

## Gestures and Actions – Assembly

Focusing ourselves



### TARGET AUDIENCE

K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----

#### Overview

This Object teaches students the gestures, postures and actions they are to undertake during the celebration of the Eucharist. The explanation of each imparts to them the significance and reason for the movement.

The multimedia element graphically depicts the ten movements of the assembly dealt with in this Object. Clicking on the image enlarges it and reveals the associated text; a brief explanation of the movement.

#### Teacher Background

Teachers are encouraged to review the 'Crafting the Art of Liturgy' section of the DVD Rom *Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* to deepen their understanding of the art, beauty and celebration as well as the roles of the ordained ministry and of the liturgical assembly.

In particular, the following aspects of *Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* provide entry points and context for this Learning Object:

- Within the pathway 'Art in the Liturgy' watch the video 'Speech, Rhythm and Silence'. The content of the video is developed further in the excerpts taken from the essay *Presidential Prayers and Practice: Towards An Ars Celebrandi* by Canon Alan Griffiths. The excerpts can be accessed by clicking on the 'Read More' arrow, or else you can download the essay by clicking on the 'View Essay' button.
- Within the pathway 'The Chanting of Prayer' watch the same titled video. Further information on the music for the English language Roman Missal, the principals, and the layout and notation of the music can be accessed by clicking on the 'Find Out More: Music For the Missal' button. Additionally, you can listen to some of the chants themselves by clicking on the 'Listen to Sample Mass Chants' button.

*Where appropriate, use this material with the students.*

#### Supporting Content

*This text supports the focus of the multimedia element.*

Sometimes a physical gesture or posture helps us to focus our mind for what

## Gestures and Actions – Assembly

Focusing ourselves



### Supporting Content

is at hand and upon God's Word. Bowing, kneeling, folding one's hands, not to mention the Sign of the Cross, help us to focus our body and soul for prayer and worship.

MOVEMENT	EXPLANATION
Genuflection	By bending our right knee to the floor, we are showing respect and reverence to the Blessed Sacrament – the hosts that have not been used. When we genuflect we face toward the tabernacle containing the Blessed Sacrament or the altar. We always genuflect when coming into the church before going into our seat and when we leave the church.
Sign of the Cross	The Sign of the Cross is a cross traced with the right hand, touching the forehead, the chest, and then the left and right shoulder. The words <i>In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen</i> are said aloud or silently as the sign is made. We make the Sign of the Cross with holy water, which is a sign of our baptism, upon entering the church and exiting the church and many times during the Mass.
Sitting	We sit in the Liturgy of the Word when we listen to the First Reading, Psalm, and Second Reading and during the homily.
Standing	There are several times during Mass when we stand. The first is during the Introductory Rites at the start of the Mass to acknowledge that Jesus is with us. For the same reason, we stand when the Gospel is proclaimed.
Singing	Singing is a form of praying and so it is important that we sing at Mass. Singing is also an important part of celebrating. We always sing at a birthday party and so too, we often sing when we celebrate Mass.
Bowing	Bowing is a sign of reverence. We bow deeply from the waist at Mass when we go on the sanctuary, near the altar. If you watch closely, you will also see the Priest bowing at different times during the Mass too.
Gospel Greeting	The Priest makes the Sign of the Cross with his thumb on the first word of the reading in the book he reads from, called the Lectionary, and announces the Gospel. We respond with the words <i>Glory to you, O Lord</i> , while making a Sign of the Cross with our thumb on our

## Gestures and Actions – Assembly

### Focusing ourselves



### Supporting Content

	forehead, lips and heart. This gesture is a form of prayer for the presence of the Word of God in your mind, on your lips, and in your heart.
Responding	The Mass is like a conversation we are having with God and so we need to respond to him at certain times during the celebration. The most common response is <i>Amen</i> , which means I believe. When we respond in Mass, we need to do it clearly and like we mean what we are saying.
Kneeling	In most churches we kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer. Kneeling is a sign of great reverence. Those who are old or injured are not obliged to kneel.
Receiving Communion	Those who have made their First Holy Communion go to Communion in an orderly line. We are offered the sacred Host and the Chalice or else the Host alone. The Priest, Deacon or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion offer us the Host saying <i>The Body of Christ</i> and we respond <i>Amen</i> . We always receive the Host and the Chalice with great reverence and in silence because this is such an important part of the Mass.

### For Reflection and Discussion: Ideas for Use

Select one or more of the following activities for students to complete.

- Invite students to view the multimedia elements of the following Objects: *Introductory Rites; Liturgy of the Word; Liturgy of the Eucharist; and Concluding Rites*. This will assist them in answering the following question:**

  - What movements does the Priest do?
  - Does he do them at the same time as the people?
  - List all the times that the Priest bows during the Mass.
- Invite students to form into pairs to complete this task:**  
Have one of your classmates read out the explanation and you name the movement. Take it in turns.
- Invite the class to practice the different movements before they attend the Eucharist. It may be helpful to screen the multimedia element each time.**  
Practice the different movements before you go to Mass again.
- Explain why it is important that actions are done well in liturgies. What other situations can you think of where actions help to bring out the importance of an event?**

**Gestures and Actions – Assembly**  
Focusing ourselves



**Teacher Professional  
Development Resources**

McCarthy, Angela, [‘Children at Mass: Integrating Gesture and Movement’](#),  
*Liturgy News*, Vol.39 (1), pp6-7, 2009