

# Adult Faith Formation - the Mass (part one)

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The word liturgy comes from the Greek *liturgia*, which means “the work of people.” **Liturgy is not a spectator sport!**

Before Vatican II, many people assumed that the priest did the praying for the people as he celebrated the Mass in Latin. Vatican II called for everyone to **fully, consciously, and actively participate** at Mass.

The Mass is divided into four parts:

1. Introductory Rites
2. Liturgy of the Word
3. Liturgy of the Eucharist
4. Concluding Rite

## 1. Introductory Rites

We are “gathered in and prepared to worship by forming relationships with those around us, recognizing the presence of Christ in our midst, reflecting on our lives and giving glory to God for the wonderful opportunity before us” (Fr. Casey Cole, *Understanding the Mass*).

The introductory rites include:

- **Entrance Song & Procession**
- **Greeting by the Priest**

The Sign of the Cross, followed by a greeting such as:

*Priest: “The Lord be with you.” All: “And with your Spirit.”*

- **Penitential Act**

A prayer that acknowledges how we have failed. There are multiple options:

The **Kyrie** is an echo prayer, sung or recited, in English or Greek:

*Minister: Lord, have mercy. All: Lord, have mercy.*

*Minister: Christ, have mercy. All: Christ, have mercy...*

*or*

*Minister: Kyrie, eleison. All: Kyrie, eleison.*

*Minister: Christe, eleison. All: Christe, eleison...*

The **Confiteor** is a prayer we say together, which begins with:

*I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters...*

Or there are other forms of the penitential rite.

A **Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Holy Water** replaces the Penitential Act when it is used (often in Easter Season).

- **Gloria**

This song of praise should be sung, not recited. It is Omitted during Lent, Advent, and in other specific cases.

- **Collect (Opening Prayer)**

The presider “collects” all of our prayers during a moment of silence, and then speaks a prayer specific to each Mass. We respond: “*Amen.*”

## 2. Liturgy of the Word

“We believe that Christ is truly present, not only in the Sacrifice on the altar, but in the Word proclaimed” (Fr. Casey Cole, *Understanding the Mass*).

We listen to the Scriptures that our ancestors in faith have heard for 2,000 years so that we will be challenged, inspired, encouraged, and strengthened to go out and continue to do God’s work in the world.

- **First Reading**

A Scripture passage from the Old Testament, except during the Easter season when it comes from the Acts of the Apostles.

- **Responsorial Psalm**

A Scripture passage from the book of Psalms which is a collection of ancient songs. A cantor sings the verses, and the assembly repeats the response.

- **Second Reading**

A Scripture passage from the New Testament, usually drawn from the epistles (letters). At the end of the first and second reading, the lector announces: “*The Word of the Lord.*” We respond: “*Thanks be to God.*”

- **Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation**

We sing the Alleluia (or another acclamation during Lent) immediately before the Gospel reading. Alleluia = “Praise the Lord!”

- **Gospel**

A Scripture passage from the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.

-The priest (or deacon) says: “*The Lord be with you.*” The people respond: “*And with your spirit.*” Priest: “*A reading from the holy Gospel according to (\_\_\_\_\_)*” People: “*Glory to you, O Lord!*” (Make the Sign of the Cross on your forehead, your lips, and your heart as you say to yourself silently, “*May the word of the Gospel be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart.*”)

-The priest or deacon reads the passage and then concludes: “*This is the Gospel of the Lord.*” We respond: “*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*”

-The readings follow a three-year Lectionary cycle and are the same in every Catholic church throughout the world. They are accessible at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/>.

- **Homily**

Preaching is meant to “Take the gift everyone has just received and to explain it in such a way that the people can have a deeper encounter with the Lord, see the connections between the Word and their life, and most of all feel exhorted to put it into practice beginning first by coming to the table of the Lord in the Eucharist” (Fr. Casey Cole, *Understanding the Mass*).

- **Creed (Profession of Faith)**

The Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed (often found on prayer cards in the pews or in the missalettes) provide an “opportunity to state in union what unites and guides us as we go into the world” (Fr. Casey Cole, *Understanding the Mass*).

- **Intercessions (Universal Prayer/Prayer of the Faithful)**

Often include petitions for the church, global issues, local concerns, and the sick and the dying.

Adapted from:

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