

# Liturgy of the Word with Children

## Best Practices from our Leaders

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- One "practice" that another couple showed us, that we found helpful, was having the children stretch before we got started. It calmed them and got them ready to listen. We also found singing...to be much better than relying on the CD for music.
- [My partner] and I have come up with a balance: he covers the discussion of the liturgy and I come up with an activity/craft/participation after his discussion (something that correlates with the message-there is a wealth of ideas online). The kids have short attention spans, and do better if you break things up a bit.
- When in doubt, have them sing a song! (also good for when you need to "fill" the time)
- Don't over-think it...keep it simple, relevant and Catholic.
- Have as many of the kids volunteer as you can...they love it. Help hold the dry erase board, the creed, come up and sing the Alleluia, pass out the worksheets, etc.
- They love when we have them role play or act out the message. Props help a lot, too. Beverly would leave things for us to use in the Day Chapel.
- We found that doing short skits and or using simple props to illustrate the readings helped keep the kids engaged. Also, we tried to keep the message simple, ask the kids lots of questions, and then repeat and summarize the message again at the end. The LWWC books were helpful to understand the meaning of the readings and give us ideas to discuss with the kids. It is also a good idea to have some extra questions or discussion or a song to fill in the time if the priest gives an extra-long homily.
- Be flexible! It certainly helps to have a "prepared" lesson and know what you want to say, but listen to the kids and be ready to adjust as necessary. If there's a certain question or sticking point, spend more time and really try to address what they're focused on.

- Over prepare! For me, there's no such thing as too much information. Every time you do LWWC, you'll have a different audience. Sometimes the kids are talkative and really responsive. Other times, the kids are quiet and don't have much to contribute. You need to be ready for either scenario (or anything in between). I also like to do additional research so I'm able to answer any related questions that might pop up.
  
- Remember, you're the leader! I enjoy LWWC the most out of all my volunteer activities because the kids are usually the most genuine and open. They're mostly sweet and considerate, but you will have those occasions when the kids are more rowdy and distracting. At those times, you have to remember that you're in charge. You don't need to yell at them, but often times you'll need to gently remind them that they're in church or you'll need to re-focus their attention to get them back on topic.
  
- 4) Relax! Most of all, try to have fun with the time you get to spend with the kids. Don't stress out if you're not a great speaker or if you've never done anything like this before. Keep in mind that the kids have no idea what you're going to say, either. Do your part to prepare and then trust that God will be with you; He will direct your actions. Some of the best LWWC sessions I've had have been ones where I didn't feel especially well-prepared or inspired. Just remember, it's not about you. It's all about trying to make Mass more relevant and easier to understand for the kids. Have fun!
  
- [Beverly] would also occasionally provide us with props for certain talks or suggest ways to communicate that week's lesson. It's always helpful to have a variety of approved resources to consult each week. Sometimes the approach suggested by the LWWC guidebook isn't very helpful (or applicable).