

GENERAL SYNOD 2003

BILL NO 10

SCHEDULE

**GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR PUBLIC
WORSHIP**

General Directions for Public Worship

1. **The Holy Communion** is the central act of worship of the Church. Morning and Evening Prayer are other regular services of public worship. One of the forms of Service of the Word may replace Morning or Evening Prayer at the discretion of the Minister. It is the privilege and duty of members of the Church to join in public worship on the Lord's Day as the weekly commemoration of Christ's Resurrection, and on the principal holy days. Holy Communion is to be celebrated on the principal holy days as set out in the Calendar and regularly on Sundays and festivals for which provision is made in this book.
2. **Services in Irish.** Worship in the Church of Ireland may be conducted in the Irish language, or in other languages understood by those present.
3. **Notes and Rubrics.** The notes incorporated into the services in this book give guidance and directions as to how a service is to be ordered and have deliberately been kept to a minimum and simplified to facilitate an acceptable flexibility. When a certain posture is particularly appropriate, it is indicated thus: *Stand* or *Kneel*. Where a rubric states that a section is to be 'said', this is to be understood to include 'or sung' and vice versa.
4. **Bible Versions.** Any translation of the scriptures sanctioned by the House of Bishops for use in public worship may be used. References in tables of readings are to the versification of the New Revised Standard Version 1989.
5. **Readings.** The passages to be read on Sundays, principal holy days and festivals are set out in the Table of Readings (pages 000 ff). Readings for weekdays may be found in the table of weekday readings as approved by the House of Bishops. Readings are announced in the following way "A reading from (*Book*), chapter..., beginning at verse...."
6. **Hymns** may be sung at appropriate points in any service, either as directed or at the discretion of the presiding minister. In the selection of hymns careful attention should be given to ensure that they are appropriate to the Bible readings and sermon.
7. **Musical Settings.** Where parts of the service are sung to a musical setting, the words for which the setting were composed may be used.
8. **Sermon.** A sermon or homily should be preached on Sundays and on principal holy days.
9. **Silence.** The Great Silence is prescribed in Holy Communion Two. Periods of silence may be kept as indicated and at any other point in services at the discretion of the presiding minister.

- 10. Holy Baptism** is normally administered at the principal service on a Sunday or holy day. Baptism should be preceded by appropriate preparation.
- 11. Weekday services.** Shorter forms of Morning and Evening Prayer are provided for weekdays; as are Compline, a Late Evening Office and an order for daily prayer. Holy Communion Two may be shortened as specified in the notes of that service. The readings at the Holy Communion may be those from the table of weekday readings approved by the House of Bishops, the Gospel reading always being included.
- 12. State Prayers.** Wherever words in any service are enclosed in square brackets to which N.I. is prefixed, such words are to be used in Northern Ireland only; and wherever words are enclosed in square brackets to which R.I. is prefixed, such words are to be used in the Republic of Ireland only. For churches and chapels in Northern Ireland, the Archbishop of Armagh may direct any alterations that may be required from time to time in prayers which relate to the Sovereign or members of the Royal Family.
- 13. Absolution.** At Morning and Evening Prayer One and elsewhere in this book when the presiding minister is a deacon or a reader and where no provision is made, instead of the absolution, the collect of the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity may be used, or a short period of silence may be kept.
- 14. At the Holy Communion.**
- (a) Members of the Church should partake of the Lord's Supper regularly and frequently after careful preparation.
 - (b) The priest who presides at the Holy Communion must be episcopally ordained. The Gospel should be read, where possible, by a deacon. The bishop of the diocese may permit lay persons approved by him to assist the priest in the administration of the bread and wine.
 - (c) Holy Communion shall not be celebrated unless there is at least one person present to communicate together with the priest.
 - (d) At the time of the celebration of the Holy Communion the communion table is to be covered by a white cloth.
 - (e) The bread to be used shall be the best and purest bread that can be obtained. Care is to be taken that the wine is fit for use. Any of the consecrated bread and wine remaining after the administration of the communion is to be reverently consumed.
 - (f) After the Communion the vessels shall be carefully and thoroughly cleansed with water.
- 15. Giving.** Members of the Church should give generously, regularly and proportionately, towards the ministry and mission of the Church, and to works of charity. Collections for these purposes may be received at any time in public worship. They may be presented at the Offertory in Holy Communion One, at the Preparation of the Table in Holy Communion and at convenient times in other services.