

Liturgical Ministries

Variety of gifts, variety of service



TARGET AUDIENCE

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

Overview

This Object looks at the offices performed by the ordained ministries and the People of God in liturgical celebrations. The description of the offices and the roles are explained in detail. The content is most suitable for secondary school students.

The multimedia element is an interactive illustrated 'map' of the 12 ministries developed in the 'Supporting Content'; clicking on each of the 12 'tiles' reveals a graphic with foundational information.

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 'Liturgical Ministries' watch the videos: 'The Bishop'; 'The Priest'; 'The Deacon'; 'The Liturgical Assembly'; 'Acolytes, Lectors and Readers'; 'Altar Servers'; 'Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion'; and 'Liturgical Musicians'. The content of the video is developed further in the excerpts taken from the essay *Liturgical Roles and Liturgical Ministry* by Msgr. Paul McPartlan. 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 'Liturgical Prayer' watch the video 'Act of the Whole Church'. 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.

Where appropriate, use this material with the students.

Liturgical Ministries

Variety of gifts, variety of service



Supporting Content

This text supports the focus of the multimedia element.

Ordained Ministries

In his *First Letter to the Corinthians*, St Paul writes about spiritual gifts. He says: Now there are varieties of gifts (*charismata*), but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone (1Cor 12: 4–6). So it is in and through the members of his Body that Christ himself is still engaged in the work of service.

The key Christian ministries are the ordained ministries (Bishop, Priest and Deacon) but, through Baptism, all the People of God share in the life of Christ and have a responsibility to take part in Christian ministry in some way. There are numerous particular ministries in which the People of God can participate.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Bishop | The Bishop is a Priest especially ordained to lead the diocese. His role is to teach and care for the spiritual needs of the Priests and people of his diocese. |
| Priest | The Priest is ordained to preach the word and preside over the liturgy and the celebration of the Sacraments. His role is also to care for the pastoral needs of his parish community. |
| Deacon | The Deacon is ordained to serve the Church. He assists the Bishop or the Priest in the celebration of the Eucharist. He can also preside at the Sacraments of Baptism and Marriage. |

The People of God

The term 'People of God' is often used to describe the baptised members of the Church who are not ordained. There is an interrelationship between the ordained and non-ordained ministries because every ministry of the whole Church is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. The People of God may serve the Church in any number of particular ministries. The Second Vatican Council encouraged their 'full, conscious and active participation':

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation ... is their right and duty by reason of their baptism. (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 1963 n. 14)

The baptised People of God are encouraged to participate in the liturgy by

Liturgical Ministries

Variety of gifts, variety of service



Supporting Content

means of the responses, acclamations, songs, the postures of prayer and, at the proper times, by an attentive silence. There are some present in the assembly who undertake particular liturgical roles to assist the Priest throughout the celebration of the Mass.

Altar Servers

The altar servers help the Priest throughout the liturgy. Anyone who has received their First Holy Communion and is trained can be an altar server. At the beginning of the Mass the altar servers process into the church with the Priest, and they bring religious symbols such as the cross or candles into the sacred space. During the Preparation of the Gifts, the altar servers stand either side of the Priest at the front of the altar to receive the gifts. They then take the gifts and the water used by the Priest to the altar table. At the conclusion of the liturgy the altar servers process out of the church with the Priest.

Liturgical Musicians

The liturgical musicians help the people to respond through music and song during the Mass. They lead the assembly at key points in the liturgy such as the Entrance Procession, the Psalm, the Alleluia, the Eucharistic Prayer, and Communion. The liturgical musicians could be those who sing, play instruments, and join with others in a choir. Music is used to help people to participate in the Mass and lift their hearts to God.

Readers/Lectors

The readers or lectors play an important role in the Liturgy of the Word as they proclaim and share the Word of God with the people gathered. Following the Introductory Rites, the lector moves to the lectern or ambo, and reads from the Lectionary the readings for that Sunday.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion assist the Priest to prepare and distribute the bread and wine to the people during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This involves bringing the hosts from the tabernacle to the altar after the Lamb of God is sung

Liturgical Ministries

Variety of gifts, variety of service



Supporting Content

or spoken. They stand at the altar with the Priest, pray with the assembly and reverently distribute the bread or wine to the people. The extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, who are usually adults, have special instruction before they perform this ministry. They also take the Eucharist to believers who are unable to attend Mass due to illness or disability.

Sacristans

The sacristans make sure that all of the preparations are made for the celebration of the Eucharist. This includes ensuring the altar is dressed, the liturgical vessels, hosts and wine are ready, the Sacramentary and the Lectionary are in place, and any other items required for that particular Mass are ready.

Ushers and Greeters

The ushers and greeters meet and greet people in a welcoming manner as they arrive at the church. Frequently they hand out hymnals and notices so that people feel welcome and prepared for Mass.

Collectors

The collectors move among the people gathered to collect money for the Church and for those in need.

Gift Bearers

The gift bearers bring up the gifts of bread and wine during the Preparation of the Gifts on our behalf. At the sanctuary the Priest receives the gifts and then places them on the altar.

For Reflection and Discussion: Ideas for Use

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

1 **Screen the appropriate video clips from *Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* for the class:**

- Research the historical foundations of the ordained ministries of Bishop, Priest and Deacon.
- Discuss the meaning of the term 'The People of God'.
- In what ways does the assembly participate in the celebration of the Eucharist?
- Research and write a case study on one of the non-ordained ministries.

Liturgical Ministries

Variety of gifts, variety of service

**For Reflection and Discussion: Ideas for Use**

- 2 **Assist the students in preparing their questions for the interview. If the interview is to be filmed, the students should be formed into groups to form a production team. It may not suit the Deacon, Priest or Bishop to do numerous interviews; in which case a class talk may be more appropriate. Students can still put questions to the individual and report on their answers.**

Interview a Deacon, Priest or Bishop about their ministry. This could be filmed and recorded for a class presentation.

Teacher Professional Development Resources

[Institute for Liturgical Ministry](#)

[Catholic Life](#) – Catholic Vocations Ministry Australia