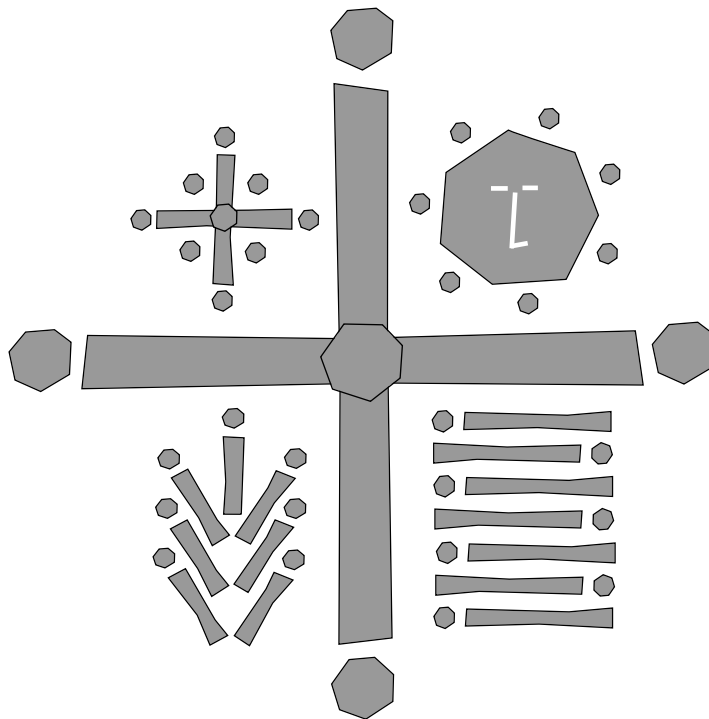
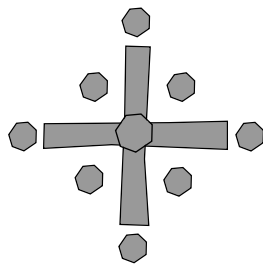


THE BOOK
OF
WEEKDAY READINGS

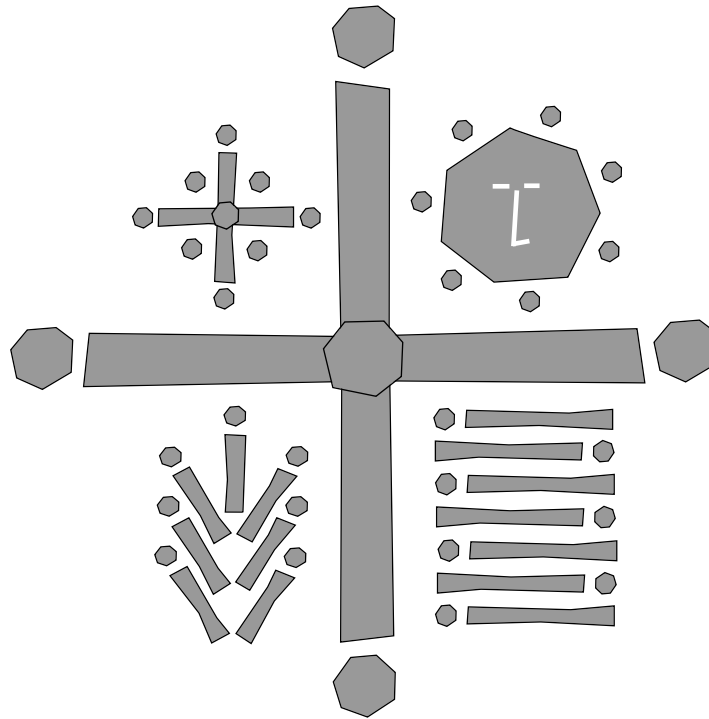
❧ *THE WEEKDAY LECTIONARY ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN* ❧





THE BOOK OF WEEKDAY READINGS

❧ *THE WEEKDAY LECTIONARY ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN* ❧



*These Scripture readings are based on the texts of the official lectionary.
They have been adapted for children in keeping with the
DIRECTORY FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN
issued by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship.*



T R E E H A U S

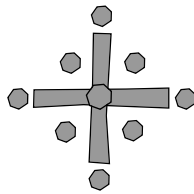
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COVER DESIGN: SYMBOLS OF THE SEASONS

The symbols that surround the Cross illustrate the sacramental life — our share in the life and work of Christ. They are formed with two simple objects — a line and a circle.

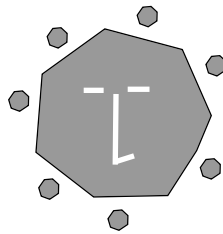
ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

The Cross designed also to resemble a snowflake that brings life to the earth.



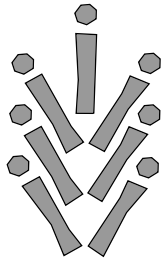
EASTER

The rising sun with a face to symbolize the Risen Christ, Light of the World.



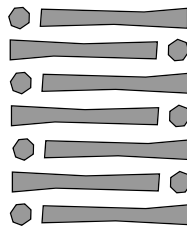
ORDINARY TIME / PENTECOST

A Candle Flame shaped by Seven Grains of Wheat to symbolize the fire and harvest time of the Spirit.



LENT

The Water of Baptism with seven reflecting waves to symbolize the seven sacraments.



Nihil Obstat:

Reverend Timothy P. Schehr
Censor Deputatus
November 5, 2003

Imprimatur:

Most Reverend Carl K. Moeddel
Vicar General & Auxiliary Bishop
Archdiocese of Cincinnati
November 14, 2003

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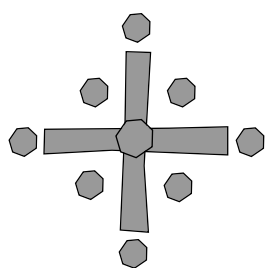
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❧ FOREWORD ❧

This foreword is a memorial tribute to the late Carroll StuhlmueLLer, C.P.. A highly revered faculty member at Catholic Theological Union of Chicago, Father Carroll made himself available as a Scripture consultant to Treehaus for almost 25 years. He reviewed and wrote a foreword to the Sunday Book of Readings adapted for children. In his memory, we are excerpting from his observations concerning the Sunday volumes, as they also set the context for the Book of Weekday Readings Adapted for Children.

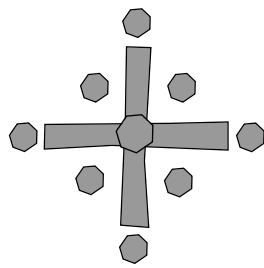
“**H**ow often we are asked by pastoral ministers and teachers: do you know of a lectionary for children? In fact, this question in one form or another goes back into the ancient times of the Bible itself. The question then turned into ways by which people at prayer and worship would not be distracted by strange or difficult phrases, nor be left in lonely ignorance of what the Bible was saying.

“Rabbis and teachers were cautiously but continuously bringing the text of the Bible into communication with the assembly just as the *Book of Readings* does for an assembly of children at church today. The Jewish teachers added a long series of changes in the margin of the Bible, indicating what was to be said aloud when this or that word was read silently in the sacred text itself! . . .

“This practice of adapting the Bible for reading, study and prayer continued in the long tradition of the church. While carefully seeking to translate the Hebrew into the Latin vernacular of his day, St. Jerome was not above discreet changes. He understands God’s new, wonderful creation in Jeremiah 31:22 as the virginal conception of Jesus: ‘the woman will encompass the man.’ Job 19:25 is modified to proclaim the resurrection of the body on the last day. This same adaptation continued in the church’s liturgical books. Verses are left out of biblical readings or from psalm responses. Otherwise, the passage may be too long or too difficult, or not well adapted to the liturgical feast.

“The *Sunday Book of Readings Adapted for Children* (and the *Book of Weekday Readings* [Editor’s addition]) is not another Bible but a ‘lectionary,’ that is, the Bible for worship, and specifically for the worshipping assembly of young children. It follows an ancient tradition of competent attention to the Word of God and equal care that the Word be alive in the minds and hearts of each member of the assembly.”

Carroll StuhlmueLLer, C.P.
Catholic Theological Union of Chicago



❧ INTRODUCTION ❧

In 1989, we published the *SUNDAY BOOK OF READINGS*, the Sunday lectionary adapted for children. It was in response to guidelines issued in 1972 by the Vatican entitled *The Directory for Masses with Children*. The *SUNDAY BOOK OF READINGS* was immediately received and acclaimed by thousands of parishes throughout the English-speaking world. Soon thereafter, we began to hear requests that we publish an adaptation of the weekday readings.

In the mid-1990's the United States bishops issued a weekday lectionary for children, but it did not follow the official weekday readings. So we continued to hear requests (often pleas) for an adaptation of the regular weekday readings. Children's liturgy leaders wanted readings that correspond to the daily readings. The *BOOK OF WEEKDAY READINGS ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN* aims to serve this expressed need. As Father Edward Matthews, one of the primary authors of the *Directory for Masses with Children*, says: "Children have the right to hear God's word in language they can understand." That, ultimately, is the purpose of the *BOOK OF WEEKDAY READINGS* — to serve our children in keeping with the Vatican's *Directory for Masses with Children*.

The *BOOK OF WEEKDAY READINGS* aims to serve children 6 to 12 years old. As the church considers liturgies of the word to be primary in the process of Christian initiation, we recommend this adaptation for daily celebrations of God's word in classrooms and homes. The layout of the text is designed to accommodate such use. This initial volume includes the readings from September through June — covering the school year when frequent gatherings with children are possible. It includes the Gospel for Monday through Friday, which is the same for both years in the two-year cycle of readings. It also provides the First Reading and Psalm Response, alternating each day between Year I and Year II of the two-year cycle — thereby providing parishes with a sufficient resource when planning regular celebrations with children.

Some might ask: May we use these readings at Mass? We do not claim that this is an official lectionary. Like the *SUNDAY BOOK OF READINGS*, this is an adaptation of the official lectionary. And, like *SUNDAY*, it is an accurate rendering of the readings, although it is not a translation from the original biblical texts. As the *Directory* states, when selecting readings for children, your decision is to be guided by *what serves the spiritual advantage of the children*. This is a pastoral decision that falls to the local pastor or presiding celebrant and children's liturgy leaders. We offer the *BOOK OF WEEKDAY READINGS* as a worthy choice. In producing this adaptation, we drew upon at least six different translations of the Scriptures as well as the wisdom of scripture scholars and experienced homilists.

The choice of vocabulary was guided by this premise: children already have a relationship with God. They have experiences of the mystery of God's presence in their lives. In a sense, we do not have to tell them who God is or even that there is a God. Insofar as we are each created by God, our experience of God's presence in our lives is innate. We are not born, however, with the language with which to explore or share with others our emerging consciousness of the mystery of God and the ambiguities of the human experience.

Our responsibility, as child caregivers, is to provide children with a language that is worthy of the experience they already are having. We believe biblical images, metaphors and liturgical signs provide such a language. So it is our duty to provide children with access to this language, which we believe to be God's word — and to listen ourselves not only to God's word but also to our children. As Jesus tells us, those with the spirit of a child already possess the kingdom (Matthew 19:14) and God has revealed to them things hidden from the wise and learned (Luke 10:21).

To aid the children's understanding, we use familiar words that describe the more difficult biblical term. For example, instead of "centurion" we use "an officer in charge of a hundred soldiers." Sometimes we use an unfamiliar word only after using more descriptive words. For example, we use the expression "a man who could not move his arms and legs" before we use "paralytic" or "paralyzed." The expression and concept "Son of Man" is more complex. Without attempting to explain the concept, we also use "the One sent by God" as a way of telling children that we're still talking about the same person.

In certain cases, we did not use words more familiar to children. For example, we did not use the word "agreement" for "covenant", as some translators have done. The word "covenant" is not only an icon of biblical language, it carries a meaning that "agreement" does not convey. "Agreement" suggests an arrangement between equals. The notion of God's "covenant" conveys a promise made by someone to another who is not an equal. God will take care of us so that God's promise can be fulfilled, even though we, on our part, may fail.

The length of readings was occasionally shortened, without sacrificing the content of the selection. Sometimes we left out details or references in texts that may confuse or needlessly complicate a reading for children. Occasionally the Psalm responses were abbreviated, particularly when the readings were lengthy. In all cases, we list chapter and verse references as they appear in the lectionary.

We have used metaphors and imagery such as, "to bear fruit", "shepherd and sheep", "vine and branches", "to run in the race" or such descriptions of God as "my rock." Children may not be able to tell you what a metaphor or analogy is, but they understand and use them in

their own fantasy and play. Such images do not define and enclose meaning. They describe and enlarge both our understanding and our experience. They invite imagination which draws us more deeply into the mystery and enchanting wonder of God's invisible presence. Here children are at home. Through such fantasy and play, children give order to a world they find in chaos. They creatively knead the earthy ambiguities of the human experience. In this sense, children's fantasy and play are where myth-making and ritual-making begin. We do not serve children by explaining such images to them; that would be taking too great a risk of explaining them away or of our getting in their way. Rather, we let the images speak for themselves — and we wonder about them ourselves with the help of our children. We are not the Word, we are servants of the Word.

We are well aware of our inadequacies in this effort. We pray that the Spirit will make smooth what we have left rough. And we hope our work in the Spirit may help children deepen their own original discoveries of God's life within and around us.

Gerard A. Pottebaum
Publisher

