

Pointers from the 2020 experience for simple confirmation liturgies

Personal and prayerful is the focus, not production and performance

The feedback from priests, school principals and parents on the 2020 liturgies is highly positive and clear. Small scale, simple liturgies spoke to people much better than large scale and highly organised ones.

For most parishes struggling in the current Covid environment that is good news.

Some key phrases they used in the feedback captures their sense:

- ✓ *Less is more, simple is best.*
- ✓ *Keep the ceremony details within what the parish can manage and enjoy.*
- ✓ *Avoid a 'performance' ceremony where everyone has to have a job.*
- ✓ *Don't make it an ordeal for yourselves!*

In order to illustrate this, we picked up some examples of how parishes tried to put this into practice last year.

1. *"We invited the families to be present 15 minutes early. Before the liturgy started we went around to each cluster and asked the candidates to introduce their families. During the liturgy we made sure to call out the name of each candidate."*

2. *"We took a moment before the liturgy started to acknowledge family members who couldn't be present. We asked the families to wave to them on the webcam."*

3. *"For the music we just had one singer with a keyboard or guitar instead of a whole choir."*

4. *"Because of the large number of candidates in our parish it worked for us to hold a series of simple Confirmation liturgies that didn't include Mass."*

See Veritas *Grow in Love* website

<https://www.growinlove.ie/en/downloadable-resources/> for a variety of Confirmation liturgy approaches.

5. *"Because of the large number of liturgies we had to run we found it was good to combine the Service of Light with the Confirmation liturgy."*

(See above link for an example.)

6. *"We found that listening to families and creating a warm welcome made parents more receptive to the gospel message we wanted to communicate. We went for simple homilies that sought to connect the good news of the gospel to the real-life experiences of the families at this time."*

- The registration of families and the zoom preparation programme offer opportunities to hear something of what Confirmation means to the families.
- Even a couple of references to what you hear could help personalise the welcome and the homily.
- Also, the three videos offer an approach to connecting the moment to the core good news that God is with us.

7. *We invited volunteers from each group of parents to assist with the ceremonies including stewarding and sanitising. We found the parents comfortable with those kinds of tasks and willing to cooperate.*