

# Welcome to Liturgy of the Word with Children!

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## About the Ministry

You are serving the Church as a prayer leader for Liturgy of the Word with Children. In doing so, you are expanding the range of a child's abilities to pray. To perform this service, you need a living faith supported by regular prayer. *Because you have experienced the presence of God, you can invite children to do the same.* At Mass, the community gathers on Sunday to proclaim its faith in the Resurrection. At Mass we give thanks to God and share the sacrament of the Eucharist. At Mass we hear and heed God's Word. *Because Sunday Mass is already the cornerstone of your spiritual life, you are familiar with the power of the liturgy to form individuals and a community of faith.*

## Role of the Prayer Leader

Those who lead the Liturgy of the Word with children are referred to as **prayer leaders** - not as catechists, teachers or facilitators. This is because the goal of the leader is to lead prayer, not teach doctrine. The prayer leader does not explain the Scripture readings so much as he or she breaks open the Word with the children. The prayer leader is focused on being a channel of God's Word, accompanying the children on their faith journey, listening to them, and helping them share their own experiences of God's presence in their lives. The prayer leader needs to lead with warmth, but also with dignity, gently commanding and holding attention.

## Holy Conversation

The prayer leader prepares to help the Scriptures come to life as the children join in the conversation about them. The prayer leader's job is to ask the right questions and let the children lead the way. We believe that the Holy Spirit is active when the children share their experiences of God. The rightness of the children's answers and responses are not the main concern of the prayer leader. Rather, the prayer leader takes on an attitude of affirmation and wonder at the children's responses, and gently guides a holy conversation in which the children begin to discover for themselves how the Scriptures can illuminate or change their lives.

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*"People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them, and when the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. Jesus, however, called the children to himself and said, "Let the children come to me and do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it."*

Luke 18:15-17