



Parts of the Mass | Introductory Rites

The Introductory Rites “...have the character of a beginning, an introduction, and a preparation.

Their purpose is to ensure that the faithful, who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.”

The most holy sacrifice of the Mass is a single act of worship, which begins with the introductory rites: the Entrance, the Greeting, the Penitential Act, the Gloria, and the Collect. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* teaches that these “have the character of a beginning, an introduction, and a preparation.” Each aspect guides the faithful more deeply into the celebration of the Paschal Banquet. We bring ourselves physically before God, we direct our minds to the things of God, we express sorrow for sins and implore God’s mercy, and we gather our prayers as a community of faith.

Because of its position and duration, it may be relatively easy to miss the significance of the Introductory Rites. Simple as they may seem these initial acts are not so: they are a calling together of the entire Body of Christ, they are the beginning of one great hymn of praise and thanksgiving, sung together by the local church, the church around the globe, and the angels and saints in heaven!

Prepare

Take some time before Mass to reflect on the week past, identifying both blessings and sins to bring before the altar. Consider each of the different parts of the introductory rites and their significance to the worshipping community: **the entrance**, to open the prayerful celebration of the Mass; **the greeting** and sign of the cross among priest and gathered community, indicating God’s presence in their midst; **the penitential act**, for the calling to mind and forgiving of minor sins; **the Gloria**, to recognize the greatness of God and our need for Him; **the collect**, a time to “collect” the prayers of the people before the altar.

Resources

- a. One family’s action plan for Mass with small children: <https://is.gd/xiqGNr>
- b. Animated “Brother Francis” presentation on the Mass: <http://bit.ly/2JYOanM>
- c. Activities related to the Mass to engage and educate children:
“The Mass Box” resource: <https://is.gd/1ArVMv>
- d. Another couple’s tips on “Bringing Kids to Mass”: <https://is.gd/G1Ef2i>
- e. A selection of prayers around the parts of the Mass: <https://is.gd/KstWWT>
- f. A tip from Pope Francis on preparing for Mass: <https://is.gd/U7AhBE>
- g. A reflection on the introductory rites from Catholic365.com: <https://is.gd/h9XREs>



- h. Archbishop Coleridge, Archdiocese of Brisbane, Australia, on the Introductory Rites: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmBI3dPTmw>

Celebrate

Like any good introduction, the introductory rites have an attention-grabbing quality. It is up to each of us, however, to make the most of them. The following resources will help in this regard.

Arrive at Mass Early

One of the most effective ways to celebrate the introductory rites is to be sure that we are present for them. If being on time to Mass is a challenge for your family, consider “telling yourselves” that Mass begins ten minutes earlier than the actual start time.

If you regularly arrive at Mass early or on time, use the time you have in the church to more intentionally prepare to celebrate Mass, even from the first few notes of the entrance hymn! As each part of the introductory rites unfolds, try to engage with its meaning and purpose as summarized above and as indicated by the words of the prayers.

Resources

- a. One writer’s “9 Practical Tips to Help You Stay Focused at Mass”: <https://is.gd/gcwfV>

Live

Mass with your faith community is certainly one way to “live” the introductory rites of the Mass, and there are other, broader ways to think about living these rites given their significance as a “beginning, an introduction, and a preparation.”

Celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is a sacrament of healing. As such, it is like the introductory rites in that it brings the Body of Christ – the Church – closer together; it helps heal the “wounds” of the Church. Also like the introductory rites, the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation disposes us to live according to God’s ways and to better receive the great graces God has in store for us at Mass. Use our search tool to find an upcoming time to celebrate Reconciliation at a parish near you:

<http://directory.catholicnh.org/churchsearch>

Dispose oneself to the Word of God more fully by reading Scripture at home

Parents with small children can help them receive the Sunday readings more effectively by practicing quiet listening with one or two short passages from Scripture. Practicing quiet listening helps children to appreciate the reverence due to the Bible, a book unique among all others. Parents with older children may wish to have more of a dialogue, perhaps encouraging a child to read. By sharing regularly about how various Scripture passages relate to everyday family life, parents will affirm the enduring relevance of the



Bible in the minds of their children. To read the Scripture readings for any day, visit <http://www.usccb.org/bible/> and click on the desired calendar date.

Participate in parish community events

Reinforce the expression of community present in the introductory rites (and Mass, in general) by making that community part of family life during the rest of the week. Check your parish website or bulletin to see what may be happening at the parish Monday through Saturday.

Preparing for June

Catholics from every parish in the Diocese of Manchester are invited to gather for a time of prayer, fellowship, and formation in June of 2020. Together, we will deepen our understanding of the Church's liturgy so that we may be sent forth into the world, glorifying God with our lives.

For more information, visit www.MinistryEnrichmentGathering.org

Video Lesson

Fr. Jason Jalbert, Vicar General, Rector and Pastor of St. Joseph Cathedral, offers a quick take on the Introductory Rites of the Roman Missal.

To view, visit bit.ly/themass-1