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**FORMING AN EFFECTIVE
PARISH LITURGY COMMITTEE**

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The ministry of the parish liturgy committee

By Kathy A. Lindell

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If we think of Sunday Mass as a sacred drama with two or three acts, several scenes, numerous props and a cast composed of presider, deacon, assembly, servers, lectors, eucharistic ministers, hospitality ministers and a choir, it is easy to see the reason for the rise and spread of parish liturgy committees since the Second Vatican Council. Someone has to plan and put all this together in accordance with the church's norms and the people's needs. But the church's worship is not just a set of texts and rubrics. Liturgy committees exist principally to enhance the living experience of the people of God as they come together in yearning to sustain the vision of a kingdom come in Jesus Christ.

The revised *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (G.I.R.M.) notes the importance of directions about the preparation of people's hearts and minds, and of the places, rites, and texts for the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist (No. 1). It clearly acknowledges that since liturgy is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian Spirit...the entire celebration is planned in such a way that it leads to a conscious, active and full participation of the faithful both in body and mind (No. 17).

Although there is no scriptural basis for the team that prepares the liturgy, we have the example of Saints Peter and John preparing the Passover meal for Jesus and his disciples. We can also assume from other scriptural references, as well as early church documents, that when the church gathered each Sunday to celebrate, someone saw to it that people were welcomed, the site appropriately arranged and the prayers, stories and the Scriptures prepared. Egeria, a Spanish pilgrim who was present at the liturgies in Jerusalem during one Holy Week in the fourth century, expressed admiration in her writings for one of the traits of the Jerusalem liturgy: the selection of scriptural texts had been adapted to the circumstances of the time.

From the earliest years of implementation of the liturgical reform envisioned by the Second Vatican Council, Catholics of the time have responded with generosity to the call to serve as liturgy committee members. Principles and practices that lead to effective liturgy committees have emerged over the years, as have many challenges. All of them illustrate the complex realities of parish life and the gifts and tensions of people as they deal with diverse experiences and ecclesiologies.

What, then, can possibly bring everyone together? What can empower liturgy committees to soar beyond their very human, and therefore limited, vision into the mystery and Spirit-filled imagination of God, revealed through Jesus Christ and his experience of life, death

and resurrection? The liturgy itself invites us into this imagination by showing us how we might know more deeply what it means to live, die and rise with Christ. The ministry of the liturgy committee is to live out the paschal mystery.

What are good practices for liturgy committees that can lead to full celebration of this mystery? And what are some of the challenges?

1. *Parish leaders should understand that because liturgy is at the heart of all parish life, the liturgy committee and its work need to be among the highest priorities.*

The committee's needs and recommendations should be reflected in the parish mission statement, the allocation of financial resources and staffing and the prominence given liturgy in religious education programs. The mission statement of one Midwestern parish, for example, inspires a powerful mandate for ministry by clearly affirming Christ as the center and liturgy as the source and summit of the Christian life: We are the body of Christ at St. Nicholas Parish, Evanston, Ill., called to gather for worship, cherish the traditions of our faith, witness the Gospel, minister to others, be Christians in the world.

But practical matters like salaries also require close attention. A parish in southern California discovered that a gifted music director was considering resigning because he was not being paid what he considered a living wage. The committee reviewed his salary with the finance committee, which not only adjusted his pay but initiated a review of all salaries in the parish.

2. *The parish liturgy committee should understand that its primary responsibility is not to prepare liturgical ceremonies.*

Rather, the committee should focus on the full range of the parish's liturgical life. This includes budgeting, long-range and short-range planning, establishing parish liturgy policy, developing job descriptions for liturgical ministers, evaluating liturgies and continuing the formation and education in liturgy for committee members and the assembly.

Other questions should also be considered: Who actually prepares the liturgy? Who works to shape the ritual and the environment, selects the music, considers possibilities for the homily and orchestrates the many other particulars and fine points of the liturgy?

3. *Liturgy is a work of art, and therefore should be prepared by artists.*

These artists should be drawn as much as possible from the congregation itself, as should those others they are forming and training. Parish leaders need to work diligently to identify liturgical artists, whose training and education in music, ritual movement, poetry and environmental art are focused on the liturgy, past and present, and its central role in the life of the church.

Committees with assemblies of diverse backgrounds have a great responsibility because their artists must discern how to express and celebrate unity in the midst of great diversity. Parishes that want to be most successful in meeting these goals should try to form committees that exchange views respectfully and frequently (sometimes in more than one language). These dialogues should focus on a cultural understanding and experience of liturgy, music, dance and visual arts, as well as on family prayer and meal-sharing customs.

One such dialogue was begun by a parish music director in California with a doctorate in ethnomusicology. She invited the Hispanic people in her music groups, whose experience was as diverse as their countries of origin, to share their knowledge and experience of All Souls Day – also known in Hispanic areas as the Day of the Dead. Their discussions transformed the parish’s celebration of All Souls Day by leading to the adoption of new and more culturally friendly modes of liturgical expression. Word of their process spread and inspired dialogue in other parishes among Asian, African American and other cultural groups, who also honor their ancestors and the dead with their own traditional prayers and rituals.

4. Effective leadership is vital.

Committee members should have authenticity, integrity, respect, flexibility, courage, humility and a passion for making things better because they understand the power of the liturgy to transform hearts, lives and communities. Their leadership skills should be nurtured and supported by the group leader, and by prayer and surrender of self to God in service to the liturgy and the community.

In practical ways this means that liturgy committee members must be willing and able to explain and defend the decisions of the committee to the parish-at-large. They need to muster the courage to challenge respectfully the parish staff and others in authority. They should fight with passion and conviction for what they deeply believe in, but also be willing to support decisions based on alternative points of view.

5. Committee members should be willing to hold one another accountable and have the courage to face difficult issues with respect and honesty.

If the music and choir directors, for example, regularly select music that the assembly cannot sing, the committee should propose more appropriate songs. If parish resources are spread too thinly over six Masses each Sunday and the church is less than half-full at some of these, the committee should consider eliminating one or more of the Masses and adjusting the Mass schedule. If liturgy committee meetings are poorly planned and managed, the members need to speak up and be willing to hold accountable those who are responsible, including themselves.

6. *The committee and the pastor need to be clear about who makes final decisions.*

In some parishes, the pastor decides; in others a small, designated team, usually paid staff, has the final say. Decision by consensus is another option. When I served as director of the Office for Worship in Los Angeles, both pastors and committee members frequently expressed confusion and frustration about decision-making. Usually my response was simple: Put the issue out front; then keep talking and listening to one another until the issue is clearly understood by everyone who has decision-making power. Then hold one another accountable for what everyone understands.

Other situations call for a process to help build relationships and trust. One parish worker told me, Our new pastor will hardly let us do anything! I asked her what he would let them do and suggested that for the time being they work hard at doing that task exceedingly well. One year later, the same person called and told me that the pastor was gradually expanding the committee's decision-making responsibilities, because he was learning to trust them. The committee's respect for him was also growing.

7. *Liturgy committee members should honor, respect, and continue to grow in their understanding of theological, historical, spiritual, pastoral, and juridical principles of liturgy.*

Liturgical competence, especially on the part of the presider, is essential. The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states that priests especially must be imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy. My experience at our diocesan worship office taught me that many priests strive tirelessly and with deep commitment to achieve this goal, but many do not.

The General Instruction affirms the importance of the ministry and leadership of the priest-celebrant. I have observed countless priests welcoming and embracing this call to liturgical leadership. They were working with one another, their liturgy committees and others to learn and be formed by their role as the one who presides. Others, unfortunately, acted out of clericalism, ignorance or indifference, making unilateral decisions because of a too-strict adherence to rubrics, personal biases and preferences, or in response to pressure from a vocal few in the parish.

This can be especially difficult when a new pastor comes into a parish that has a strong and established tradition of vibrant, faith-filled liturgies and almost immediately begins to impose his personal agenda. New pastors would do well to worship with the assembly and participate in its liturgical practices for at least a year before suggesting any changes. Liturgy committees that have worked effectively in a spirit of collegiality will dissolve if a new pastor arbitrarily ignores their dedication, hard work, expertise, and experience. By the same token, pastors who experience hostility or disrespect for their role as presider may avoid meetings or even consider disbanding the committee.

8. *The liturgy committee must know, love, and respect the assembly.*

Establishing this kind of relationship and understanding is as basic to the committee's success as knowing the ages, races, ethnicities, languages, cultures, socioeconomic statuses and education levels of the parishioners.

It is vital if the committee hopes to be in touch with the assembly's hopes, dreams, fears and struggles or to understand and support the way it prays, gestures, sings and listens liturgically.

Parishes all over the country are discovering that learning about the people who assemble each Sunday is not a matter of demographic factfinding or reading the latest book on multicultural liturgy (although these can help). It requires experiences that develop and deepen the relationships and understandings that can profoundly influence liturgical prayer. These may include meal-sharing, with various ethnic and cultural foods on the table; seminars and retreats that encourage dialogue and sharing of stories and values; and intergenerational and multicultural social gatherings, with music and dancing.

9. *A liturgical committee should center its primary attention on doing the basics exceptionally well, Sunday after Sunday the fundamental actions of gathering, welcoming, proclaiming the Word and celebrating the Eucharist.*

The committee members must identify clearly what needs to be done and pursue solutions honestly, with respect for the demands of the liturgy. If the Liturgy of the Word needs improving, for example, the committee should be willing to consider a broad range of areas to work on. Among these might be the quality of proclamation and the homily; ritual movement; the sound system; the appearance of the Lectionary and Book of Gospels; catechesis for the assembly about liturgical silence, listening and response; religious education and Scripture study that are Lectionary-based; and weekly reflection on the Scriptures with homilists. But liturgy committees need to be realistic about what they can accomplish with often limited time and resources.

10. *Members of the committee should believe that evaluation matters.*

The evaluation should consist of concrete observations offered by people with a vision that goes beyond Sunday. Comments should clearly indicate in detail what promotes full, active and conscious participation and what hinders it. More important, the committee should know that participation is not just about what happens on Sunday. People's lives and the life of their community should be transformed by their worship and prayer.

Participation in and support of parish soup kitchens and outreach such as prison ministry and care for the homeless or shut-ins are just a few examples of another kind of liturgy, one that is experienced beyond just Sunday.

Finally, committee members should enter fully into the liturgical life of the parish.

They should freely and reverently open their hearts to the awesome practices and a commitment to move forward, one step at a time, are good start. Liturgy committee members who accept God's call to enter fully into the celebration of Lent and its liturgies, with sincere and courageous hearts, open to conversion in their lives and ministry, will arrive at the great Easter Vigil – and the next liturgy committee meeting – renewed and more deeply formed in the joy of the Resurrection. Through this joy, they will more deeply know what it means to prepare and celebrate Sunday as exemplified by the Opening Prayer for the Second Sunday of Easter: We no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. From the waters of death you raise us with him and renew your gift of life within us. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you.

Which best practice does your parish liturgy committee do best? How can you build upon what you're currently doing to do even better?

Which best practice does your parish liturgy committee need to prioritize and improve? Why? Who will need to be involved in making necessary changes?

Imagine you can improve the practice you identified as a priority. What will the consequences be for your parish's liturgical life in 6 months? 1 year? 5 years?

Don't forget, the Center for Learning is here to help. We are pleased to offer a Professional Learning Community that will address "change management" in parish ministries. You can learn more about this program and register at www.learnwithocp.org/calendar. We also coach pastoral ministers from around the country, providing accompaniment and support as they seek to strengthen liturgical life in their community. Schedule a FREE coaching conversation today to see how we can help you and your community. Book time today at www.learnwithocp.org/book-a-meeting.

Documents and guidelines

“Liturgical Actions are not private actions but celebrations of the Church itself; which is the ‘sacrament of unity,’ namely, a holy people assembled and ordered under the bishops; therefore liturgical actions pertain to the whole body of the Church and manifest and affect it, but they affect the individual members of the Church in different ways according to the diversity of orders, functions, and actual participation.” *Code of Canon Law*, 837.1

“The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the fount from which her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made children of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord’s Supper.” *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL)*, 10

“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 liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as a ‘chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people’ (1 Peter 2:9) is the right and duty by reason of their baptism.” CSL, 14

“The parishes, set up locally under a pastor taking the place of the bishop, are most important: in some manner they represent the visible Church established throughout the world. Therefore, both in attitude and in practice, the liturgical life of the parish and its relationship to the bishop must be fostered among the faithful and clergy; efforts must also be made toward a lively sense of community within the parish, above all in the shared celebration of the Sunday Mass.” CSL 42.

“Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations can foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken it.” *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, 5

“Liturgical participation commits a person to a life of faithful discipleship.” *Built of Living Stones*, 21

The Role of the Parish Worship Commission

Taken from the [Guidelines for Parish Worship Commissions](#) from the Diocese of Lansing.

The Parish Worship Commission's role is advisory. With the bishop and pastor, it:

- assesses the needs of the worship assembly and regularly evaluates practices to see that those needs are being met.
- advises the pastor, pastoral coordinator, or sacramental minister on liturgical matters and the condition of liturgical spaces.
- provides direction for those who prepare liturgies. Then, under its leadership, others implement plans. The commission itself does not concern itself with installing the Advent wreath, purchasing the red geraniums for Pentecost, nor choosing hymns. Subcommittees may be established which utilize others' musical or artistic gifts.
- provides for the liturgical education of all parishioners using various methods including speaker series, school and religious education curriculum, bulletin articles, and liturgical commentary, when appropriate;
- promotes the development of competent liturgical ministers (including those who bring the Eucharist to shut-ins) with regular communication and annual evenings of formation;
- with the pastor, it implements liturgical laws, universal norms and diocesan policies and directives (cf. canon 837.1);
- sets goals for the progress of the liturgical life of the parish;
- and helps the parish see the connection between worship and Christian living.

As an entity of the Parish Pastoral Council, it maintains regular communication with other parish commissions.

Liturgy committee assessment

The checklist below is meant to help identify areas for improvement. After answering “yes” or “no” for each question, identify realistic action steps that could be taken to improve the effectiveness of the liturgy committee.

For best effect, provide this checklist to the members of the liturgy committee and have them complete their responses individually. Then, hold a conversation to align responses and action steps.

question for reflection	yes	no	action step(s)
1. Does the liturgy committee have a purpose statement and charter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Is the liturgy committee purpose statement aligned to the parish mission?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Are committee members familiar with the purpose statement and charter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Do members understand how their work contributes to the mission of the parish?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Do members have a good idea of their responsibility and expectations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Is committee membership representative of the entire parish?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Does committee membership represent all ministries associated with liturgy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Is liturgy a clear priority for the parish and its leaders?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Does the committee have a chair who is not the pastor, liturgist, or music director?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Is decision-making authority clearly articulated and understood?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Are committee meetings well-planned and well-managed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. Does the committee discuss important issues at the heart of vibrant liturgical life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
13. Does the committee review and comment on budget and finances related to liturgy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
14. Do all committee members know, love, and respect the assembly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15. Do members of the committee dialogue well, exchanging ideas respectfully?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

16. Do members represent committee decisions well to the parish at-large?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
17. Does the pastor support the work of the committee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
18. Do the liturgist and music director support the work of the committee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
19. Do members receive consistent, frequent formation in principles of liturgy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
20. Does the committee regularly complete liturgical evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
21. Does the committee focus on gathering, welcoming, the Word, and the Eucharist?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
22. Does the committee focus on "climaxes:" Triduum, Lent, Advent, Christmas, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
23. Does the committee focus on art and environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
24. Does the committee focus on liturgical ministries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
25. Do members of the committee participate fully in parish liturgical life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

In addition, what other questions, observations, or concerns need to be addressed?

How will the action steps identified above be implemented? When? By whom?

When will this checklist be revisited for re-evaluation?

Liturgy committee structure planner

Clear expectations and role descriptions are essential to any well-functioning, effective committee. Use the following worksheet to think through position descriptions for your parish liturgy committee.

What qualifications does a person need to meet to be considered as a potential member for the liturgy committee?

Once a part of the committee, what expectations do all members need to meet? What responsibilities do all members have?

Certain roles have additional responsibilities and functions. What do the individuals fulfilling the following roles need to do/accomplish/oversee?

Chairperson:

Secretary:

Other (if any):

Other (if any):

Are any members of the liturgy committee expected to participate in other parish committees (i.e. pastoral council)? Are members of other parish committees expected to participate as a member of the liturgy committee?

What ministries could/should be represented on the liturgy committee?

The liturgy committee should represent – and be representative of – the entire parish community. Provide a thorough description of the parish community below, including information about age, gender, family and marital status, socio-economic profile, racial and ethnic background, cultural and linguistic presence, etc.

How many members should/could the liturgy committee have?

How long will membership terms be? How will this be distributed to avoid too many members rotating off the committee at once?

How (and who) will potential committee members be identified and invited?

How (and who) will new committee members be trained and oriented?

Liturgy Committee Charter

Every parish committee or commission should have a charter. A charter establishes the committee's purpose, scope of work, relationship to the mission of the parish, organization, operation, membership, authority, and other critical functions. The committee charter should be widely publicized and made available to all. It should be reviewed regularly and kept updated, as needed.

The following are actual liturgy committee charters and are provided as examples of what a charter can look like.

St. Athanasius' Liturgy Committee Charter

The Liturgy Committee serves our parish through the ministry of liturgy. We hope to build the faith of our community through an understanding of our church's rituals and traditions, and through the art of finding the most helpful expression of those traditions for our parish and its people.

1. We will advise the pastor on all matters relating to liturgy, including but not limited to all the matters he chooses to ask our opinion about.
2. We will work closely with our parish council on any liturgical questions it chooses to assign to us for reflection and comment.
3. The parish liturgy committee will meet at least ten times annually. The attendance of the chairman, the music director, and the pastor (at least) is required at each meeting.
4. While our decisions and reactions are not binding upon the parish or its staff, as a matter of course the liturgy committee should be informed in advance about decisions and actions that affect the parish's liturgies. These areas include the hiring of parish musicians and liturgists, changes in the church environment, and important changes in the liturgical schedule.
5. At least once a year, our committee will devote a meeting to an overall reflection on the parish's liturgical life and the successes and failures of the past year. After that meeting, we'll circulate notes describing the committee's discussions and its consensus to the pastor and parish staff.
6. The pastor will serve as a member of the liturgy committee but will not serve as chairperson.
7. The parish music director will serve as a member of the committee, but not as its chairperson. At least once a year the committee will devote all or part of a meeting to providing feedback and reflection on the parish music program overall. The pastor retains full decision-making authority concerning the music director's employment and compensation. However, the pastor will consult with the liturgy committee before hiring or terminating his music director, and members of the liturgy committee chosen by the chairperson and the pastor will form a search committee together with the pastor when seeking any new music director for the parish.
8. The chairperson of the liturgy committee will be appointed by the pastor and will serve for a term of two years, which can be renewed upon mutual agreement of the pastor and the chairperson. The chairperson will set the times and places for committee meetings and will be responsible for

preparing an agenda in advance of each meeting. The chairperson will prepare notes from each meeting for subsequent distribution to its members, the parish council, or the parish at large.

9. The leaders of principal parish liturgical ministries, including lectors, eucharistic ministers, and ministers of hospitality, will serve as members of the parish liturgy committee. The leaders of these ministries will be jointly chosen by the pastor and the liturgy committee's chairperson, and will serve for terms of two years, which can be renewed upon mutual agreement of the leader, the pastor, and the committee chairperson.
10. The pastor and the chairperson will appoint one member of the committee to serve as coordinator for art and environment, who will serve for a term of two years and may be reappointed by the mutual consent of the chairperson, pastor, and the member involved. This member coordinates the work of parish volunteers on issues related to the worship environment.
11. The pastor and the chairperson will jointly choose at least two other members of the liturgy committee, who will serve for terms of two years each. They may be reappointed by mutual consent of the pastor, the chairperson, and the member involved.
12. At least one new member will be appointed to the committee each year, either as a replacement for an outgoing member or as a new member.
13. Any other member of the parish may attend a liturgy committee meeting unless certain meetings involve discussions or other sensitive matters and are closed to the public by the pastor and the chairperson. Any member of the parish is welcome to bring a suggestion or complaint before the liturgy committee in person or in writing and is entitled to receive an official and prompt response from the committee. Unsigned letters will not be considered by the committee in any way.
14. Before the beginning of each budget year, the liturgy committee will receive an annual description from the pastor or the parish council of the budget for parish liturgy for that coming year. The liturgy committee has the right to comment and ask questions concerning the overall level of spending on parish liturgy and to recommend particular spending items for the consideration of the pastor, the parish council, and the finance committee.

From The Liturgy Committee Handbook by Thomas Baker and Frank Ferrone. You can access the full text of the book for free at www.liturgycommittee.com.

Liturgy Commission Guidelines

Saint Thomas Aquinas Church and Catholic Student Center

Section A. Purpose

1. To assist the pastor and parish liturgist in facilitating the liturgical prayer of the community.
2. To nourish and give direction to the liturgical worship of the parish, including the elements of spirituality, music, environment, liturgical ministers, and attention to liturgical norms.

Section B. Membership

1. The pastor who, in the name of the bishop, is the principal liturgist.
2. Staff persons associated with liturgy: priests on staff or in residence, parish liturgist.
3. Coordinators or representatives of various liturgical ministries: lectors, Communion ministry, liturgical music, hospitality ministry, art/environment, sacristans, Mass coordinators, video production, linen care, etc.
4. At-large representation from both resident and student parishioners.

Section C. Functions

1. To engage in its own ongoing formation in order to develop an understanding of liturgical theology and liturgical spirituality.
2. To implement the liturgical guidelines issued by the universal Church and the Archdiocese.
3. To initiate and discern the need for liturgical policies in the parish, and to assist the pastor and parish liturgist in setting appropriate policies.
4. To collaborate with the pastor and parish liturgist in order to prepare liturgical celebrations consistent with the theology and practice of the universal Church.
5. To assess liturgical celebrations with a view toward their strengths, weaknesses, and needed improvements.
6. To promote awareness of the liturgical year through various celebrations and prayer services and through aesthetic environment.
7. To identify people qualified for various liturgical ministries of the parish, e.g., lectors, Communion ministry, liturgical music, hospitality ministry, art/environment, sacristans, Mass coordinators, video production, linen care, etc. and to assist in recruiting them for the appropriate roles.
8. To oversee formation for liturgical ministry, both specific to the roles, and in general to the liturgical ministers and the parish.
9. To assess the performance of liturgical ministers.
10. To communicate the work of the committee to the pastoral council via written report or liaison.

Find the charter on the Saint Thomas Aquinas parish website at:

<https://staparish.net/liturgy/liturgy-commission-guidelines>.

Liturgy committee agenda builder

Adapted from the [Guidelines for the Parish Liturgy Committee](#) from the Diocese of Saint Cloud.

The following are recommended best-practices for developing effective liturgy committee agendas. Every parish liturgy committee will need to develop a meeting culture that works for them, and so these practices should be adapted and revised to suit your context.

I. PRAY

Every meeting of the liturgy committee – and all parish committees – should begin with prayer. Committee members can take turns in preparation and leadership of prayer, or a chosen prayer format could be used.

II. MINUTES

Minutes from the previous meeting should be reviewed or read to ensure coordination of all efforts, recall of decisions and plans, transparency of deliberations, and accuracy of the notes.

III. FORMATION

A portion of the meeting should be used to study or discuss a particular topic of the liturgy. Formation topics can be chosen based upon committee or parish need, upcoming liturgical season or rites, and so forth.

IV. STAFF REPORTS

The pastor, liturgist, and/or music director shares brief comments, updates, and insights concerning the liturgical life of the parish, upcoming plans or needs, and other happenings that are relevant to the liturgy committee's purview.

V. AGENDA ITEMS

The chairperson, in coordination with the pastor and parish staff, identifies specific agenda items for discussion, review, or decision. Topics that require additional exploration can be delegated to members for further discussion and work (and brought back to the committee at a future meeting).

VI. SUBCOMMITTEE/MINISTRY REPORTS

Any existing subcommittees or representatives from parish ministries (i.e. lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, ushers, etc.) can provide a brief report, update, or insight concerning their specific work.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The calendar of upcoming liturgies is briefly reviewed, announcements made, and a reminder of the date, time, and location of the next meeting is given.

The committee closes in prayer.

Resources and reading list

Essential documents

Lysick, David, ed. *The Liturgy Documents, Volume One* (5th edition). Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2012.

This volume contains the following essential documents:

- *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (1963)
- *Dies Domini: On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy* (1998)
- *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2002)
- *Lectionary for Mass; Introduction* (1981, 1998)
- *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*
- *Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and General Roman Calendar* (1969)
- *Ecclesia de Eucharistia: On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church*
- *Redemptionis sacramentum: On Certain Matters to be Observed or to be Avoided Regarding the Most Holy Eucharist*
- *Lectionary for Mass: Introduction*
- *Book of the Gospels: Introduction*
- *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*
- *Built of Living Stones; Art, Architecture and Worship*
- *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*
- *Gathered in Steadfast Faith: Statement of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy on Sunday Worship in the Absence of a Priest*

Formation resources

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Seasonal and annual resources

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Living Liturgy: Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

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