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C) Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999, 2000, 2001.
- Birmingham, Mary. *Word and Worship Workbook* (Three Volumes: Year A, Year B, Year C). New York: Paulist Press, 1998, 1999, 2000.
- Brown, Raymond. *Reading the Gospels with the Church – From Christmas through Easter*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1996.
- Brown, Raymond. *An Adult Christ at Christmas*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1978.
- Brown, Raymond. *A Coming Christ in Advent*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1988.
- Brown, Raymond. *A Crucified Christ in Holy Week*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986.
- Camille, Alice. *God's Word Is Alive! – Entering the Sunday Readings*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998.
- DeGidio, Sandra. *The Liturgical Year: How Christians Celebrate Time*. Catholic Update (C1195) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- Donohue, John. *Hearing the Word of God – Reflections on the Sunday Readings*. (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C). Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003, 2004, 2005.
- Faley, Roland J. *Footprints on the Mountain – Preaching and Teaching the Sunday Readings*. New York: Paulist Press, 1994.
- Living Liturgy*. Collegeville: MN: Liturgical Press, annual.
- Richstatter, Thomas. *The Lectionary and the Liturgical Year: How Catholics Read Scripture. Scripture from Scratch* (N0795) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger.
- Shea, John. *The Spiritual Wisdom of the Gospels for Christian Preachers and Teachers*. (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C) Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004, 2005, 2006.
- Sink, Tom and Karen. *This Sunday's Gospel – Exploring Its Meaning and Message*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998.
- Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons*. Liturgy Training Publications. Chicago: LTP, annual.

## Lectionary Activities for Children, Youth, and Families

- Calderone-Stewart, Lisa. *In Touch with the Word – Lectionary Based Prayer Reflections: Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1996.
- Calderone-Stewart, Lisa. *In Touch with the Word – Lectionary Based Prayer Reflections: Cycle C for Ordinary Time*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1997.
- Calderone-Stewart, Lisa. *In Touch with the Word – Lectionary Based Prayer Reflections: Cycle A for Ordinary Time*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1998.
- Calderone-Stewart, Lisa. *In Touch with the Word – Lectionary Based Prayer Reflections: Cycle B for Ordinary Time*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1999.
- Cronin, Gaynell. *Celebrating the Gospels – Activities and Prayers for Sunday Cycles A, B, and C*. Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 2003.
- Hakowski, Maryann. *Sharing the Sunday Scriptures with Youth – Cycle A*. Winona: St. Mary's Press, 1998.
- Hakowski, Maryann. *Sharing the Sunday Scriptures with Youth – Cycle B*. Winona: St. Mary's Press, 1996.
- Hakowski, Maryann. *Sharing the Sunday Scriptures with Youth – Cycle C*. Winona: St. Mary's Press, 1997.

- Singer-Towns, Brian (editor). *Bringing Catholic Youth and the Bible Together – strategies and activities for parishes and schools*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 2000.
- Thompson, Katie. *Step by Step – Take Home Leaflets for every Sunday of the Catholic Lectionary for ages 3-6*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1999.
- Thompson, Katie. *Footprints in Faith – Take Home Leaflets for every Sunday of the Catholic Lectionary for ages 7-12*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1999.
- Thompson, Katie. *The Complete Children's Liturgy Book – Liturgies of the Word for Years A, B, C*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1995.

## Bibles with Study Editions

- The Catholic Study Bible* (New American Bible). General Editor: Donald Senior. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- The Catholic Study Bible: Personal Study Edition*. General Editor: Jean Marie Hiesberger. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995
- The Catholic Youth Bible*. (NRSV or NAB versions) Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press.

## Web Sites with Lectionary and Liturgical Year Resources

- [www.AmericanCatholic.org](http://www.AmericanCatholic.org) (St. Anthony Messenger Press)
- [www.blestarewe.com](http://www.blestarewe.com) (Silver Burdett Publishing Company)
- [www.cyberfaith.com](http://www.cyberfaith.com) (Sadlier Publishing Company)
- [www.faithfirst.com](http://www.faithfirst.com) (RCL Publishing Company)
- [www.harcourtreligion.com](http://www.harcourtreligion.com) (Harcourt Religion Publishing Company)
- [www.homefaith.com](http://www.homefaith.com) (Claretian Publications web site)
- [www.textweek.com](http://www.textweek.com) (Text This Week): Scripture study and worship links and resources indexed according to the Revised Common Lectionary and by Scriptural text (includes an index of Scripture stories correlated to feature films)

## Children's Scripture Resources

- Cerqueda, Joan Baroi. *The Bible – A People Listen to God*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.
- Dunlap, Judith. Illustrated by Steve Erspamer. *Jesus Lives – Faith Stories for Young Children*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1998.
- Dunlap, Judith. Illustrated by Steve Erspamer. *Spirit with Us – Faith Stories for Young Children*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1998.
- Dunlap, Judith. Illustrated by Steve Erspamer. *Yahweh Calls – Faith Stories for Young Children*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1998.
- Freeburg, Paule, and Christopher Walker. Illustrated by Jean Germano. *Stories and Songs of Jesus*. Portland, OR: Oregon Catholic Press. (Volume 1 and Volume 2)
- Gallery, Phillip. *Can You Find Followers of Jesus – Introducing Your Child to Disciples*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2000.
- Gallery, Phillip. *Can You Find Jesus – Introducing Your Child to the Gospel*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1996.
- Getty-Sullivan, Mary Ann. Illustrated by Marygrace Dulski Antkowski. *God Speaks to Us in Feeding Stories*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997.
- Getty-Sullivan, Mary Ann. Illustrated by Marygrace Dulski Antkowski. *God Speaks to Us in Dreams and Visions*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997.

Getty-Sullivan, Mary Ann. Illustrated by Marygrace Dulski Antkowski. *God Speaks to Us in Water Stories..* Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997.

Krenzer, Rolf and Constanza Droop. *Jesus is Risen.* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001.

Krenzer, Rolf and Constanza Droop. *Jesus is Born.* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999.

L'Engle, Madeleine. *The Glorious Impossible – Illustrated with Frescoes from the Scrovegni Chapel by Giotto.* New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1990.

Neff, LaVonne. *The Jesus Book – 40 Bible Stories Retold.* Chicago: Loyola Press, 1994.

Rock, Lois and Diana Mayo. *The Easter Story.* New York: Paulist Press, 2002.

*The Life of Jesus – Adapted from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.* Illustrated by Dorothee Duntze. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999.

Wangerin, Walter Jr. *The Book of God for Children.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997.

Wildsmith, Brian. *Jesus.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Wildsmith, Brian. *A Christmas Story.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Wildsmith, Brian. *The Easter Story.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. .

# Session Resources

## Before the Session

### Environment

Set-up a prayer table with a table cloth, Bible (large), Children's Bible, Children's Lectionary, Lectionary, Book of the Gospels a lighted large candle, seeds, wheat, and a cross.

### Home Kit

#### **Home Activities at Generations of Faith Online**

- Meal Ritual: Emmaus: Recognizing the Risen Lord
- Meal Ritual: Loaves and Fishes: Hospitality at the Table
- Meal Ritual: Bread of Life, Life to the Full: Living Bread
- Meal Ritual: Barbecue on the Beach: Enthusiasm for Jesus
- Meal Ritual: Matthew, Tax Collector: All Are Invited to Dine with Jesus
- Meal Ritual: On a Mission from Jesus: Proclaim God's Word Always
- Table Ritual: God's Word
- Scripture Reflections on Eucharist
- Scripture Activity: Learning and Growing through the Lectionary Readings
- Scripture Activity: Table Reflections during the Easter Season
- Scripture Activity: Family Scripture Activity

#### **People of Faith—Generations Learning Together Magazines (Harcourt Religion)**

- *Celebrating the Sacraments: Eucharist* (Volume 4, number 2)

#### **Catholic Update (St. Anthony Messenger Press)**

*The Liturgical Year: How Christians Celebrate Time.* Sandra DeGidio. Catholic Update (C1195) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.

*The Lectionary and the Liturgical Year: How Catholics Read Scripture.* Thomas Richstatter. Scripture from Scratch (N0795) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.

*A Walk through the Mass – A Step-by-Step Explanation.* Thomas Richstatter, O.F.M. Catholic Update C0889.

*Finding Jesus in the Eucharist: Four Ways He Is Present.* Rev. Lawrence Mick. Catholic Update C0705.

*Participating Fully at Sunday Mass: Adapted from "Gather Faithfully Together: A Guide for Sunday Mass."* Cardinal Roger Mahoney. Catholic Update C0698.

#### **Creative Communications for the Parish**

*A Light for My Path.* St. Louis: Creative Communications for the Parish. (A booklet which lists all of the Lectionary readings for the year.)

### **Liturgy Training Publications**

*A Year of Grace.* (Liturgical Calendar) Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, annual. (Packaged in sets of 25.)

*At Home with the Word.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, annual. (For the Lectionary readings for the year.)

### **Prayer Resource**

For additional prayer services consult:

Haas, David. *Increase Our Faith – Parish Prayer Services for Whole Community Catechesis.* (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C) Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, 2005, 2006.

## Materials for the Session

### Gathering

- Name tags
- Community building activities

### All Ages Opening Learning Experience

- Opening Prayer Service Handout
- Bible

### In-Depth Learning Experience

#### Supplies:

- Supplies for prayer table
- Bible for each student
- Lectionary
- Pen and paper
- Creative art supplies (see activities for listing)

#### Supplies for Seed Planting (families with children)

- cups or pots for planting
- seeds (marigolds or herbs)
- soil
- spoons or little scoops
- stones (to put in bottom of cup or pot)
- water
- supplies for clean-up

#### Books

- Bibles for each family and individual participant or multiple copies for each table
- pens/pencils
- Children's Bible and Children's Lectionary
- Commentaries on the Lectionary (See list of books at the beginning of the session plan.)

#### Handouts

- *The Liturgical Year: How Christians Celebrate Time.* Sandra DeGidio. Catholic Update (C1195) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- *The Lectionary and the Liturgical Year: How Catholics Read Scripture.* Thomas Richstatter. Scripture from Scratch (N0795) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- *A Light for My Path.* St. Louis: Creative Communications for the Parish. (A booklet which lists all of the Lectionary readings for the year.)
- *A Year of Grace.* (Liturgical Calendar) Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, annual.
- *Youth: Church Seasons: Mark Your (Liturgical) Calendar.* Sandra DeGidio. Youth Update (Y1299) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- *Youth: The Bible: A Users Guide.* Brian Singer-Towns. Youth Update (Y0900) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- *Children's Activity #1: Rewriting a Gospel*
- *Children's Activity #2: Creative Ways to Reflect on the Sunday Readings*

- *Children's Activity #3: God's Word in Film*
- *Children's Activity #4: God's Word in Psalms (Children and Families)*
- *Reflecting on the Sunday Readings using Lectio Divina (adolescent and adult)*
- *Reflecting on God's Word: Lectio Divina (adolescent and adult)*
- *Jesus of Nazareth Film Segments (adolescent and adult)*
- *Praying with Scripture: Activities (adolescent and adult)*
- *Prayer with Scripture: Meditation (adolescent and adult)*
- *Praying the Scriptures: Individual Reflection (adolescent and adult)*
- *Integration and Application Learning Activities (adolescent and adult)*
- *Stories in Our Lives (adults)*

Video/DVD (adolescent and adults)

- *Jesus of Nazareth (Available in video stores)*
- *Eucharist: A Taste of God (Liguori Publications)*

## Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application

### Closing

- Closing Prayer Service



# Session at a Glance

Part One: Gathering (5 minutes)

Part Two: All Ages Learning Experience (20 minutes)

Part Three: In-Depth Learning Experience (90 minutes)

## Choose a Learning Group Format

- Age Group Format
- Learning Activity Centers

## Learning Plan

### Families with Children Learning Plan

1. Sower and Seed
2. God's Word through the Year
3. Additional Activities
  - *Children's Activity #1: Rewriting a Gospel*
  - *Children's Activity #2: Creative Ways to Reflect on the Sunday Readings*
  - *Children's Activity #3: God's Word in Film*
  - *Children's Activity #4: God's Word in Psalms (Children and Families)*

### Adolescent Learning Plan

1. The Bible in My Life – A Reflection
2. The Scriptural Message through the Year – A Reflection
3. God's Word through the Year – Presentation and Activity
4. Integration and Application Activities

### Adult Learning Plan

1. Story in Our Lives
2. God's Word through the Year
3. Connecting with the Scriptures

### Activity Centers for Families with Children

1. The Parable of the Sower and Seed Planting
2. God's Word through the Year Activity
3. Listening to God's Word on Sunday Activity
4. Rewriting a Gospel
5. Creative Ways to Reflect on Sunday Readings
6. God's Word in Film
7. God's Word in Psalms
8. Read a Book Together

**Activity Centers for Adolescents and Adults**

1. God's Word through the Year
2. Listening to God's Word
3. Rewriting Scripture
4. Scripture and Artwork
5. Scripture and Advertisements
6. Scripture and Drama
7. Scripture and Music
8. Reflecting on the Sunday Readings using Lectio Divina
9. Reflecting on God's Word: Lectio Divina
10. Jesus of Nazareth Film Segments
11. Praying with Scripture: Activities
12. Prayer with Scripture: Meditation
13. Praying the Scriptures: Individual Reflection

Part Four: Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application (20 minutes)

Part 5. Closing Prayer Service (10 minutes)

# Part 1

## Gathering (5 minutes)

### 1. Registration and Hospitality

- Welcome people and ask them to sign in for the program.
- Ask people to make a name tag or provide one.
- Distribute the Home Kit for the session, including any handouts participants will need for the session. (You can also distribute handouts for the In-Depth Learning program at the beginning of the activity.)
- Invite people to share a meal; depending on time of day, the program may end with a meal instead.

### Welcome

[spoken text] Welcome the participants to the program and introduce the theme of the session, using the words below or your own words.

The “Listening to God’s Word” session presents an understanding of the Lectionary and its message as it is proclaimed and interpreted throughout the Liturgical Year. We are going to listen, interpret, and apply the Word of God as it is proclaimed in the Lectionary each Sunday. The goal of the session is to develop an appreciation for the significance of the Scriptures and, in particular, the Lectionary for our daily lives as Catholics.

### 2. Group Formation

Organize people into intergenerational small groups of approximately eight people for the All Ages Learning Experience and the closing learning activities (Part 4 and 5). Ask all members of the same family to sit together in these intergenerational groups. Each group should have as many of the following categories as possible: family (parents, children, teens), young adults, adults without children, and older adults. If members of the same family are intergenerational – children, teens, parents, and grandparents – keep them together in one group.

### 3. Opening Prayer Service

The Opening Prayer Services is the All Ages Learning Experience.

## Part 2

### All Ages Learning Experience (20 minutes)

#### Preparation

Set-up a prayer table with a table cloth, Bible (large), Children's Bible, Children's Lectionary, Lectionary, Book of the Gospels a lighted large candle, seeds, wheat, and a cross.

#### Prayer Service

Lead an extended prayer service with music on the theme of Listening to God's Word. This will serve as the All Ages Opening Experience. Using Lectionary reading for the next Sunday as the focus of the prayer service and engage the participants in listening carefully to God's Word. Consider a dramatic re-enactment, echo pantomime, or dramatic reading. You might consider show a short movie excerpt of the reading from a movie on the life of Jesus (e.g., *Jesus of Nazareth*).

An excellent resource with lectionary-based prayer services for every Sunday of the year is *Increase Our Faith – Parish Prayer Services for Whole Community Catechesis* by David Haas. (Three Volumes: Year A, B, C) Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, 2005, 2006.

Additional lectionary-based prayer resources include:

Galipeau, Jerry. *Prayer Services for Parish Life*. Schiller Park, IL: World Library Publications, 2004.

McCann, Deborah. *Let Us Gather – Prayer Services for Catholic Schools and Assemblies*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002.

Piercy, Robert W., and Vivian E. Williams. *When Children Gather – 20 Prayer Services for the Liturgical Year*. Chicago: GIA Publications, 1998.

Check the following sources for songs on God's Word or use the songs you would sing at next week's Sunday liturgy.

- *Singing Our Faith – A Hymnal for Young Catholics* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2001) [Hymnal, Leader's/Catechist's Manual, 11 CD set]
- *Walking by Faith – Music and Ritual Prayer for Children*. David Haas and Robert W. Piercy. (Chicago, GIA Publications, 1997.) [CD]
- *Spirit and Song – A Seeker's Guide for Liturgy and Prayer*. (Portland: OCP Publications, 1999.) [Hymnal and 10 CD set]
- *Gather – Comprehensive*. (Chicago: GIA, 1994)

## Part 3

### In-Depth Learning Experiences (90 minutes)

The In-Depth Learning Experience is designed for the **Age Group Format** (using the lesson plans with break-out groups for families with children, adolescents, and adults) and **Learning Activity Centers** (using the activities from the age-group lesson plans).

#### Age Group Format

This format provides for three separate parallel learning programs. Though age groups are separated, each one is focusing on the same topic.

You might choose this format if you have:

- an adequate number of meeting spaces for the various groups to gather
- an adequate number of competent facilitators and catechists to work with each group
- a topic that is best explored through age-specific learning

#### Facilitation Tips for This Format

- Organize participants into three or more parallel learning groups: families with children (grades 1-5), adolescents (grades 6-12), and adults.
- If there are a large number of adolescents, divide them into two groups: middle school and high school.

Organize separate groups for young adults, adults, and older adults. Or you can give the adults their own choice for forming small groups.

- Direct the adolescents and adults into small groups. Give them all the handouts and learning materials needed for the learning experiences
- Guide the families with children into table groups of two or more families. Give each table all the handouts and learning materials necessary for the learning experiences.
- A facilitator must guide all of the families through each learning experience, while catechist move from table to table assisting.

#### Age Group Format Outline

The In-Depth Learning Plan can be utilized for break-out groups of families with children, adolescents, and adults.

#### Families with Children

You can organize the learning activities in two ways. The lesson plan is designed for table groups of two or more families (you can organize individual family groups). Make sure each table has the supplies, instructions, and learning materials necessary to do the activities. A

facilitator guides the families through each activity. Catechists move from table to table assisting families.

### **Learning Plan Outline**

1. Sower and Seed
2. God's Word through the Year
3. Additional Activities
  - *Children's Activity #1: Rewriting a Gospel*
  - *Children's Activity #2: Creative Ways to Reflect on the Sunday Readings*
  - *Children's Activity #3: God's Word in Film*
  - *Children's Activity #4: God's Word in Psalms (Children and Families)*

You can also organize the families with children lesson in activity centers. Use the options described under Activity Centers. Set-up the meeting room with tables and chairs (or floor space) for children and parents to learn, work, discuss. Each center is facilitated by a team of facilitators/catechists who guide the families through the activity plan. Each center has all of the materials necessary for conducting the activity. Be sure to keep the activity centers far enough apart so that people can focus on their activity.

### **Activity Centers**

1. The Parable of the Sower and Seed Planting. (See Family with Children session plan.)
2. God's Word through the Year Activity. (See Family with Children session plan.)
3. Listening to God's Word on Sunday Activity. (See Family with Children session plan.)
4. Rewriting a Gospel. (Children's Activity #1)
5. Creative Ways to Reflect on Sunday Readings (Children's Activity #2)
  - Artwork
  - Advertisements
  - Comic Strip
  - Drama
6. God's Word in Film. (Children's Activity #3)
7. God's Word in Psalms. (Children's Activity #4)
8. Read a Book Together

## **Adolescent and Adult Lesson Plan**

There is one lesson plan for adolescents and adults with age-appropriate activities for each group within the lesson plan.

### **Adolescent Learning Plan Outline**

1. The Bible in My Life – A Reflection
2. The Scriptural Message through the Year – A Reflection
3. God's Word through the Year – Presentation and Activity
4. Integration and Application Activities

### **Adult Learning Plan Outline**

1. Story in Our Lives
2. God's Word through the Year
3. Connecting with the Scriptures

## Learning Activity Centers

The Learning Activity Center Format provides structured learning activities at a variety of stations or centers in a common area. Learning activity centers are self-contained learning experiences, focusing on a specific topic or theme. They include brief presentations by the facilitators, interactive and experiential activities, group discussion and sharing. Each center can utilize a different learning method, such as drama or role play, creative arts, prayer, ritual, film, games, demonstrations, exhibits, and music.

One of the best ways to envision a Learning Activity Center Format is to imagine visiting a children's museum or one of the Epcot pavilions at Walt Disney World in Orlando. You will find a variety of interactive, experiential exhibits, media presentations, and staff-facilitated learning activities.

Learning Activity Centers can be used with all age groups. They can be developed for an intergenerational audience or for particular age groups, such as families with children or adolescents or adults. Learning Activity Centers can also be utilized in the families with children learning program within the Age Group Format.

## Scheduling and Learning Plan Outline

You can use the Learning Activities Center Format by developing activity centers using the activities in the lesson plans for families with children, adolescents, and adults. You can organize the participants into groups so they can easily move from one activity center to the next (see organizing ideas below) OR offer a variety of activity centers and let people select the ones they would like to experience.

### **Activity Centers for Families with Children**

1. The Parable of the Sower and Seed Planting. (See Family with Children session plan.)
2. God's Word through the Year Activity. (See Family with Children session plan.)
3. Listening to God's Word on Sunday Activity. (See Family with Children session plan.)
4. Rewriting a Gospel. (Children's Activity #1)
5. Creative Ways to Reflect on Sunday Readings (Children's Activity #2)
  - Artwork
  - Advertisements
  - Comic Strip
  - Drama
6. God's Word in Film. (Children's Activity #3)
7. God's Word in Psalms. (Children's Activity #4)
8. Read a Book Together: Create a story center where parents and children can hear and/or read Scripture stories. Consult the resource list at the beginning of the session plan for suggestions.



### Activity Centers for Adolescents and Adults

1. God's Word through the Year (in session plan)
2. Listening to God's Word (in session plan)
3. Rewriting Scripture (adolescent integration and application activities handout)
4. Scripture and Artwork (adolescent integration and application activities handout)
5. Scripture and Advertisements (adolescent integration and application activities handout)
6. Scripture and Drama (adolescent integration and application activities handout)
7. Scripture and Music (adolescent integration and application activities handout)
8. Reflecting on the Sunday Readings using Lectio Divina (handout)
9. Reflecting on God's Word: Lectio Divina (handout)
10. Jesus of Nazareth Film Segments (handout)
11. Integration and Application Learning Activities (handout)
12. Praying with Scripture: Activities (handout)
13. Prayer with Scripture: Meditation (handout)
14. Praying the Scriptures: Individual Reflection (handout)

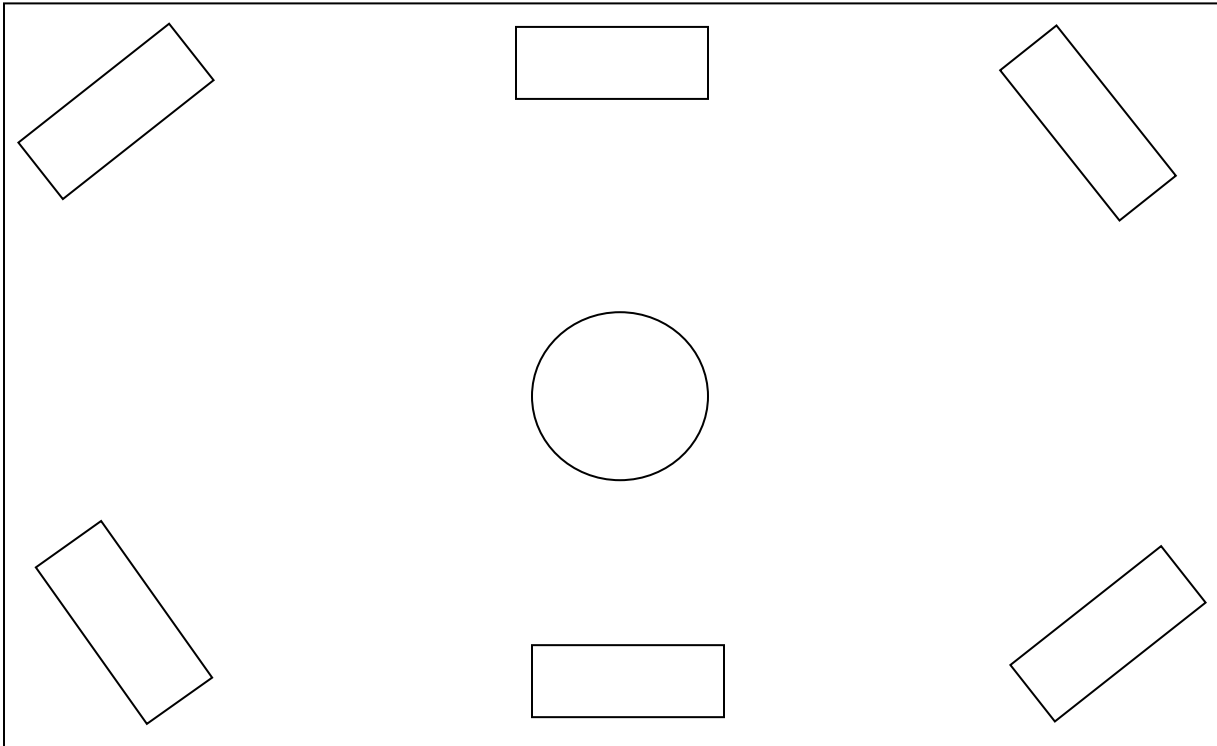
Here is a sample schedule with four rounds of learning centers, allocating 20 minutes per activity center:

- 6:00 Hospitality and Dinner
- 6:30 Part 1. Gathering and Prayer  
Part 2. All Ages Learning Experience  
Introduction: Listening to God's Word through the Year (Lectionary Overview)
- 7:00 Round 1: Learning Activity Centers
- 7:15 Break (move to next center)
- 7:20 Round 2: Learning Activity Centers
- 7:40 Break (move to next center)
- 7:45 Round 3: Learning Activity Centers
- 8:05 Break (move to next center)
- 8:25 Round 4: Learning Activity Centers
- 8:30 Summary Presentation/Reflections
- 8:35 Part 4: Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application  
Part 5: Closing Prayer

## Organizing the Activity Centers

There are two ways to set up activity centers: one large room, or multiple break-out rooms.

If you arrange all of the learning centers in one large meeting gym or parish hall, set-up the centers around the outside of the room (see example). The center space can become a storytelling center with a carpet or chairs for children to sit. The example below shows six different learning centers plus the storytelling center. You may still need separate rooms if you have a learning center that focuses on prayer (worship space) or shows a film (meeting room).



Keep in mind the following when organizing in one room:

- Make sure there is adequate space between learning centers so that people are not interrupted by the activity at other centers.
- Set-up each learning activity center with tables and chairs (or carpeted floor space) for participants to listen, discuss, and create. Children and teens can use the floor, but adults will need chairs.
- Assign each learning center a number and post the number on the wall and floor at each center.

If you arrange learning centers in multiple rooms such as meeting rooms, classrooms, parish hall, gym, worship space, assign one learning center to each space. This format resembles a conference where people move from room to room for each session. Place the learning center name outside each room and develop a list of centers with locations, and a map if necessary, so that people can easily find the correct room.

## Organizing Groups

Once you have determined how many learning centers you will offer, you can organize participants accordingly. If you offer four learning centers, you can organize the participants into four groups of equal size and assign each group a specific sequence that they will move through the learning centers. Assign a number to each learning center and an alphabet letter to each group, then describe how they will move through the centers: Group A: 1-2-3-4; Group B: 2-3-4-1, Group C: 3-4-1-2, and Group D: 4-1-2-3. If you offer three learning centers, there would be three groups rotating among the three learning centers. Keep families together in one group.

If you offer more than three or four learning centers, allow people to choose the learning centers they are going to experience. Remind them that if a particular center is crowded, they can move to another center and then return to their first choice in another round. Families with children should stay together because the activities require parents to work with their children.

## Staffing

Each center is facilitated by a team of facilitators/catechists who guide the participants through the activity plan. The teaching team facilitates the overall learning plan for the center: making presentations, guiding learning activities, organizing discussions, and so on. The number of team members needed depends on the complexity of the activities and the number of participants at a learning center. Teams should have at least two or three people, but some centers will require five or six people. Older adolescents can also serve as members of the teaching team, and are especially valuable in facilitating creative activities and dramatic presentations.

To present the focus of each learning activity center, ask the teaching teams to present a very brief overview of what they will be doing in each center. Give each participant the list of learning activity centers with short descriptions, a schedule and the locations of the centers.

# Listening to God's Word Learning Experience

## Preparation

### Gathering

- Name tags
- Community building activities

### All Ages Opening Learning Experience

- Opening Prayer Service Handout
- Bible

### In-Depth Learning Experience

#### Supplies:

- Supplies for prayer table
- Bible for each student
- Lectionary
- Pen and paper
- Creative art supplies (see activities for listing)

#### Supplies for Seed Planting (families with children)

- cups or pots for planting
- seeds (marigolds or herbs)
- soil
- spoons or little scoops
- stones (to put in bottom of cup or pot)
- water
- supplies for clean-up

#### Books

- Bibles for each family and individual participant or multiple copies for each table
- pens/pencils
- Children's Bible and Children's Lectionary
- Commentaries on the Lectionary (See list of books at the beginning of the session plan.)

#### Handouts

- *The Liturgical Year: How Christians Celebrate Time.* Sandra DeGidio. Catholic Update (C1195) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- *The Lectionary and the Liturgical Year: How Catholics Read Scripture.* Thomas Richstatter. Scripture from Scratch (N0795) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- *A Light for My Path.* St. Louis: Creative Communications for the Parish. (A booklet which lists all of the Lectionary readings for the year.)
- *A Year of Grace.* (Liturgical Calendar) Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, annual.
- *Youth: Church Seasons: Mark Your (Liturgical) Calendar.* Sandra DeGidio. Youth Update (Y1299) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.

- Youth: *The Bible: A Users Guide*. Brian Singer-Towns. Youth Update (Y0900) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- *Children's Activity #1: Rewriting a Gospel*
- *Children's Activity #2: Creative Ways to Reflect on the Sunday Readings*
- *Children's Activity #3: God's Word in Film*
- *Children's Activity #4: God's Word in Psalms (Children and Families)*
- *Reflecting on the Sunday Readings using Lectio Divina* (adolescent and adult)
- *Reflecting on God's Word: Lectio Divina* (adolescent and adult)
- *Jesus of Nazareth Film Segments* (adolescent and adult)
- *Praying with Scripture: Activities* (adolescent and adult)
- *Prayer with Scripture: Meditation* (adolescent and adult)
- *Praying the Scriptures: Individual Reflection* (adolescent and adult)
- *Stories in Our Lives* (adults)

Video/DVD (adolescent and adults)

- *Jesus of Nazareth* (Available in video stores)
- *Eucharist: A Taste of God* (Liguori Publications)

## Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application

### Closing

- Closing Prayer Service

# Families with Children Learning Experience

## 1. Sower and the Seed

The first activity engages the children in identifying the things that help us to hear and understand God's Word. The focus of the activity is the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23) and planting seeds.

"A farmer went out to scatter seed in a field. While the farmer was scattering the seed, some of it fell along the road and was eaten by birds. Other seeds fell on thin, rocky ground and quickly started growing because the soil wasn't very deep. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and dried up, because they did not have enough roots. Some other seeds fell where thornbushes grew up and choked the plants. But a few seeds did fall on good ground where the plants produced a hundred or sixty or thirty times as much as was scattered. If you have ears, pay attention!" (Matthew 13:3-9 CEV)

Now listen to the meaning of the story about the farmer: The seeds that fell along the road are the people who hear the message about the kingdom, but don't understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches the message from their hearts. The seeds that fell on rocky ground are the people who gladly hear the message and accept it right away. But they don't have deep roots, and they don't last very long. As soon as life gets hard or the message gets them in trouble, they give up. The seeds that fell among the thornbushes are also people who hear the message. But they start worrying about the needs of this life and are fooled by the desire to get rich. So the message gets choked out, and they never produce anything. The seeds that fell on good ground are the people who hear and understand the message. They produce as much as a hundred or sixty or thirty times what was planted. (Matthew 13:18-23 CEV)

Begin by lighting the candles on the prayer table. Play a song to begin and lead a procession of the children with the Lectionary just as we do on Sunday at Mass.

1. Introduce the session by prayerfully reading the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23). using the Children's Lectionary (or a children's Bible).
2. Dramatize the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23). Organize the children into four groups representing each part of the story. Work with each group to put movement to their part of the story. Then read the story slowly and ask each group to act-out their part.
  - a) seeds that fell on the road and was eaten by birds
  - b) seeds that fell on thin, rocky ground and quickly started growing because the soil wasn't very deep, but when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and dried up, because they did not have enough roots
  - c) seeds that fell where bushes grew up and choked the plants
  - d) seeds that fell on good ground where the plants produced a hundred or sixty or thirty times as much as was scattered.
3. Now guide the children in planting their seeds in the cups or pots.

After the seeds are planted, ask the children to give their answers to the following two questions. Make a list of the things that help and hinder plants from growing.

- What helps plants to grow? (For example: sunlight, good soil, water, removing weeds)
- What stops plants from growing?

Read the second part of the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:18-23) again. Then ask the children:

- If God's Word (the Bible) is a seed and we are the soil, what are the things in our lives that help God's Word grow in us – things like sunlight and water for seed? What helps us to hear God?
- When are you like rich soil that soaks up water and provides nutrients for the seeds – God's Word? (For example, when we pray, go to Mass, read the Bible, help others, etc.)

Remind the children that when they water their seed or plant and give it sunlight, they should think about how they listen to God and God's Word in the Bible.

## 2. God's Word through the Year

You might want to conduct this part of the program in a chapel or worship space or set-up the meeting room in such a way that participants can experience a prayerful environment.

This section contains a variety of activities to engage children in exploring the Lectionary and applying the Scriptures to their lives. The activity begins with a presentation on the Lectionary and the Liturgical Year and then offers a variety of ways to help children explore the Lectionary readings for an upcoming Sunday. You may want to select the Sunday reading from the current or upcoming season (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter) as a way to prepare children for the season.

**For the Lectionary Readings:** You can find the Scripture readings for weekdays and Sundays at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org). Go to "Daily Readings."

### Presentation: God's Word through the Year

Each year the story of salvation is proclaimed through the Church Year. Each Sunday we listen to God's Word as the story of salvation unfolds from Advent through Christmas into Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time.

Review the two articles below and create a presentation that explains the movement of the major themes of each season of the Liturgical Year. Show the children how the Lectionary presents the story of Jesus from Advent through Ordinary Time. Be sure to have a copy of the Lectionary or the Children's Lectionary for the children to see.

- DeGidio, Sandra. *The Liturgical Year: How Christians Celebrate Time*. Catholic Update (C1195) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.

- Richstatter, Thomas. *The Lectionary and the Liturgical Year: How Catholics Read Scripture*. Scripture from Scratch (N0795) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.

You may want to illustrate your presentation by reading (or having individual children read) one representative Scripture passage from the Lectionary for each major season: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time. Focus your attention on the First Reading or the Gospel. Use *At Home with the Word* (Liturgy Training Publications. Chicago: LTP, annual) or similar resource to review the Lectionary readings for your particular Church Year and Lectionary Cycle (Cycle A-Matthew, B-Mark, C-Luke).

## Activity: Listening to God's Word on Sunday

Jesus is asking us to listen to what God says to us. This includes listening to the Scriptures that are proclaimed during the Liturgy of the Word at Mass. Explain to the children that this activity will prepare them to get the most out of the Gospel reading this Sunday.

### Step One

Briefly introduce the Gospel reading for the coming Sunday by giving a short synopsis and providing significant background information, when applicable. Use the suggested lectionary commentaries for Cycle A, B, C to provide background information (e.g., the socio-cultural context of the account) on the Gospel reading.

### Step Two:

Proclaim the reading. Create a prayerful environment – read from the Children's Lectionary, light a candle, gather the children in a circle, etc.

**For the Lectionary Readings:** You can find the Scripture readings for weekdays and Sundays at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org). Go to "Daily Readings."

### Step Three

Discuss the reading. Use the following categories of questions to create questions that work best with the Sunday Gospel reading you have chosen.

- *Content Questions:* These are questions that reinforce the participants' understanding of the chosen passage: who? what? where? when? how? why? These questions help you to know if the children understand what they heard before moving on to deeper questions. Some Lectionary selections may not call for the asking of content questions, while others may warrant a second reading or brief re-telling in the leader's own words.
- *Opened-ended Questions:* These are questions that encourage the children to hypothesize, question, and reflect. The goal is to help the children prepare for the upcoming Sunday's Liturgy of the Word by encouraging them to wonder and contemplate the meaning of what they hear. The leader's job is not to tell the children the meanings they expected to discover. The leader's task is to ask open-ended questions and to listen to the responses. The leader should correct obviously incorrect ideas that may be put forth.  
Suggested general questions include:
  - What part of the reading do you like best?



- What part of the story do you think is most important?
- What part of the story says something about you?
- What do we hear Jesus saying to us in this Gospel?
- What does Jesus want us to do in this Gospel?

The leader should be prepared to ask some questions that relate specifically to the reading. Here are some examples of open-ended questions for specific readings.

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven

(Matthew 13:33 – 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time-A)

- I wonder what is inside the leaven?
- I wonder what is inside the tiny seed? What makes it grow? Where does the energy come from?
- What are some other small things that become big things?
- What do you think Jesus means by saying that the kingdom of heaven is like a tiny thing that becomes big? What makes the kingdom grow?

The Loaves and the Fishes

(John 6:1-15 – 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time-B)

- I wonder why Jesus decided to feed all the people?
- Where did all the food come from?
- How do you think the disciples felt upon seeing that everyone would get their fill?

Be Watchful

(Mark 13:33-37 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent-B)

- I wonder what Jesus is asking us to watch for?
- How will we recognize what we are watching for?

**Step Four**

Invite the children to respond to the reading through a creative art expression. Choose one creative medium for all or provide a variety and give children a choice. Ask the children to use one of the methods to answer the questions:

- What do we hear Jesus saying to us in this Gospel?
- What does Jesus want us to do in this Gospel?

Among the creative art possibilities are the following. (Feel free to add more options.)

- Draw a picture of the Gospel story.
- Make a symbol that captures the story (sculpture using modeling clay, artwork using crayons or markers, etc.)
- Write (and if possible illustrate) the key message from Jesus on a rock, a card, a sheet of paper, a poster, a bookmark, etc.

### **Additional Activities**

**Families with Children Activity 1** and **Activity 2** (see handouts) provide additional creative approaches for integrating the meaning of the reading into one's life. These two handouts include the following activities:

- Rewriting Scripture
- Artwork
- Advertisements
- Drama
- Music

### **Step Five**

Provide the children with an opportunity to presentation discuss their creations. Discuss the variety of responses and creative expressions.

Conclude by asking them if they were going to give the homily on Sunday, what would they talk about.

### **Additional Activities**

If time allows, conduct one or more of the Families with Children Activities (see handouts) to deepen the children's understanding of how to apply the Word of God to their life.

# Adolescent Learning Experience

## 1. The Bible in My Life

To conduct the opening activities organize the young people into small groups of 6-8 people or if the group is small enough remain in the large group.

Begin this session by asking the young people to complete the following sentences. (Write the unfinished sentences on newsprint. You might want to give the young people pens and paper to record their answers.) Give them quiet time to think about their answers. Then ask them to share their reflections with their group. Ask them to move from one question to the next in order.

- The Bible is important in the Sunday Mass (or in the life of the Church) because...
- The Bible is important in my life as a because...
- Interpreting the Bible is difficult because...
- In order to understand the meaning of a passage or book of the Bible I...

Conclude by inviting the young people to share responses to the sentences with the entire group. Ask for responses to the last two sentences (interpreting the Bible and understanding the meaning of a passage) and then discuss what is difficult about interpreting and understanding the Bible.

## 2. The Scriptures through the Year

Organize the young people into five groups (or use the existing small groups) and ask them to complete one of the following questions. Tell them to do the best they can in remembering what the Scriptures teach us in each of the five seasons. (Write the unfinished sentences on newsprint.)

- During the Advent season the message we hear in the Scriptures is...
- During the Christmas season the message we hear in the Scriptures is...
- During the Lenten season the message we hear in the Scriptures is...
- During Holy Week the message we hear in the Scriptures is...
- During the Easter season the message we hear in the Scriptures is...

Ask each group to report what they identified to the entire group. (You may want to write responses on newsprint for all to see.) After the reports discuss how difficult or easy the activity was. What did they know about these seasons? What didn't they know? Why did they know the answers? Why didn't they know the answers?

## 3. God's Word through the Year

This section contains a variety of activities to engage young people in exploring the Lectionary and developing skills for reading, interpreting, and applying the Scriptures to their lives. The activity begins with a presentation on the Lectionary and the Liturgical Year and then offers a variety of ways to help young people explore the Lectionary readings for an upcoming Sunday.

You may want to select the Sunday reading from the current or upcoming season (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter) as a way to prepare young people for the season.

You can substitute *Reflecting on the Sunday Reading using Lectio Divina* for the process outlined in Part 2 below (see handouts.) Be sure to add Step Three from the process below (researching commentaries on the Lectionary readings) to the *Lectio Divina* process.

For specific teaching activities for the Sunday you have selected, consult *In Touch with the Word* and *Sharing the Sunday Scriptures with Youth* (listed in the resources at the beginning of the session plan).

**For the Lectionary Readings:** You can find the Scripture readings for weekdays and Sundays at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org). Go to “Daily Readings.”

## Part 1: Presentation—God’s Word through the Year

Each year the story of salvation is proclaimed through the Liturgical Year (Church Year). Each Sunday we listen to God’s Word as the story of salvation unfolds from Advent through Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time.

Review the three articles below and create a presentation that explains the movement of the major themes of each season of the Liturgical Year. Show the young people how the Lectionary presents the story of Jesus from Advent through Ordinary Time.

- DeGidio, Sandra. *The Liturgical Year: How Christians Celebrate Time*. Catholic Update (C1195) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- DeGidio, Sandra. *Church Seasons: Mark Your (Liturgical) Calendar*. Youth Update (Y1299) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- Richstatter, Thomas. *The Lectionary and the Liturgical Year: How Catholics Read Scripture*. Scripture from Scratch (N0795) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger

Distribute a copy of *Church Seasons: Mark Your (Liturgical) Calendar* (Youth Update) and the Liturgical Year calendar, *A Year of Grace* (Liturgy Training Publications) to each person. Ask the young people to follow your presentation by reviewing the article and calendar.

Illustrate your presentation by reading one representative Scripture passage from the Lectionary for each major season: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time. Focus your attention on the First Reading or the Gospel. Use *At Home with the Word* (Liturgy Training Publications. Chicago: LTP, annual) or similar resource to review the Lectionary readings for your particular Church Year and Lectionary Cycle (Cycle A-Matthew, B-Mark, C-Luke).

Select young people to read the Scripture passages. After each reading invite the young people to share their thoughts on the connection between the Scripture reading and the season of the Liturgical Year.

### **Option: Video Presentation**

Use the sixth segment of the video *Eucharist: A Taste of God* (13 minutes). This segment, entitled “The Voice of God,” provides an overview of the Liturgy of the Word. In the Liturgy of the Word we hear God speaking to us now. We hear our life stories in light of a bigger story – the story of God’s care through the ages – that transforms our stories. The video discusses aspects of learning to hear the voice of God, including our need to prepare ahead of time for the proclamation of the Word at Mass.

## **Part 2: Activity—Listening to God’s Word on Sunday**

Introduce this activity by saying in your own words:

Hearing God’s Word fully in the Liturgy of the Word requires practice and preparation. We need to be aware of the presence of God in the events of our daily lives and in the proclamation of the Scripture in order to make meaningful connections between our lives and the Mass. One way to prepare for the Liturgy of the Word is to reflect on the readings ahead of time. I invite you now to prepare for this Sunday’s liturgy by reading and discussing the Gospel that will be proclaimed.

Lead the participants through the following steps:

### **Step One**

Read the First Reading and Gospel for the upcoming Sunday aloud. Create a prayerful environment – read from the Lectionary, light a candle, gather the young people in a circle, stand for the reading, etc.

**For the Lectionary Readings:** You can find the Scripture readings for weekdays and Sundays at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org). Go to “Daily Readings.”

In addition to reading the Scriptures you can present the Scripture by using one of these two approaches:

### **Option 1: Film Version of the Gospel Stories**

Present the Gospel reading by using a segment from the feature film, *Jesus of Nazareth*. Find the Gospel story in the film. A partial list of Gospel stories from *Jesus of Nazareth* is included at the end of the session plan. (Using the DVD version of *Jesus of Nazareth* will make it easier to find the story.)

Begin by reading the Gospel story. Then play the film version.

You can also try another technique: begin reading the Scripture passage, then fade into the video portrayal of the scene. Near the end of the video story, pick up the reading where you left out while the volume is turned down and the film is paused.

### **Option 2: Dramatizing the Scriptures**

You can also engage the young people in dramatizing the Scripture story. Use one of the following resources to dramatize a Gospel story:

- Marmouget, C. Rosemary. *Scripture Alive – Role Plays for Youth*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1997. [Parable of the Pounds, Parable of the Vineyard Laborers, Parable of the Good Samaritan, Healing Words, Rich Man and Lazarus, Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids, Parable of Prodigal Son, Parable of the Healing Touch, Adulterous Woman, Parable of the Mustard Seed, Greatest Among US, Jesus Chooses the Twelve, Samaritan Woman, Rich Young Man)
- O'Connell-Roussell, Sheila and Therese Vordran Nichols. *Lectionary-Based Gospel Dramas for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1999. [Sunday Gospel readings for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany]
- O'Connell-Roussell, Sheila and Therese Vordran Nichols. *Lectionary-Based Gospel Dramas for Lent and Easter Triduum*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1999. [Sunday Gospel readings for Lent and the Triduum]

### **Step Two**

Give everyone an opportunity to read the story silently to themselves once or twice.

### **Step Three**

Use a lectionary commentary to provide background information on the Gospel reading. The background information may be helpful to the participants as they discern the meaning of the passage.

### **Step Four**

Discuss the reading. Begin by explaining that we bring the events and stories of our daily lives to our celebration of the Eucharist. The proclamation of the Word at Sunday Mass is an invitation for us to understand God's action in the midst of our lives as we hear the Scripture readings.

Use the following questions as a guide to developing your own questions that will work best with the Lectionary readings you have chosen. Conduct the discussion in the large group or small groups, depending on the number of participants.

- What is the main point of the story?
- What part of the reading do you like best?
- What part of the story do you think is most important?
- What part of the story speaks to your life the best?
- What do we hear Jesus saying to us in this Gospel? Or what is God saying to us through this passage?
- What is Jesus asking us to do in this Gospel? Or what is God asking us to do us in this passage?
- Does the liturgical season that is the context for this reading suggest additional insights about what God is saying to us?
- Does the reading evoke memories of significant events or stories in your life?
- (Add questions specifically related to the passage.)

### **Step Five**

Summarize the key points of the discussion.

## 4. Integration and Application Activities

If time allows, conduct one or more of the *Integration and Application Learning Activities* (after the adult session) to deepen the young people's understanding of how to apply the Word of God to their life. Choose from the following learning activities:

- Rewriting Scripture
- Artwork
- Advertisements
- Drama
- Music

# Adult Learning Experience

This learning program can be utilized in a workshop setting with a facilitator/presenter or in a small group setting, such as a faith sharing group. This learning program can also be used with parents whose children are preparing for First Eucharist.

## 1. Story in Our Lives

Guide participants through a period of reflection on the role that stories play in our lives. Distribute copies of the *Handout: Story in Our Lives*.

Introduce this activity by asking participants to relax and assume a comfortable posture, perhaps moving around the room if your gathering space allows. Consider playing instrumental music softly. You may want to begin by lighting a candle, suggesting to participants that they focus on the flickering flame. Ask the participants to breathe deeply, from one to ten long breaths. Invite them to consider the following questions about stories and storytelling. Allow ample time for participants to think about their responses.

1. Think of your life as a story or series of stories.
  - What are two or three of the most important events or turning points in your life thus far? Think about how you would tell the stories of these events to someone else.
  - Are there similarities in these stories or events, any common themes? Are there differences?
  - Are there stories in your life—stories you have lived—that you would call stories of birth or beginning? Are there stories of death or despair and hopelessness? Are there stories of resurrection or renewal and new life?
2. Think back now to your childhood.
  - What were some of your favorite stories when you were a child? Can you say why you chose the ones you did?
  - Who were some of your favorite storytellers when you were a child? Again can you say why?
3. If you had to pick a favorite story from Scripture, what story would you choose? Can you say why, and especially whether it has some connection with your own life now or in the past?
4. If you are a parent, do you tell the stories to your own children? What stories do you read to them?

Organize participants into groups of 6-8 people or the most appropriate size for your group and invite them to share their reflections for the questions on the *Handout: Story in Our Lives*.



## 2. God's Word through the Year

This section contains a process to engage adults in exploring the Lectionary and developing skills for reading, interpreting, and applying the Scriptures to their lives. The activity begins with a presentation on the Lectionary and the Liturgical Year and then guides the adults through a reflection process on the Lectionary readings for an upcoming Sunday. You may want to select Sunday reading from the current or upcoming season (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter) as an way to prepare the young people for the season.

You can substitute *Reflecting on the Sunday Reading using Lectio Divina* for the process outlined in Part 3 below. Review the handout. Be sure to add Step Three from the process below (researching commentaries on the Lectionary readings) to the *Lectio Divina* process.

For specific teaching activities for the Sunday you have selected, consult *In Touch with the Word* (listed in the Program Resources).

**For the Lectionary Readings:** You can find the Scripture readings for weekdays and Sundays at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org). Go to "Daily Readings."

### Part 1: Introduction

Present the following ideas, in your own words, about the role of story in shaping human life.

When we encounter a great story, we find that it encounters us too. We find we do not stand at a distance from it; instead, we discover that it is part of the human vocation to live inside story, just as it is story's vocation to live inside us!

Our own religious heritage is founded on the power of story, the Jewish story that begins with the creation, and the Christian story that met that older story two thousand years ago. Both of those stories continue into our own day, generally under the heading "tradition" – Jewish tradition and Christian tradition. If we want the next generation to receive their complete inheritance, we must work to make these stories part of their lives.

First are the stories of the Hebrew Bible, what many Christians refer to as the "Old Testament." These include "In the beginning stories" stories, like those found in the book of Genesis. They give us the tales of the beginning of the world, the beginning of the human race . . . stories of liberation and freedom . . . stories of great heroes and heroines.

The Christian New Testament is the other great treasury of our religious stories. Here the stories center around the person of Jesus and his apostles and disciples, as well as around the people he met or influenced during his life.

The primary story of the New Testament, however, is the one sacramentalized and memorialized and told and retold liturgically every year: the story of the birth,

childhood, growing-up, public life, suffering, death and rising of Jesus. This great story is told and retold at Christmas and Easter, and without our realizing it becomes part of our own lives too. It emerges as our central myth (a story that is not only true, but more-than-true, greater-than-true), giving us the shape of our lives. In knowing this story . . . we can be saved from despair and claim the religious form of our own lives.

(Excerpted with slight adaptation from Maria Harris, *The Faith of Parents*, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1991, 83-88.)

## Part 2: Presentation—God’s Word through the Year

Each year the story of salvation is proclaimed through the Liturgical Year (Church Year). Each Sunday we listen to God’s Word as the story of salvation unfolds from Advent through Christmas into Lent and Easter and through Ordinary Time.

Review the two articles below and create a presentation that explains the movement of the major themes of each season of the Liturgical Year. Show the participants how the Lectionary presents the story of Jesus from Advent through Ordinary Time.

- DeGidio, Sandra. *The Liturgical Year: How Christians Celebrate Time*. Catholic Update (C1195) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- Richstatter, Thomas. *The Lectionary and the Liturgical Year: How Catholics Read Scripture*. Scripture from Scratch (N0795) Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger

Using *The Liturgical Year: How Christians Celebrate Time* by Sandra DeGidio be sure to include the following key points in your presentation:

- Jesus’ resurrection—his passover from death to life—is the foundation of the Church’s life and its liturgical calendar.
- Our Church year begins with Advent but is oriented toward Easter and Jesus’ resurrection as the summit of Christian life.
- The Gospel stories proclaimed at liturgy during the course of the year tell the story of God-with-us in the redeeming work of Christ: the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Spirit.
- Our liturgies are not reenactments of events and stories from the past. They are encounters with Christ in the present. When the Scriptures are proclaimed in liturgy, Christ is present.
- Each year we repeat the same cycle: Advent-Christmas-Epiphany-Ordinary time-Lent-Easter-Pentecost-Ordinary time. (Briefly describe the central stories of each season using DeGidio’s text.)
- Each Sunday we celebrate the same mystery: the resurrection and the unfolding of the new creation.
- The proclamation of the Word in liturgy invites us to hear stories of God’s actions as they are told through the year, helps us to discern God’s presence in our own stories, and challenges us to respond.

Distribute copies of the two articles plus the Liturgical Year calendar to everyone (*A Year of Grace*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, annual.)

Illustrate your presentation by reading one representative Scripture passage from the Lectionary for each major season: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time. Focus your attention on the First Reading or the Gospel. Use *At Home with the Word* (Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago: LTP, annual) or similar resource to review the Lectionary readings for your particular Church Year and Lectionary Cycle (Cycle A-Matthew, B-Mark, C-Luke).

Select people to read the Scripture passages. After each reading invite the adults to share their thoughts on the connection between the Scripture reading and the season of the Liturgical Year.

### **Option: Video Presentation**

Use the sixth segment of the video *Eucharist: A Taste of God* (13 minutes). This segment, entitled “The Voice of God,” provides an overview of the Liturgy of the Word. It highlights that in the Liturgy of the Word, we hear God speaking to us now. We hear our life stories in light of a bigger story – the story of God’s care through the ages – that transforms our stories. The video discusses aspects of learning to hear the voice of God, including our need to prepare ahead of time for the proclamation of the Word in the Mass.

## **Part 3: Activity—Listening to God’s Word on Sunday**

Introduce this activity by saying in your own words:

Hearing God’s Word fully in the Liturgy of the Word requires practice and preparation. We need to be aware of the presence of God in the events of our daily lives and in the proclamation of the Scripture in order to make meaningful connections between our lives and Mass. One way to prepare for the Liturgy of the Word is to reflect on the readings ahead of time. I invite you now to prepare for this Sunday’s Mass by reading and discussing the Gospel that will be proclaimed.

Lead the participants through the following steps:

### **Step One**

Read the First Reading and Gospel for the upcoming Sunday aloud. Create a prayerful environment – read from the Lectionary, light a candle, stand for the reading, etc.

**For the Lectionary Readings:** You can find the Scripture readings for weekdays and Sundays at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org). Go to “Daily Readings.”

### **Option: Film Version of the Gospel Stories**

In addition to reading the Scriptures you can present the story in film. Present the Gospel reading by using a segment from the feature film, *Jesus of Nazareth*. Find the Gospel story in the film. A partial list of Gospel stories from *Jesus of Nazareth* is included at the end of the session plan. (Using the DVD version of *Jesus of Nazareth* will make it easier to find the story.)

Begin by reading the Gospel story. Then play the film version.

You can also try another technique: begin reading the Scripture passage, then fade into the video portrayal of the scene. Near the end of the video story, pick up the reading where you left out while the volume is turned down and the film is paused.

### **Step Two**

Give everyone an opportunity to read the story silently to themselves once or twice.

### **Step Three**

Use one of the suggested Lectionary Commentaries for Cycle A, B, C to provide background information on the Gospel reading. The background information may be helpful to the participants as they discern the meaning of the passage.

### **Step Four**

Discuss the reading. Begin by explaining that we bring the events and stories of our daily lives to our celebration of Eucharist. The proclamation of the Word at Sunday Mass is an invitation for us to understand God's action in the midst of our lives as we hear the Scripture readings.

Use the following questions to create your own questions that will work best with the Lectionary reading you have chosen. Conduct the discussion in the large group or small groups, depending on the number of participants.

- What is the main point of the story?
  - What part of the reading do you like best?
  - What part of the story do you think is most important?
  - What part of the story speaks to your life the best?
  - What do we hear Jesus saying to us in this Gospel? Or what is God saying to us through this passage?
  - What is Jesus asking us to do in this Gospel? Or what is God asking us to do us in this passage?
  - Does the liturgical season that is the context for this reading suggest additional insights about what God is saying to us?
  - Does the reading evoke memories of significant events or stories in your life?
- (Add questions specifically related to the passage.)

## **3. Connecting with the Scriptures**

Invite everyone to think about the following questions quietly. Write the questions on newsprint or reproduce the questions on a handout and distribute the handout to everyone.

- Recall the two or three significant events or turning points in your life narrated at the beginning of this program:
  - Can you make any connections between those events and your feelings about them and the reading just proclaimed?
  - What does the Scripture passage say about your life?
  - What does the passage say about God's presence in your life?
  - What does it say about your way of relating to people?

Ask the participants to join their small group (from earlier in the session) and share their reflections on the four questions.

**Note:** You can add creative activities and/or extend the session by using the Handout: *Integration and Application Learning Activities* and the Handout: *Praying with Scripture*.

# Integration and Application Learning Activities

## Method: Rewriting Scripture

One way to give people insight into Scripture is to have them rewrite it. There are a variety of ways that people can rewrite a Gospel story:

- **Activity 1:** Rewrite the Old Testament reading or the Gospel story by using a contemporary setting or issues. The parables and teachings of Jesus can easily be re-written in a contemporary style. For example, taking the parable of the Prodigal Son or the Good Samaritan and using a contemporary setting for the story helps people to identify with the story and its meaning for our lives today. They can rewrite the teachings of Jesus such as the Beatitudes or sections of the Sermon on the Mount. They can also rewrite Psalms, making them a personal prayer.
- **Activity 2:** Rewrite the Gospel story by putting themselves into the story. Here is a simple process:
  - Read a story about Jesus.
  - Give people a brief background on the story.
  - Ask people to rewrite it from a first person point of view, describing the events as though they were there participating. Ask them to arrange the situation so that at the end of the story they are alone with Jesus.
  - Ask them to conclude their story with a dialogue between Jesus and themselves, discussing what happened. Their conversation will lead into thoughts and feelings about their own life.
- **Activity 3:** Rewrite the Gospel story as an eyewitness account of something Jesus did or as an interview script of a person who met Jesus (e.g., a person whom Jesus healed). They can also rewrite an Old Testament reading as an eyewitness account.
- **Activity 4:** Rewrite the Old Testament reading or Gospel story from a particular point of view, e.g., the different characters in the parable of the Good Samaritan
- **Activity 5:** Rewrite the Old Testament reading or Gospel story using creative methods such as storyboards for a TV show or a movie on the story, a TV newscast on the story, a commercial related to the story, newspaper or magazine story.
- **Activity 6:** Rewrite the Gospel story using a letter format. Tell people to think of Scripture as God's letter to them. Read the passage and then ask them to respond by writing their reflections on God's Word in the form of a prayer. Ask them to use a letter format (Dear Jesus... or Dear God...) and include what they learned from reading the Gospel story, how they will try to live what God has said, and what they need from God now so they can live what God has asked of them.

## Method: Artwork

Create artwork to illustrate a Scripture story (or teaching) from the Lectionary and provide a way for people to express the meaning it has for them. Like the artists who created stained glass windows or those who created the great religious art masterpieces, give people an opportunity to utilize art to express the meaning of the Scripture story. They can use a wide variety of art forms, depending on the interests and abilities of the group. Art projects can include paintings (e.g., watercolor), posters (with painting or photos or a blend of art forms), a photo essay, sculptures, stained glass windows, a tapestry, a tile mosaic, a mural, a quilt, a collage, a banner, a mobile, etc. You may want to choose several art forms and then organize people in groups to create projects.

## Method: Advertisements

Create advertisements to illustrate a Scripture story (or teaching) from the Lectionary and provide a way for people to express the meaning it has for them. The adolescents can use a variety of advertising methods: a 30 second TV or radio ad, a song, an ad in a magazine, poster advertisement, a billboard, etc. You may want to choose several methods and then organize the children in small groups to create advertisements.

This project involves writing the content for your advertisement (e.g., a script for a commercial or magazine ad), identifying or creating artwork, symbol, images, photos, etc. to accompany the content, and developing the final product. Use the following process to create your advertisements:

### **Step One: Focus Your Advertisement**

In short phrases clearly identify what you want to communicate.

### **Step Two: Select Your Advertising Approaches**

- Review the methods listed below.
- Select your advertising approach. Here are several marketing methods that you can consider: a 30 second TV or radio ad, an ad in a magazine children read, a poster advertisement, a billboard, a magnet for the refrigerator, a T-shirt, etc.

### **Step Three: Design Your Advertisements**

Combine your message with your advertising methods to create the ad. Add color or artwork or whatever else will enhance your promotion.

## Method: Drama

Create a dramatic enactment or role play to illustrate a Scripture story (or teaching) from the Lectionary and provide a way for young people to express the meaning it has for them. Develop a drama by creating a storyline, identify characters, write a script, add music (if appropriate), and develop the production. For example, young people can role play a person Jesus healed or dramatize a parable by using contemporary situations to bring the parables to life today. A second example involves creating role plays of real life events today through which you can tell

the Scripture story, e.g., MTV has a show called “Real World” which follows real people through the events of their lives.

Role playing is one of the most useful methods to explore attitudes and to practice skills. To be successful when conducting a role play, it helps to know different ways to set it up (scripting).

- **Free form.** Prepare a general scenario and ask the actors to fill in the details themselves.
- **Prescribed.** Prepare a script with a well-prepared set of instructions that state the facts about the roles they are portraying and how they are to behave.
- **Partially prescribed.** Provide extensive background information about the situation and the characters to be portrayed but do not tell the actors how to handle the situation.
- **Replay life.** Ask the actors to reenact an actual situation that they have faced.
- **Dramatic reading.** Provide the actors with a previously prepared script to act out.

## Method: Music

Create a music presentation to illustrate a Scripture story (or teaching) from the Lectionary and provide a way for young people to express the meaning it has for them. The young people can write or rewrite songs (e.g., Church music or pop music), select and sing songs, produce a music video(s) or stage a concert which communicates the message of the Scripture story. For example, you can create a song by “re-writing” the Beatitudes into a rap song with one verse of the song for each beatitude or writing a song about the people Jesus healed.



# Jesus of Nazareth Film Segments

*The following outline is organized around the three-part video program.*

## **Video Cassette 1: Birth, Baptism, and Early Ministry Years**

### **Video Cassette 2: Ministry Years**

- Matthew the tax collector arrives at Peter's house and is not welcomed
- Jesus cures the paralytic man
- At night, by the lake, Peter and his companions are arguing
- Jesus and some disciples on the way to Matthew's house
- Jesus is welcomed by Matthew and tells the parable of the prodigal son
- Peter and Matthew are reconciled
- In his palace Herod talks to John the Baptist in prison
- Herod and Herodias talk
- Jesus arrives on shore by boat and is greeted by the crowds
- Matthew and Peter leave everything to follow Jesus
- Jesus teaches the crowds
- Jairus approaches Jesus asking for help
- Jesus in the house of Jairus, raises his daughter from the dead
- During the banquet that follows Jesus calls Thomas
- At night while Jesus is sleeping Matthew and Peter converse
- John in his dungeon shouts to the guests celebrating Herod's birthday
- During the party Salome dances for Herod
- Salome asks for John's head
- John is murdered in the dungeon
- Disciples, Judas, and some Zealots around John's tomb
- Judas approaches Jesus to become his disciple
- Children throw stones at Mary Magdalene's house
- Mary Magdalene and her client talk
- On the hillside crowds follow Jesus
- The rich young man approaches Jesus
- Afflicted people and Mary Magdalene follow Jesus to hear him
- Jesus feeds five thousand with the miracle of loaves of bread and fishes
- The Zealots and Judas discuss the work of Jesus
- Simon the Zealot follows Jesus
- In the house of Simon the Pharisee Jesus explains his teachings
- Joseph of Arimathea converses with Jesus
- Mary Magdalene rushes in
- Mary at the feet of Jesus
- Jesus forgives her sins
- In the olive grove Jesus sends his disciples off to their mission
- John visits Mary the mother of Jesus
- Assault on Herod, the Zealots manage to wound him
- The Zealots arrested and killed in front of Herod's palace

- The disciples, returned from their mission, stand around the fire with Jesus
- “Who do you think I am” – Peter’s profession of faith
- The Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, the Our Father
- Peter tries to stop Jesus from going to Jerusalem
- The crowds journey to Jerusalem for the festival
- A messenger from Martha and Mary comes to Jesus
- Jesus arrives at Bethany and learns that Lazarus has died
- Martha and Mary talk to Jesus who asks them to take him to the tomb
- Jesus prays to the Father
- Jesus raises Lazarus
- Crowds ascend to the temple in Jerusalem
- In the temple the pilgrims pray and bring in the lambs for sacrifice
- Judas goes to talk to Zerah, the chief of the scribes of the temple
- Jesus enters Jerusalem riding a donkey; the crowds are waving palms
- The market and money changers
- Jesus, outraged, overturns their stalls and chases them from the temple
- Jesus is confronted by Zerah and the Pharisees
- Judas intervenes and talks to Jesus and Zerah
- Mary and the Rabbi are going to Jerusalem
- Jesus is addressing the crowd in the temple, Nicodemus listens
- While Jesus performs the rite of ablutions, he is approached by Barabbas
- Barabbas does not understand the way of Jesus and leaves

### **Video Cassette 3: Passion, Death, Resurrection**

- Jesus with the children in the temple and tells them a parable
- Jesus addresses the conclusion of his parable to the Pharisees
- Jesus is teaching the crowds in the temple
- The woman caught in adultery is brought to the Pharisees in the temple
- Jesus disperses her accusers and forgives her sin
- A Roman Centurion approaches; Jesus instructs the crowds
- Jesus cures the Centurion’s servant
- In the temple Jesus cures the blind man
- The blind man is questioned by the Pharisees
- The blind man believes in Jesus; the Pharisees are arguing
- Jesus confronts the Pharisees and condemns their hypocrisies
- Last Supper
- Passion and Death
- Resurrection

## Part 4

# Sharing Learning Reflections and Home Application (20-25 minutes)

### Advanced Preparation

- Determine what each group will bring back to the large group or to their small group to share as a result of their learning.
- Determine how each group will share their reports or projects so that they “teach” the other groups about the event and theme.

### Home Kit

Develop a “Listening to God’s Word” Home Kit that *extends* and *expands* the learning that has taken place through the intergenerational learning program. It should *engage* families and individuals in living their faith at home through traditions and celebrations, rituals, symbols, prayers, service projects, learning activities, and enrichment activities. Include specific activities on the event that you have selected as a focus for the session. These additional activities can include learning activities about the event, Scripture readings, table rituals, prayers, and so on.

Use a variety of design formats for your activities, such as a prayer card, stand-up card, poster, placemat, newsletter, booklet, magnet, bookmark, and artwork.

Included with this session are the following home activities:

- Meal Ritual: Emmaus: Recognizing the Risen Lord
- Meal Ritual: Loaves and Fishes: Hospitality at the Table
- Meal Ritual: Bread of Life, Life to the Full: Living Bread
- Meal Ritual: Barbecue on the Beach: Enthusiasm for Jesus
- Meal Ritual: Matthew, Tax Collector: All Are Invited to Dine with Jesus
- Meal Ritual: On a Mission from Jesus: Proclaim God’s Word Always
- Table Ritual: God’s Word
- Scripture Reflections on Eucharist
- Scripture Activity: Learning and Growing through the Lectionary Readings
- Scripture Activity: Table Reflections during the Easter Season
- Scripture Activity: Family Scripture Activity

Additional Recommended Resource

- *A Light for My Path*. St. Louis: Creative Communications for the Parish. (A booklet which lists all of the Lectionary readings for the year.)

# 1. Whole Group Sharing and Reflection

The whole group sharing experience provides an opportunity for each age group to share something they have learned with the entire group. Ask people to rejoin their intergenerational groups from the All Ages Learning Experience.

First, ask the participants to share what they learned in a small group setting or by inviting participants or groups, representing families, teens, and adults, to share projects or reflections with the entire.

[spoken text] Second, present the following information using the words below or your own words:

Think of everything we have done in this session to learn about the Liturgy of the Word. Take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned in this session:

- What is one new thing you learned about the God’s Word? OR What new insights did you discover about God’s Word and the Lectionary – something that you did not know before?
- How can you use your new insights every Sunday at Mass?
- How can you continue to develop your ability to read, interpret, and apply the Scripture readings to daily life?

Review the Home Kit for the event containing prayers, rituals, service projects, family enrichment, and learning activities. Guide everyone in developing an individual or family action plan for living at home using the Home Kit, and planning for participation in the sacrament.

## 2. Reflection—Application Strategies

Prepare strategies and activities to guide individuals and families in *reflecting* on the meaning of their learning and their participation in the Church event and in *applying* their learning to daily living as a Catholic. The goal is to help people apply the beliefs and practices to their daily life, and report or “publish” their learning with others in the parish community.

Reflection and application activities and strategies can be included with the Home Kit. You can also include a time for feedback in your next intergenerational learning program

There are a variety of formats for reflection – application activities. Reflection tools include unfinished sentences, reflection questions, learning journals, and a structured reflection activities. Application tools include action plans, practice plans, “to do” lists, and resolutions.

Art and media strategies can also be used to express reflection and application. Consider activities such as a bumper stickers, picture collages, “recipe for living” cards, posters, photos, and projects that create and bring back to Sunday Mass or the next intergenerational learning program.

## Part 5.

### Closing Prayer Service (5 minutes)

Conclude with a closing prayer and song. Sing or play a song that celebrates listening to God's Word from your parish hymnal, children's liturgical music (e.g., *Stories and Songs of Jesus*, Volume 1 and Volume 2, Oregon Catholic Press), or *Spirit and Song* hymnal and CD (Oregon Catholic Press).

If time allows, you can use one or more of prayer activities on the *Handout: Praying the Scripture* to conclude the session.

Close the session with the following prayer.

*Loving and gracious God,  
you have placed in our hearts a marvelous capacity for remembering.  
Help us to remember your story in the Bible –  
a story that is thousands of years old,  
yet new again today as we read the Scriptures.  
In our remembering fill us with gratitude and joy for your Word.  
May it give us sustenance and support.  
Grant us the courage and grace to live your Word each day.  
Amen.*