

# TOTAL YOUTH MINISTRY

MINISTRY RESOURCES FOR

Prayer and Worship

Pray It! Study It! Live It!® resources offer a holistic approach to learning, living, and passing on the Catholic faith.

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### **Total Youth Ministry**

*Ministry Resources for Community Life*

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*Ministry Resources for Justice and Service*

*Ministry Resources for Pastoral Care*

*Ministry Resources for Prayer and Worship*

*Ministry Resources for Youth Leadership Development*

*Total Faith™ Initiative Coordinator's Manual*

*The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*

*The Catholic Youth Bible™*

# TOTAL YOUTH MINISTRY

MINISTRY RESOURCES FOR  
Prayer and Worship

Thomas East



saint mary's press

This book is dedicated to my wife, Lois, and to my daughters, Kaelyn, Michelle, and Kristen, for all their loving support, care, and prayers.

This book is also dedicated to all who share in this ministry of walking with and praying with young people.

The following authors contributed to this manual:

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- The prayer and liturgy preparation materials are based upon work developed by Tom Tomaszek, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- “We’ve Come This Far by Faith” includes prayer text from an unknown source among the African American Catholic community.
- The background pieces on the accompanying CD-ROM that are titled “Sacraments and Sacred Seasons: The Worship of the Church” and “Growing as a Catholic Christian: Life in the Spirit” have been adapted from the work of Thomas Zanzig as found in *Confirmed in a Faithful Community: Catechist’s Theology Handbook*.
- The material on pages 29–44 in “Rituals, Rites of Passage, and Blessings” on the accompanying CD-ROM are taken from The Center for Ministry Development’s *Families and Youth—A Resource Manual*, edited by Leif Kehrwald and John Roberto.
- The materials titled “Blessings for Young People” and “Nongathered Prayer and Worship Strategies” included on the accompanying CD-ROM are taken from The Center for Ministry Development’s *YouthWorks*, section 14, parts 4 and 5. This section was edited by Bruce Baumgarten.

The publishing team included Barbara Murray and Laurie Delgatto, development editors; Penelope Bonnar, copy editor; Barbara Bartelson, production editor; Cären Yang, art director and designer; Jonathan Thomas Goebel, cover designer; Digital Images © Photo-Disc, Inc., cover images; Alan S. Hanson, prepress specialist; Andy Palmer, CD art director and designer; manufacturing coordinated by the production services department of Saint Mary’s Press.

Produced with the assistance of settingPace, LLC, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Ministry Resource manuals were developed in collaboration with the Center for Ministry Development. The publishing team included Thomas East, project coordinator, and Cheryl Tholcke, content editor.

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Printed in the United States of America

2464

ISBN 978-0-88489-774-3

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# Introduction

## About Total Youth Ministry

Many youth today are waiting to hear the Good News that is ours as Christ's disciples. Youth in our parishes long to grow spiritually and to belong to their family, Church, and local community in meaningful ways. Parents of youth long to experience Church as supportive of and caring about the same things they care about. They hope the parish will offer ways for youth to be involved and to grow in their faith. Parents want to understand youth ministry so they can support and encourage their child's participation.

Parishes want to know how to include youth and how to pass on faith to a new generation. Parish members want to see youth more involved, and are worried about the challenges that face today's youth. They know that young people need support from their faith community—now more than ever. Parish youth ministry leaders are generous, passionate, and busy people; they make sacrifices so that youth will have a community to belong to and a place to grow. They need ideas and plans for youth ministry activities—and strategies that really work. They are working toward a ministry that goes beyond just gathering groups of young people; they are working toward a ministry that makes connections between youth and the community.

All those voices have something in common—a longing for youth ministry that is inclusive, dynamic, and flexible.

In 1997 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) published its blueprint for youth ministry in the twenty-first century. *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* challenges youth ministry to focus its efforts in these directions:

- to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today
- to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community
- to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person

In *Renewing the Vision*, the bishops urge the Church to guide young people toward a life of fullness in Jesus Christ, and to give them the tools that will enable them to live out that fullness as Catholic Christians. To put it simply, the bishops call young people to embrace their faith as they study it, pray it, and live it. The bishops also challenge the faith community to surround young people with love, care, and attention and to include youth throughout the life of the parish.

## The Ministry Resource Manuals

The ministry resource manuals of the Total Youth Ministry series address each of the components of youth ministry as outlined in *Renewing the Vision*. The advocacy and catechesis components are woven throughout the ministry resource manuals. You will find the following information in each of the ministry resource manuals:

- a chapter explaining the component, connecting it to Church documents, and identifying practical ideas and resources for implementing the component
- sessions that can stand alone or be combined with others in the series
- numerous strategies, ideas, suggestions, and resources that go beyond a specific gathering

The content of each manual includes newly developed sessions, ideas and strategies as well as “tried and true” material drawn or adapted from *Youth-Works* and other resources previously published by the Center for Ministry Development.

Following is a brief description of each of the manuals:

- *Ministry Resources for Community Life* offers faith communities program resources and strategies to build community among young people and throughout the entire parish. The resource includes nine gathered sessions to help young people get to know one another, themselves, and the meaning of Christian community. It also contains an outline for an ecumenical event to help build community across denominational lines, and it offers practical strategies and ideas to help manage community issues, make the most of community life opportunities, and encourage intergenerational and family relationships.
- *Ministry Resources for Evangelization* offers faith communities tools and program resources to evangelize youth. It offers practical strategies and ideas for outreach to young people and contains twelve gathered sessions to share the Good News. It also includes a retreat to engage young people in becoming or continuing as Jesus’ disciples.
- *Ministry Resources for Justice and Service* offers faith communities programs and strategies to engage youth in justice, direct service, and advocacy in faithful, age-appropriate, and proactive ways. This resource contains eight gathered sessions around specific justice issues, an overnight retreat



on service to poor people, and two half-day retreats or evening reflections on simplicity and racism.

- At the heart of *Ministry Resources for Pastoral Care* are twelve sessions designed to equip young people with the tools needed to celebrate their holy goodness and navigate some of life's difficult issues. The topics of the sessions include recognizing the goodness in oneself and others, building and maintaining relationships, dealing with tough times, and preparing for the future. The last section of the manual comprises strategies for doing the ongoing work of pastoral care.
- *Ministry Resources for Prayer and Worship* is designed for those who work with and walk with youth in this journey of discipleship. The manual contains three sessions to teach youth to pray and to practice praying in different forms. Eleven communal prayer services are included, which can be used on a variety of occasions throughout the seasons of the year. The manual also contains strategies and resources to help youth communities develop patterns of prayer and to include youth in preparing prayers and liturgies.
- *Ministry Resources for Youth Leadership Development* offers faith communities program resources and strategies to develop youth as leaders within youth ministry programs and the parish. The manual includes four foundational sessions on Christian leadership, ten leadership skill sessions and minisessions, and two sessions to help prepare youth and adults for working together. The manual offers ideas and strategies for creating leadership roles within the parish, inviting youth to leadership, and working with the parents of youth leaders. The plans for implementing sessions and other gathered events are complete, easy to follow, and adaptable to your community.

With the detailed plans provided for the sessions, activities, and strategies in Total Youth Ministry, youth ministry volunteers no longer need to be program designers. By using the Total Youth Ministry resources, you can focus on the important task of finding the leaders who make youth ministry happen. Each session includes an overview, a list of materials, preparation steps, and step-by-step instructions for facilitating a session with confidence. Most sessions also include a variety of ways to extend the theme of the session with prayer, related learning exercises, or follow-through experiences.

## An Added Feature: Digital Download

Each manual has a Digital Download that includes the full content of the manual and is in read-only, non-print format. Handouts are provided in printable color versions (which cannot be customized) and in black-and-white versions that you can customize for the particular needs of a group. You will also find hyperlinks to suggested Web sites.

To access the digital download, visit [www.smp.org/tym\\_resource](http://www.smp.org/tym_resource)

## Participant Resources

Much of the material in the ministry resource manuals is designed to work in a complementary way with the contents of *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth (CFH)* and *The Catholic Youth Bible (CYB)*.

## Ministry Resources for Prayer and Worship: An Overview

As youth grow in faith, they learn to pray always and to pray in all ways. *Ministry Resources for Prayer and Worship* is designed for those who work with and walk with youth in this journey of discipleship, by providing ways for youth to participate in communal prayer and worship. This manual consists of four sections. Part A explores the role of prayer in youth ministry. Part B has three sessions for teaching youth to pray and for practicing praying in different forms. Part C provides eleven communal prayer services, which can be used on a variety of occasions throughout the year. Part D contains strategies and resources for helping youth communities develop patterns of prayer and for including youth in preparing prayers and liturgies.

## Manual Contents: An Overview

### Part A: The Central Role of Prayer in Ministry with Young People

The two chapters in part A explore the central role of prayer in ministry with young people.

#### Chapter 1: Prayerful Youth Ministry

- This chapter provides guidance for integrating a ministry of prayer and worship throughout all youth ministry and catechetical efforts. Also included are strategies, ideas, and resources for developing prayerful ministry with youth.

#### Chapter 2: Youth and Liturgy

- This chapter focuses on three main considerations for promoting youth participation in liturgy: preparing youth for liturgy, preparing liturgies with and for youth, and preparing the community for youth involvement. This chapter also includes practical strategies and helpful resource suggestions.

### Part B: Sessions on Prayer

The three chapters in part B teach about ways to pray and provide a way to practice prayer with a youth community. These chapters can be used in a variety of ways within youth gatherings, religious education programs, or retreats.

### Chapter 3: TAPP into Prayer

- This chapter provides an exploration of biblical prayer models and an explanation of the TAPP approach to prayer: Thanks, Admit, Petition, and Ponder. A communal prayer service and personal journal ideas provide opportunities to practice this prayer model.

### Chapter 4: Praying with Music: Psalms for Today

- This chapter introduces youth to this powerful prayer form. They learn about the origins of the Psalms and consider songs from today that can help them pray. This chapter includes additional strategies for continuing this exploration.

### Chapter 5: Triduum Participation: Watch and Pray

- This chapter prepares youth to participate in the Triduum liturgies by exploring the central symbols, actions, and Scriptures. Extension ideas are provided for each liturgy along with a process for regathering youth to reflect upon their experience.

## Part C: Prayer Services

Part C contains eleven communal prayer services to be used with a youth community on various occasions.

### Chapter 6: Bread: Broken and Shared

- This prayer, which is focused on the miracle of the loaves and fishes, invites participants to share about themselves and connects this sharing to the sharing of the loaves in Jesus' miracle.

### Chapter 7: I Call You Each by Name

- In this prayer, participants reflect upon God's call to discipleship. This prayer includes an optional gathering activity that would help participants learn one another's names; some extensions to the prayer continue this theme.

### Chapter 8: Praying with Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha

- This service provides an opportunity for communities to reflect in prayer upon the story and example of this amazing and faithful American Indian woman.

### Chapter 9: Praying with Our Lady of Guadalupe

- This prayer offers youth communities a time to stop and listen to Our Lady of Guadalupe in the way that Saint Juan Diego did centuries ago. In this prayer, participants hear the message of Mary to all people in the Americas.

### Chapter 10: We've Come This Far by Faith

- This prayer celebrates the faith and hope of African and African American leaders and heroes.

### Chapter 11: Praying for Mothers and Fathers

- This prayer provides youth a chance to pause and reflect with gratitude on the gift of their parents.

### Chapter 12: Praying for Peace

- This prayer invites participants to pray for peace and to consider the needs of their neighbors throughout the world. It includes opportunities to listen and pray using the Scriptures and Church documents.

### Chapter 13: Leadership Commissioning

- This communal prayer should be used in conjunction with the training and formation of youth and adults as leaders in ministry. This prayer focuses on the symbol of oil and describes its use in prayer.

### Chapter 14: Grieving the Loss of a Peer

- This prayer provides an opportunity for youth and adults to pray at a time of loss in the community. It also invites participants to gain strength and hope from Jesus and to celebrate the life of a friend.

### Chapter 15: Praying During Advent

- This four-part prayer service is to be used during the four weeks of Advent. Each week, the participants pray and reflect on the meaning of each candle through the Advent season: hope, peace, joy, love.

### Chapter 16: Return to Me: Reconciliation Service

- This communal penance service uses the story of the prodigal son to engage participants in preparation for and celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation. Through this service, participants reflect on their lives and where in their lives they have strayed from God's call to discipleship. This service uses the form of a "Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution."

## Part D: Strategies and Planning Processes

### Chapter 17: Patterns of Prayer for Youth Communities

- This chapter provides a collection of prayers to help youth communities pray regularly. Also included are ideas for ways to pray anytime and anywhere with a youth community.

### Chapter 18: Planning for Communal Prayer

- This chapter provides a process for introducing youth to planning communal prayer. It includes helpful worksheets and handouts.

### Chapter 19: Preparing for Mass

- This chapter provides guidance for leaders in preparing Mass, along with a step-by-step process for prayerful preparation. Worksheets are included for Mass preparation and for preparing the general intercessions.

## Background Information and Additional Resources

### Background Information

The background pieces in the Digital Download provide the kind of information that will support your ministry with young people and make it more enjoyable.

#### Sacraments and Sacred Seasons: The Worship of the Church

- This background piece provides an opportunity for youth ministry leaders to reflect on the sacramental life of the Church and offers a discussion of the annual cycle of religious feasts and seasons that serves as the broad context of the communal worship of Catholics.

#### Growing as a Catholic Christian: Life in the Spirit

- This piece introduces the concepts of religious identity and styles of faith and briefly describes four faith styles that stereotypically emerge in a sequential order throughout the life process.

### More Prayer Resources

These resources found in the accompanying Digital Download complement the prayers and strategies contained in *Ministry Resources for Prayer and Worship*.

#### Rituals, Rites of Passage, and Blessings

- Rituals are at the heart of Catholic Christian identity and community. This piece includes a variety of rituals and blessings for young people, as well as ideas for acknowledging and celebrating rites of passage with young people and their families.

#### Nongathered Prayer and Worship Strategies

- This piece has a variety of ideas and suggestions for providing prayer opportunities to young people in off-site settings, such as the home.

## How to Use This Manual

*Ministry Resources for Prayer and Worship* is designed to help bring prayer into a variety of ministries and gatherings of youth. Prayer can be part of everything you do with youth. Prayer can also be a focus for gathering. To begin planning for your prayerful youth ministry, you can choose from at least two starting points. One way to start is to consider an event or gathering that you are planning. Review the prayers and resources to identify elements you can include in that event.

Another way to start is to look at your plans for the coming year or season and choose times to gather to learn about prayer and to pray as a community. Some of the prayers can be connected to a season or event in the life of the community. Others are good anytime, anywhere.

The most important starting point for prayer is to consider the people you are praying with: for what do we need to pray today? There is always a need for prayer, and God always provides a way. These resources remind you of ways to get started.

## Implementing the Prayers and Sessions

Each session on prayer and prayer service contains common elements. The “Overview” introduces the prayer. Next is “At a Glance,” which shows the elements of the prayer or the session. “Suggested Time and Group Size” helps you plan for the approximate timing of the prayer and make choices about the size of the group and possible adaptations of the prayer or session. The “Background Reading” section lists connections to Scripture, the *CFH*, and *CYB* articles. “Preparation” suggestions include instructions for materials you will need, including duplicated handouts or resources. “Setting the Prayer Environment” provides suggestions for ways to create a sacred space for prayer. Learning and praying are woven together in many of the communal prayers as participants learn about and practice prayers.

The three prayer sessions in part B include a specific learning element. Two of these sessions include a list of outcomes, and all three have a Study It! section preceding the communal prayer. In the communal prayers in part C, “Setting the Prayer Environment” is followed by the “Order of Service.” As prayer leader, you can follow this order of service to lead the prayer and to cue the other leaders who are assisting. The “Order of Service” always includes these four elements in the pattern for prayer:

### Gather

This movement calls the community to prayer. When they gather, each action within this movement brings the participants toward an openness and attentiveness to what they are about to experience. God calls them to a relationship, and they respond by turning to and engaging God. There are many ways to gather for prayer; this movement helps the participants to stop and truly join in the community at prayer.

### Listen

In this movement the participants listen to God’s Word alive in their lives today. God speaks through a proclamation of Scriptures, Psalms, poetry, music, storytelling, witness, drama, or current readings.

### Respond

After the participants have had the chance to listen and reflect on God’s message, they need to respond as believers to that message. Through the use of ritual actions, gestures, prayers of intercession, a song, journaling, or composed prayers, participants are invited to a deeper relationship with God.

### Go Forth

The final movement of prayer is intended to motivate the community to leave the place where they are gathered and “go therefore and make disciples” (Matt. 28:19), just as Jesus did. In prayer they strengthen their bond with God, but God also inspires them to love and serve the Lord and one another. The sending forth action points them to where the world needs

Christian action. Some elements in sending the members of the assembly forth include closing prayers, blessings, songs, commissioning, a procession, a sign of peace, or some action.

Following the Order of Service, you will find ideas for further explorations. These may include suggestions for extending the prayer or session, *ideas* for connecting families with prayer, or journal questions.

## Handouts and Resources

All the necessary handouts and resources are found at the end of each chapter in this manual. They are also found in the accompanying Digital Download, in both color and black-and-white versions. The black-and-white materials can be customized to suit your particular needs.

## Involving Other Leaders in Prayer

Youth and adults can share in leading these prayers and sessions in a number of ways:

- **Lectors.** All the prayers include a Scripture proclamation, which can be assigned to one or more leaders.
- **Prayer readers.** Each prayer has many segments that can be prayed by an assortment of leaders.
- **Music leaders.** A musician or a small choir can be responsible for leading participants in song.
- **Music assistants.** Many of the prayers suggest reflective music; a leader can be invited to help with the CD player so other prayer leaders can focus on spoken prayers and instructions.
- **Prayer environment assistants.** Invite youth or adults to help prepare the prayer environment and greet the community that gathers for prayer. Invite both youth and adults to assist as leaders with prayer. Be sure to take time in advance to prepare all leaders for their roles.

## Preparing Yourself

Read each prayer or session before you implement it to make sure you understand the flow of the prayer and the preparations and adaptations needed for your community.

In the week before the prayer, pay attention to what is happening among the youth in your community, as well as what is happening in the wider community, in the nation, and in the world so you can bring these things to prayer.

Spend time in prayer with the Scriptures or the focus of the prayer you will lead. Take time to pray for the leaders who will share leadership in prayer, as well as for the youth and the adults who will participate. Allow adequate time for preparation: gathering of supplies, setting for the music

and readings, preparing the leaders, and creating the prayer environment. Like a good host, you will want to be relaxed and ready when the participants arrive so you can truly be present and begin the prayer from the moment you greet the members of the community.

## Standard Materials

To save time, consider gathering frequently used materials in bins and storing those bins in a place that is accessible to all staff and volunteer leaders. Here are some recommendations for organizing the bins.

### Supply Bin

The following items appear frequently in the materials checklists:

- *The Catholic Youth Bible*, at least one copy for every two participants
- *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*, one copy for leader reference
- candles and matches
- items to create a prayer space (for example, a colored cloth, a cross, a bowl for water, and a vase for flowers)
- masking tape
- cellophane tape
- washable and permanent markers (thick-line and thin-line)
- pens or pencils
- self-stick notes
- scissors
- newsprint
- blank paper, scrap paper, and notebook paper
- journals, one for each participant
- index cards
- baskets

### Music Bin

Music can be a profound part of communal prayer. Consider a wide selection of music as you prepare for communal prayers. Begin with a small collection of tapes or CDs to use in prayer in your ministry, and add to it over time. You might ask the young people to put some of their favorite music in the bin. The bin might include the following styles of music:

- *Prayerful, reflective instrumental music*, such as the kind that is available in the adult alternative section of music stores. Reflective music helps set a mood for prayer and can include classical, instrumental, and synthesized music. Labels that specialize in this type of music include Windham Hill and Narada.
- *Popular songs with powerful messages*. Using popular music within prayer can help bring the lives of young people into prayer and reinforce prayer within a youth's world. If you are not well versed in popular music, ask the young people to offer suggestions.



- *Contemporary Christian music* includes a variety of styles and can match many themes, topics, and the Scriptures. This music can often be purchased in Christian bookstores, larger music stores, or from Web sites.
- *The music of contemporary Catholic artists.* Many teens are familiar with the work of Catholic musicians such as Steve Angrisano, Sarah Hart, David W. Kauffman, Matt Maher, Michael Mahler, Jesse Manibusan, and Danielle Rose.

Also consider including songbooks and hymnals. Many of the musical selections suggested in Total Youth Ministry are taken from the *Spirit & Song* hymnal, published by Oregon Catholic Press (OCP). If you wish to order copies of this hymnal, please contact OCP directly at [www.ocp.org](http://www.ocp.org) or by calling 800-548-8749. Including copies of your parish's chosen hymnal is a suitable option as well. You might also check with your liturgy or music director for recordings of parish hymns.

Contemporary Christian music and Catholic musicians are providing songs rooted in the Scriptures that challenge us to be disciples who serve others. Collections of Catholic hymns and songs can help make the connection between communal prayer and parish worship.

## Some Closing Thoughts

We hope you find this material helpful as you invite young people into a deeper relationship with God and with the marvelous community of faith we know as the Catholic Church. Please be assured of our continual prayers for you and the young people you serve.

## Your Comments or Suggestions

Saint Mary's Press wants to know your reactions to the materials in the Total Youth Ministry series. We are open to all kinds of suggestions, including these:

- an alternative way to conduct an activity
- an audiovisual or other media resource that worked well with this material
- a book or an article you found helpful
- an original activity or process
- a prayer experience or service
- a helpful preparation for other leaders
- an observation about the themes or content of this material

If you have a comment or suggestion, please write to us at 702 Terrace Heights, Winona, MN 55987-1318; call us at our toll-free number, 800-533-8095; or e-mail us at [smpp@smpp.org](mailto:smpp@smpp.org). Your ideas will help improve future editions of Total Youth Ministry.



## Part A

# **The Central Role of Prayer in Ministry with Young People**



# 1 Prayerful Youth Ministry

## Introduction

Young people's lives, like adult's lives, are filled with distractions. Many voices shout to youth, calling them in different directions as the youth search for peace and security. As teachers and ministers privileged to journey with young people, we invite them to prayer, and we create an environment that calls them to prayer. Most of all, we get out of the way, and we help young people recognize the movement of the Holy Spirit in their lives through prayer.

The *Catechism* describes prayer as gift, covenant, and communion (see CCC, nos. 2558–2565). Prayer is *gift* because we receive even our hunger for prayer as grace from God. Prayer is *covenant* because we recognize that it is “the heart that prays” (CCC, no. 2562). Prayer is our lifeline in our relationship with God; it is the source of our integration as a person and the compass that guides our communication with others. Prayer is *communion* because in prayer we are resting in and waiting on God as the Holy Trinity. Gift, covenant, and communion: these are words to describe a powerful relationship possible in the heart of prayer. The job of ministry leaders is to help youth recognize and receive this gift, enter more deeply into covenantal relationship with God, and experience the communion that God has prepared for them in love.

## The Ministry of Prayer and Worship

“The ministry of prayer and worship *celebrates* and *deepens* young people's relationship with Jesus Christ through the bestowal of grace, communal prayer and liturgical experiences; it *awakens* their awareness of the spirit at work in their lives; it *incorporates* young people more fully into the sacramental life of the Church, especially eucharist; it *nurtures* the personal prayer life of young people and it *fosters* family rituals and prayers” (*Renewing the Vision*, p. 44).

## Reflect

What is prayer? The answers are as varied as the people who pray. Here are some thoughts on prayer:

“For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy,”<sup>1</sup> wrote Saint Thérèse of Lisieux (CCC, no. 2558).

“Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God,”<sup>2</sup> wrote Saint John Damascene (CCC, no. 2559).

“Prayer is sometimes a speechless, wordless union occurring at a level deeper than the images and concepts of the surface mind” (Kathleen R. Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, p. 70).

This paragraph, from the United States Catholic Bishops' document on youth ministry, describes the breadth of the ministry of prayer and worship. Some foundational principles are evident in this vision.

## **Prayer Is About Relationships**

Young people's prayers join them to the heart of our loving God. This relationship is celebrated in community. Youth ministry leaders are called to help youth grow in their personal prayer life, their prayer with their family, their prayer in community, and their full participation with the whole faith community at prayer in the sacraments, especially the central prayer of our faith, the liturgy of the Eucharist.

God has already initiated the relationship with youth. We help celebrate and deepen this relationship, but it is God's grace, not our efforts, that created the relationship. We cooperate with the Spirit already at work in young people's lives by helping young people pause and reflect on the work of the Spirit in their moment of time, in their lives, and in their world.

## **Prayer Is Integrating and Holistic**

Prayer and worship is more than putting aside a few minutes for an opening or a closing prayer. God is looking for openness to prayer in the hearts, minds, and lives of all people. What the Church strives for in its ministry with young people is not a program filled with prayers but a truly prayerful youth ministry.

Prayerful youth ministry is about praying always and praying in all ways. Every part of our lives is a matter worthy of God's time in our personal prayer. In the same way, everything done in youth ministry can be brought to prayer. Pray for young people, pray with them, pray together in each moment of ministry, and encourage continued prayer beyond the times of gathering. Introducing youth to the richness of the Catholic faith tradition helps them experience a variety of ways to pray.

The ministry of prayer and worship is not separate from the other components of youth ministry; it is an integral part of ministry with young people. When youth are learning about the faith, take time to pray that the learning seeds fall on good ground. When they learn about justice and serving those in need, pray for an attitude of service and for the strength to change their own lives. When sharing the good news with others, pray to stay humble and courageous. When learning about leadership, pray to be foot-washers and leaders modeled on Jesus. In all the components, prayer can and does play an important role.

## Dimensions of a Prayerful Youth Ministry

Within the variety of ways that young people gather in the parish, diverse prayer experiences can be provided. These prayers can (and should) vary in length and style to help youth experience different ways to pray. Sometimes prayer gathers young people, helps them to know one another, and begins the process of becoming community. Sometimes prayer is part of gatherings as an opening or closing prayer, or it can be a prayer within a teaching moment or community building time that integrates a theme. Sometimes prayer is the gathering; a communal prayer can be the reason to gather with a youth community.

### Provide a Variety of Communal Prayer Services

Communal prayer with youth introduces them to the tradition of prayer and ritual and also brings the life experiences and symbols of life for youth into prayer. Communal prayer should also include considerations of the ethnic and cultural heritage of the participants. It is important to introduce youth to prayer that includes the richness of faith that makes them truly Catholic and universal, by including prayer symbols, rituals, music, environment, styles, and texts from the rich diversity of people of faith throughout the world.

### Promote Participation in the Sacraments

Any planning for prayer with youth should focus on building toward their participation in the central prayer of the faith, which is the Mass. Part of prayerful ministry can lead youth to the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, the Eucharist, and Confirmation. The life of service as a community should prepare youth to discern and be open to the sacraments of Marriage and Holy Orders. Young people should also experience the sacraments of healing by experiencing ways to participate in Reconciliation (also called Penance) and by providing for those who are in need of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

### Teach Youth to Pray

Teaching young people to pray occurs each time they participate in communal prayer. Youth ministry efforts can be intentional in also teaching youth the prayer traditions of the faith and providing them with a way to pray, a time to pray, and a place to pray. Faith formation efforts with young people should teach them about prayer and introduce them to a variety of prayer practices. By helping young people recognize and remember the holy in their lives, these ministry efforts also help turn youth toward prayer.

## TryThis

To promote a variety of prayer experiences, consider hosting a prayer banquet. This banquet is like a progressive dinner except that the community experiences a number of different prayer styles. At one home introduce one style, such as praying with creation; at another home invite the participants to gather in a guided meditation; in another home provide an opportunity to pray with the Scriptures, and so on.

## TryThis

Consider the following days or occasions for prayer in your community. Many of these occasions have helpful Web sites with suggestions and resources.

- ◆ **December 1.** World AIDS Day ([www.worldaidsday.org](http://www.worldaidsday.org))
- ◆ **January 1.** World Day of Peace (sponsored by the Vatican, [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/special\\_features/peace/prayer-peace\\_index.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/peace/prayer-peace_index.html))
- ◆ **January 18–25.** Prayer for Christian Unity (sponsored by the World Council of Churches, [www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/faith/wop2003/contents.html](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/faith/wop2003/contents.html))
- ◆ **First Friday in March.** World Day of Prayer ([www.worlddayofprayer.net](http://www.worlddayofprayer.net))
- ◆ **April 22.** Earth Day ([www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net); see also Saint Francis and Earth Day at [www.americancatholic.org/Features/Francis/earthday.asp](http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/Francis/earthday.asp))
- ◆ **June 21.** World Peace and Prayer Day ([www.worldpeaceday.com](http://www.worldpeaceday.com))
- ◆ **September.** Grandparents Day, celebrated on the first Sunday after Labor Day ([www.grandparents-day.com](http://www.grandparents-day.com))

## Pray the Moments of Youth Ministry

Moving beyond opening and closing prayer means taking the time to pray the moments of ministry. When a youth sprains an ankle playing volleyball, the youth community should take time to pray. When a disaster in the world or an accident or an illness in the community is spoken of, those gathered should stop and pray. When youth and adults finish building a home for a family in need, they should stop and pray. As the bus is leaving for the retreat center, those gathered should stop and pray. Before eating a meal together, all should stop and pray. When the community celebrates with the nation or the world, it can use those occasions for prayer, such as World Day of Prayer or Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The occasions in a young person's life—their birthdays, the day they receive their driver's license, graduation, or going back to school—are important moments of prayer. Moments of huge concern for young people, such as the death of a peer, are often the agenda of a gathering. In these moments the community should turn to God as a sign of faith, gratitude, and absolute dependency on God's love and greater understanding. Praying these moments is being truthful about our relationship with God. Youth who experience such life-moment praying of youth ministry leaders, as well as the community at large, will pick up this pattern in their own lives; when this happens, prayer moves from the "should do" list and becomes as natural as breathing or eating.

## Pray with and for Youth

When meeting with youth, it is appropriate to ask to pray with them. This question roots the conversation in the faith and puts the future under God's continued guidance. Besides praying with youth, as leaders in youth ministry, you should include youth in your daily prayer intentions. Develop a pattern for prayer that includes praying for individual youth and for the youth of the community and of the world. It is equally important to ask young people what they would like to pray for. Consider providing an intentions book or a white board where youth leave intentions that become part of your prayer as leaders and teachers, as well as part of the community's prayer.

## Pray as a Team

Take time as a team of people who serve youth to pray about the ministry. Teams that work together, laugh together, and pray together bring steadiness, consistency, and faithfulness to their ministry. If a team is rooted in prayer, it will not rise or fall on whether youth show up at a program or whether they face a struggle in the community.

## Support Families of Youth in Prayer

Encourage families to pray at home with their teens by providing resources and support to find ways that work for them. Starting patterns of prayer



with families of adolescents is harder if this was not a pattern when children were younger. There are ways to help. Consider bringing parents of teens together to talk about prayer and ritual at home. Families of adolescents can find times to pray as a family—mealtimes, morning time, bedtime, seasons of the year. You can also help families pray the moments of family life: celebrations, birthdays, overcoming conflict, experiencing forgiveness. Create simple suggestions to help families find a place of prayer in their home, such as the family table. Suggest creating a family prayer space that includes a Bible, a cross, and a candle. Families can name prayer intentions for one another by having a white board in the home that lists prayer intentions. You can also support families in experiencing a variety of ways to pray by providing times for family prayer in the parish community.

## **Include Youth in Planning and Leading Prayer**

The last dimension of prayerful youth ministry demonstrates the need for youth and for the community's belief in their gifts—by providing ways for young people to share in leadership and planning for shared prayer. How will you bring the world of youth into conversation with God in your shared prayer? One way is to invite youth to help bring the symbols, music, issues, and tempo of their life to shared prayer. Youth can help lead prayer: many youth are gifted and sincere presiders for communal prayer. They grow in their experience and readiness as they are taught to pray, as they take the time to plan prayer together, and as they are provided formation and mentoring in becoming prayer leaders.

## **Conclusion**

Like Jesus on the road to Emmaus, all youth ministry leaders journey with young people as they question, struggle, and celebrate. The journey becomes a prayer journey when laughter, tears, and questions are brought to God. May your adventure with youth be a journey blessed with creativity, innovation, faithfulness, and renewal.

## **Resources for Prayer**

### ***The Catholic Youth Bible***

The *CYB* is filled with Pray It! connections and indexes that are extremely helpful in preparing prayer. See the index of the *CYB* for:

- **Events, People, and Teachings**
  - Old Testament Stories
  - New Testament Stories
  - People

## Prayer for Leaders Who Journey in Prayer with Youth

God,  
come now and send your  
Spirit,  
fill us with your fire of love,  
the passion that comes from  
you alone.  
Activate in each and every  
one of us  
the blessings and gifts that  
you have instilled  
and planted in us.  
Help us see our gift, help us  
release the gift, and help  
us share the gift.  
What is the gift?  
The gift is you, your presence.  
The presence that we need,  
the presence that we ache  
for,  
the presence that helps us to  
do more than just survive.  
The presence that is true  
blessing, true resurrection,  
and true grace.  
Be with us, now.  
Amen

(David Haas, *Finding the  
Calm*, p. 67.)

- Prayers
- Miracles of Jesus
- Parables of Jesus
- Teachings of Jesus
- **Sacrament Connections**
- **Life and Faith Issues**
- **Article Subject Index**

## *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*

The *CFH* contains two sections that help teens understand the topics of prayer and worship:

- Part B: Liturgy and Sacraments
- Part C: Christian Prayer

## Understanding and Leading Prayer

- Huebsch, Bill. *A New Look at Prayer: Searching for Bliss*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991.
- Hughes, Kathleen. "Lay Presiding—The Art of Leading Prayer." In *American Essays in Liturgy*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1988.
- Morneau, Robert F. *Paths to Prayer*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1998.

## Praying for Teens

- Haas, David. *Finding the Calm—Biblical Meditations to Nourish Those Who Nurture Teens*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1997.
- Koch, Carl. *Send Your Spirit—Praying for Our Teens*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1999.

## Promoting Family Prayer and Spirituality

- Calderone-Stewart, Lisa-Marie. *A Family Guide to "The Catholic Youth Bible."* Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2000.
- Chesto, Kathleen. *Family Prayer for Family Times: Traditions, Celebrations, and Rituals*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1996.
- Curran, Dolores. *Dolores Curran on Family Prayer*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1997.
- Nelson, Gertrud Mueller. *To Dance with God—Family Ritual and Community Celebration*. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.
- Roberto, John, ed. and project coordinator. *FamilyWorks*. Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1995.

## Books with Prayers and Music to Use in Planning Communal Prayer

- Cornerstone Media. *Scripture Themes and Popular Music* (a two-CD set with a leader's book), *Stations of the Cross: A Journey You'll Never Forget!* and *The Themes of Holy Week: Four Additional Meditations* (also a two-CD set with a leader's book). Available at [www.cornerstonemedia.org](http://www.cornerstonemedia.org) and also distributed by Saint Mary's Press.
- Delgatto, Laurie, ed. *Hey, God! What Now? Biblical Assurance for Life's Questions*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2003.
- Haas, David. *Prayers Before an Awesome God: The Psalms for Teenagers*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1998.
- Koch, Carl, ed. *Dreams Alive—Prayers by Teenagers*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1991. (Note: Several other books in this series are collections of prayers written by youth.)
- Loder, Ted. *Guerrillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle*. San Diego: Lura-media, 1984.
- *Spirit & Song: A Seeker's Guide for Liturgy and Prayer*. Portland, OR: Oregon Catholic Press ([www.ocp.org](http://www.ocp.org)), 1999.

## Books with Planned Communal Prayer Services

- Ayer, Jane E. *Guided Meditations for Ordinary Time: Courage, Loss, Gratitude, and Needs*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1998. (Note: This series has twelve books, with included CDs or audiocassettes, on a variety of topics.)
- Calderone-Stewart, Lisa-Marie. *Prayer Works for Teens*. Book 1. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1997. (This series has four volumes.)
- Dues, Greg. *Seasonal Prayer Services for Teenagers*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991.
- Kielbasa, Marilyn. *Prayer: Celebrating and Reflecting with Girls*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2002.
- Regan, S. Kevin. *Teen Prayer Services: 20 Themes for Reflection*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1992.

## Helping Youth Learn About Prayer and Sacraments

- *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2004.

# 2 Youth and Liturgy: Promoting Full Participation

## Introduction

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people . . . is their right and duty by reason of their baptism. (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [Sacrosanctum Concilium]*, no. 14)

In many parish communities, there is a growing sense of urgency and importance regarding youth participation in liturgy. Many young people are concerned that their experience of liturgy does not speak to their lives. Parents describe their frustration in encouraging their teens to attend Mass and their concern that youth are losing the practice of their faith. Pastors, youth ministry leaders, catechists, and other parish leaders know the potential that liturgy has for including youth in the community and promoting conversion; yet they see a gap between how Mass could reach all the assembly and how Mass is experienced on Sunday.

These voices all express a hope for the full, active, and conscious participation of young people and the entire assembly in liturgy.

## Preparing Youth for Liturgy

C. S. Lewis once described liturgy participation in this way:

As long as you notice, and have to count the steps, you are not yet dancing but only learning how to dance. A good shoe is a shoe you don't notice. Good reading becomes possible when you do not consciously think about eyes, or light, or print, or spelling. The perfect liturgy would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God. (*Letters to Malcolm*, p. 4)

Youth want and deserve preparation and support so they can join in the dance of liturgy and experience the depth of God's love and embrace in this, the central prayer of the Catholic faith. A parish can do a great deal to prepare young people to participate before those young people ever enter the door of the church.

Another way to prepare youth for liturgy is to promote prayer in all ministries with young people. This can be accomplished by helping youth find a way, a place, and a time for personal prayer. Bring a spirit of prayerfulness to youth ministry by claiming prayer moments during your time with young people. For example, when a young person is injured during a sporting event, you can stop and involve the whole community in a prayer of blessing as the youth is transported for medical treatment.

All the experiences of prayer help lead youth to the central prayer of our faith: the Eucharistic liturgy. The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry describes this relationship in *From Age to Age: The Challenge of Worship with Adolescents*, "The symbols and rituals of liturgy become more meaningful for youth when they draw from their experiences of private prayer" (no. 58).

To help youth participate actively in the parish community, youth ministry leaders need to build toward this participation throughout all their youth ministry efforts. Leaders need to ask themselves how they can support youth in prayer participation through silence, song, shared prayer, posture, and listening. Attentiveness to prayer then becomes the agenda for preparing youth for liturgy.

## Conditions for Active Participation in Liturgy

Youth and adults participate more fully in liturgy if . . .

- they are able to bring their *lives of prayer* to the shared and communal prayer of the assembly
- they are *comfortable in the gathered community*
- they are willing to *sing the prayer*
- they know the shared *prayers in words, posture, and gesture*
- they know how to *listen to the Word* of God and apply the Word to their lives
- they are *comfortable with silence*
- they are *open to symbol and ritual*
- they *love and live the Eucharist*
- they understand what it means in the dismissal to be sent to *live out their baptismal call*

Intentional preparation also helps the young people get ready for liturgy. The preparation includes helping them prepare for the upcoming Sunday liturgy through sharing and discussion of the Sunday Scripture readings during the week. Youth can be prepared for participation in special

## TryThis

To prepare youth for liturgy and to help the community serve young people, consider these helpful resources:

- ◆ Fleming, Austin. *Preparing for Liturgy: A Theology and Spirituality*, rev. ed. Chicago: Liturgy Training Press, 1997.
- ◆ Francis, Mark R. *Shape a Circle Ever Wider: Liturgical Inculturation in the United States*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Press, 2000.
- ◆ Hughes, Kathleen. *Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Press, 1999.
- ◆ McGloin, Kevin. *What Every Catholic Needs to Know About the Mass*. San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, Inc., 2001.
- ◆ National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. *From Age to Age: The Challenge of Worship with Adolescents*. Washington: National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, 1997.
- ◆ Richstatter, Thomas, OFM. *Sacraments: How Catholics Pray*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1995.
- ◆ *The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource*. Vol. 1. Chicago: Liturgy Training Press, 1991.
- ◆ Brian Singer-Towns, ed. *Vibrant Worship with Youth*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2000.

feasts and holy days if you take time during the week before the event to prepare for the special nature of the celebration. Besides preparing for specific liturgies, youth ministry also supports young people by helping them grow in their understanding of the pattern and the nature of liturgy. *From Age to Age* says, “A specific objective of intentional catechesis for liturgy is to assist teens through reflection and sharing in exploring how liturgical symbols and rituals celebrate their experiences of God and life events” (no. 39).

## Ideas, Strategies, and Resources

- Promote prayer within all ministry efforts and events with youth:
  - Promote personal prayer life.
  - Bring a prayerful spirit to all ministry.
  - Prepare prayer with and for youth.
- Build time in youth ministry for silence, symbol, and ritual.
- Include music and song throughout youth ministry to help youth sing their prayers in liturgy.
- Support parents by advocating and preparing young people for participation in liturgy.
- Gather with parents and share hopes, ideas, and concerns. Consider these suggestions for parents:
  - Families attend liturgy together. Parents should let their children know this is what they do as a family and talk about why they believe in participation.
  - Make going to Mass an occasion—go to breakfast afterward or join in a special family activity.
  - Parents should share with their children their feelings about liturgy and their reasons why their young persons’ participation is important to them. Sharing their underlying values for being part of the community at prayer during Mass is important.
  - Parents and adult leaders should be careful about complaining about the parish or the pastor. It is normal for adults to discuss things about the community with one another, but youth can misinterpret such concerns and critique as negativism and be discouraged from being part of the community.
  - If parents really struggle with encouraging their child to attend Mass, suggest that the parents ask the young person to go to Mass as a gift to the parents. Sometimes adults just cannot convince young people they should go to Mass for their own good; however, parents can let their child know what it means to them to attend Mass together.
- Bring the Sunday readings into a young person’s life during the week:
  - Utilize prayer forms, such as *lectio divina*.
  - Utilize themes from Sunday readings for gatherings during the week and for retreats.

- Provide resources that help youth and their families prepare for liturgy at home.
- Provide intentional preparation for youth participation in liturgy:
  - Have a “walk-through” liturgy, with the presider or someone who is knowledgeable providing commentary about the pattern and the prayer responses in the Mass. These comments are made briefly at several points within an actual liturgy. Note: Use this strategy sparingly. You do not want to over-explain the symbols of liturgy, but the explanations can help renew a youth’s understanding of Mass. Many young people have not considered the nature of liturgy since their first Communion preparation.
  - Invite someone knowledgeable about liturgy and the history of the worship space to give youth a tour of the church. The tour leader can familiarize youth with worship space and symbols.
  - Create a retreat that focuses on the pattern and elements of Mass. During a weekend of sessions and activities, explore each aspect of the liturgy from the Introductory Rites to the Dismissal. Use the resources suggested at the end of this section to help you plan a similar activity for your group.
  - Promote participation in liturgy in different parishes and communities. For instance, participate in experiences of liturgy with different ethnic communities. Try experiencing parishes with different styles of liturgy, such as a university campus ministry liturgy or a liturgy at your diocesan cathedral.
  - Participate in liturgies with youth and take time for discussion before and after the liturgy. For example, you could organize a breakfast club by having youth come before liturgy to break open the Word and then participate in liturgy together. After liturgy, go out to breakfast, or take turns sharing breakfast in one another’s homes.

### Resources for Preparing Youth for Liturgy

- *Vibrant Worship with Youth: Keys for Implementing “From Age to Age: The Challenge of Worship with Adolescents.”* See especially:
  - “Liturgical Catechesis: A Parish Workshop Model,” by Lisa-Marie Calderone-Stewart
  - “Ready to Assemble: Youth as Part of the Liturgical Assembly,” by Michael Novak

### **Catholic Faith Handbook connections**

Chapter 18 provides an understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist; chapter 34, “Praying with the Scriptures,” describes a *lectio divina* process for personal prayer; chapter 35, “Praying Together,” describes the centrality of the Eucharist.



## Preparing Liturgies with and for Youth

Liturgy celebrates our relationship with a loving God. In *Music in Catholic Worship*, a document of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the connection between relationships and worship is described:

People in love make signs of love, not only to express their love but also to deepen it. Love never expressed dies. Christians' love for Christ and for one another and Christians' faith in Christ and in one another must be expressed in the signs and symbols of celebration or they will die.

Just as disciples once gathered in Jesus' name, the community gathers to worship and draw strength from the Eucharist to continue the mission Jesus began. One of the implications of focusing on discipleship is the need to connect liturgy and justice. This connection can be made within the music selections, the intercessions for the Prayer of the Faithful, the homily, and through the announcements of community service within the liturgy. The relationship between justice and worship is important to all members of the faith community, but for youth this relationship becomes a litmus test of relevancy. Young people expect the community to serve as Jesus did, and they long to celebrate this call to justice in the community's worship. Justice and worship connect with the idealism that accompanies adolescence (see *From Age to Age*, no. 41).

Vibrant worship includes an emphasis on the following four areas:

- **Effective preaching of the Word.** Young people require dynamic homilies, which employ storytelling and life examples, to make liturgy meaningful to them.
- **Youthful spirit in music and song.** Youth (in fact, the entire assembly) need to be able to sing their prayers in a sound and at a pace that matches their lives. They also need to become familiar with the Church's musical traditions. A youthful spirit in music and song can be brought to the worshipping community by working collaboratively with music leaders and by looking at the instrumentation, style, and setting for musical texts used in liturgies. Involving youth in the selection of music and inviting them to participate as musicians and choir members also gives them an opportunity to share their gifts.
- **Visually dynamic symbols and actions.** Youth can become bored (so too can the entire assembly) when the visual nature of liturgy is weak. *Sacred Liturgy* calls for "signs perceptible to the senses" (no. 7). This principle challenges parishes to make the signs and symbols of liturgy shout through the preparation of the environment and the planning for participation in the prayers and actions of liturgy.
- **Interactive and communal dimension.** Prayer as a community reflects and celebrates its relationship as a community. Within and around



liturgy, the parish needs to help youth (and all members of the assembly) feel welcome and accepted. The parish also must strive to intentionally build and celebrate relationships within this shared prayer (see *From Age to Age*, nos. 61–75).

These four areas are important to people of all ages, but communities have found that attending to these areas helps promote youth participation. The process of drawing youth into the life of the parish involves leaders from many different ministries working together for the good of the whole assembly.

As part of “Effective Youth Ministry Practices in Catholic Parishes,” a joint research project of the Center for Ministry Development and Saint Mary’s Press, youth described their hopes for liturgy. The 140 young people interviewed for the project spoke passionately about wanting to pray the liturgy with all their senses. The youth said they desired inspiring homilies and vibrant music. Parish staffs were among the 232 adults interviewed for the study, and they spoke about the powerful energy that youth participation brings to the whole parish community. Youth involvement in liturgical ministries was noted in the study as something that invigorated parish liturgy for the whole community. Working for the good of the whole is challenging. The root meaning of the word ritual is “to fit together” (Biziou, *The Joy of Ritual*, p. 10). As a ritual, liturgy celebrates our relationship with God and one another and helps fit our lives together. However, different members of the congregation have different relationships with God and with one another. They also have different styles of celebrating. These differences make liturgy challenging. The obvious solution might be to have weekly special liturgies for youth. But parishes must avoid strategies that focus only on creating liturgy experiences that meet adolescents’ needs. To become lifetime parishioners, youth need to experience the give and take of belonging to a community that balances the needs of all generations. Their experience of liturgy and community will otherwise be a cliff experience: once they are no longer adolescents, where will they go? The hope for youth is that they experience parish life and its communal worship at liturgy as nourishment for a lifetime as disciples.

During liturgy, the entire community is called to worship together. Throughout parish life, and especially in worship, ministry leaders and communities are recognizing the need to include young people more intentionally within the wider assembly. This is an important directive of *Renewing the Vision*, which quotes the following from the U.S. bishops’ 1995 pastoral letter “A Message to Youth: Pathways to Hope”: “Parishes should be a place where [young people] are welcomed, grow in Jesus Christ, and minister side by side with the adults of the community” (p. 13).

This need to include youth is also noted in mainline youth ministry publications. Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster critique the separate

youth congregation approach in *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry*. Creasy Dean describes this approach as “the one-eared Mickey Mouse model of youth ministry” (p. 31). In this model the congregation as a whole (visualized as a large circle) has an attached but separate youth congregation (visualized by a smaller circle attached to the large circle). Youth experience their belonging, worship, and service as part of a youth congregation that runs on parallel tracks to the adult congregation. After years of participation in a youth congregation, young people may never make it into the adult congregation because it is foreign to them. The adult congregation’s energy, style of worship, and network of relationships are a whole new world that years of youth ministry have not prepared the young person for. As Creasy Dean states:

The upshot of the overwhelming dominance of youth-group models of ministry was a deepening chasm between youth ministry and the theology of the church as a whole. When youth graduated from the “youth group”—the only form of ministry many young people had ever experienced—they effectively graduated from church as well. (p. 30)

To avoid parallel congregations, parishes must focus on youth in the congregation while providing for ministry to youth with their peers. In worship this means that each liturgy is open to the full participation of youth and adults in the community (see *From Age to Age*, no. 93).

## Ideas, Strategies, and Resources

- Promote youth participation in all liturgies where youth are present.
- Prepare occasional liturgies for youth. See chapter 19, “Preparation for Mass.”
- Involve youth in preparing liturgies for the parish community:
  - Include youth in preparing non-Eucharistic liturgies and prayer services for the community.
  - Prepare Eucharistic liturgies for the whole community, which will be “gifted” by youth charisms and involvement.
- Involve and apprentice youth in liturgical ministries. To prepare youth for liturgical ministries, involve them in parish and diocesan ministries formation. Also consider a ministry mentor approach: assign two adult liturgical ministers to work with two to four youth in each ministry area. Provide support and materials to the mentors and the youth as needed.

## Resources for Involving Youth in Liturgy

- For specific liturgical ministry preparation materials, see the Basics of Ministry series provided by Liturgical Training Publications (LTP): “Guide for Lectors,” “Guide for Ministers of Communion,” and “Guide

for Ushers and Greeters.” These materials are written for adults but could be adapted for youth. Contact LTP at [www.ltp.org](http://www.ltp.org) or 800-933-1800.

- *Vibrant Worship with Youth: Keys for Implementing “From Age to Age: The Challenge of Worship with Adolescents”* includes these helpful chapters:
  - “Active Teens in Liturgical Ministries,” by Stephen Petrunak
  - “Spirited Music and Singing,” by Thomas N. Tomaszek
  - “Ten Things to Keep in Mind When Preaching to Youth,” by Bishop Kenneth Untener
  - “Vibrant Multicultural Liturgy: Saint Michael’s Story,” by Tom Hein-en and C. J. Hribal
  - “Youth and Liturgy: A Hispanic Perspective,” by Peter M. Kolar
  - “Youth and Liturgy: An African American Perspective,” by Valerie Shields

## Preparing the Community for Youth Involvement

The third strategy in promoting youth participation in liturgy is the most foundational and the most challenging: preparing the community for youth involvement. In *Renewing the Vision*, this goal for parishes is described as “youth-friendly” (p. 13). This community vision welcomes the gifts, ideas, and concerns of young people. In the worshipping life of the community, this means engaging the energy of youth without losing the communal dimension of the liturgy. The task is not easy, and it begins with rebuilding relationships between youth and adults. *From Age to Age* also addresses this concern for the worshipping community: “Pastoral and liturgical leaders need to provide a welcome and safe environment in which teens can offer their gifts and enthusiasm” (no. 84).

Youth want to be essential to the community. A workshop presenter who asked young people what they needed in order to participate more fully in their parish expected the usual answers: youthful music, dynamic homilies, seeing more youth involved in ministries. One young woman stated her need to be essential: “What I need is to know that someone would notice if I wasn’t there.” She offered a truth about youth involvement: youth are essential to many of the commitments they make to their schools, their workplaces, and their homes. They desire to be essential in their parish communities as they pray, as they share their lives, and as they serve others in God’s name.

When youth are not present, the community is diminished and deprived of the gifts they bring. Leaders in ministry with youth can help youth take their place in the worshipping community. Adult leaders should be advocates for youth involvement and strive to create the hospitality in the

parish communities that welcomes youth participation. An advocacy role puts youth ministry leaders in dialogue with other leaders in the parish. “Pastoral leaders must work together to present the parish as welcoming and supportive” (*From Age to Age*, no. 37).

## Ideas, Strategies, and Resources

- Become a youth-friendly parish community:
  - Provide for hospitality throughout parish life and especially at the Eucharist.
  - Promote youth visibility in parish life and in liturgies.
  - Provide youth with a voice in parish life and leadership.
- Help the community to know how to support youth involvement.
  - Educate the parish about youth and youth ministry.
  - Communicate simple ways for the community to support youth.
  - Model inclusion throughout parish ministries.
- Work together as a parish community to promote youth participation.
- Assess the strengths and areas to grow in the parish regarding youth and liturgy, using resource 1, “Planning for Youth and Liturgy Assessment Form.”
  - Listen to youth and help the community hear their concerns and dreams.
  - Build relationships with and provide resources for leaders who can influence youth participation.
  - Create a pastoral plan for the parish that promotes “fully conscious, and active participation” (*Sacred Liturgy*, no. 14).
- To create a pastoral plan, gather a variety of leaders in the parish to review this article and *From Age to Age*. Create a plan that addresses these elements:
  - As a parish, we will prepare youth for liturgy by . . .
  - We will prepare liturgies with and for youth by . . .
  - We will include youth in liturgical ministries by . . .
  - We will prepare the community for youth participation by . . .

## Resources for Full and Active Participation

- *Vibrant Worship with Youth*, especially these chapters:
  - “Liturgical Catechesis: A Parish Workshop Model,” by Lisa-Marie Calderone-Stewart.
  - “Ready to Assemble: Youth as Part of the Liturgical Assembly,” by Michael Novak.
- *Celebrate Youth: Becoming a Youth Friendly Church* (Naugatuck, CT: The Center for Ministry Development, 1998) is a resource for parishes to implement *Renewing the Vision*.

## Conclusion

Liturgy is an *action* of Christ and his body, the church. It is ritual worship *in community*. Liturgy is literally *the work of the people*—the saving work of Christ made present by the power of the Spirit through which our salvation is both signified and realized. In liturgy, we *remember* and *make present* the paschal mystery of Christ. (Pat Kerwin, “Preparing for Liturgy: Minding your P’s & Q’s,” *Liturgy* 90, May–June 1999, p. 1)

Parishes have an incredible opportunity to help youth join in worship and celebrate their relationship with God in order that they might become a vital part of the faith community. To embrace this opportunity, ministry leaders will need to accept the challenge of including youth in the celebration of liturgy. There is much work to do. The fruit of this work is genuine communal worship, where all members of the assembly can participate more fully.

# Planning for Youth and Liturgy Assessment Form

	This needs growth.	We try to do this.	We do this well.
<b>Preparing Youth for Liturgy</b>			
1. Young people in the community understand the meaning of liturgical actions and symbols.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. We provide opportunities for young people to participate in a variety of worship experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. We promote the personal prayer life of youth by teaching about prayer and providing diverse opportunities for participating in communal prayer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We create opportunities for young people to reflect on their experience of liturgy and its role in their spiritual life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. We provide ways for youth to prepare during the week for the readings of the upcoming liturgy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. We provide support for parents by supporting youth participation in liturgy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## Preparing Liturgies with and for Youth

7. Our liturgical space fosters a feeling of participation in the liturgies rather than a feeling of being a spectator.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. We have a liturgical music advisory board on which youth are represented.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. We use songs in liturgies that are easy to sing and have lyrics that speak to all members of the assembly—including young people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. We have strong musical ensembles that incorporate a variety of instruments and include many voices, including young voices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	This needs growth.	We try to do this.	We do this well.
<b>Preparing Liturgies with and for Youth (<i>continued</i>)</b>			
<b>11.</b> All liturgical celebrations reflect the variety of cultural heritages in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>12.</b> Homilies are well prepared, passionately delivered, and have depth.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>13.</b> Homilies are appropriate in length.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>14.</b> Homilists use appropriate stories and examples that connect to young people's lived experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>15.</b> Homilists spend time with youth to hear their reflections on the Scriptures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>16.</b> We involve young people in the various liturgical ministries of the parish.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>17.</b> Youth in liturgical ministries receive appropriate training and spiritual formation for their roles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>18.</b> Young people are actively recruited to share their gifts in liturgical ministries and feel accepted by the entire parish or school community in doing so.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>19.</b> Issues and events that affect young people directly are a regular part of the prayers of the faithful and other community prayers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>20.</b> Young people are actively involved in liturgical preparation.			
<b>21.</b> We provide special youth liturgies on an occasional basis to celebrate important moments in young people's lives—the beginning of school, retreats, Christian service, graduation, and so on.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	This needs growth.	We try to do this.	We do this well.
<b>Preparing the Community for Youth Involvement</b>			
<b>22.</b> The entire parish community actively participates in all aspects of the liturgy (singing, responding, listening, gesturing, and so on.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>23.</b> In the liturgical celebrations, youth feel welcomed as valued members of the gathered community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>24.</b> Parish staff and leaders collaborate to promote youth participation in liturgy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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(Portions of this resource are adapted from “How Youth-Inclusive Are Our Liturgies?” *Vibrant Worship with Youth: Keys for Implementing “From Age to Age”* (Winona, MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 2000), pages 212–213. Copyright © 2000 by Saint Mary’s Press. All rights reserved.)



## Part B

# Sessions on Prayer



# 3 TAPP into Prayer

## AT A GLANCE

### Overview

To stay connected to God's love and guidance in life, young people need to find ways to pray. In this prayer, participants are introduced to a simple process for personal prayer. TAPP stands for Thanks, Admit, Petition, and Ponder. Within the prayer, participants reflect on these steps and join their hearts in communal prayer.

### Suggested Time and Group Size

This session on prayer will take 45 minutes to one hour. This prayer adapts well for groups of different sizes.

### Background Reading

- ◆ *Catholic Youth Bible* article connections: "Eli Teaches Samuel How to Pray" (1 Sam. 3:1–19), "A Lord's Prayer Reflection" (Matt. 6:5–15), "The Magnificat, The Prayer of the Poor!" (Luke 1:39–56), "The Making of a Prayer" (James 5:13)

### Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ❑ 4-by-6-inch index cards, several for each small group of five to seven participants
  - ❑ a mirror, a photo album, and a globe
  - ❑ copies of handout 1, "TAPP into Prayer," and handout 2, "TAPP into Prayer Journal," one of each for each participant
  - ❑ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, one for each participant
  - ❑ copies of handout 3, "Admit Petitions," enough for the number of readers (one to four)

### Study It

#### Core Session:

#### TAPP into Prayer

- ◆ Welcome and Focusing Activity: Models of Prayer
- ◆ TAPP Explanation and Journaling

### Pray It

#### Gather

- ◆ Gathering Song
- ◆ Opening Prayer

#### Listen

- ◆ Reading: Phil. 4:4–7

#### Respond

- ◆ Thanksgiving Prayers
- ◆ Admit Prayers
- ◆ Petition Prayers
- ◆ Ponder
  - ◇ Silence
  - ◇ Reflective Song

#### Go Forth

- ◆ Spiral Activity
- ◆ Closing Prayer

- ❑ *Catholic Youth Bibles* or other Bibles, one for every two participants
- ❑ masking tape
- ❑ markers, two or three per small group
- ❑ CD player, with reflective and instrumental music
- Place a marker in the Bibles to note the readings in the focusing activity.
- Prepare a newsprint sheet with the following description:
  - T is for Thanks
  - A is for Admit
  - P is for Petition
  - P is for Ponder
- On a sheet of newsprint, write “Prayer Responses” across the top, and then write:
  - Thanks Response: We thank you, God.
  - Admit Response: Help us to turn to you, God.
  - Petition Response: Be with us, God.
- Recruit one participant to proclaim the Scripture passages, and one to four participants to pray the petitions.
- Prepare a sheet of newsprint with the following opening prayer:
  - Give me  
 A pure heart  
 That I may see Thee,  
 A humble heart  
 That I may hear Thee,  
 A heart of love  
 That I may serve Thee,  
 A heart of faith  
 That I may abide in Thee.

(Adapted from Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, p. 189)
- Select a gathering song such as “Open My Eyes, Lord,” by Jesse Manibusan; “If Today,” by Trevor Thomson; “Seek Ye First,” by Karen Lafferty, or another song with petition or prayer as its theme. You will also need to choose a reflective song such as “Come, Lord Jesus,” by Steve Angrisano and Tom Tomaszek; “Shepherd Me, O God,” by Marty Haugen; “Path of Life,” by Trevor Thomson, or another song that has rest or comfort as its theme.

## Setting the Prayer Environment

Arrange a circle of chairs with the prayer table in the center. The table should be low enough that it does not block the participants’ views of one another. Cover the table with the cloth. On the table, place a candle, a cross, and a Bible.



## Core Session: TAPP into Prayer

1. Welcome the participants, and provide an introduction to the session in these or similar words:

- God is always with us, but we are not always aware of God's presence. God promises us that we will experience peace and presence in a special way when we pray. During this time together we are going to learn about a way to pray that helps us tap into God's peace and presence in our lives.
- To begin to further explore prayer, we will look to models for prayer from the Scriptures.

2. Divide the participants into four groups, and assign one of the following Scripture passages to each group.

- Gen. 28:10–22
- 1 Sam. 3:1–11
- Luke 1:26–56
- Matt. 26:36–46

Provide each group with a few index cards and markers. Then give these instructions:

- In your small group, read the Scripture passage and identify the qualities of the person in the Scripture who is a model for prayer.
- Name three to four strengths and qualities of the model pray-er.
- Write these qualities in large print on the index cards (one quality per card).

Allow 10 to 12 minutes for the participants to complete this task.

3. Ask one person from each group to post the group's index cards on the wall. Then make these comments:

- Prayer is communication with God. These models for prayer remind us that prayer is different for each of us but that all prayer has this in common: "the raising of one's mind and heart to God"<sup>3</sup> (CCC, no. 2559).
- When we pray, we pray on many levels.

Refer to the three symbols you have gathered, and then continue with these comments:

- These three symbols remind us of the three dimensions of prayer.
- The mirror reminds us that we pray for ourselves. We pray on the personal level when we pray for ourselves, asking for blessings, forgiveness, or strength to change our lives.

- The photo album reminds us that we pray for people we know and love. We pray on the interpersonal level when we pray for people we know, our loved ones, family members, friends, and those in our community.
- The globe reminds us that we pray for all of God's creation. We pray on the social level when we pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world. We also pray for the world and all its creatures.
- You might have noticed all three of these dimensions of prayer in the Scripture story you just read.

4. Distribute handout 1, "TAPP into Prayer," and introduce the TAPP model by saying:

- Today we are going to reflect and pray together using a model called TAPP into Prayer.
  - **T** stands for *Thanks*. The first part of this prayer gives you a chance to reflect on what you are thankful for.
  - **A** stands for *Admit*. This is a chance to think about and admit choices and actions that were wrong. This includes things that hurt others and times when we did not do the good that God called us to do.
  - **P** (the first P) stands for *Petition*. Petition means asking: What do we want to ask God? What do we want to ask God for ourselves? for our loved ones, for those we know, and for the world?
  - **P** (the second P) stands for *Ponder*. In this case, ponder means to think with your hearts. In this step, we listen for God's voice in our hearts, and we rest in God's presence.

5. Distribute handout 2, "TAPP into Prayer Journal," and invite the participants to take a few moments to reflect on the questions on the handout as a preparation for prayer. They should focus only on the *Thanks*, *Admit*, and *Petition* portions. After they have reflected on the questions, invite the participants to take a moment to prepare to pray as a community.

## TryThis

- ◆ Consider inviting the participants to complete the "ponder" portion of the journal after they have prayed as a community.
- ◆ Provide participants with extra copies of handout 2 to use in their personal prayer time at home.

# Pray It

## Order of Service

### Gather

1. Begin the prayer service by distributing copies of *Spirit & Song* (or another hymnal) and inviting the participants to sing the gathering song you have chosen.

2. Refer the participants to the prayer you have posted on newsprint, and invite them to join you in praying the opening prayer.

## Listen

3. Invite the reader to proclaim Phil. 4:4–7. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow.

## Respond

4. Continue with these comments:

- In this reading, we are reminded to rejoice, to pray with thanksgiving, and to ask for what we need.
- In your journals, you reflected on the four aspects of TAPP into Prayer. Let us then take a moment to offer our thanks. Our response will be “We thank you, God.”

Invite the participants to share aloud.

5. Continue with these comments:

- The second step in prayer today is to reflect on our actions and things we need to admit to God and to ourselves.
- I invite you to take a moment of silence to think about your actions from this past week. Through what actions did you turn away from God and his call? In what ways did you ignore God’s call to do good and help others? [Allow a moment or two of silence for the participants’ reflections.]
- Let us pray together that we might turn to God. Our response to each petition will be “Help us turn to you, God.”

Invite the readers to pray the petitions provided on handout 3, “Admit: Petitions.”

6. Continue with these comments:

- The third step in prayer is petitions. During this time we let our requests be known to God. What are our needs? What are the needs of our loved ones? our community? our world? I invite you share your petitions with the community. Our response to each request will be “Be with us, God.”

Invite the participants to share aloud.

7. Continue with these comments:

- In the Scriptures, we are told that Mary, upon seeing Jesus in the Temple with the elders, “[pondered] all these things in her heart” (Luke 2:51). Like Mary, we are called to ponder God’s action in our lives. Let us take a few moments of reflection to sit quietly and rest in God’s hands.

Allow for two to three minutes of silence. Following the silence, play the reflective song you have chosen.

## Go Forth

8. Offer the following instructions to the participants:

- Please stand and join hands.
- As a group, we are going to make a spiral. I will lead the group; stay in your place until the person next to you leads you.
- Remember to continue holding hands.

Lead the group in a spiral by going to your right in front of the persons who were on your right in the circle. Make a smaller and smaller circle until everyone is caught up in the spiral and you are a tight group of people in the center.

While in the tight circle, pray this prayer:

- Loving God, you are always with us, and you give us everything we need. You invite us to lift our hearts and minds to you, and you ask us to share our lives with you. Bless us today, and bring us close to your heart. Surround us, Lord, with your love and care so we may always rely on your strength and be guided by your wisdom. We ask this prayer through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



# TAPP into Prayer

**T**hank and praise God for the good things you have been given and the good people in your life.

**A**dmit the things you may have done wrong or the opportunities to help others that you may have ignored.

**P**etition God for your needs, and intercede for the needs of others (loved ones, people you know, and people throughout the world). But remember that there is a difference between what you want and what you need.

**P**onder what God has to say to you. Practice pausing long enough to listen.

Note: The four components of TAPP do not have to be prayed in any particular order.

# TAPP into Prayer Journal

## **Thanks**

What are the things or blessings in my life for which I am thankful?

Who are the people I am thankful for?

## **Admit**

What actions do I want to talk with God about?

What have I done wrong that has hurt myself or others?

What have I failed to do? What did I ignore or not do that God might have called me to do?

## **Petition**

What do I want to ask God?

For myself?

For family, friends, enemies, people in my community?

For my brothers and sisters throughout the world?

For the world and all of creation?

## **Ponder**

What do I hear God telling me?

How is God speaking to me about my actions?

How is God speaking to me about my petitions?

# Admit Petitions

The response to each petition will be “Help us turn to you, God.”

**Reader:** For the times when we forget to come to you in prayer.

We pray . . .

**Response:** *Help us turn to you, God.*

**Reader:** For the times when we hurt others. We pray . . .

**Response:** *Help us turn to you, God.*

**Reader:** For the times when we hurt ourselves. We pray . . .

**Response:** *Help us turn to you, God.*

**Reader:** For the times when we are selfish or prideful. We pray . . .

**Response:** *Help us turn to you, God.*

**Reader:** For the times when we fail to do the good that you call us to.

We pray . . .

**Response:** *Help us turn to you, God.*

**Reader:** For all the times when we turn away from you. We pray . . .

**Response:** *Help us turn to you, God.*

# 4 Praying with Music:

## Psalms for Today

## AT A GLANCE

### Overview

The Psalms are a wonderful gift given to us in the Old Testament. They represent the human struggles and joys of faith as expressed through songs to our loving God. In many respects, the Psalms of the Israelites are similar to the variety of music young people listen to today. In this session, the participants discover the effectiveness of using music in prayer and are assured that music, both liturgical and secular, can be a tool for forming relationships with God and with one another.

### Outcomes

- ◆ The participants will recognize music as a way to communicate in prayer.
- ◆ The participants will explore how the Psalms were used to convey the Israelites' relationship with God as expressed in human conditions.
- ◆ The participants will make connections between the purpose of the Psalms and contemporary music.

### Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ☐ markers
  - ☐ newsprint
  - ☐ CD player and selected music CDs, if a musician is unavailable
  - ☐ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, one for each participant
  - ☐ small slips of paper
  - ☐ pens for each participant
  - ☐ *Catholic Youth Bibles* or other Bibles, one for each participant

### Study It

#### Core Session: Psalms and the Music of Our Time

- ◆ Music and Culture (10 minutes)
- ◆ What the Psalms Tell Us (10 minutes)
- ◆ Psalms of Yesterday and Today (30 minutes)

### Pray It

- ◆ The Gift of Forgiveness (15 Minutes)

### Live It

- ◆ Song library
- ◆ Prayer resource Web site

- Prepare a sheet of newsprint with the following list:
  - hymns of praise and thanksgiving
  - hymns of lament or petition
  - hymns of wisdom
  - songs for worship
  - songs that tell of history
- Review the “In-Depth” article preceding the book of Psalms in the *CYB* for additional background information.
- You will need a CD or tape recording of the following songs:
  - (Psalm 23) “Shepherd Me, O God,” by Marty Haugen
  - (Psalm 25) “To You, O God, I Lift Up My Soul,” by Bob Hurd
  - (Psalm 95) “Come, Worship the Lord,” by John Michael Talbot
- Ask one of the participants to choose and bring a song that conveys the theme of forgiveness or the complexity of communication in a relationship. You may also choose to play a liturgical song such as “Be Merciful, O Lord,” by Steve Angrisano.
- Invite a participant to proclaim the Scripture passage.

## Study it.

### Core Session: Psalms and the Music of Our Time

1. Welcome the participants and introduce the session by saying the following:

- Music is a tool that has transcended age and culture. From the very beginning of time, humans have relied on the gift of music not only to celebrate but to bring to life the conditions and realities of our humanity.
- Whether a series of drumbeats in the form of Native American worship, the complexity of a major symphony, or the rhythmic lyrics of a popular rap song, music tells a human story.
- Music reflects the moods and conditions of people and times, and it provides us with an avenue of reflection on our lives that touches our minds and hearts.

2. Invite the participants to brainstorm all the places where music is used intentionally; record the results of their brainstorming on a large sheet of newsprint. Examples might include the following: church, television shows, airplanes, sporting events, dentist’s office. Once the list is compiled,

ask the participants to examine it and explain why music is used in these places.

**3. Explain the following:**

- Just as we use music today as a tool to create certain moods and to evoke certain images or feelings of the human experience, the Israelites, whom we read about in the Old Testament, also used the gift of song to tell their stories.
- These songs, called psalms, evoke the thoughts and the feelings of a people on a journey toward God. When you read or sing the Psalms, you find a group of people who share the struggles and the joys of relationships. Isn't that what much of our music today is about?
- As we read the Psalms, or sing them, we can see that they deal with many different aspects of relationships with God and with the community.
- The Psalms are divided into categories based on the message conveyed in each one.

Referring to the newsprint you have posted, review with the participants the five categories noted.

- Let us listen to some samples of Psalms that may be familiar to you.

**4.** Play short samples of Psalms 23, 25, and 95. As each Psalm is played, invite the participants to guess what kind of Psalm it is or at least the mood, feeling, or thought being conveyed. You may also wish to distribute Bibles and encourage the participants to locate the Psalm as they listen to the lyrics of the song.

**5.** Divide the participants into five smaller groups. Give each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker. Assign one of the following categories to each group, and invite them to list on the newsprint all the song titles they can think of that deal with their assigned category:

- Sadness
- Thankfulness
- Joy
- Concern about the world condition
- Expressions of love

**6.** Read aloud from the newsprint the list of the songs in each category. Pose the following questions to all the participants:

- Prayer and communal worship involve communicating our thoughts and feelings to God. Music can be used as a tool to reflect and express those feelings, just as a recited prayer or verbal prayer can. How have you experienced music as prayer?
- Have you ever attended a Mass without music? Describe the difference.

7. To each small group, distribute a Bible and enough blank sheets of paper and pens for each group member. Assign to each group one of the following Scripture passages. You may also choose other Psalms that may be more significant to the participants.

- Psalm 14
- Psalm 19
- Psalm 22
- Psalm 42
- Psalm 103

Ask one person in each small group to read the assigned Psalm slowly. As that person reads, the rest of the small group should write down feelings, thoughts, situations, or stories the Psalm is trying to convey. Allow a few minutes for this step.

8. Invite each small-group reader to read the Psalm again to his or her group. Tell the participants that after the second reading, each small-group member should share aloud what he or she thought the Psalm was trying to convey.

Ask the small groups to come to some agreement about the overall mood, feeling, or thought of the Psalm.

Once they come to agreement, invite them to think of a secular song that conveys the same ideas they discussed in their group. Allow a few minutes for the small groups to complete their task.

9. Invite a spokesperson from each small group to share the Psalm and the reason their group selected the particular secular song they chose.

10. Conclude this part of the session with the following comments:

- Music as part of the human experience is one way we celebrate and deepen our relationships. Many couples and groups of friends have special songs; holidays and birthdays are associated with songs and music. In music we remember special people and communities and experiences.
- Music also expresses our relationship with God. The Psalms are sung prayers that expressed the relationship between the Hebrew people and their God. A psalmist is someone who wrote psalms. Like a psalmist, we can use music to pray to express the variety of feelings we have and offer those feelings to God.



# Pray It

## Gather

1. Distribute to each participant a pen and a small slip of paper. Invite the participants to write down the initials of someone in their life, or someone in the world, whom they are having difficulty forgiving.

## Listen

2. Invite a volunteer to proclaim Matt. 18:23–35 (the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant). Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow.

## Respond

3. Say the following:

- As humans, our lives are centered in relationships. For this reason, God gives us plenty of opportunity to forgive others. Think about the initials on that piece of paper in front of you.
- As we play this song that speaks to the gift of forgiveness, think about how you could verbally or nonverbally forgive that person.
- Is there something you can say or an action you can perform that would show that person you are a person of faith, a person able to forgive?

4. Play the song you chose before the beginning of the session. Note for the participants that the song conveys a message of forgiveness or the complexity of communication in a relationship.

## Go Forth

5. Invite the participants to put the slip of paper with the initials they wrote in a pocket, purse, wallet, or another place where they can see it and be reminded of the opportunity to forgive.

6. Share the following closing prayer with the participants:

- God of mercy, we know that to forgive someone can be far from an easy option, and we know that forgiveness isn't somehow pretending that something wrong hasn't happened. Instead, it is being generous—as your Son showed in his dying words—in being willing to release the other person from what natural justice demands should be “punishment” for wrongdoing. Isn't this what you mean by “mercy,” and isn't this what we are to do when you call us to be “merciful” to others?

For what we have done wrong, Lord, forgive us to the extent that we are generous and gracious in forgiving—or truly hoping to forgive—those who have wronged us. Empower us to break the cycle of hatred, resentment, or bitterness—always resisting evil and conquering it with goodness. Bring your healing and peace and wholeness into the lives of those we pray for and into our own lives.

We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen. (Adapted from Hutchinson, *Walk in My Presence*, p. 44)



## Options and Actions

- **Song library.** Ask the participants to lend music CDs to the parish youth ministry to develop a library of songs that could be used for prayer experiences. Organize the songs by categories, themes, or liturgical seasons and feasts.
- **Prayer resource Web site.** Develop a Web site that students could use to plan their own prayer services. The Web site could contain scriptural and inspirational readings, as well as liturgical and secular music recommendations.

# 5 Triduum Participation:

## Watch and Pray

### Overview

The Triduum, the center and high point of the Church's liturgical year, is a rich opportunity to help youth join the whole faith community in reflecting on the central mysteries of our faith in Christ Jesus. *Triduum* is a Latin term for "three days." The Catholic Church celebrates the Triduum as the period of time from the evening Holy Thursday Mass through the Easter Sunday liturgies. This session prepares youth to participate in the Triduum liturgies. A follow-up session helps young people reflect on their experience of participating.

### Outcomes

- ◆ Participants will reflect on the symbols of the liturgies of the Triduum.
- ◆ Participants will learn about the liturgies of the Triduum.
- ◆ Participants will prepare for participation in the Triduum and reflect on that experience.

### Background Reading

- ◆ *Catholic Youth Bible* article connections: "Feast of the Passover" (John 13:1–20), "Jesus Models Service to Others" (John 13:1–17)

### Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ❑ index cards, several for each participant
  - ❑ pens or pencils, one for each participant
  - ❑ copies of handout 4, "Watch and Pray: Journal for the Triduum," one for each participant
  - ❑ a CD of reflective instrumental music and a CD player

## AT A GLANCE

### Study It

#### Core Session: Triduum Participation

- ◆ Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes)
- ◆ Focusing Activity: Symbols of Easter (10 minutes)
- ◆ Presentation (35 minutes)
  - ◇ Introduction to the Triduum
  - ◇ Holy Thursday
  - ◇ Good Friday
  - ◇ Easter Vigil
  - ◇ Journal Reflection
  - ◇ Planning for Participation in the Liturgies
- ◆ Closing Prayer (10 minutes)
  - ◇ "Good Friday Prayer"

#### Follow-Up Gathering (30 minutes)

- ◆ Reflection Questions and Discussion
- ◆ Scripture Reading: Rom. 6:3–11
- ◆ Closing Prayer

#### Session Extensions

- ◆ Holy Thursday
- ◆ Good Friday
- ◆ Easter Vigil

- Prepare a table with popular symbols of Easter, such as dyed eggs, stuffed bunnies, baskets, baby chicks, a young girl's Easter hat, and unopened Easter candy.
- Prepare a table with these suggested symbols for the Triduum:
  - *Holy Thursday*: bread (flat bread such as pita), wine in a simple wine glass, basin or bowl for foot-washing, clear glass or plastic pitcher of water, and a towel
  - *Good Friday*: globe or map of the world, crucifix (preferably a cross with a corpus)
  - *Easter Vigil*: kindling and matches, the Paschal candle from previous year or a tall candle, the *Lectionary* or *The Catholic Youth Bible* or other Bible, opened to one of the Easter Vigil readings; small glass jar or bottle with oil; small glass bowl of water with a small branch resting in the water.
- Prepare for the presentation portion of this session. In addition to the background information provided, consider reviewing these resources:
  - Paiva, Kathleen. "Remembering: The Liturgies of Lent and Easter." *Youth Update* (St. Anthony Messenger Press), no. Y0493.
  - Richstatter, Thomas. "Our Holiest Week: A Practical Guide for the Holy Week Liturgies." *Catholic Update* (St. Anthony Messenger Press), no. C0492. See online at [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org).
- Prepare for the follow-up gathering. Gather two index cards and one pen or pencil per participant. Have a Bible for the Scripture reading.



## Core Session: Triduum Participation

### Welcome

1. Welcome the participants and provide this overview of the session:
  - The liturgies from Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday are considered one celebration, which is called the *Triduum*.
  - *Triduum* means "three days" in Latin, and in these three days the Church remembers Christ's Crucifixion, his death, and his Resurrection.
  - In our time together, we will prepare to participate with the rest of the community in these liturgies.

## Focusing Activity

2. Provide each participant with a blank index card and a pen or pencil. Invite them to think about a symbol they identify with Easter and Holy Week. Refer them to the symbol tables you have set up for examples, or they may draw a symbol on their index card.

3. Ask the participants to find a partner to share a discussion of the following:

- What is the symbol you chose?
- Why did you choose this symbol?
- What does this symbol have to do with Easter?
- How does this symbol remind you about your life in Christ?

4. Regather the participants into a large group. Ask for a few sample responses to the above questions. Then say:

- Many Easter symbols such as rabbits, eggs, or baby chicks are associated with Easter because the day is a celebration of new life.
- Some of the symbols are also connected to the season of spring. New life is emerging—grass and plants are taking root and animals are being born.
- Eggs were once a symbol of spring, but as Christianity spread, people associated the egg with the stone tomb from which Christ rose.
- Chicks and birds are symbols of the new life Jesus promised his followers.
- Rabbits have long been a symbol of new life in spring.
- Some foods that we associate with Easter, like hot-cross buns, are shaped like or include a decoration of the cross as a sign of hope.

## Presentation

5. Distribute to each participant a copy of handout 4. Using the following comments, conduct a presentation on the Triduum:

- In our families and in many cultures, we have special ways to celebrate Easter. Because Easter is the center of our faith, the Church has a special way to celebrate. This celebration is called the *Triduum*.
- The Triduum—the liturgies from Holy Thursday evening to Easter Sunday—is the central and high point of the liturgical year.
- Before the Crucifixion, Jesus asked his disciples to come to the garden and wait with him. He asked his disciples to keep watch and to pray.
- Jesus asks all people of faith, as modern-day disciples, to come and wait with him through the Triduum. In these liturgies some actions, symbols, processions, and ritual happen only once a year. The Scriptures are proclaimed in a way that is different from other liturgies. Also, the Church community welcomes new members.
- Let us take a look at what is happening in these liturgies.

## TryThis

For additional information about the roots of traditional Easter symbols, see Pamela Kennedy, *An Easter Celebration: Traditions and Customs from Around the World* (Nashville, TN: Ideals Children's Books, 1990), pp. 10–14.

6. Invite the participants to look at handout 4. Referring to the symbols you have gathered and placed on the Triduum symbol table, continue with your presentation:

- Let's begin with Holy Thursday. This liturgy recalls the Last Supper and celebrates the institution of the Eucharist. In the second reading, Jesus takes the bread and the cup, offers the prayer of blessing, and invites the disciples to share in his Body and Blood.

Pick up the bread and the cup.

7. Continue the presentation:

- The Gospel reading tells about Jesus' continued instruction on what it means to be the Eucharist as he washes the feet of the disciples.

Lift the pitcher and the towel, and point to the basin. Then continue the presentation.

- The Good Friday liturgy is somber but not sad. One thing you will notice about the liturgy is its starkness—there is no opening song or procession or greeting.
- Four elements make up the liturgy. First, in the liturgy of the word, John's description of the Passion is proclaimed. Second, the general intercessions are prayed. On Good Friday, the Church takes seriously the call to pray for all people of all faiths and those without faith in God. On this occasion of Christ's outpouring of love and his sacrifice on the cross, the Church remembers that this act of love was for everyone.

Make reference to the globe of the world, or the map. Then continue the presentation:

- For each general intercession, the assembly kneels and prays silently and then stands again to hear the next call to prayer. The prayers are for the following intentions:
  - the Church
  - the Pope
  - the clergy and the laity of the Church
  - those preparing for Baptism
  - the unity of Christians
  - the Jewish people
  - those who do not believe in Christ
  - those who do not believe in God
  - all in public office
  - those in special need
- In the third element of this liturgy, the Church shows a sign of reverence for the cross to recall Jesus' act of love. In some communities, the cross is

elevated, and the assembly kneels and prays in silence. In others, members of the assembly are invited to reverently touch or kiss the cross.  
Lift the cross at this time.

**8. Continue with the presentation:**

- The fourth element of this liturgy is a Communion service. The community receives the Eucharist that was consecrated the previous day. At the end of this liturgy, there is no song or procession—"all depart in silence" (*Roman Missal*).
- Saturday is the Easter Vigil. A vigil is "the act of keeping awake at times when sleep is customary" (*Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., s.v. "vigil").
- The focus of the Easter Vigil is remembering the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This liturgy begins with a service of light. On Holy Thursday, all candles were extinguished; however, on this night of waiting for Christ's Resurrection, the presider blesses the "new fire" and lights the Paschal candle for the first time.

Lift the kindling and hold the candle at this time.

**9. Continue with the presentation:**

- The lighting of the Paschal candle is followed by a special sung prayer called the Easter proclamation or the *Exultet*. During the liturgy of the word, seven readings from the Old Testament recall the story of God's saving love throughout history. This is followed by the Gloria, which has not been sung since Lent began.
- Next, a reading from one of Paul's letters is proclaimed. Paul's letter is a reminder of the meaning of Baptism. After the Epistle, the assembly sings the "Alleluia," which has also not been sung since Ash Wednesday. Finally, the Gospel reading is proclaimed, and the assembly is reminded of the glory of the Resurrection!

Lift the *Lectionary* or the Bible.

**10. Continue with the presentation:**

- After the homily, the liturgy of Baptism takes place for new members who are initiated and receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. During the ritual, the initiates are anointed with oil.  
Lift the bottle of oil.
- Oil is an ancient symbol of strengthening and has a rich tradition of use within the sacraments. During Holy Week, priests and lay members of the diocese gathered for a special Mass called the Chrism Mass. This Mass celebrates the priestly ministry in the Church. During the Chrism Mass, the bishop blesses oils that are used in the sacraments. The oils are used

## TryThis

If you have time, you can talk about the meaning of the symbols on the Paschal candle:

- ◆ The candle is a reminder that Christ's light is always in our lives.
- ◆ The cross is the center of the symbols. The cross stands as a sign of Christ's faithfulness and our faith.
- ◆ At the top and at the bottom of the cross are two Greek letters: Alpha (looks like an "A") and Omega (looks like an "O" with the bottom part curled open). Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last. These letters symbolize that Jesus is the beginning and the end: he is part of our beginning, and he promises to be with us until the end of time.
- ◆ In the four quadrants created by the cross, the year is noted. Each year a new Paschal candle is lit and used until the following Easter.
- ◆ During the Easter Vigil, the presider inserts five grains of incense in the candle to represent the glorious wounds of Christ.

for anointing *catechumens* (those preparing for initiation), for Anointing of the Sick, and as chrism oil, which is used for Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders (ordination of deacons, priests, and bishops). These oils are often stored in the worship space of the Church in a special cupboard called an *ambry*. Water is also blessed.

- Once the anointing has taken place, the whole community renews their baptismal promises.

Lift the bowl of water and the branch, or the *aspergillum*, the liturgical instrument used to sprinkle people or objects.

- The sacraments of initiation are then followed by the liturgy of the Eucharist.
- The celebration of Easter begins with the vigil and continues through the liturgies of Easter Sunday—all of which focus on the Resurrection of Jesus.

**11.** Invite the participants to take a few minutes to reflect on one or more of the questions in the journal that relate to each of the liturgies. You might consider playing instrumental music in the background.

**12.** When the participants regather, pose the following question:

- What are some ways that we as a group could encourage one another to participate in the liturgies?

Get a few ideas from the participants, or offer these suggestions:

- We could pair up and remind our partners with a phone call or an e-mail.
- We could also plan to meet a few minutes before the liturgy so we could sit and participate together.
- We could plan to go out for ice cream (or an early breakfast) after the vigil.

**13.** Prepare the group to participate in the liturgies. Offer the following comments:

- The documents of the Second Vatican Council call all of us to “fully conscious, and active participation” in the liturgy (*Sacred Liturgy*, no. 14).
- Sometimes our participation is less than full because we are distracted, and less than active and conscious because we allow ourselves to become bored or sleepy. Jesus asks us to keep watch and to pray—these are intentional actions.
- It is good for us to remember that we do not watch liturgy like we watch a show or a parade. In a parade, some people walk down the street and wave while most people watch. In a procession, everyone walks together to a holy place or a destination. Our participation in liturgy is more like being part of a procession. We are the Body of Christ gathered to remem-



ber the truth of these celebrations and the truth of God's love and forgiveness. Participating in these liturgies is one way we live out our Baptism and strengthen ourselves as disciples.

**14.** Remind the participants that they are invited to gather again after Easter to talk about their experience of the Triduum liturgies. Announce the time and place for the meeting. Close the session by praying together "Good Friday Prayer," by David Haas, on handout 4.

## Follow-Up Gathering

After Easter, reconnect with the young people who participated in the previous session. This process can be part of another gathering or can be part of a celebration, such as getting together to go out for ice cream or dessert. Encourage youth to participate in this reflection even if they did not participate in all the Triduum liturgies.

**1.** Welcome the participants. Distribute index cards and pens, and ask participants to reflect silently on the following questions. They can write the answers to the first question on the front of the card and use the back for the second question.

- What helped you pray during the Triduum liturgies?
- What did you notice, hear, see, and feel during these liturgies?

Allow two or three minutes for reflection, then invite the participants to share in pairs or small groups. Regather as a large group, and ask for sample responses to the questions.

**2.** Continue with this introduction:

- During our experience of the Triduum liturgies, Jesus called us to wait in the garden with him, to watch and to pray. We probably felt many different emotions and had difficulty staying focused, just like it was hard for the disciples with Jesus. Despite the challenge, what we gained and learned from this experience strengthened us as disciples.

Distribute another index card to each participant, and provide a few moments of reflection on the following two questions:

- What does your experience remind you or tell you about the meaning of Christ's sharing of his body and blood, his death and Resurrection?

Provide a personal example to help the participants share.

- What do you feel called to change, to do, or to stop doing because of your experience?

## Mediaconnections

Participants can experience Holy Week by viewing scenes from the film *Jesus of Nazareth* (Artisan, Fox Video, 1977, 360 minutes). This film is available as a set of three videocassettes or on DVD. The events of Holy Week are on the third volume of the set.

## Familyconnections

Invite the families of adolescents to participate in the session together. The Media Connections suggestion is appropriate for adolescents to experience as part of a group or at home with family.

Invite the participants to share again in pairs or small groups. Allow time for sharing and then ask them to regather as a large group. Ask for sample responses to the questions.

3. Invite a volunteer to proclaim Rom. 6:3–11. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow. Then say:

- In this reading, we are reminded of our Baptism into Christ. Our experience of Easter calls us anew to walk as disciples. I invite you to reflect on a word or a phrase that describes a blessing we need as disciples to be Easter people. For instance we could ask to be blessed with endurance or courage. [Allow a moment of silence.] I ask you now to share these words aloud.

Invite members of the group to share the word or phrase. Close the prayer with these words:

- God of all creation, in obedience to your holy will, Jesus embraced our humanity. You raised him from the dead to the glory of eternal life. In this Easter season, bathe us in the light of Christ and lead us to the eternal vision of your beauty. We ask this through Christ our savior. Amen. (Gabriele, *Prayers for Dawn and Dusk*, p. 143.)

## Session Extensions

To extend this preparation for the Triduum, consider the following activities in conjunction with the liturgies.

- **Holy Thursday:** Proclaim the Gospel and have participants experience the foot-washing by washing one another's feet. Prepare for this prayerful experience by having one station for foot-washing for every six participants. At each station have two towels, a pitcher of water, and a basin. Prepare the group to experience the foot-washing in a reverent way. Include music in the background. Another option for Holy Thursday would be to ensure that one or two youth be among the twelve whose feet are washed during the Holy Thursday liturgy.
- **Good Friday:** Divide the participants into small groups of two to seven people. Assign each small group one of the general intercessions. Have each group write a prayer for that group of people named in their intercession. The prayer should connect to the needs of our time. Write the prayers on newsprint, share them aloud, and display them before Easter.
- **Easter Vigil:** Divide the participants into small groups of two to seven people. Assign each small group one of the vigil readings. Ask each group to read the Scripture passage and prepare a brief presentation that includes the following elements: What is the reading about, and how does this reading tell us of God's call and love? As an alternative or an addition,

groups could prepare a brief skit bringing the message of the reading into today's setting. (Note: The Epistle reading from Romans is not a narrative and does not easily lend itself to a skit. Consider instead the Old Testament or the Gospel readings.) An additional or alternative action for the Easter Vigil would be to have the participants write letters or create greeting cards that welcome the new members into the Church community.

# Watch and Pray: Journal for the Triduum

## **Holy Thursday**

### **Focus**

Holy Thursday celebrates the institution of the Eucharist.

- The whole faith community, including all the priests, celebrates this liturgy.
- The tabernacle is empty at the beginning of the liturgy—the faithful receive the Eucharist that is consecrated during this liturgy, not from previous liturgies.
- The readings are Exodus 12:1–8, 11–14; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26; and John 13:1–15.
- The Gospel tells of the washing of the feet. After the homily, the pastor of the community removes his chasuble and washes the feet of twelve members of the community.
- After the Mass concludes, the Eucharist is transferred to another location. This is a solemn ritual that includes a blessing with incense.
- After the Eucharist is transferred, the Church is prepared for Good Friday: crosses are removed or covered, the table or altar is made bare, and the lights are turned out.

### **Jesus' Actions**

- Jesus shares his Body and Blood and washes the feet of the disciples at the Last Supper.

### **Key Word**

- **Love.** On the eve of his Crucifixion, Jesus showed the depths of his love by giving us the Eucharist and washing the disciples' feet.

### **Reflection Question**

- How will I follow Jesus' example of love?

## Good Friday

### Focus

On Good Friday, the Church remembers Jesus' Crucifixion.

- No sacraments are celebrated on Good Friday or Holy Saturday (until the Easter Vigil).
- The readings for this liturgy are Isaiah 52:12–53; Hebrews 4:14–16, 5:7–9; and John 18:1–19:42.
- This liturgy is somber but not sad: the altar is bare; there is no greeting or opening song. The general intercessions are prayed in a special way in this liturgy. After each petition, the assembly is asked to kneel and pray silently. In these special petitions, prayers are offered for:
  - ☐ the Church
  - ☐ the Pope
  - ☐ the clergy and the laity of the Church
  - ☐ those preparing for Baptism
  - ☐ the unity of Christians
  - ☐ the Jewish people
  - ☐ those who do not believe in Christ
  - ☐ those who do not believe in God
  - ☐ all in public office
  - ☐ those in special need
- After the general intercessions, the veneration of the cross takes place. In many places the veneration is an opportunity to kneel before and touch or kiss the cross. A Communion service follows the veneration. Communion consecrated the day before is distributed to the faithful. There is no recessional song, and silence is maintained.

### Jesus' Actions

- Jesus leads his disciples to a garden to pray and is arrested. He is tried, sentenced to death, suffers, and dies on the cross.

### Key Word

- **Passion.** Jesus' death on the cross is called his Passion, a word commonly associated with the strongest feelings of love.

### Reflection Questions

- For what and for whom would I give my life?
- How is God calling me to share my life and my passion?
- How can I join in Christ's Passion through prayer, conversion, and action?

## Easter Vigil

### Focus

The focus of the Easter Vigil is remembering the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- The liturgy begins with a service of light. The new fire is blessed, and the Easter candle is lit for the first time. This is followed by a special prayer called the Easter proclamation, or the *Exultet*.
- The readings for the Vigil are:

<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 1:1–2:2	<input type="checkbox"/> Ezekiel 36:16–28
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 22:1–18	<input type="checkbox"/> Romans 6:3–11
<input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 14:15–15:1	<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 28:1–10 (in cycle A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 54:5–14	<input type="checkbox"/> Mark 16:1–8 (in cycle B)
<input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 55:1–11	<input type="checkbox"/> Luke 25:1–12 (in cycle C)
<input type="checkbox"/> Baruch 3:9–15 and 3:32–4:4	
- After the homily, new members are initiated and receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. A blessing of the water is included. This portion of the liturgy concludes with the whole community renewing their baptismal promises. The liturgy of the Eucharist follows.

### Jesus' Actions

- Jesus, risen from the dead, goes to greet the disciples.

### Key Word

- **Joy.** The women who discovered Jesus' empty tomb were confused at first and then filled with joy. The disciples who gathered in the upper room did not believe at first but were filled with joy upon hearing the news.

### Reflection Questions

- What does Easter mean to me personally?
- How can I share with others the joy and the truth of Christ's Resurrection at Easter?

## Good Friday Prayer

God,  
today I celebrate the incredible realization  
that you have not abandoned me.

You continually restore my hope  
and never tire in your passion for me,  
even in the midst  
of this most unquestionable horror story:  
the agony of blood and nails and thorns,  
the loneliness of the cross,  
the abandonment by friends and followers.

You ask me to travel to the dark place as well  
and feel your searing pain,  
feel your loneliness,  
feel your grief of disloyalty.

Come to me today  
and sign me with your cross.  
May I wear the cross proudly  
and always live as your servant.  
Into your hands, God, I commend my life. Amen.

(The prayer is from *Praying with the Word—Lent, Holy Week, and Easter*,  
by David Haas [Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1997], page 92.  
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Messenger Press.)





## Part C

# Prayer Services



# Bread:

## Broken and Shared

### Overview

To be part of a community, we share what we have, and we graciously accept from one another. This prayer, which focuses on the miracle of the loaves and fishes, invites participants to share about themselves and connects this sharing with the sharing of the loaves in Jesus' miracle. The prayer is well suited for gathering a community together at the beginning of a faith-sharing series, a retreat, or a service involvement. This prayer could work well in a group that includes youth and adults, such as a parent-teen gathering or a ministries retreat day. Consider linking this prayer to the liturgical year. This reading is used as the Gospel for liturgies on the Wednesday of the first week of Advent.

### Suggested Time and Group Size

Allow 30 to 40 minutes for this prayer with a smaller group of five to twelve people. Allow 45 to 60 minutes for this prayer with a larger group of thirteen to thirty people.

This prayer adapts well for groups that vary in size from seven to 200. For groups of more than thirty people, see the suggested adaptations that accompany the Order of Service.

### Background Reading

- ◆ *Catholic Youth Bible* article connections: "Bread and Wine" (Gen. 14:17–20), "The Eucharist" (John, chapter 6)

## AT A GLANCE

### Gather

- ◆ Welcome
- ◆ Gathering Song
- ◆ Gathering Prayer
- ◆ Faith Sharing

### Listen

- ◆ Matt. 15:32–33
- ◆ Faith Sharing
- ◆ Matt. 15:34–37
- ◆ Reflection

### Respond

- ◆ Petitions
- ◆ Blessing and Sharing of Bread

### Go Forth

- ◆ Closing Prayer
- ◆ Closing Song

## TryThis

Invite a small group of youth and adults to make bread in advance for this prayer.

### VARIATION:

#### Large Group

To use the prayer with a group of more than thirty people, divide the participants into small groups of eight to twelve, each forming a circle around a central prayer focus. In the center of each circle, place a basket with a small loaf of bread. At the central prayer focus, place the Scriptures on a small table, along with a cloth and a candle.

## Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ☐ a single loaf of unsliced bread (a round loaf that is mild or sweet and can be divided easily is preferred). If the group is more than thirty, use multiple loaves as needed.
  - ☐ plate or basket for the bread
  - ☐ a *Catholic Youth Bible* or other Bible, bookmarked at Matt. 15:32–37
  - ☐ a low table and a tablecloth
  - ☐ a candle and matches
  - ☐ *Spirit & Song* books or *Spirit & Song* CDs and a CD player, if a music leader is not available
  - ☐ a CD of reflective instrumental music
- Make two copies of handout 5, “Prayer Petitions for Bread: Broken and Shared,” for the two leaders who will lead the petitions.
- Choose a gathering song, such as “Song of the Body of Christ,” by David Haas; “Lead Us to Your Table,” by Tom Tomaszek and Steve Angrisano; or another appropriate opening song on the theme of breaking bread. Also choose a closing song such as “Somos El Cuerpo de Cristo/We Are the Body of Christ,” by Jaime Cortez and Bob Hurd, or “In This Place,” by Trevor Thomson.
- Recruit two volunteers or team leaders to proclaim the Gospel readings and two others to pray the prayers of petition.

## Setting the Prayer Environment

Arrange a circle of chairs with the prayer table in the center. The table should be low enough that it does not block people’s view of one another. Cover the table with the cloth. On the table, place the candle, Bible, a plate or basket, and the loaf of bread.

## Order of Service

### Gather

1. Invite the participants to gather together in the prayer space. Distribute to each a songbook, and invite the participants to join in singing the gathering song.

2. Offer the following opening prayer:

Loving God,

We believe

our lives are touched by you,  
that you want something for us,  
and something of us.

Give us ears today

to hear you,

eyes

to see the tracing of your finger,

and a heart

quickened by the motions

of your Spirit.

We ask this as we continue to pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

(Adapted from Ted Loder, *Guerrillas of Grace*, p. 29)

3. Ask the participants to choose partners for sharing. Use these or similar comments to invite the participants to share:

- As a way for us to begin our prayer and sharing, I ask that you think of something you have with you that is a symbol of the community you come from, that is, something that tells about the community you are part of. This could be your family, your town, city or region, your school, or your parish. This could be a picture in your wallet, a ring on your finger, or a favorite sweater! Take a moment to show and share the item with one person sitting next to you.

After allowing 5 to 7 minutes for sharing, invite the participants to share their name and one sentence that describes the symbol they chose. Allow 7 to 15 minutes for large-group sharing—this will vary by size of the group.

## Listen

4. Invite the first reader to proclaim Matt. 5:32–33. Allow a few moments of quiet reflection to follow.

5. Comment on the reading in these or similar words:

- In today's reading, Jesus sees the hunger in the community that has gathered. The hunger he saw that day was for food to eat. In our communities, people are hungry for many things—food, shelter, security, and friendship.
- What are the hungers you see in this community? Take a moment to reflect and share with the person sitting beside you. (Option: Invite the participants to name the hungers they identify using one or two words in the large group.)

Allow 7 to 10 minutes for sharing in pairs. You may wish to play instrumental music in the background.

### VARIATION:

## Large Group

In the large-group sharing during the “gather” portion of prayer, invite the participants to share, within their small group of eight to twelve members, their name and one sentence that describes their symbol.

**VARIATION:****Large Group**

During the bread blessing in the “respond” portion of the prayer, ask someone from each group to stand in the center of its circle and hold up the basket with the loaf of bread. Bread should be shared within the smaller groups.

6. Invite the second reader to proclaim Matt. 15:34–37. Allow a few moments of quiet reflection to follow. Then offer some brief comments such as these on the reading just proclaimed:

- We know Jesus could have accomplished this miracle in any way he wanted. One way he could have multiplied the loaves and fishes was through a miracle of sharing.
- At the beginning of this prayer, you took something from your pockets or bags; you opened up your pouches and shared something that reminded you of your community. In a similar way, Jesus might have invited people who had traveled to open their bags and share with one another.
- We are called to be community and to share with one another. We are also called to reach beyond our community to share with others.
- We are challenged today: With whom should I share the gifts in my bag? How can I be more open to receiving gifts from others? How can my gifts become part of the nourishment for a hungry world?

**Respond**

7. Invite the petition readers to stand and pray aloud the petitions on handout 5. Conclude with this prayer:

Loving God, we stand at your feet, changed by your Word. We bring to you what we have and who we are. Gather our lives into baskets so that your grace and spirit might change us to become nourishment for a hungry world. We ask this in Jesus’ name as we will continue to pray. Amen!

8. Ask someone to hold up the plate or basket of bread. Introduce the bread-sharing to the community by saying:

- In our Tradition we use bread within our prayer to remind us that we are called to be the Body of Christ. During Mass the bread we eat is blessed in a special way and becomes the Eucharist. This bread we will bless is a different symbol that reminds us of today’s Gospel.
- Please join me in a sign of blessing by extending both hands.
- Loving God, you always give us what we need. You give us food, shelter, drink, and rest. You give us family, friends, and time to grow. Bless this bread and this community gathered in your name. Gathered as we are together as one, help us to become nourishment for a hungry world. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Invite everyone to pass the basket (or plate) and share the bread. Provide instrumental music in the background as participants break, share, and eat the bread.

## Go Forth

9. Invite the community to join hands for a closing prayer, asking them to respond with “Amen” at the end of the prayer:

- Loving God, your Spirit nourishes our lives. Send us forth as bread for the hungry. We ask this in Jesus’ name.

10. Conclude the prayer by inviting the participants to join in singing the closing song you have selected.

## Journal Questions

The following questions can be used to extend this prayer session, or the participants can use them for personal reflection after the gathered time.

- During the prayer you reflected upon hungers in your community. What are some ways you see the evidence of these hungers? What are the situations and people with whom you identify these hungers?
- What gifts do you have that could connect to the hungers? For example, if one hunger is for friendship, what are your gifts for making friends that could be part of the solution?

## ***Catholic Faith Handbook*** connection

Chapter 31, pp. 309–311

# Prayer Petitions for Bread: Broken and Shared

Offer the following petitions after the comments that follow the second reading from the Gospel.

**Reader 1:** Called to share, we bring our needs to you, O God. Please join in our response: Send us as your bread, Loving God.

**Response:** Send us as your bread, Loving God.

**Reader 1:** We pray for the Church, that we may always be guided by your words and nourished by your bread.

**Response:** Send us as your bread, Loving God.

**Reader 2:** We pray for the hungry, that we may share our food and our lives.

**Response:** Send us as your bread, Loving God.

**Reader 1:** We pray for all those who seek community, that we may open our doors and our hearts to welcome the stranger and comfort the forsaken.

**Response:** Send us as your bread, Loving God.

**Reader 2:** We pray for the community gathered here in your name. Fill us with your life and light that we may be transformed by your loving hands to become food and love.

**Response:** Send us as your bread, Loving God.



# I Call You Each by Name

## AT A GLANCE

### Overview

Our God calls us by name to be disciples. In this prayer, the participants reflect on this call and share with one another about their names. This prayer works well with groups who are new to one another because of the opportunity for introductions within the prayer. This prayer may be connected with the rite of election, which takes place on the first Sunday of Lent. In the rite of election, the catechumens who are preparing for Christian initiation inscribe their names in the Book of the Elect as part of their journey toward receiving the sacraments of initiation during the Easter Vigil. As with all aspects of the sacraments of initiation, this rite is a community celebration. Consider using this prayer with your community in the week before the rite as a way to prepare the youth community to join in prayer for the catechumens and to prepare to experience the rite during liturgy.

### Suggested Time and Group Size

Allow 20 to 30 minutes for this prayer with a smaller group (seven to twelve people). Allow 40 to 50 minutes for this prayer with a larger group (thirteen to thirty people).

For groups larger than thirty, divide the participants into small groups of eight to twelve, with each group forming a circle around a central prayer focus.

### Gather

- ◆ Welcome
- ◆ Gathering Song
- ◆ Opening Prayer

### Listen

- ◆ 1 Sam. 3:1–10
- ◆ Sharing
- ◆ Eph. 3:14–21

### Respond

- ◆ Petitions

### Go Forth

- ◆ Closing Prayer
- ◆ Sign of Peace
- ◆ Concluding Song

### Prayer Extensions

- ◆ Connecting to the Rite of Election
- ◆ What's in a Name?
- ◆ Name Prayer

## Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ☐ several small lightweight plastic or foam balls (one ball for each group of three people)
  - ☐ copies of handout 6, “I Call You Each by Name Worship Aid,” one for each participant
  - ☐ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, one for each participant
  - ☐ a table, a decorative cloth, and a cross
  - ☐ a *Catholic Youth Bible* or other Bible
  - ☐ a candle and matches
- Recruit two participants to proclaim the Scripture readings and the petitions.
- Select a gathering song such as “Lead Me, Lord,” by John D. Becker; or “You Are Mine,” by David Haas; as well as a closing song such as “We Are God’s Work of Art,” by Mark Friedman; or “At the Name of Jesus,” by Christopher Walker.

## Setting the Prayer Environment

Create a prayer focus with a table, decorative cloth, candle, cross, and Bible.

## Welcome Activity

Getting to know one another and laughing together can gather people for prayer.

### Group Juggling

**1.** Distribute name tags. Ask each person to write his or her name in large print on the name tag and place the name tag on their shirt or blouse.

**2.** Gather the participants into groups of five to eight people. Hand the first ball to a group member. Instruct the remaining group members to hold their hands up until they receive the ball. The person with the ball should call the name of another group member and toss the ball to that person. The receiver then calls the name of another group member and tosses the ball to that person. Continue until everyone in the group has handled the ball and it has returned to the first person who tossed the ball.

**3.** Now instruct the participants to toss the ball again—the ball must be handled in the same order, and the participants should continue to call out names before throwing the ball. Once the group has the system down, it may be timed and can work on speed. Then, hand another ball to the first person while the first ball is halfway around the group. Once the groups have each passed two balls around, give each group a third ball and then

a fourth. Each time, the ball must be passed in the order that was initially established.

**Variations:** If you have multiple groups, have half of each group rotate to another group (this would be a way for people to learn additional names). Or ask the groups to reverse order with one ball and then add additional balls. In a final round, ask the groups to pass the balls as quickly as they can without dropping the balls. Instruct the groups to sit down after they have dropped a ball. Continue until one group is left standing.

**4. Discussion questions:**

- What made it hard to do this exercise?
- What made it easy?

**5.** Ask all to cover their name tags, then ask for a volunteer to name everyone in their group. Close this exercise with these comments:

- In our activity we called one another's name before throwing the ball. In our reading tonight we will hear of the time when God called Samuel by name before asking Samuel to become a prophet. God calls each of us by name before entrusting us to become disciples. It is our job to listen, to be alert, and to be ready for what is coming our way!

Invite the participants to gather in a prayer circle.

## Order of Service

### Gather

**1.** Welcome the participants to the prayer, and invite everyone to join in the responses and the songs. Introductions occur within the prayer itself. Distribute to the participants copies of handout 6 and songbooks.

**2.** Invite participants to sing the gathering song you have selected.

**3.** Share with the participants the opening prayer as it appears on handout 6.

Eternal One,  
Silence from whom our words come,  
Questioner from whom our questions arise,  
Lover of whom all our loves are hints,  
Disturber in whom alone we find rest,  
Mystery in whose depths we find healing and find ourselves.

### Listen

**4.** Invite the first reader to proclaim 1 Sam. 3:1–10. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow the reading.

**VARIATION:****Large Group**

When the participants are asked to share about their name in the large group, invite them to share in the small group instead.

5. Invite the participants to pair up and to share about their names.

They might consider these questions:

- Why did your parents choose your name for you?
- Do you have nicknames that you like?
- Do you have nicknames that you don't like?
- How do you feel about your name?

Allow a few minutes for the sharing, then say:

- Please share with all of us your name, where you go to school, and one or two sentences about how you were named.

6. Thank the participants for sharing, then invite the second reader to proclaim Eph. 3:14–21. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection after the reading.

**Respond**

7. Continue with these comments:

- In the reading, the Apostle Paul prays that we might know the hope to which God has called us and that we might recognize “the name that is above every name” (Phil. 2:9).
- We are called to be disciples, and our loving God gives us what we need to follow faithfully.
- We join in praying the following petitions to ask for God's continued blessing.

Invite the readers to share the petitions from handout 6.

**Go Forth**

8. After the petitions, allow for a moment of silence, then use the words “Together we pray” to invite the participants to pray aloud the closing prayer on handout 6.

9. Conclude by asking the participants to offer one another a sign of peace. Then invite them to sing the closing song you have chosen.

**Prayer Extensions****Connecting with the Rite of Election**

After the sharing about names, take a few moments to explain the rite of election. Use these or similar words:

- As a Church we will soon celebrate what is called the rite of election. This rite is not about voting or political elections; it is the second step in the journey for people who are preparing for Christian initiation.
- The rite of election is about “names” in two ways. First, during this rite each catechumen will write his or her name in the Book of the Elect as a

sign of readiness for the final preparation period that leads to the sacraments of initiation during the Easter Vigil.

- The rite of election is so named because the Church is accepting these soon-to-be members; “the acceptance made by the Church is founded on the election by God, in whose name the Church acts” (*The Rites of the Catholic Church*, p. 94).
- The rite is about names in a second way. During the preparation for Christian initiation and before the rite of election, these persons are referred to as *catechumens*; after the rite of election, they are called the *elect*. They are also called *illuminandi*, which means “those who will be enlightened.” Through our Baptism, we experience enlightenment as we share more fully in Christ’s light.
- Like the elect, we are called by name, and we are chosen by God as part of God’s Church, which acts in God’s name.

At this point you can continue with the prayer from where you left off, or you can use the extension below.

## What’s in a Name?

*The Name Book: Over 10,000 Names—Their Meanings, Origins, and Spiritual Significance*, by Dorothy Astoria and published by Bethany House Publishers, describes the Christian meanings and origins of names and attributes a strength or blessing to each name. Purchase or borrow multiple copies of the book (one for every three to five participants) and have the participants identify and pray for the strength in their name meaning. Distribute index cards and invite the participants to write their names and the strength associated with them. Then invite the participants to come forward one at a time to the prayer table to pin their names to the prayer cloth or to place their name cards in the prayer basket. These name cards can later be redistributed to participants as a prayerful reminder of being called by name.

## Name Prayer

Lead the youth in a meditation about names. This prayer exercise could take place before the reading from Ephesians. Prepare the group for the meditation by asking the participants to make themselves comfortable. Ask the participants to be reverent and quiet as a gift to one another during the meditation. Provide instructions for the meditation in these words:

- The writers of the Psalms were not satisfied with one name for God; they called him my rock, my delight, my shield, my king, my shepherd. Like the psalmist, we call God by names that represent God’s presence in our lives. In this prayer, you are asked to invent names for Jesus. These names come from your creativity and arise from your heart. As you continue to breathe deeply, speak these names to yourself, Jesus, my joy . . . Jesus, my strength . . . Jesus, my peace . . .

## TryThis

- ◆ Provide the participants with index cards with the names of the catechumens printed on them (one name per card). Distribute one card to each participant, and ask the participants to pray for the catechumens as they journey toward initiation.
- ◆ Instead of preparing a presentation about the rite of election, consider inviting a leader from your parish’s Christian initiation team and a catechumen to share about the meaning of the rite, the elements of the ritual, and the application to our lives.

Allow 3 to 5 minutes of quiet reflection. Continue in these words:

- When two friends are trying to find each other, they often call each other's name until they are together . . . You have called on Jesus' name; now imagine that you hear Jesus inventing names for you . . . What does he call you? Continue to breathe deeply and listen as you imagine Jesus' names for you.

Allow 3 to 5 minutes of quiet reflection.

Invite the participants to take a few minutes to journal about this experience. Use the following starter questions:

- What were your names for Jesus? How did you feel about calling Jesus by these names?
- What were the names that Jesus called you? How did you feel about being called by these names?
- What do you feel called to in this prayer? What do you wonder about?
- What do you want to think about and meditate more upon?

(Adapted from Anthony de Mello, *Sadhana*, pp. 111–113.)

# I Call You Each by Name

## Worship Aid

*Please join in the prayer responses where indicated on this worship aid as  
“All Respond.”*

### **Gather**

#### **Opening Prayer**

##### **Prayer Leader:**

Eternal One,  
Silence from whom our words come,  
Questioner from whom our questions arise,  
Lover of whom all our loves are hints,  
Disturber in whom alone we find rest,  
Mystery in whose depths we find healing and find ourselves,

##### **All Respond:**

Enfold us now in your presence, restore to us your peace,  
renew us through your power, and ground us in your grace.

### **Listen**

- 1 Samuel 3: 1–10
- Ephesians 3:14–21

### **Respond**

- Petitions

##### **Reader:**

For the gift of vision to see the things we sometimes miss  
because our earth-eyes are distracted . . .

##### **All Respond:**

Give us your vision.

##### **Reader:**

For the gift of conviction to live radically the Gospel you have preached  
to us . . .

##### **All Respond:**

Give us your conviction.

**Reader:**

For the gift of servanthood to empty ourselves as you did in being willing to bend low to wash feet, to heal wounds . . .

**All Respond:**

Give us your spirit of being servant.

**Reader:**

For the gift of poverty to let go of those things that clutter our vision of you, to rid our lives of all that doesn't matter . . .

**All Respond:**

Give us your spirit of poverty.

**Reader:**

For the gift of hope to stand on tiptoe with all creation to wait believing for rebirth, for growth, for completion . . .

**All Respond:**

Give us your hope.

**Reader:**

For the gift of reverence to be gentle with the mystery of each person's uniqueness to stand on holy ground and acknowledge the value of creation . . .

**All Respond:**

Give us your reverence.

**Reader:**

Finally, we pray for the grace to recognize your gifts when they are given, to own them, to claim them, to acknowledge them as ours to give away . . .

**All Respond:**

Give us your own power of recognition.

**Go Forth**

**Closing Prayer**

**Prayer Leader:**

Together we pray.

**All Respond:**

O God of light, O Lord of sight, you have graced me with your vision.

My restless heart receives with joy the truth of goodness.

Amen to all the goodness of my name.



# Praying with Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha

## AT A GLANCE

### Overview

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha's life was ordinary in many ways, but it was extraordinary because of the qualities she embodied. Kateri experienced much pain, sorrow, and hardship. Yet in all things she found joy and peace through her belief in Jesus Christ. The prayer in this session provides an opportunity for youth communities to pray with this inspiring, faithful woman of God. This prayer has elements of American Indian spirituality, which is rooted in the firm belief that all things are made by the Creator and are therefore worthy of honor and respect. In the American Indian culture, prayers to the four compass directions are prayed with the permission of an elder and to the Great Spirit. The nontraditional prayer of the four directions offered here honors Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, whose feast is celebrated on July 14. Colors are associated with each of the four directions; in a similar way, we as a Church associate colors with the various liturgical seasons. The colors most commonly used are the Lakota colors: east, yellow; south, white; west, black; and north, red. The directions are also associated with certain attributes: east, illumination and enlightenment; south, childhood and summer; west, dreamtime and darkness; and north, winter, old age, cold, end of things.

### Suggested Time and Group Size

Allow 20 minutes for this prayer. This prayer service may be prayed with any size group.

### Background Reading

- ◆ *Catholic Youth Bible* article connections: "Sacrificial Giving" (Mark 12:41–44); "Iroquois Prayer of Thanksgiving" (1 Thess. 5:16–24); "Living in Your Tent, on Your Holy Hill" (Psalm 15)

### Gather

- ◆ Welcome
- ◆ Gathering Song
- ◆ Opening Prayer

### Listen

- ◆ Story of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha
- ◆ Prayer to the Four Directions

### Respond

- ◆ Litany of Praise

### Go Forth

- ◆ Closing Blessing
- ◆ Closing Song

## Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ☐ a small table
  - ☐ a plain wooden cross
  - ☐ four pieces of fabric to correspond to the four directions: yellow, east; red, north; white, south; and black, west (about one yard of each)
  - ☐ fresh flowers (preferably white lilies) or plants
  - ☐ a candle
  - ☐ a picture or an icon of Blessed Kateri (available from [www.bridgebuilding.com](http://www.bridgebuilding.com))
  - ☐ one copy of resource 2, “Story of Kateri Tekakwitha”
  - ☐ copies of handout 7, “Prayer to the Four Directions,” one for each participant
  - ☐ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, one for each participant
- Invite a volunteer to tell the story of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha as noted on resource 2.
- Select a gathering and closing song such as “Song at the Center” or “Canticle of the Sun,” both by Marty Haugen. They are found in *Gather Comprehensive*, published by GIA in Chicago. Other songs with creation as a theme can be used.

## Setting the Prayer Environment

Arrange chairs in a circle. Set up a small table in the center, with each of the colored cloths set in its corresponding direction. Arrange on the table the wooden cross, a candle, fresh flowers or other plants, and the picture or icon of Blessed Kateri.

## Order of Service

### Gather

**1.** Welcome the participants, and distribute to each a copy of handout 7 and a hymnal. Then invite the participants to sing the gathering song you selected.

**2.** Offer the opening prayer:

- O great and wonderful Father, you are at the center of creation. You are the foundation of the four corners of the universe. All creation from the rising of the sun to the smallest insect is indebted to you. Today we join with your daughter, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, in honoring you, and we offer up this prayer in the name of Jesus, our brother.

## Listen

3. Invite the reader to begin the story of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha as noted in part 1 of resource 2.

4. Begin “The Prayer to the Four Directions” by saying:

- Please stand and face the east.
- The east is the place of illumination and enlightenment, and so we pray . . .

Invite all to pray the prayer to the east as noted on handout 7.

5. Invite the reader to continue the story of Blessed Kateri as noted in part 2 of resource 2.

6. Continue the prayer with the community by saying:

- Please stand and face the south.
- The south is the place of childhood, and so we pray . . .

Invite all to pray the prayer to the south as noted on handout 7.

7. Invite the reader to continue the story as noted in part 3 of resource 2.

8. Continue the prayer by saying:

- Please stand and face the west.
- The west is the place of dreams, and so we pray . . .

Invite all to pray the prayer to the west as noted on handout 7.

9. The reader continues the story of Blessed Kateri as noted in part 4 of resource 2.

10. Continue the prayer with the community by saying:

- Please stand and face the north.
- The north is the place of old age and winter, and so we pray . . .

Invite all to pray the prayer to the north as noted on handout 7.

## Respond

11. Introduce the litany of praise to God with these words:

- Throughout Blessed Kateri’s life, all of nature spoke to her about the Creator. She knew that nothing existed without the Creator and that all things owed praise to the Creator.
- In the Book of Daniel, we read about three young men who offer up this song of praise to God for saving them from a fiery inferno.
- Please join in this litany by praying the refrain “bless the Lord.”
- Sun and moon, *bless the Lord*; praise and exalt him forever.
- Stars of heaven, *bless the Lord*.
- Every shower and dew, *bless the Lord*.
- All you winds, *bless the Lord*.

## Did You Know?

Many American Indian prayer rituals include the practice of smudging—brushing sage smoke over oneself as a way of cleansing. Smudging serves the same function as burning incense in a church during Mass. It blesses and purifies the space.

- Fire and heat, *bless the Lord.*
- Cold and chill, *bless the Lord.*
- Nights and days, *bless the Lord.*
- Lightning and clouds, *bless the Lord.*
- Mountains and hills, *bless the Lord.*
- Everything growing from the earth, *bless the Lord.*
- Seas and rivers, *bless the Lord.*
- You dolphins and all water creatures, *bless the Lord.*
- All you birds of the air, *bless the Lord.*
- All you beasts, wild and tame, *bless the Lord.*
- You sons and daughters of men and women, *bless the Lord.*
- All creation, *bless the Lord.*
- Give thanks to the Lord, who is good and whose mercy endures forever!

## Go Forth

**12.** Offer this closing blessing:

- O great and wonderful Creator, we thank you for Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, the “Lily of the Mohawks.” May we be inspired by her example and strive to live a life of Christian devotion in the face of difficulties and misfortune. We offer up this prayer in the name of Jesus, our brother. Amen.

**13.** Invite the participants to sing the sending forth song you have chosen.

# Story of Kateri Tekakwitha

## Part 1

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha was born to a Christian Algonquin and to a Mohawk warrior in the Mohawk Valley in 1656. Her Mohawk name was *Tekakwitha*, which means “she puts things in order.” Her name suited her well because she always put God first in her life. When she was only a child, smallpox swept through the Mohawk Valley, killing her parents and brother and leaving her physically scarred and frail the rest of her life. She even lost some of her eyesight to the disease.

## Part 2

As a child, Kateri learned the value of hard work from her people. In spite of her physical difficulties, she did her share of the work necessary to help her family and her people. When she was only 12 years old, the Jesuit missionaries, called “black robes,” came to teach about Jesus and his cross. What the “black robes” taught made sense to her. It answered many of her questions and went straight to her heart. During her entire childhood, she listened and learned and waited for the right time to ask for Baptism.

## Part 3

We cannot know how long Kateri dreamed of asking for Baptism, knowing that it would displease her uncle, but she finally felt that she had to do what God was asking her to do. She put God first

in her life, and on Easter of 1676, she was baptized with the name Kateri, which means Catherine. Because she became a Christian, people began to make fun of her and call her a “Christian dog.” Despite this very difficult time, she remained faithful to God. Her family wanted her to marry, as was the custom among her people for a woman of her age, but she was so filled with love for God that she couldn’t think about getting married. She often spent time alone in the forest praying the rosary before a cross of sticks that she made. Her great dream was to live for God alone, but her family could not understand this.

## Part 4

Realizing that things were not going to get better, Kateri decided to leave home without telling anyone. The Jesuits helped her escape, and she traveled for days until she arrived at a Mohawk village in what is now Quebec, where other Christian Indians lived. At age 23, she made a vow of perpetual virginity, a commitment that was unheard of among Indians. She often performed penance for her own sins and for those of her people. Gradually, her health grew worse, and she was confined to her sick bed. She was not afraid to die; she referred to death as “going home to God.” On April 17, 1680, at age 24, Kateri Tekakwitha died. In her short life, she had left the entire Church a great example of faith.

# Prayer to the Four Directions

## **East**

O great and wonderful Creator, you give us the sun to light our day and warm us. Help us to remember, as Blessed Kateri did, that even though she lived with the darkness of smallpox her entire life, you became the one true light of her life. Allow us to be a people who walk always in your light. We pray to you, O God. Amen.

## **South**

O great and wonderful Creator, as we face the south, we thank you for our own childhood. Help us to remember that just like Blessed Kateri, we are never too young to hear your words and take them into our hearts. May we listen carefully to your words of comfort and wisdom. We pray to you, O God. Amen.

## **West**

O great and wonderful Creator, as we face the west, we thank you for the dreams you have given us in our own lives and for the dream Jesus gave us of his Kingdom. Help us to remember that like Blessed Kateri, we too must be willing to sacrifice and face prejudice for the dream of the Kingdom. Give us the courage of Blessed Kateri to be faithful to that dream. We pray to you, O God. Amen.

## **North**

O great and wonderful Creator, as we face the north, we pray to have the wisdom and courage of Blessed Kateri when we too face the cold winds of winter in our lives. May we always embrace your cross and know that you are our true home. May we too become examples of faith to others by the kind of life we live. We pray to you, O God. Amen.

# 9 Praying with Our Lady of Guadalupe

## AT A GLANCE

### Overview

Each year on December 12, the Church celebrates Mary as the patroness of the Americas, Our Lady of Guadalupe—Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Mary speaks to and for the poor and the oppressed. This prayer experience introduces the participants to the story of Mary's appearance to Juan Diego. Each year on December 9, we celebrate the feast of Juan Diego, a newly canonized saint. Consider using this prayer in conjunction with either feast day.

### Suggested Time and Group Size

Allow 30 to 40 minutes for this prayer with a smaller group of five to twelve people. Allow 45 to 60 minutes for this prayer with a larger group of thirteen to thirty people.

This prayer adapts well for groups that vary in size from seven to 200.

### Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ☐ a Mexican blanket or a weaving from another Latin American country
  - ☐ roses or other flowers; cactus, if available
  - ☐ a picture or an icon of Our Lady of Guadalupe (available from [www.bridgebuilding.com](http://www.bridgebuilding.com))
  - ☐ candles, six to eight of varying sizes
  - ☐ copies of handout 8, "Readings," one for each reader
  - ☐ copies of handout 9, "Praying with Our Lady of Guadalupe," one for each participant
  - ☐ CD player and *Spirit & Song* CDs, if a musician is not available
  - ☐ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, one for each participant

### Gather

- ◆ Welcome
- ◆ Opening Song
- ◆ Opening Prayer

### Listen

- ◆ Story of Mary's Appearance to Saint Juan Diego

### Respond

- ◆ Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary

### Go Forth

- ◆ Closing Prayer
- ◆ Closing Song

## TryThis

To learn more about Our Lady of Guadalupe and Saint Juan Diego, visit these Web sites:

- ◆ [www.sancta.org/nican.html](http://www.sancta.org/nican.html)
- ◆ [www.zihua-ixtapa.com/~anotherday/2000\\_2001/dec/guadalupe.htm](http://www.zihua-ixtapa.com/~anotherday/2000_2001/dec/guadalupe.htm)
- ◆ [www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintjem.htm](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintjem.htm)
- ◆ [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org)

- Select a gathering-and-closing song, such as “Immaculate Mary” or “Holy Is His Name (Canticle of Mary),” by John Michael Talbot; “Holy Is Your Name (Canticle of Mary),” arranged by David Haas; or another song with Mary as its theme.
- Invite three participants to serve as readers.

## Setting the Prayer Environment

Set a table as the focal point for the prayer; cover the table with the Mexican blanket or other Latin American weaving. Arrange fresh flowers and cactus along with the candles and the picture or icon of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

## Order of Service

### Gather

1. Welcome the participants, and distribute to each a copy of handout 8 as well as a songbook. Invite the participants to join in singing the gathering song you have chosen.

2. Offer the opening prayer:

- O, Immaculate Virgin, Mother of the true God and Mother of the Church, who revealed your love and compassion to all those who ask for your protection, hear the prayer that we address to you today, and present it to your son Jesus, our sole redeemer. Amen.

Let us now sit and listen to the voice of Mary as she spoke to Saint Juan Diego Cuautlatotzin (Cu-au-tla-toe-a-zteen).

### Listen

3. Invite the readers to come forward and proclaim the first reading as noted on handout 8. Allow a few moments of quiet to follow. Then invite the participants to reflect on what they have heard by saying:

- Take a moment to think silently about the times you have felt abandoned and alone, the moments you have felt you had no one to turn to, the occasions you felt conquered and defeated. [Pause for 30 seconds.]
- Mary’s words are not just for Juan Diego; more importantly, they are for us.
- Please join with me in praying the first prayer on your handout 9.

Together with the participants pray the prayer as noted. When the prayer is concluded, continue by sharing:

- We continue to hear the words that Mary spoke to Juan Diego.

Invite the reader to proclaim the second reading as noted on handout 8.



4. Pause for a moment, then use these or similar words to invite the participants to reflect for a few moments:

- Pause a moment in silence to think about the times you have thought of yourself as too unimportant, or too young, or not popular enough, or not smart enough to do something you felt called to do. [Pause in silence for 30 seconds.]
- Mary's words are not just for Juan Diego; more importantly, they are for us.
- Please join me in praying the second prayer on your worship aid.

5. Using handout 9, begin the prayer as noted. When the prayer is concluded, continue by saying:

- We continue to hear the words that Mary spoke to Juan Diego.

Invite the readers to proclaim the third reading as noted on handout 8.

6. Pause for a moment, then in these or similar words, invite the participants to reflect:

- Take a moment to think about a time when you felt great fear. Sometimes fear becomes so strong that we cannot believe that anything will restore peace to our heart. [Pause for 30 seconds.]
- Mary's words are not just for Juan Diego; more importantly, they are for us.
- Please pray with me the third prayer on your worship aid:

As noted on handout 9, begin the third prayer.

7. Offer this reflection to the participants:

- The apparition of Mary that Juan Diego saw in 1531 began a new era for all the people who lived at that time in the Americas or who have since come to the American continents. Mary promised that her love is for all the people who live together in this land.
- When Mary gave this message, no borders had been drawn in this hemisphere. The Pilgrims had not made their voyage across the ocean to Plymouth. Mexico did not exist. South America had none of the countries that we know today. It was just *this land*. And we now live on *this land*, whether we are Mexican, or of Hispanic, European, African, or Asian descent.
- No matter when our ancestors came to this land, all its people are under the protection of the Blessed Mother, and the words she spoke to Juan Diego so long ago are for us today.
- So let us pray this litany of praise to Mary.

## TryThis

Consider singing a verse of "Immaculate Mary," or another song that honors Mary, after each reading.

## Respond

Invite the participants to respond to each portion of the litany as noted. You will need to “prompt” them when the response changes.

- Lord, have mercy. *Christ, have mercy.*
- Lord, have mercy. Christ, hear us. *Christ, graciously hear us.*
- God, the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*
- God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*
- God the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*
- Holy Trinity, One God, *have mercy on us.*
- Holy Mary, *pray for us.*
- Holy Mother of God, *pray for us.*
- Holy Virgin of virgins, *pray for us.*
- Mother of Christ, *pray for us.*
- Mother of the Church, *pray for us.*
- Mother of divine grace, *pray for us.*
- Mother most pure, *pray for us.*
- Mother most chaste, *pray for us.*
- Mother inviolate, *pray for us.*
- Mother undefiled, *pray for us.*
- Mother most amiable, *pray for us.*
- Mother most admirable, *pray for us.*
- Mother of good counsel, *pray for us.*
- Mother of our Creator, *pray for us.*
- Mother of our Savior, *pray for us.*
- Virgin most prudent, *pray for us.*
- Virgin most venerable, *pray for us.*
- Virgin most renowned, *pray for us.*
- Virgin most powerful, *pray for us.*
- Virgin most merciful, *pray for us.*
- Virgin most faithful, *pray for us.*
- Mirror of justice, *pray for us.*
- Seat of wisdom, *pray for us.*
- Cause of our joy, *pray for us.*
- Spiritual vessel, *pray for us.*
- Vessel of honor, *pray for us.*
- Singular vessel of devotion, *pray for us.*
- Mystical rose, *pray for us.*
- Tower of David, *pray for us.*
- Tower of ivory, *pray for us.*
- House of gold, *pray for us.*
- Ark of the covenant, *pray for us.*
- Gate of heaven, *pray for us.*

- Morning star, *pray for us.*
- Health of the sick, *pray for us.*
- Refuge of sinners, *pray for us.*
- Comforter of the afflicted, *pray for us.*
- Help of Christians, *pray for us.*
- Queen of angels, *pray for us.*
- Queen of patriarchs, *pray for us.*
- Queen of prophets, *pray for us.*
- Queen of apostles, *pray for us.*
- Queen of martyrs, *pray for us.*
- Queen of confessors, *pray for us.*
- Queen of virgins, *pray for us.*
- Queen of all saints, *pray for us.*
- Queen conceived without original sin, *pray for us.*
- Queen assumed into heaven, *pray for us.*
- Queen of the most holy Rosary, *pray for us.*
- Queen of families, *pray for us.*
- Queen of peace, *pray for us.*
- Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world; *spare us, O Lord.*
- Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world; *graciously hear us, O Lord.*
- Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world; *have mercy on us.*
- Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God. *That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*
- Let us pray: Grant, we beg you, O Lord God, that we your servants may enjoy lasting health of mind and body, and by the glorious intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, be delivered from present sorrow and enter into the joy of eternal happiness. Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

("Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary,"

at [www.udayton.edu/mary/prayers/loreto.html](http://www.udayton.edu/mary/prayers/loreto.html), accessed May 21, 2003.)

## Go Forth

Invite the participants to join together in praying the Hail Mary. Conclude the prayer by singing the closing song you have chosen.

# Readings

## First Reading

### Reader 1:

In 1531, ten years after the conquest of Mexico by Spain, Mary, the mother of the one true God, appeared to a man by the name of Juan Diego on the hill of Tepeyac. He was a Native Mexican man of the Nahuatl (pronounced *Na-wa*) people. He had lived through the conquest and had later converted to Catholicism.

### Reader 2:

The conquest had left the people of Mexico feeling beaten. They felt abandoned and alone. Their gods had failed them, and there was no one to turn to. But Mary, the Mother of the one great God, came to heal all their wounds. Listen to the words that she had to say to Juan Diego.

### Reader 3:

“Know now for certain, my son, the smallest one, that I am the perfect and ever virgin holy Mary, mother of the one true God, through whom one lives, the creator of mankind, the one who owns what is near and beyond, the owner of heaven and earth. I ardently desire that here they build me my sacred little house, a *Teocalli*.

### Reader 1:

“There I will offer him to all the people with all my love, my compassionate gaze, my help, and my salvation because I am truly your merciful mother

and mother of all who live united in this land and of all mankind, of all those who love me, of those who cry to me, of those who search for me, of those who have confidence in me. There I will listen to their cry, to their sadness, so as to curb all their different pains, their miseries and sorrow, to remedy and alleviate their sufferings.”

## Second Reading

### Reader 1:

Our mother Mary sent Juan Diego to deliver her message to the bishop of Mexico and to ask that a church be built for her at the site where she appeared to Juan Diego, but the bishop did not believe him. When Juan Diego returned, he told Mary that the bishop had not believed him because he was a man of no importance and that she should send someone else. This is how she answered him:

### Reader 2:

“But it is very necessary that you personally go and request that my wish, my will, be realized, be carried out, through your intercession. I beg you earnestly, youngest son of mine, and solemnly do command you that once again tomorrow you go to see the bishop. From my part, let him know, let him hear my wish, my will, so that he will make, he will build the temple that I ask. So, once again, tell him that it is I personally, the ever virgin, holy Mary, the Mother of God, who is sending you.”

### Third Reading

#### Reader 1:

Juan Diego returned to the bishop again. This time the bishop asked for a sign that would prove it was the mother of God who made such a request. When Juan Diego returned to the Virgin Mary, she assured him that she would give him the sign the bishop needed the next morning. When Juan Diego reached his home, he found that his uncle was near death. The next morning, fearing that his uncle would die, he decided not to run the errand that Mary had given him but to go to Mexico City to find a priest for his uncle. But when he reached the foot of the hill of Tepeyac, the Virgin appeared to him again. Juan Diego was very frightened and told her that his uncle was dying. This is what she said to him:

#### Reader 2:

“Listen and keep in your heart, my youngest son, that there is nothing for you to fear, nothing to afflict you. Let neither your face nor your heart be worried. Do not fear this or any other illness, or anything pounding or afflicting. Am I not here, I who am your mother? Are you not in my shadow, under my protection? Am I not the fountain of your joy? Are you not in the fold of my mantel, in my crossed arms? Is there anything else you need? Don’t let anything afflict you, perturb you. Let not the sickness of your uncle cause pain. He will not die of it now. Be assured that he is well.”

#### Reader 3:

When Juan Diego heard her words, he was greatly comforted by them. His heart became peaceful.

(Portions of this handout are from a translation of *Apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe*, from the original story known as “Nican Mopohua,” by Antonio Valeriano and translated by Fr. Angel Cerda, on the EWTN Web site, [www.ewtn.com/jp99/apparition.htm](http://www.ewtn.com/jp99/apparition.htm), accessed May 7, 2003.)

# Praying with Our Lady of Guadalupe

## **Pray together after the first set of readings:**

Mother of compassion and love, just like the people in Juan Diego's time, we have moments when we feel alone and abandoned and we don't know where to turn for help. Look on us with your eyes of mercy. As you heard the cry of the people of Mexico so long ago, hear us now. Do not abandon us when we most need you. Cleanse our wounds and nurse us back to health. Amen.

## **Pray together after the second set of readings:**

Mother of compassion and love, give us the strength to respond with a yes to God in our lives and to have the confidence to act even when we feel it would be better for God to send a different person. Help us remember that we are important to God regardless of how old we are, where we go to school, how much money we have, or what our background is. Allow us to remember our own dignity and to treat all people with the same dignity and respect.

## **Pray together after the third set of readings:**

Mother of compassion and love, do not permit fear to possess our hearts. Give us courage as we face our greatest fears. Allow us to remember that you are our Blessed Mother and that you have promised to love and protect us. Grant that we may live always worthy of the love and compassion you offered Juan Diego and offer us now.

# 10 We've Come This Far by Faith

## AT A GLANCE

### Gather

- ◆ Gathering Song
- ◆ Opening Prayer

### Listen

- ◆ Scripture Reading

### Respond

- ◆ Prayer

### Go Forth

- ◆ Closing Prayer
- ◆ Sign of Peace

## Overview

We've come this far by faith. These words of inspiration are drawn from the experience and the hope of the African American community. In these words, we are reminded that we are where we are because of our faith in God, and we reaffirm our faith in the future. This prayer celebrates the faith and the hope of leaders and heroes who are African and African American. In the prayer, heroes are remembered and ancestors are prayed for. This prayer could be used during African American History Month (February); on the feast days of Saint Benedict the African (April 3), Saint Peter Claver (September 9), and Saint Martin de Porres (November 3), or on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday (third Monday in January).

## Suggested Time and Group Size

This prayer can take 15 to 20 minutes, longer if songs are included. The prayer works well with a variety of group sizes (as small as five and as large as 100).

## Background Reading

- ◆ *Catholic Youth Bible (CYB)* article connections: "Kwanzaa as a Way of Life" (near Deut. 10:12–22) This reference provides background on Kwanzaa, a description of the celebration, and the following scriptural connections to the seven principles:
  - ◇ "ujima" (collective work and responsibility), Deut. 8:11–18
  - ◇ "kujichagulia" (self-determination), Jth. 8:9–36
  - ◇ " umoja " (unity), Ps. 133; 1 Cor. 12:12–26
  - ◇ "ujamaa" (cooperative economics), Matt. 16:25
  - ◇ "kuumba" (creativity), Matt. 25:14–30
  - ◇ "nia" (purpose), Rom. 8:28
  - ◇ "imani" (faith), Gal. 6:9

- ◇ “We Were There” (Mark 15:21)
- ◇ “Anchor of the Soul” (Heb. 6:19–20)
- ◆ See also “African American articles” in the *CYB* article subject index.

## Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ❑ a prayer cloth, a candle, and a cross
  - ❑ a *Catholic Youth Bible* or other Bible
  - ❑ copies of handout 10, “Reflection and Prayer on Heroes,” for the readers
  - ❑ copies of handout 11, “We’ve Come This Far by Faith,” one for each participant
  - ❑ CD player and selected music CDs, if a musician and song leader or small choir are unavailable
  - ❑ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, one for each participant
- Invite six participants to serve as readers. Five readers will proclaim the reflections on handout 10, and the sixth reader will proclaim the Gospel (Luke 6:17–26).
- Select an appropriate gathering song and closing song. See the suggestions in the Order of Service. Additional hymn suggestions can be found in these African American hymnals: *Lead Me, Guide Me*, published by Oregon Catholic Press, Portland, Oregon, 800-LITURGY, [www.ocp.org](http://www.ocp.org); *African American Heritage Hymnal*, published by GIA Publications, Inc., Chicago 800-442-1358, [www.giamusic.com](http://www.giamusic.com).

## Setting the Prayer Environment

Create a prayer table that includes a prayer cloth, the *CYB* or other Bible, a candle, and a cross. Consider using a kinte-style cloth as the prayer cloth. Kinte is a woven cloth from Africa that consists of geometric and lined patterns of vibrant colors. Actual kinte cloths are works of art. Printed kinte patterns are often available at fabric stores or African art stores, especially in February. On the prayer table, consider including photos of African Americans who are models of faith. Use the Web sites in the media connections listing to find and print small photos. Cut the photos and attach them to a colored background using construction paper, matching the colors to the colors in your prayer cloth. Place these photos around the prayer table.



# Order of Service

## Gather

1. Distribute a songbook to the participants, and then invite them to join in singing the gathering song you have chosen. Consider “Litany of Saints,” by Grayson Warren Brown; “At the Name of Jesus,” by Christopher Walker; or another gathering song with discipleship as its theme.

2. Welcome the participants with this opening prayer:

- As we come together in faith, leaning on the Lord, we praise God for all our ancestors who taught us that goodness is stronger than evil, that love is stronger than hate, that light is stronger than darkness, that life is stronger than death, and that victory is ours through God who loves us.
- In this prayer, we remember people of faith who are African and African American, heroes and role models who have something to teach all of us. These men and women protected their families with nothing but faith in their God. They walked by faith, not by sight. They encouraged with words such as “You can do it.” They knew that God would make a way out of no way.
- I invite you to call to mind the name of an ancestor you want to remember in our prayer tonight. Let us now call out together these names in one voice.

Invite all the participants to call out the names of ancestors.

## Listen

3. Invite the Gospel reader to come forward to proclaim Luke 6:17–26. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow. Then continue by saying:

- Blessed are our ancestors.
- In this Gospel, Jesus tells us that those who follow his way of love are blessed.
- So we pause to listen to stories of blessed men and women of African and African American descent, who are heroes of the Scriptures and of our history.

4. Invite the five readers to come forward to proclaim the stories from handout 10. After reading the story, each reader should lead the community in praying the response on handout 10.

## Mediaconnections

The following Web sites have helpful information about African American History Month:

- ◆ The Black History Hotlist, [www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/bh\\_hotlist.html](http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/bh_hotlist.html), has stories, poems, activities, and speeches of African American heroes. This site also has links to several more resources.
- ◆ CNN fyi.com, [fyi.cnn.com/fyi/interactives/specials/bhm/story/playing.past.html](http://fyi.cnn.com/fyi/interactives/specials/bhm/story/playing.past.html), features a gallery of civil rights leaders, with pictures and brief biographies of many African American leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr., Frederick Douglass, and Sojourner Truth.
- ◆ The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops offers the Web site Secretariat for African American Catholics, [www.usccb.org/saac/index.htm](http://www.usccb.org/saac/index.htm). The site includes resources and information that encourage integration of the African American culture and the Catholic Church in the United States.

## Respond

5. Continue the prayer, inviting the participants to respond as noted.

- May we remember and honor all men and women of faith and the legacy they left for as long as the sun shines and the waters flow. For their eyes were like the eagle, their strength like the elephant, and the boldness of their lives like the lion.
- Blessed are Saint Martin de Porres and Thomy Lafon, who saw the needs of the poor and stretched out their hearts and hands.

**Response:** *For theirs is the kingdom.*

- Blessed are Coretta Scott King, Myrlie Evers, and Betty Shabazz, who mourn the death of their husband, and the death of some of the hopes of their people.

**Response:** *For they shall be comforted.*

- Blessed are Nathan Jones, Harriet Tubman, Henry Garnet, and Sojourner Truth, who hungered for righteousness.

**Response:** *For they shall be satisfied.*

- Blessed are the clean of heart, sisters Felicitas and Perpetua, Moses the Black, and the Martyrs of Uganda.

**Response:** *For they shall see God.*

- Blessed are the peacemakers, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mary McLeod Bethune, and Barbara Jordan.

**Response:** *For they shall be called the children of God.*

- Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of slander against you.

**Response:** *Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.*

## Go Forth

6. Offer the closing prayer:

- God of all, you who brought us this far by faith, we lift our prayers to you. Help us to have faith in ourselves and in our potential to be victorious in the struggles. Help us to believe. Help us to remain faithful until death. Allow the wisdom of our ancestors to walk with us always. Bless this gathering. Allow it to nourish and strengthen our faith and the work we do. And allow us to come together again soon, with greater achievements and closer to liberation and a higher level of human life. Let the Church say Amen!

**Response:** Amen!! Amen!!

7. Conclude with an exchange of peace or a closing song such as “Alleluia, Give the Glory,” by Ken Canedo and Bob Hurd, or another appropriate sending forth song.

# Reflection and Prayer on Heroes

**Reader 1.** From the Book of Judith: “Listen to me, rulers of the people of Bethulia! What you have said to the people today is not right . . . Who are you to put God to the test today, and to set yourselves up in the place of God in human affairs?” (8:11–12).

From the words of Sojourner Truth in 1851: “That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain’t I a woman?” (*Famous Black Quotations*, page 37).

When people who are abused cower quietly in corners, injustice lives on. Bent heads, muffled voices, and terrified spirits invite wrongs to continue.

Judith was a biblical heroine who refused to let her role be determined by others. As a woman and a widow, she had little social standing in ancient Israel. Yet she did not let this keep her from speaking out and challenging the community leaders to action.

Sojourner Truth was a modern hero who refused to keep quiet despite being mistreated and devalued. Her womanhood was slighted and her personhood was trampled, yet she traveled America to tell all who would listen about the evils of slavery. (Adapted from *The Catholic Youth Bible [CYB]*, near Judith 8:9–36)

**Let us pray.** *Dear God, give us the boldness of Judith and Sojourner Truth to address the wrongs of this world. Amen.*

**Reader 2.** From the Gospel of Mark: “They compelled a passerby, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus” (15:21).

According to this passage, the Roman soldiers compelled a North African black man from Cyrene by the name of Simon, a passerby, to carry the cross of Jesus. We do not know anything more about Simon of Cyrene, except that Mark identifies him as the father of Alexander and Rufus. The reference to Simon’s sons by name and the possibility that Rufus is the same person that Paul greets in Romans 16:13 indicate they were known among the early Christians. For African

Americans this evidence of the prominence and influence of African people in the early Christian Church is significant.

African people were there from the beginning of Christianity. They were not latecomers to the Christian faith. Thank God, somebody always remembers! African Americans and other people who have experienced oppression are in danger of forgetting who they are and where they come from—not because they are forgetful peoples, but because the oppressors have tried to erase their culture and identity in order to cripple and control them. Despite this, somebody always remembers. (Adapted from *CYB*, near Mark 15:21)

**Let us pray.** *Dear God, we praise you for having African people there from the beginning of your plan of salvation. We praise you in knowing that people of all races will be with you at the end. Hallelujah! Amen.*

**Reader 3.** From Paul's letter to the Galatians: "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up" (6:9).

From the words of Frederick Douglass: "Be not discouraged. There is a future for you. . . . The resistance encountered now predicates hope. . . . Only as we rise . . . do we encounter opposition." (*Famous Black Quotations*, page 69)

These words by Frederick Douglass in 1892 encouraged African Americans not to abandon their struggle for equality. It seemed that the more African Americans struggled, the more they suffered pain inflicted on them by others. In the face of certain suffering, Douglass urged them to look toward the promise of living as equals under the law.

They knew that God was their liberator and justice giver. God made them brave in the face of danger and capable of dying for the cause they embraced. They looked to God and saw their future. They took the words from Paul's letter seriously. Today, we don't face slave masters nor do we live on plantations as servants in fetters, but we do endure other situations equally as perilous. Let us not grow weary or lose heart. We must have faith. Our God is still in the saving business. (Adapted from *CYB*, near Galatians 6:9)

**Let us pray.** *Dear God, our future is in your hands. Lead us to it with your power. Amen.*

**Reader 4.** From Paul's letter to the Hebrews: "We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain" (6:19).

From a tribute to an African American mother:

Something mighty powerful kept a smile on my mother's face every day when I was a little girl. I never knew she was in pain. All I saw was a woman with a demeanor of hope and a purpose in life.

I did not know it back then, but she was enduring racial harassment on her job. There was unceasing verbal hate toward African Americans. As I have matured, I have learned that her harassment was not unique. It was a common experience for many African Americans in this country.

When faced with oppressive situations, let us be thankful for a God who continuously fills us with hope. Without hope, oppression is lethal. Hope keeps us moving forward when we'd just as soon give up. Hope makes us smile at tomorrow, even though today is a bitter pill. Is your hope anchored in the Lord? (Adapted from *CYB*, near Hebrews 6:19–20)

**Let us pray.** *Dear God, give us hope when we face oppression. Amen.*

**Reader 5.** From the Gospel of Matthew: “For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it” (16:25).

From the words of Martin Luther King Jr.: “A man who won't die for something is not fit to live” (*Famous Black Quotations*, page 15).

Jesus tells us we need to leave behind our old life of selfishness and embrace a new way of life marked by caring about the needs of others. Only then can the spirit of the Lord abound. Martin Luther King Jr. practiced this new way of life in his dream for a better day for African Americans—a dream he was willing to work and die for. (Adapted from *CYB*, near Matthew 16:25)

**Let us pray.** *Dear God, when we act to take care of only ourselves, give us the strength to live selflessly. Amen.*

(All scriptural citations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic Edition. Copyright © 1993 and 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches in the United States of America. All rights reserved. The portions labeled *CYB* are adapted from “The Principle of Kujichagulia,” near Judith 8:9–36; “We Were There,” near Mark 15:21; “The Principle of Imani,” near Galatians 6:9; “Anchor of the Soul,” near Hebrews 6:19–20; “The Principle of Ujamaa,” near Matthew 16:25, respectively, in *The Catholic Youth Bible*, first edition [Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2000]. Copyright © 2000 by Saint Mary's Press. The words of Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, and Martin Luther King Jr. are from *Famous Black Quotations*, edited by Janet Cheatham Bell [New York: Warner Books, 1998], pages 37, 69, and 15, respectively. Copyright © 1986, 1991, and 1995 by Janet Cheatham Bell.)

# We've Come This Far by Faith

## Gather

Gathering Song  
Opening Prayer

## Listen

Luke 6:17–26  
Stories of Heroes and Role Models of Faith

## Respond

**Prayer Leader:** For as long as the sun shines and the waters flow, may we remember and honor all men and women of faith and the legacy they left, for their eyes were like the eagle, their strength like the elephant, and the boldness of their lives like the lion.

Blessed are Saint Martin de Porres and Thomy Lafon, who saw the needs of the poor and stretched out their hearts and hands.

**All Respond:** *For theirs is the kingdom.*

**Prayer Leader:** Blessed are Coretta Scott King, Myrlie Evers, and Betty Shabazz, who mourn the death of their husbands and the death of some of the hopes of their people.

**All Respond:** *For they shall be comforted.*

**Prayer Leader:** Blessed are Nathan Jones, Harriet Tubman, Henry Garnet, and Sojourner Truth, who hungered for righteousness.

**All Respond:** *For they shall be satisfied.*

**Prayer Leader:** Blessed are the clean of heart, sisters Felicitas and Perpetua, Moses the Black, and the Martyrs of Uganda.

**All Respond:** *For they shall see God.*

**Prayer Leader:** Blessed are the peacemakers, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mary McLeod Bethune, and Barbara Jordan.

**All Respond:** *For they shall be called the children of God.*

**Prayer Leader:** Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of slander against you.

**All Respond:** *Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.*

## Go Forth

Concluding Prayer  
All Respond: Amen! Amen!  
Sign of Peace  
Closing Song

# Praying for Mothers and Fathers

## AT A GLANCE

### Overview

Throughout the ups and downs of adolescence, most youth remain connected to their families, especially their parents. This prayer can be used to acknowledge the role parents play in the lives of young people. It can be used as an opening or closing prayer for a session that focuses on parental relationships, or it can be used to honor special days, such as Mother's Day or Father's Day. The leader might choose to adapt the prayer to specifically address mothers or fathers. Leaders should be sensitive to the pastoral needs of the participating youth; many young people live with foster parents, grandparents, or other relatives. Despite their situations, most youth still identify themselves as having parents, either their biological parents or other persons to whom they have formally or informally assigned that role.

### Suggested Time and Group Size

This prayer experience is designed for a 20- to 25-minute time frame and is appropriate for any size group.

### Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ☐ a large candle
  - ☐ *Catholic Youth Bibles* or other Bibles, one for every two participants
  - ☐ a CD player and a CD of reflective music
  - ☐ six copies of handout 12, "Opening Prayer"
- Make prayer cards from resource 3, "Prayer for My Parents," for each participant.
- Ask the participants to bring a photo of their parent(s) or grandparent(s) to the prayer service.
- Invite six participants to serve as readers.

### Gather

- ◆ Opening Prayer

### Listen

- ◆ Luke 2:41–51
- ◆ Reflection
- ◆ Sharing Stories

### Respond

- ◆ Meditation
- ◆ A Prayer for My Parents

### Go Forth

- ◆ Closing Prayer

## TryThis

After the opening prayer, play a song that speaks about parent-and-child relationships.

## Setting the Prayer Environment

Set up a focal point in the middle of the room. You may use a table or the floor, but make sure that the participants sit around the focal point and have access to it. If you are using a table, the group should sit in chairs; if you are using the floor, the group should sit on the floor. At the focal point, place a large candle with the prayer cards in a circle around it, as if to duplicate the seating arrangement of the group around the focal point. You may choose to use soft lighting and meditative music in the background during the prayer.

## Order of Service

### Gather

1. Introduce the prayer service by saying:
  - Tonight [today] we gather to honor the people who have had a significant role in shaping who we are today. We honor and pray for our parents and give thanks for them and the gifts that they are to us.
  - We also want to acknowledge that some people don't live with their parents. Through death, divorce, and other family struggles, people can become separated from their parents. This prayer for parents comes from our hearts to our God in recognition of our parents, wherever they are.
  - We also pray for the times when the relationship with our parents has been strained.

2. Invite the six readers you have selected to come forward and share the reflection they have been assigned from handout 12.

### Listen

3. Invite a volunteer to proclaim Luke 2:41–51. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow. Then say:

- All of us from time to time have made our parents angry or worried. It is part of our human experience as children and as adults. Even Jesus, who was both human and divine, was not immune from causing his parents some grief.

4. Invite the participants to find a partner and sit together. Provide each pair with a Bible. Ask the participants to read the Scripture passage again in their dyads.

Pose the following questions for them to discuss, allowing a few minutes between each question.

- Describe a time when you really worried your parents.
- Describe a time when your parents were really angry with you. What were the circumstances?

Invite the participants to share their stories with the larger group.



## Respond

5. After four or five stories are shared, make the following or similar comments:

- As the opening of our prayer suggests, we react to our parents differently, depending on our own development and stage in life. A two-year-old has a different view of a mom or a dad than a sixteen-year-old does.
- Parents also view their children differently as they grow, and they offer their children different gifts along the way. The needs of a baby are not the same as the needs of a senior in high school.
- Our parents are human; they can do wonderful things for us, and they can make mistakes. For each of us, our experience of our parents is unique. Your experience of your parents' love is different from the experience of the person next to you. Knowing that this relationship has its ups and downs, we still reflect on all we can be grateful for.
- Let us prayerfully consider the gifts our parents have offered us along our journey.
- Think about your own life journey, and try to remember back as far as you can.
- Try to recall the greatest gift your mom or dad ever gave you—not a material gift but the gift of love. Maybe your parent gave such a gift when you were sick or made a financial or personal sacrifice on your behalf. Perhaps your parent had to make a major decision for you.
- How old were you when this gift of love was given to you? Do you remember?

Pause in silence and let the students prayerfully consider these questions.

6. After 2 minutes of silence, ask the participants to consider the following questions:

- Are there moments now or in the upcoming months when you, as a son or daughter, have the opportunity to return that love?
- An expression of love can be as simple as showing gratitude, helping around the house, or taking on a new personal responsibility that will help your parents. Maybe it is as simple as being home for dinner more often during the week or attending church with the family.
- What can you do personally in the near future to express your gratitude and love for your parents?
- What do your parents need right now from you that would assure them of your love?

Again, pause in silence and let the students prayerfully consider these questions.

## TryThis

Depending on time and the comfort level of the group, you might choose to have some participants share their thoughts about what they can do for their parents, or what they think their parents need from them at this time in their lives.

7. After two minutes of silence (or the sharing), give the participants the following directions:

- Each person, one at a time, come forward and pick up a prayer card from the prayer space. As you pick up a card, replace it with the picture of your parents that you brought to prayer this evening.

After all the participants have picked up a prayer card and returned to their places, have the group read together the prayer on the back of the card.

## **Go Forth**

8. Conclude the prayer by thanking the participants and reminding them to follow through on any actions they considered during the prayer. Invite the participants to approach the prayer space so they can look at one another's pictures.

# Opening Prayer

**Reader 1.** When I was born, I was totally dependent on you to take care of me. Whatever I needed, you managed to get it for me. When I was hungry, I was fed. When I was cold, you made me warm. When I cried, you held me in your arms. When I was sick, you took care of me. I probably even woke you up in the middle of the night, yet you still loved me.

**Reader 2.** When I was two, I was a little more confident and wanted to do things on my own. When I wanted to walk, you held me up. When I wanted to swing, you pushed me. When I wanted to feed myself, you let me make a mess. When I wanted to go with the “big kids,” you kept your eye on me. I probably kept you running after me, yet you still loved me.

**Reader 3.** When I was five, it was time to learn more about other people and the world. When I went to school, you made sure I got there and home safely. When I learned to read, you encouraged me and told me how proud you were of me. When I came home with hurt feelings, you listened to me and made me feel better. When I brought home artwork, you hung it on the refrigerator. I probably was starting to grow up too fast, yet you still loved me.

**Reader 4.** When I was ten, I was starting to want my own independence. When I wanted privacy, you didn’t come into my room. When I wanted to play sports, you managed to get me to all the practices. When I wanted to sleep over at a friend’s house, you made sure I packed everything I needed. When I wanted to eat just junk food, you tried to set me straight. I probably didn’t think about how you felt when I stopped kissing you in front of my friends, yet you still loved me.

**Reader 5.** When I was fourteen, I wanted to spend more time with my friends. When I went out on Friday nights, you wanted to know whom I was with. When I bought new clothes you didn’t like, you wanted to know why I wanted to look that way. When I insisted on listening to the radio in the car rather than talking to you, you just let it go. When I wanted to stop visiting my grandparents, you made excuses for me. You probably didn’t like all my decisions, yet you still loved me.

**Reader 6.** Now I am even older, and I sometimes think I just don’t need your help as much. But please understand this, you have given me my roots and wings. You have helped shape who I am today. Even if I don’t tell you or show you, I really do love you.

# Prayer for My Parents

**Directions:** Have one of the participants draw a picture of the Holy Family or of any family for use on the reverse side of the prayer cards you will make from this resource.

<p><b>Prayer for My Parents</b></p> <p>When I let them down, Give them strength. When they let me down, Give me wisdom. When I worry them, Give them peace of mind. When they worry me, Give me courage. When I bring them joy, Give them pride. When they bring me love, Give me the grace to love them in return.</p> <p>Amen.</p>	<p><b>Prayer for My Parents</b></p> <p>When I let them down, Give them strength. When they let me down, Give me wisdom. When I worry them, Give them peace of mind. When they worry me, Give me courage. When I bring them joy, Give them pride. When they bring me love, Give me the grace to love them in return.</p> <p>Amen.</p>
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# 12

## Praying for Peace

### AT A GLANCE

### Overview

Jesus' call to love our neighbor includes a command to work and pray that all people live in peace and justice. This prayer invites the participants to pray for peace and to consider the needs of people throughout the world. The prayer includes an opportunity to create a peace prayer candle for the participants to continue to use at home. This prayer can also be used on World Day of Prayer for Peace, which is January 1, or at any other time when emphasizing peace would be beneficial to the young people and the community.

### Suggested Time and Group Size

This session can last from 50 to 60 minutes, depending upon the time allotted for the participants to create prayer candles. This prayer works well with small or large groups.

### Background Reading

- ◆ *Catholic Youth Bible* article connections: "Swords into Plowshares" (Isa. 2:1–5), "Lions and Lambs" (Isa. 11:6–9e), "Shalom" (Isa. 32:16–20)

### Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ❑ tall votive candles, preferably in white or clear glass holders, one for each participant
  - ❑ small, disposable, foil pie tins, one for each small group of four
  - ❑ scissors, one for each participant
  - ❑ standard white glue, enough for use by all participants
  - ❑ small paint brushes, one for each participant
  - ❑ three copies of handout 13, "A Church at the Service of Peace"

### Gather

- ◆ Welcome
- ◆ Opening Song
- ◆ Gathering Prayer

### Listen

- ◆ Luke 19:41–42
- ◆ Reflection
- ◆ Candle Making
- ◆ Faith Sharing
- ◆ Mic. 4:1–5
- ◆ "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response"

### Respond

- ◆ Petitions

### Go Forth

- ◆ Closing Prayer
- ◆ Closing Song

- ☐ two copies of the resource 4, “Petitions for Peace”
- ☐ several taper candles
- ☐ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, or *Spirit & Song* CDs and a CD player, if a music leader is not available
- ☐ CD of reflective instrumental music
- ☐ matches
- ☐ prayer cards prepared from resource 5, “World Prayer for Peace,” one for each participant
- Gather multiple copies of news magazines and newspapers, one or two for each participant.
- Dilute the glue with water to a 1:1 ratio. Once diluted, pour glue into foil pie tins.
- Write the following on a sheet of newsprint:
  - Lead us in your truth, O God; teach us your paths.
 Post the newsprint in a place visible to participants.
- Invite several youth or adult leaders to assist with this prayer. One person should serve as the prayer leader. Another can be asked to proclaim the Gospel. Three participants should read handout 13. One or two readers can pray the petitions on resource 4. A music leader or small choir should lead the opening and closing songs and provide the instrumental music during the reflection between the readings.
- Choose (or invite the music leader to do so) a gathering song, such as “Lord, Let Us See Your Kindness,” by Paul Hillebrand; “Our God Reigns,” by Leonard E. Smith Jr.; or another song that reflects the theme of peace. You will also need to choose a closing song, such as “Power of Peace” or “Lord, Every Nation,” both by Jesse Manibusan.
- Prepare an area of the room for the participants to find the supplies for the peace candles.

## Setting the Prayer Environment

Set up a prayer table or area in the center of the room with the *CYB* or other Bible, candle, cloth, and cross. Use the Paschal candle if possible. Arrange chairs in a circle around the prayer focus, or if the prayer center is on the floor, invite the participants to sit on the floor around it.

## Order of Service

### Gather

1. Welcome and invite the participants to gather together in the prayer space. Distribute to each participant a songbook. Introduce this prayer session in these or similar words:

- Jesus greeted his friends by saying, “Peace be with you.” He also wants us to have peace in our hearts, our relationships, and our world. During this prayer time, we are going to remember the people and the places in need of our prayers for peace.

2. Invite the participants to join in singing the opening song you have selected.

3. Proclaim the opening prayer, which is adapted from a prayer written by a teenager:

Help us, God, understand why  
the nations go to war  
and their people cry.

Help us know what is right to do,  
who is right for us,  
what nation to look up to.

Tell us, God, what is best:  
fighting in wars  
or laying our arms to rest.

Tell us how we will  
keep the world safe  
and not have to kill.

We ask this as we gather  
for prayer in Jesus’ name.  
Amen.

(Adapted from Ritch Galvan, Central Catholic High School, Grand Island, Nebraska, in *Dreams Alive: Prayers by Teenagers*, p. 46.)

## Listen

4. Invite the reader to proclaim Luke 19:41–42. Allow a few moments of silence to follow. Then provide these comments:

- Jesus wept because people did not see the ways that make for peace. Discipleship in Jesus includes joining ourselves to his passion for peace for all people.
- For whom would Jesus weep today?
- For whom should we pray for peace?
- Each of you is going to create a peace candle. You can take this candle home to continue our prayer for peace.

- Spend some time quietly looking over the newspapers and magazines you will be provided, and then select and cut out headlines, pictures, and stories of people and situations near and far that need our prayers for peace.
- After you have chosen your clippings, select a candle and glue the clippings to the outside of the candle. When you have finished, read over the people, places, and situations that call out for peace and prayer.

Distribute the necessary supplies to the participants, and then allow about 25 minutes for them to create their candles. You might consider playing instrumental music in the background.

5. Invite the participants to find a partner and share one or two of the clippings on their candle and why they chose that story. Allow 5 to 7 minutes for sharing, then say:

- Please come forward and light your candle, placing it on the prayer table. As you do so, name one of the places, people, or situations that call out for peace—by completing this sentence:
  - I pray for peace in . . . or for . . .

Be sure that each participant has had the chance to come forward before proceeding to the next step.

6. Introduce the second reading in this way:

- God’s vision for our world is one of peace, not violence; love, not hate; justice, not vengeance. Let us hear of God’s plan in the words of the prophet Micah.

Invite the reader to proclaim Mic. 4:1–5. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow. Then make the following comments:

- In their pastoral letter “The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response,” the Catholic Bishops of the United States tell us, “We are called to be a Church at the service of peace” (no. 23).
- Echoing the words of the prophet Micah that urge us to God’s call to peace and justice, our Church leaders call us to put ourselves prayerfully at the service of peace.

7. Invite the selected readers to come forward to read handout 13. Allow a few moments of silence to follow.

## Respond

8. Invite the selected readers to pray the petitions found on resource 4. Be sure to ask all the participants to respond to each prayer with the words you have posted on newsprint:

- Lead us in your truth, O God; teach us your paths.



9. Continue the prayer in these words:

- Please stand and extend your hands in a sign of blessing over our candles.  
Loving God, source of all light,  
source of all true peace,  
You give us everything we need, including the means to make peace with  
our brothers and sisters throughout the world.  
Bless these candles and  
Bless this community gathered in your name.  
May we join our hearts with all your people in a prayer for peace.  
We ask this through Jesus, the light that shines forever.  
Amen.

## Go Forth

10. Invite the participants to extend a sign of peace to one another.  
After the exchange, distribute the prayer cards, and pray together the prayer  
for peace.

11. Conclude by inviting the participants to sing the closing song you  
have chosen.

## Live It Options

- **Youth Pledge of Nonviolence.** Individual youth can take the Youth Pledge of Nonviolence, and communities of youth are invited to take the pledge. Go to The Institute for Peace and Justice Web site, [www.ipj-ppj.org](http://www.ipj-ppj.org), to view the pledges and the accompanying resources.
- **Peace Prayer Quilt.** This option gives you a way to display the prayers of peace written by youth. Use the parish hall or the vestibule of the church for the exhibition. To make the prayer quilt, you will need 5-by-8-inch index cards, colored pens, ballpoint pens, and colored newsprint such as light blue. Give all participants an index card, and invite them to make a symbol for peace or write a prayer for peace. If the participants need help to get started with the prayer, suggest that the prayer begin with “Dear God.” Allow 15 to 20 minutes. Frame each symbol and prayer—using colored construction paper—and place the framed pieces on a larger piece of construction paper (or on several pieces, depending upon your numbers). Title the quilt “Our Prayer for Peace.” Make copies of handout 14, “Peace Prayer Quilt: Youth Prayers for Peace,” to distribute as examples to the participants.

## Familyconnections

- ◆ Visit The Institute for Peace and Justice Web site, [www.ipj-ppj.org](http://www.ipj-ppj.org), and review the family resources, including the Family Pledge of Non-violence.
- ◆ Invite families to purchase an erasable marker board. This board can be used to pray for places and situations in the world that need God’s peace. As the family reads the paper or watches the news, family members can discuss places of war and violence, and place the name of the place and the people on the board. Families can set a time to stop daily or weekly to pray for the named places (perhaps using the prayer candle and suggested prayer card).

# A Church at the Service of Peace

**Readers 1–3.** We are called to be a Church at the service of peace.

**Reader 1.** At the center of the Church’s teaching on peace and at the center of all Catholic social teaching are the transcendence of God and the dignity of the human person. The human person is the clearest reflection of God’s presence in the world; all the Church’s work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God but is the expression of God’s creative work and the meaning of Christ’s redemptive ministry.

**Readers 1–3.** We are called to be a Church at the service of peace.

**Reader 2.** Christians approach the problem of war and peace with fear and reverence. God is the Lord of life, and so each human life is sacred; modern warfare threatens the obliteration of human life on a previously unimaginable scale. The sense of awe and “fear of the Lord” which former generations felt in approaching these issues weighs upon us with new urgency.

**Readers 1–3.** We are called to be a Church at the service of peace.

**Reader 3.** We believe that the Church, as a community of faith and social institution, has a proper, necessary and distinctive part to play in the pursuit of peace. Because peace, like the Kingdom of God, is both a divine gift and a human work, the Church should continually pray for the gift and share in the work.

**Readers 1–3.** We are called to be a Church at the service of peace.

(The response is from the pastoral letter “The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response,” number 23, by the National Council of Bishops/United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB] [Washington, DC: USCCB, 1983]. Copyright © 1983 by the USCCB. Used with permission.)

# Petitions for Peace

**Petition.** We pray for a world where all people respect and care for one another, where love overcomes all hate and fear.

**Response.** Lead us in your truth, O God; teach us your paths.

**Petition.** We pray for a world where all children are taught about cooperation and community, where they learn that tolerance and respect can overcome prejudice and discrimination.

**Response.** Lead us in your truth, O God; teach us your paths.

**Petition.** We pray for a world where difference, tradition, culture, and spiritual roots are honored; where the goal of living in a peaceful community is as important as clean air, water, and protecting life.

**Response.** Lead us in your truth, O God; teach us your paths.

**Petition.** We pray for a world where political leaders encourage respect for diversity instead of exploiting differences for political gains.

**Response.** Lead us in your truth, O God; teach us your paths.

**Petition.** We pray for a world where leaders of all faiths denounce absolutism and fundamentalism, and where all expressions of faith are respected and revered.

**Response.** Lead us in your truth, O God; teach us your paths.

**Petition.** We pray for a world where the oppression of minorities is unacceptable everywhere, and where understanding and peacemaking are shared priorities and societal goals.

**Response.** Lead us in your truth, O God; teach us your paths.

(This prayer service is adapted from the Sisters of the Holy Cross, "Stop the Hate Prayer Service," at [www.cscsisters.org/justice/justice\\_prayer.asp](http://www.cscsisters.org/justice/justice_prayer.asp), accessed June 9, 2003. Copyright © 2002 by the Sisters of the Holy Cross.)

# World Prayer for Peace

## World Prayer for Peace

Lead me from death to life . . .  
From falsehood to truth.  
Lead me from despair to hope,  
From fear to trust.  
Lead me from hate to love,  
From war to peace.  
Let peace fill our hearts,  
Our world, our universe.  
Amen

("The Upanishads," as adapted by Satish Kumar,  
at [www.uua.org/news/91101/jslade.html](http://www.uua.org/news/91101/jslade.html), ac-  
cessed June 20, 2003. Used with permission.)

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cessed June 20, 2003. Used with permission.)

# Peace Prayer Quilt: Youth Prayers for Peace

God,  
Bless those who need me.  
Bless those I need.  
Bring peace to us,  
into each of our hearts,  
and give us the courage  
to spread the love you gave us.  
Amen.

(Megan Landers, Regina High School, Harper Woods, Michigan, in *Dreams Alive: Prayers by Teenagers*, edited by Carl Koch [Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1991], page 47.  
Copyright © 1991 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved.)

Help me, God, understand why  
the nations go to war  
and their people cry.

Help me know what is right to do;  
who is right for us;  
what nation to look up to.

Tell me, God, what is best:  
fighting in wars  
or laying our arms to rest.

Tell me how we will  
keep the world safe  
and not have to kill.

(Ritch Galvan, Central Catholic High School, Grand Island, Nebraska, in *Dreams Alive*, page 46.)

# 13 Leadership Commissioning

## AT A GLANCE

### Gather

- ◆ Welcome
- ◆ Opening Prayer
- ◆ Scripture Reading
- ◆ Gathering Song

### Listen

- ◆ Comments on Anointing

### Respond

- ◆ Signing with Oil

### Go Forth

- ◆ Scripture Reading
- ◆ Closing Prayer
- ◆ Closing Song

## Overview

A commissioning service is best used after the completion of a Christian leadership formation or training program. This prayer focuses the young people on what they have accomplished and prepares them for using their new skills. The symbol of oil acknowledges the gifts they have been given and the responsibility to use those gifts wisely in bringing others to Christ.

## Suggested Time and Group Size

This prayer service takes 15 to 20 minutes. The commissioning will work for any size group. The recommended ratio is one leader per twelve participants.

## Background Reading

- ◆ *Catholic Youth Bible* article connections: “Why Me?” (Exod. 5:22–23), “A Violent Jesus?” (Matt. 10:34–39), “God’s Invitation List” (Luke 14:7–24), “Spice Me Up, Lord” (Luke 14:34–35), “Prophets of Hope, Youth on a Mission” (Eph. 4:17–32)

## Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ☐ a *Catholic Youth Bible* or other Bible
  - ☐ candle and matches
  - ☐ oil (preferably scented) displayed in a small, clear bowl
  - ☐ a small purificator or towel
  - ☐ copies of handout 15, “Leadership Commissioning Closing Prayer,” one for each participant
  - ☐ CD player and CDs of instrumental music, if a musician is not available

- ❑ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, one for each participant
- Choose a gathering song and a closing song, utilizing the suggestions in the Order of Service.
- Recruit two participants to proclaim the Scripture readings (Luke 22:24–27 and John 21:15–17).

## Setting the Prayer Environment

This prayer works best in a large circle. It is recommended that the participants gather in a circle around a small table covered with a decorative cloth. Place on the table a candle and matches, a Bible, the oil used for anointing, and a small purificator or towel.

## Order of Service

### Gather

1. Distribute a copy of the songbooks and of handout 15 to each participant. Welcome the participants and offer the following or similar opening prayer:

- Good and loving God, we come before you ready to use our gifts to serve others. We ask you to give us the understanding to know what true leadership is and to use our gifts in meaningful and responsible ways. Amen.

2. Invite the reader to proclaim Luke 22:24–27. Then allow a few moments for quiet reflection.

3. Invite the participants to sing the gathering song you have selected. Consider “Servant Song,” by Donna Marie McGargill, OSM; “The Summons,” by John L. Bell; “The Call,” by Tom Franzak; or another song with discipleship or leadership as its theme.

### Listen

4. Say or paraphrase the following:
- God blesses us not only with the opportunity to lead but with special tools to help us along the way. God gives us strength during difficult times, comfort during times of grief, courage during times of need, and healing during times of pain.
  - The Church is rich with symbols of the gifts God gives us. One of those symbols is oil, which is used in various rites of the Church.
  - Oil is a natural resource with multiple uses. Think about the ways we use oil. We use oil to cook, to operate machinery, to heal wounds, to transport us. Oil sweetens, flavors, and enhances.

### **Catholic Faith Handbook connection**

Chapter 3, “Sacraments,” includes an explanation of the use of oil for the anointing of the sick, within the sacraments of initiation, and in Holy Orders.

- Because oil is a natural gift that can serve people in multiple ways, its symbolism has become sacred to us as people of faith. In the Scriptures, oil is used in anointing to bring comfort to those in need.
- Oil is a symbol of God's love and strength in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick.
- The Church tells us that "the symbolism of anointing with oil also signifies the Holy Spirit,<sup>4</sup> to the point of becoming a synonym for the Holy Spirit. . . . Its full force can be grasped only in relation to the primary anointing accomplished by the Holy Spirit, that of Jesus. Christ (in Hebrew *messiah*) means the one 'anointed' by God's Spirit" (CCC, no. 695).
- We use oil in our prayer today in a way that is different from the anointing used in the sacraments. We will sign one another with oil to symbolize our discipleship in Christ and our call to serve others in Jesus' name. As we sign one another with oil, let us pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance and inspiration to make our faith in Christ real to others through our actions and words.

#### **VARIATION:**

### **Large Group**

If your group has more than twelve participants, ask one or two adults to help sign the participants with oil. Have each adult receive the oil in a small bowl from the prayer table and proceed to a position in the circle at some distance from the other adults in the circle. Before beginning, inform the adults to turn to their left to begin anointing the participants. When the adults have finished with their section, they can take their bowls to the center table and return to the circle.

## **Respond**

5. Give this instruction to the participants:

- Please place your palms in an upright position as if forming a bowl with your hands. I will sign and bless you with oil. After you are signed, you may rub the oil into your hands.

To sign and bless the participants, begin at one place in the circle. As you approach a participant, dip your finger in the oil and make the sign of the cross in the palm of each participant. As you sign the participants, say, "Use the gifts of the Spirit, and bring Christ into our world." Continue around the circle until each person has been blessed. You may wish to play soft instrumental music to set a prayerful tone during this time.



## Send Forth

6. Invite the second reader to proclaim John 21:15–17. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow.

7. Invite the participants to pray together the closing prayer found on handout 15. Note to leader: If this prayer has been used in a training program for leaders, you could include comments at this time that connect the training to this prayer service.

- Loving God,  
 You have given us many gifts to use.  
 Help us always to use our gifts wisely  
 And to never take them for granted.  
 Give us the courage to be your servants  
 And the grace to be leaders  
 Who bring your Good News to others.  
 May we always be those who feed your sheep  
 And never grow tired of what you ask of us.  
 Amen.

8. Close the prayer by singing the closing song you selected. Consider “Go Make A Difference,” by Steve Angrisano and Tom Tomaszek; “Lead Me, Lord,” by John D. Becker; “City of God,” by Dan Schutte; or another sending forth song with mission or discipleship as its theme.

## TryThis

- ◆ Give each young person a small token to symbolize his or her leadership role. Some suggestions are votive candles, cross pins, friendship bracelets, bookmarks, or prayer cards.
- ◆ Commission youth leaders during the parish celebration of Catechetical Sunday. To learn more about Catechetical Sunday, see the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Web site at [www.usccb.org/publishing/catsun.html](http://www.usccb.org/publishing/catsun.html) for information and resources for Catechetical Sunday.
- ◆ Commission youth leaders during a parish liturgy. Invite the members of the parish to extend their hands in prayer upon the young leaders as the presider offers a prayer of blessing.

# Leadership Commissioning Closing Prayer

Loving God,  
You have given us many gifts to use.  
Help us always to use our gifts wisely  
And to never take them for granted.  
Give us the courage to be your  
servants  
And the grace to be leaders  
Who bring your Good News to others.  
May we always be those who feed  
your sheep  
And never grow tired of what you ask  
of us.  
Amen.

# 4 Grieving the Loss of a Peer

## AT A GLANCE

### Overview

One of the most difficult times in youth ministry occurs when a young person dies. No matter the circumstances, at such a time young people need to mourn, grieve, and remember the one who has died. This prayer invites participants to gain strength and hope from Jesus and to celebrate the life of a friend.

### Suggested Time and Group Size

Allow 30 to 40 minutes for this prayer service. The time will depend on the amount of sharing that occurs after the readings. This prayer service works for any size group and could also include parents and other adults in the community.

### Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ☐ a *Catholic Youth Bible* or other Bible
  - ☐ a candle and matches
  - ☐ CD player and music CDs, if a music leader is not available
  - ☐ one copy of resource 6, “Prayers of Intercession”
  - ☐ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, one for each participant
- A music leader should be recruited. Check with your parish music or liturgy director if you do not have someone on your leadership team who can assume this role.
- Invite two young people to serve as lectors and one person to pray the prayers of intercession. You might also consider asking a young person to serve as a cantor to proclaim the responsorial psalm.

### Gather

- ◆ Welcome
- ◆ Gathering Song
- ◆ Opening Prayer

### Listen

- ◆ Scripture Reading
- ◆ Song Response
- ◆ Scripture Reading

### Respond

- ◆ Sharing Stories of Loved Ones
- ◆ Prayers of Intercession

### Go Forth

- ◆ Sign of Peace
- ◆ Closing Prayer
- ◆ Closing Song

## TryThis

- ◆ Prepare a PowerPoint or a slide or video presentation of the deceased person's life and show it as part of the service.
- ◆ Distribute decorative paper and invite the people present to write a remembrance of the person who has died or a letter of support to the family. Compile all the items into a scrapbook and present it to the family.
- ◆ Create a large picture of the person or an inspirational poster—with matting all around—and invite participants to write a message of hope, comfort, or love on the matting. Present this special remembrance to the family.

- Invite one or two people to share a story or memory of the person who has died. (Note: Extending the invitation before the gathering allows people to collect their thoughts and decide what to say.)
- Select a gathering song, a responsorial psalm, and a closing song utilizing the suggestions in the Order of Service.

## Setting the Prayer Environment

If the group is expected to be large, consider holding the prayer service in the church. For groups of fifty or fewer, select an appropriate meeting room at the parish, or use a small chapel. If the service is to be held in a meeting room, set up chairs to encircle a prayer table. Cover the table with a cloth, and place the candle and the Bible on the table. Place on the table a picture of the person who died, as well as any objects or symbols of the person's life. Candle lighting will help create a quiet atmosphere. Put copies of the songbook or hymnal at each seat.

## Order of Service

### Gather

1. Invite the participants to gather together in the prayer space. Welcome them by saying:

We gather today to remember [insert name of the young person]. We are saddened by our loss, and so we gather together to mourn but also to celebrate the beautiful life of our friend, [insert name]. May we continue to know God's care for us and for [insert name], and may the Spirit of peace and solace fill our hearts. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

2. Invite the participants to sing the gathering song you have chosen. Consider "There Is a Longing," by Anne Quigley, or another appropriate gathering song.

### Listen

3. Invite the first reader to come forward to proclaim the Scripture reading, 2 Cor. 5:1,6–10. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow.

4. Invite the young people to sing the responsorial psalm you have selected. Consider "Shepherd Me, O God," by Marty Haugen; "Keep Me Safe, O God," by Jesse Manibusan; or another appropriate psalm response song.

5. Invite the second reader to come forward to proclaim the Gospel reading, John 14:1–7. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow.

## Respond

6. Invite the young people you have asked (and who have prepared) to share their story or memory of the one who has died. If time permits, offer the same opportunity to others by saying:

- Many of us have stories and fond memories of [insert name]. If someone would like to share a story about [insert name], please do so.

7. Invite the participants to pray the prayers of intercession:

- Let us turn to Christ Jesus with confidence and faith in the power of his cross and Resurrection.

Ask the reader to come forward and pray the prayers as noted on resource 6.

Ask the participants to respond to each prayer with the words “Lord, hear our prayer.”

## Go Forth

8. Invite the participants to extend a sign of God’s peace to one another. If some prayer participants are not Catholic, explain the way your community shares a sign of peace. Allow a few minutes for participants to offer a sign of peace to those around them.

9. Continue by praying the closing prayer:

- Loving God, we thank you for [insert the name of the deceased person], who was so dear and beloved to us. We thank you that through [his or her] life, [insert name] became a person we all could love. We ask that the special gifts of [insert name] will continue to be valued by us long after [his or her] death. We pray that nothing of [insert name]’s life will be lost, but that [his or her] spirit will remain in our hearts and give strength to us in our times of need. We thank you, God, for giving us the gift of [insert name] and for giving us this opportunity to remember and celebrate [his or her] life. Amen.

10. Invite the participants to sing the closing song you have chosen. Consider “We Are the Light of the World,” by Jean Anthony Greif and Tom Tomaszek, or another appropriate sending forth song.

(This prayer service is adapted from “Wake Service: Death in the Family,” *Family Rituals*, pp. 110–112.)

# Prayers of Intercession

**Reader.** We pray in remembrance of our friend, [insert name]. May God lovingly welcome [him or her] with arms of peace and love. We pray to the Lord.

**All.** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Reader.** We pray for [insert name]'s family. May they find the comfort and support they need in this time of sorrow and loss. We pray to the Lord.

**All.** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Reader.** We pray in thanksgiving for the gift of life and laughter that [insert name] shared with us. May each of us live our days in a spirit of hope and joy. We pray to the Lord.

**All.** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Reader.** We pray for all who have lost loved ones. May cherished memories and treasured times make us mindful of the many blessings that life brings us. We pray to the Lord.

**All.** Lord, hear our prayer.

# 15

## Praying During Advent

### Overview

During the Advent season, we have the opportunity to reflect on the gifts God gives us through the birth of Jesus. It is important that we give thanks for these gifts and that we take time to recognize these gifts as present in our world and lives today. This prayer service is to be used during the four weeks of Advent. Each week, the participants pray and reflect on the meaning of each Advent candle—hope, peace, joy, love. It is most useful in small-group settings such as faith-sharing groups, small Christian communities, catechesis groups, leadership teams, or weekly workshops. It can also be adapted for larger group settings, such as youth-group meetings or larger classes.

### Suggested Time and Group Size

Allow 20 to 30 minutes for a group of fifteen or fewer people. Allow 30 to 40 minutes for a larger group. If you use this prayer with a group of more than fifteen people, divide the group into smaller faith-sharing groups of five or six people. After the quiet reflection that follows the reading of the modern-day news stories, ask the smaller groups to reflect on the questions and offer their reflections in prayer.

### Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ☐ Advent wreath with candles
  - ☐ matches or a lighter
  - ☐ one or two newspaper or magazine articles for each week of Advent
  - ☐ CD player and selected recordings if a musician is not available
  - ☐ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, one for each participant

## TryThis

Make an Advent wreath with the participants, using the following items: a circular base, evergreen boughs, four candles (three purple and one pink or four white candles with purple and pink ribbons), four candleholders, and wire or staples for fastening the evergreens and candle holders to the base. Attach the evergreen boughs and candles to the base. If you use white candles, tie purple ribbon around three candles, and tie a pink ribbon around the fourth (adapted from *FaithWays*, Advent season, p. 9).

- Prepare newsprint with the following prayers and responses:
  - Our hope is in Christ, the Light of the World.  
**Response:** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
  - Make ready the way of the Lord, clear a straight path.  
**Response:** Lord, you are the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Help us prepare for your coming by following your example of prayer, caring, and service to others.
  - We ask this in the name of Jesus, God's Son and our Savior.  
**Response:** Amen.
- This step requires preparation during the week before each weekly prayer is held. Using resource 7, "Leader Preparation," as a guide, select stories from national or local newspapers and periodicals. You might also conduct a simple search on a newspaper Web site for stories that capture the spirit of hope, peace, joy, or love. You could involve young people in this task by asking two or three youth to assist with the prayer preparation by bringing a story on the theme to the prayer service. You might also consider reading more personal stories, which may be found in your parish bulletin or local school newspaper.
- Each week you will need to recruit participants to proclaim the Scripture reading, lead the candle lighting, share the news story you have chosen, and pray the prayers of intercession.
- For additional background about the symbols of Advent, see Reynolds R. Ekstrom, *New Concise Catholic Dictionary* (Mystic, CN: Twenty-Third Publications, 1995), pp. 7–9.
- Select an opening and closing song for each prayer, utilizing the suggestions from the Order of Service.
- Distribute copies of the chosen songbook to the participants.

## Setting the Prayer Environment

This prayer works best when the participants are seated around a table, with the Advent wreath in the center. The table could be draped with a purple or white cloth. You might also conduct this prayer with the Advent wreath in the middle of a circle of people who are sitting on the floor.

## Order of Service

### Week 1: Hope

#### Gather

1. Welcome the participants and invite them into an atmosphere of prayer by saying:



- As we gather in prayer around our Advent wreath, let us take notice of its shape. Throughout history, the circle has, and continues to hold, great meaning for us as people of faith.
- American Indian tradition reminds us that much of God's creation revolves in a circle. We see it everywhere and in all seasons: in a bird's nest, in a round lake, in the way leaves spiral to the ground after falling off a tree, and in the shape of raindrops and snowflakes. The earth circles the sun, and God brings us new life each day through the gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love.
- We also see and live circles in our own cycles of life as we move from conception to old age and experience different moments of the gifts God offers us.
- As we gather around these pine boughs created by God and shaped into a circle by human hands, we pray in thanksgiving for the circles and cycles in our lives that are expressed in times of hope, peace, joy, and love.
- We offer our prayers during this Advent season, marking the beginning of another cycle and circle for us, as we await the coming of Jesus.

2. Select one song to use as an opening for each of the four weeks of Advent. Consider a traditional hymn such as "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," by John Neale, or titles from *Spirit & Song*, such as "Seek Ye First," by Karen Lafferty; "All the Ends of the Earth," by Bobby Fisher; or "Blessed Are They," by Tom Tomaszek. Begin the prayer by inviting the participants to join in singing the opening song you have selected.

3. Offer the opening prayer in these or similar words:

- Come, Lord Jesus! We hunger, we thirst, and we wait in hope for you! Come, Lord Jesus, and do not delay! Amen. (Adapted from *Celebrate Family*, pp. 15–16)

4. Invite one of the participants to light the first candle on the Advent wreath. Lead the following prayer, or invite a young person to do so. Refer participants to the newsprint so they can follow along with the responses. The prayer should be prayed while the candle is being lit:

- All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God.  
(The candle is lit.)

- Our hope is in Christ, the Light of the World.

**Response:** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

- Make ready the way of the Lord, clear a straight path.

**Response:** Lord, you are the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Help us prepare for your coming by following your example of prayer, caring, and service to others.

- We ask this in the name of Jesus, God's Son and our Savior. Amen.

(Adapted from *FaithWays*, Advent season, p. 13)

## Listen

5. Invite the participant you have chosen to proclaim 1 Cor. 1:3–9. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow, then say:

- In Paul's letter to the people of Corinth, Paul gives thanks that they are richly blessed through Jesus Christ. As we wait for the coming of Jesus at Christmas, Paul reminds us that we too must wait in hope for salvation, just like the Corinthians.
- This week we light the candle of hope. Hope reminds us that even though Jesus was born in a simple manger, he brought light and salvation to the whole world and into our hearts this day. Let us listen and reflect on where we find hope in our world today.

6. Invite the participant you have chosen to read the modern-day news story that captures *the spirit of hope*.

## Respond

7. Invite the participants to share their response to the following questions:

- Where else do you see hope happening in our world?
- Where do you see hope happening in your life?

Allow a few minutes for sharing to take place.

8. Say:

- As we gather in prayer to reflect on the coming of Christ into our world and hearts, we pray in thanksgiving for the gift of hope. At this time, we offer our prayers in gratitude. Let us voice those times when we witnessed or experienced hope in our lives. After each prayer of gratitude, we will respond, "Come, Lord Jesus, be the hope in our lives today."

Invite the participants to offer their own prayers of thanksgiving.

## Send Forth

9. Offer this closing prayer, or invite a young person to do so:

- Let us who are gathered around this Advent wreath become creators of hope in our world today. As you, our God, offered the gift of your Son to us, may we offer the gifts of ourselves to you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

10. Conclude by inviting the participants to sing the closing song you have selected. Consider "Christ, Be Our Light," by Bernadette Farrell; "The Lord Is My Light," by Christopher Walker; or another appropriate song on the theme of hope.

### VARIATION:

#### Group Size

If the group is small, sharing can be done within the group. If the group is large, you might ask participants to find a partner with whom they can share.

## Week 2: Peace

### Gather

1. Welcome the participants by saying:
  - As we gather in prayer around our Advent wreath during this second week of waiting and hoping, let us pause for a moment of silence.
2. Invite the participants to sing the opening song you selected. (See the suggested hymns for week one.)
3. Offer this opening prayer, or invite a participant to do so:
  - Come, Lord Jesus! Bring peace and healing to our family and our world. May we hear again your own prayer “that we may be one.” May we prepare the way for you by being generous and forgiving. Amen. (Adapted from *Celebrate Family*, pp. 15–16)
4. Light the Advent wreath, making sure to light the first-week candle as well as this week’s. Lead the following prayer, or invite a young person to do so. Refer participants to the newsprint so they can follow along with the responses. The prayer should be prayed while the candles are being lit:
  - All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God.  
(The candles are lit.)
  - Our hope is in Christ, the Light of the World.  
**Response:** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
  - Make ready the way of the Lord, clear a straight path.  
**Response:** Lord, you are the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Help us prepare for your coming by following your example of prayer, caring, and service to others.
  - We ask this in the name of Jesus, God’s Son and our Savior.  
**Response:** Amen.

(Adapted from *Faith Ways*, p. 13.)

### Listen

5. Invite the young person you have chosen to proclaim Isa. 2:1–5. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow, then say:
  - In this Scripture reading, we hear Isaiah promise the Israelites that soon a new way of living will come to pass. By relying on the word of God, people will turn from ways of violence to ways of peace. Wars will end, and God’s people will live in peace and harmony.
  - This week we light the candle of peace. Peace reminds us that the birth of Christ was a holy and sacred moment. It also reminds us of what Joseph and Mary did to prepare for that night. We too must be ready and prepared for peace. Let us listen and reflect on where we find peace in our world today.

6. Invite the young person you have chosen to read the modern-day news story capturing *the spirit of peace*.

## Respond

7. Invite the participants to share (with a partner if the group is large) their response to:

- Where else do you see peace happening in our world?
- Where do you see peace happening in your life?

Allow a few minutes for sharing to take place.

8. Then say:

- As we gather in prayer to reflect on the coming of Christ into our world and hearts, we pray in thanksgiving for the gift of peace. At this time, we offer our prayers in gratitude. Let us voice those times when we witnessed or experienced peace in our lives. To each prayer of thanksgiving, we will respond, “Come, Lord Jesus, be the peace in our lives today.”

Invite the participants to offer their own prayers of thanksgiving.

## Send Forth

9. Offer the following closing prayer, or invite a young person to do so:

- Gathered around this Advent wreath, let us become creators of peace in our world today. As you, our God, offered the gift of your Son to us, may we offer the gifts of ourselves to you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

10. Invite the young people to sing the closing song you have selected. Consider “The Power of Peace,” by Jesse Manibusan; “Prayer of Saint Francis,” by Sebastian Temple; or another appropriate song on the theme of peace.

## Week 3: Joy

### Gather

1. Welcome the participants by saying:

- As we gather in prayer around our Advent wreath during this third week of waiting and hoping, let us pause for a moment of silence.

2. Invite the participants to sing the selected opening song. (See the suggested hymns for week 1.)

3. Offer the opening prayer in these words or other words you have prepared:

- Come, Lord Jesus! Come and stay with our family and friends—and all who are dear to us. May your light shine brightly so we can see you everywhere. Help us to spread your light and joy by giving freely and happily to all we meet. Amen. (*Celebrate Family*, pp. 15–16)

4. Light the Advent wreath, making sure to light the first two candles as well as this week's. The pink candle should be lit this week. Lead the following prayer, or invite a young person to do so. Refer participants to the newsprint so they can follow along with the responses. Pray the prayer while the candles are being lit:

- All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God.  
(The candles are lit.)
- Our hope is in Christ, the Light of the World.  
**Response:** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
- Make ready the way of the Lord, clear a straight path.  
**Response:** Lord, you are the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Help us prepare for your coming by following your example of prayer, caring, and service to others.
- We ask this in the name of Jesus, God's Son and our Savior.  
**Response:** Amen.

(Adapted from *FaithWays*, p. 13.)

## Listen

5. Invite the young person you have chosen to proclaim Psalm 126. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow, then say:

- Today we hear the psalmist remind us that God, indeed, has done great things for us. We look forward to future blessings because we believe God loves us.
- This week we light the candle of joy. Joy reminds us of how Mary, the mother of Jesus, felt when the angel Gabriel revealed to her that the child would be born from her womb. Joy reminds us of the happiness expressed between Mary and her cousin, Elizabeth, as they shared with each other their wonderful news of the lives that were to come. Let us listen and reflect on where we find joy in our world today.

6. Invite the young person you have chosen to read the modern-day news story that captures *the spirit of joy*.

## Respond

7. Invite the participants to share (with a partner if the group is large) their response to:

- Where else do you see joy happening in our world?
- Where do you see joy happening in your life?

Allow a few minutes for sharing to take place.

**8. Share the following:**

- As we gather in prayer to reflect on the coming of Christ into our world and hearts, we pray in thanksgiving for the gift of joy. At this time, we offer our prayers in gratitude. Let us voice those times when we witnessed or experienced joy in our lives. To each prayer of thanksgiving, we will respond, “Come, Lord Jesus, be the joy in our lives today.”

Invite the participants to offer their own prayers of thanksgiving.

## Send Forth

**9. Offer the following closing prayer, or invite a young person to do so:**

- Gathered around this Advent wreath, let us become creators of joy in our world today. As you, our God, offered the gift of your Son to us, may we offer the gifts of ourselves to you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**10.** Conclude by inviting the participants to sing the closing song you have selected. Consider “Shouts of Joy,” by Ken Canedo; “I Rejoiced,” by Trevor Thomson; or another appropriate song on the theme of joy.

## Week 4: Love

### Gather

**1. Welcome the participants by saying:**

- As we gather in prayer around our Advent wreath during this fourth and final week of waiting and hoping, let us pause for a moment of silence.

**2.** Invite the participants to sing the opening song. (See the suggested hymns for week 1.)

**3. Offer the following opening prayer, or invite a young person to do so:**

- Come, Lord Jesus! Open our minds and hearts and souls as we wait for you to be born anew in our lives. Help us to experience your love alive today in our families, our community, and our world. Amen.

*(Celebrate Family, pp. 15–16)*

**4.** Light the Advent wreath, making sure to light all the candles. You may lead the following prayer, or invite a young person to do so. Refer participants to the newsprint so they can follow along with the responses. The prayer should be prayed while the candles are being lit:

- All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God.  
(The candles are lit.)

- Our hope is in Christ, the Light of the World.

**Response:** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

- Make ready the way of the Lord, clear a straight path.

**Response:** Lord, you are the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Help us prepare for your coming by following your example of prayer, caring, and service to others.

- We ask this in the name of Jesus, God's Son and our Savior.

**Response:** Amen.

(Adapted from *FaithWays*, p. 13)

## Listen

5. Invite the young person you have chosen to proclaim 1 Thess.

3:12–4:2. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow, then say:

- In the Scripture reading today, Saint Paul encourages the Thessalonians, who may be feeling disheartened at the length of time it is taking Jesus to return. He directs them to continue to show love for one another and to grow in love of God. Paul tells the Thessalonians that God's great love for them will sustain them.
- This week we light the candle of love. Love reminds us of a caring and giving God. Jesus is an expression of God's love for us. God so loved the world that he gave us his only Son so we might have life forever. Let us listen and reflect on where we find love in our world today.

6. Invite the young person you have chosen to read the modern-day news story that captures *the spirit of love*.

## Respond

7. Invite the participants to share (with a partner if the group is large) their response to:

- Where else do you see love happening in our world?
- Where do you see love happening in your life?

Allow a few minutes for sharing to take place.

8. Say:

- As we gather in prayer to reflect on the coming of Christ into our world and into our hearts, we pray in thanksgiving for the gift of love. At this time, we offer our prayers in gratitude. Let us voice those times when we have witnessed or experienced love in our lives. After each prayer of thanksgiving, we will respond, "Come, Lord Jesus, be the love in our lives today."

Invite the participants to offer their own prayers of thanksgiving.

## Send Forth

**9.** Offer the following closing prayer, or invite a young person to do so:

- Let those of us gathered around this Advent wreath become creators of love in our world today. As you, our God, offered the gift of your Son to us, may we offer the gifts of ourselves to you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**10.** Conclude by inviting the participants to join in singing the closing song you have selected. Consider “We Gotta Love,” by Tom Booth, Israel Houghton, and Matt Maher; “What Is Our Service to Be,” by Scot Cran-dal; or another appropriate song on the theme of love.



# Leader Preparation

**Week 1:** Select a modern-day news article on hope. Such stories might include:

- signs of developing peace in a troubled country
- a student or family overcoming great obstacles
- letters to the editor about hopeful situations in the community

**Week 2:** Select a modern-day news article on the spirit of peace. Such stories might include:

- people in our country or world who stand up for peace and justice
- a message of peace voiced by religious or political leaders of our day
- how victims of violence are now finding peace and comfort in their lives

**Week 3:** Select a modern-day news article on the spirit of joy. Such stories might include:

- accomplishments of local students
- creative and exciting wedding, anniversary, or birth announcements
- children and their innocent experiences of the wonders of the holidays

**Week 4:** Select a modern-day news article on the spirit of love. Such stories might include:

- parent-and-child relationships
- the efforts of nonprofit groups that assist the community
- people helping strangers

# 16

## AT A GLANCE

## Return to Me: Reconciliation Service

### Introductory Rite

- ◆ Introductory Reflection
- ◆ Gathering Song
- ◆ Opening Prayer

### Celebration of the Word of God

- ◆ Exod. 20:1–17
- ◆ Responsorial Psalm
- ◆ Gospel Acclamation
- ◆ Luke 15:11–32
- ◆ Homily

### Rite of Reconciliation

- ◆ Penitential Rite
- ◆ Intercessions
- ◆ Lord's Prayer
- ◆ Individual Confession and Absolution
- ◆ Proclamation of Praise for God's Mercy
- ◆ Concluding Prayer of Thanksgiving

### Concluding Rite

- ◆ Final Blessing
- ◆ Sending Forth
- ◆ Closing Song

## Overview

The sacrament of Reconciliation (also called Penance) is a graced opportunity for youth to experience God's love and mercy. This communal penance service uses the story of the prodigal son to engage participants in preparation for and celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation. During this service, participants reflect on their lives and where in their lives they have strayed from God's call to discipleship. The key focus is on turning their lives back to God and seeking mercy and forgiveness for their sins.

This service uses the form of a "Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution" in *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, vol. 1, pp. 48–59). Note: To help youth understand the sacrament of Reconciliation, see chapter 19 of *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*.

## Suggested Time and Group Size

This reconciliation service, including time for individual confession and absolution, lasts about two hours. The service may be used for any size group. The most important consideration is having an appropriate number of priests available for individual confessions. A ratio of one priest for every ten to fifteen participants is ideal.

## Background Reading

- ◆ *Catholic Youth Bible* article connections: "True Repentance" (1 Chron. 21:1–17), "Catholic Connections: Reconciliation" (John 20:21–23), "Asian American: Be Reconciled" (1 John 2:7–11)

## Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ☐ several candles
  - ☐ a large picture of the face of Jesus (large print or poster-size pictures of Jesus are available at [www.bridgebuilding.com/catalog/christ1.html](http://www.bridgebuilding.com/catalog/christ1.html))
  - ☐ a large, black cloth, 30 inches to 45 inches wide, and sufficiently long for draping from the ceiling to the floor or for suspending at least 7 feet from the ground
  - ☐ CD player and CDs of reflective music, if a musician is unavailable
  - ☐ straight pins and white ribbons (about 1/2-inch by 3-inches) for each participant
  - ☐ one copy of resource 8, “Introductory Reflection”
  - ☐ three copies of handout 16, “Gospel Proclamation”
  - ☐ one copy of resource 9, “Intercessory Prayers”
  - ☐ a lectern or a simple podium
  - ☐ a *Catholic Youth Bible* or other Bible
  - ☐ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, one for each participant
- Invite a priest to preside at the service. Provide him with a complete copy of this prayer service. If you have a large group, you will want to invite additional priests to assist with the sacrament. Note: In the Order of Service, the prayers the presider will lead are noted. A deacon, if one is present, can also lead these prayers. Additional prayer leaders can lead other prayers. See *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, chapter 2, for an explanation of these roles.
- Invite and prepare a young person to offer the introduction as noted on resource 8 and to proclaim the first reading.
- Invite and prepare three participants or leaders to act out the Gospel drama as mimes. Provide each with a copy of handout 16.
- Invite a young person to proclaim, in song, the responsorial psalm.
- Invite a young person to pray the intercessory prayers as noted on resource 9.
- Invite two or three youth or adults to assist you in distributing the ribbons and pins.
- Select the music for the gathering, the responsorial psalm, the Gospel acclamation, the proclamation of praise for God’s mercy, and the closing. Utilize the suggestions found in the Order of Service.
- Determine the locations where private confessions will take place. You will need a separate location for each priest who will hear confessions.
- Distribute copies of the songbook to each participant.

## Setting the Prayer Environment

Drape the black panel from ceiling to floor to create a focus point for the participants. Create another focus point with the candles arranged at different heights and sufficient brightness. Arrange a third focus point with a picture of the face of Jesus. All these points should be set up so that all can be seen by the participants.

## Order of Service

### Introductory Rite

1. Invite the young person you have chosen to begin by sharing the reflection on resource 8. Allow a few moments of silence to follow.

2. Invite the participants to sing the gathering song you have selected. Consider “My Soul is Thirsting,” by Steve Angrisano, or another appropriate opening song.

3. The presider welcomes and greets the participants by saying:

- Grace, mercy, and peace be with you  
from God the Father  
and Christ Jesus our Savior.

**Response:** And also with you.

*(The Rites of the Catholic Church, no. 49, p. 549)*

4. The presider offers the opening prayer:

- Friends in Christ, let us pray for God’s compassion as we change our hearts in sincere repentance and sorrow for our sins.
- Lord, hear the prayers of the people you have gathered here, a community of faith seeking your pardon for words and actions that have separated us from you and one another. We ask for the grace of your forgiveness and refreshment of our spirits. We ask this in your most holy name. Amen.  
(Opening prayers can also be found in *The Rites*, Penance, chapter 2, nos. 50 and 97–100.)

### Celebration of the Word of God

5. The first reader should come forward to proclaim Exod. 20:1–17. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow.

6. The cantor should come forward to proclaim the responsorial psalm you have selected. Consider “Psalm 51: Create in Me,” by Bob Hurd and Ken Canedo, or “Be Merciful, O Lord,” by Steve Angrisano. Allow a few moments of silence to follow.

7. Invite the participants to stand and sing the Gospel acclamation you have selected. Consider “Celtic Alleluia,” by Fintan O’Carroll and Christopher Walker. During Lent sing “Glory and Praise,” by Jesse Manibusan, as the Gospel acclamation.

8. The priest and the three mimes should now come forward for the proclamation of the Gospel (Luke 15:11–32). The three mimes should act out the Scripture reading as it is being proclaimed, according to the instructions on handout 16.

9. The priest or deacon continues the service by offering a brief homily. Suggested content includes the following thoughts:

- Each of us must take the initiative to turn to God in times of struggle.
- Trust and humility are the key values that allow us to move beyond our challenges to come before God and express our sorrow.
- When we have a sincere heart that responds to God’s call to conversion, we are given a new opportunity for growth as a member of God’s family in faith.

10. Invite the participants to examine their conscience by offering the following comments:

- To examine our conscience means to take stock of our words and actions and evaluate them in light of God’s will for our lives. By being honest with ourselves, we can confront those habits that keep us from growing as a disciple of Jesus.
- The early Church was recognized for its words and actions by the public observation: See how those Christians love one another! When we examine our conscience, we are involved in an act of love, love for ourself, our God, and our neighbor.
- I invite you to take time now to evaluate the experiences of your day-to-day living in the quest for a true sorrow for the times you have failed.

Invite the three mimes to come forward and read the questions provided for each character in part 2 of handout 16.

## Rite of Reconciliation

11. The presider uses these words to invite the participants to kneel and join the confession of sins:

- My brothers and sisters, confess your sins and pray for each other, that you may be healed. (*The Rites*, pp. 552–553.)

All pray together:

- I confess to almighty God,  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have sinned through my own fault  
in my thoughts and in my words,

in what I have done,  
 and in what I have failed to do;  
 and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,  
 all the angels and saints,  
 and you, my brothers and sisters,  
 to pray for me to the Lord our God.

(The Rites, p. 553)

**12.** Invite the participants to respond to the penitential intercessions:

- Our response to our prayers is “We seek the grace of your forgiveness, O Lord.”

Invite the young person you have chosen to come forward to offer the intercessions as noted on resource 8.

**13.** Presider continues by saying:

- Now let us pray using the words Jesus taught us, asking God to forgive us as we forgive others.

Pray the Lord’s Prayer with the participants.

**14.** The presider offers this prayer:

- Loving and merciful God, you have shown us your unconditional love. As we gather as your Church, may we have confidence in your promise to grant us your healing and your compassion. Through this sacrament of the Church, pardon all sinners so they might give your name glory and honor. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Individual Confession and Absolution

**15.** Share the following with the participants:

- The Church’s sacrament of Reconciliation is a sign of God’s presence alive in this moment. The sacrament draws us closer to God and to one another. This sacrament helps us return to God’s intended path for us—a journey of faith rooted in the example and Good News of Jesus.
- Reconciliation has four parts. The first is contrition, an honest and true sorrow for the sins we have committed. The second is confession, a clear telling of the sin for which we ask God’s forgiveness. The third is absolution, the action of Christ through the priest in which Jesus’ healing is shared with us. The final part is satisfaction or penance, a change in our habits that shows we have been so affected by God that our words and actions are no longer sinful but rather give life to those around us.
- I invite you now to go to one of the priests for confession or for a blessing. At the end of your visit, you will receive a white ribbon that you can pin to your shirt or blouse as an outward sign of being created anew through the experience of reconciliation.

Distribute the ribbons and pins, using the leaders you asked to help with this. During confessions, play quiet music from a CD-ROM in the background or have the music ministers offer reflective song selections. Song selections could be instrumental, contemporary Christian, or popular among young people. Lyrically, they should reflect the focus on reconciliation.

After participants return from confession, provide optional meditative activities for them. These activities might include paper and pens for journaling, Bibles or prayer books for spiritual reading, rosaries for devotional prayer, or roving leaders who offer to be prayer partners with individual participants.

## Proclamation of Praise for God's Mercy

**16.** Invite the participants to sing “Here I Am,” by Tom Booth, or a similar song on the theme of thanksgiving.

## Concluding Prayer of Thanksgiving

**17.** Presider offers the following prayer:

- We thank you, most awesome God, for the grace of your mercy and love. You have made us new creations in your son, Jesus. May this gift of reconciliation inspire us to share your love with others so that you may be given praise and glory as the source of our hope and all good things. We make this prayer through Christ, who is Lord, forever and ever. Amen. (Alternative prayers of thanksgiving can be found in the *The Rites*, nos. 57 and 207–211.)

## Concluding Rite

**18.** Invite the participants to bow their heads while the priest offers this final blessing and sending forth:

- May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you. Amen.
- Let us go forth strengthened by God's merciful love to be disciples of the Lord and ambassadors of Christ's peace.

**Response:** Thanks be to God. (Alternative concluding prayers can be found in *The Rites*, nos. 207–211.)

**19.** Invite the participants to join in singing the closing song you have chosen. Consider “Strength for the Journey,” by Michael John Poirier, or another appropriate sending forth song.

## Catholic Faith Handbook connection

See chapter 19, pp. 183–188, for a full description of the history and practice of the sacrament of Reconciliation. This chapter also includes the guide “How to Make a Good Confession.”

# Introductory Reflection

- I am not perfect. There are things I have done that I regret because they hurt my friends, my family, and my God. I can even do things to hurt myself.
- Yet God is so much bigger than my imperfections, my moments of weakness, and my sins.
- None of us is perfect, and that's why we need God.
- God, who is kind, merciful, compassionate, forgiving, and loving, always holds the door to God's house open for us to return when we have strayed.
- Let us remember that God offers us a comforting embrace to say "I'm sorry" for those things that separate us from God and one another.
- Let us turn to God, who yearns to be in a lasting relationship with each of us.
- Let us quench our thirst for the closeness of God as we bring our imperfect selves to God, who will create us anew in the sacrament of Reconciliation.



# Gospel Proclamation

## Part 1

Each mime assumes a different role for the following. One acts as the prodigal son, one acts as the father, and the third acts as the older son. As the Gospel, Luke 15:11–32, is proclaimed by the priest or the deacon, the mimes act out their assigned parts:

- At verse 12, the prodigal son, dressed in all black, steps forward (in front of the black cloth) counting, then spending cash and credit cards.
- At verse 15, he expresses his hunger and a desire to return home.
- At verse 20, he moves toward his father, who is dressed in white (standing in front of the picture of the face of Jesus).
- At verse 22, the father pins a white ribbon on the prodigal son, and they embrace.
- At verse 25, the elder son, also dressed in black, steps forward (standing in front of the black cloth).
- At verse 28, the elder son begins to argue with the father, who steps toward him (standing in front of the candles).
- At verse 31, the elder son moves toward the father, who pins a white ribbon on him.
- At verse 32, the father leads the elder son to the prodigal son, and they embrace (in front of the picture of the face of Jesus).

## Part 2

Be sure to pause for a moment of silence after each question.

- **The Elder Son.** When are those times I have tried to put myself above others? Have I been envious or jealous of someone else or their possessions? When have I not appreciated the things that God has given me in my life? Am I angry or do I still hold a grudge against someone? Whom have I not forgiven when they hurt me? When have my words and actions been uncaring, failing to acknowledge the needs of others? Have I done or said anything to hurt or kill someone's spirit or reputation?
- **The Father.** Has my language been derogatory toward or about others? How have my relationships with my parents or elders been lately? Have I been genuine in my love and support for others? Have I taken the name of the Lord in vain? When have I focused my attention on ungodly things and not trusted God to help me? Have I been present to the Lord in prayer and worship, acknowledging that God is important to me?
- **The Prodigal Son.** Have I been selfish, not sharing my time or my possessions with others? In choosing my wants and needs, have I hurt others? When have I been greedy, wanting more for myself? Have I been honest and truthful with others and myself? Am I respectful of my body, not abusing it but taking good care of it? Can people trust me, or have I broken trust by sharing things told to me in confidence? Am I respectful of others in the way I treat them with a sense of dignity and value?

# Intercessory Prayers

Be sure to allow time between each prayer for the participants to respond by saying:

**We seek the grace of your forgiveness, O Lord.**

- May your compassion give us the courage to trust you as you welcome us to reconciliation.
- May we be truly sorry for our sins, coming to you with an attitude of authentic repentance.
- May those against whom we have sinned offer us forgiveness.
- May we find wholeness of heart, restoration of spirit, and honoring of our brothers and sisters through the sacrament of Reconciliation.
- May our confession bring the healing of Jesus to our lives today and always.
- May your law of love rule our choices so that our words and actions reflect your goodness.
- Forever help us to walk in your light, seeking your guidance and living in holiness and peace with everyone we encounter.

Part D

# Strategies and Planning Processes



# 17 Patterns of Prayer for Youth Communities

## AT A GLANCE

### Overview

“Welcome, everyone’s here now, so let’s begin with prayer.” Many youth gatherings begin with these words. We start with prayer to remind ourselves as a community that the reason we gather is to spend time awake to God’s presence. God is present in each gathering and in our communion with one another. We also typically end our gatherings with prayer. We strive to continue a prayerful spirit throughout our time together. To be in the habit of prayer, many communities—of youth or adults—develop patterns of ways to pray. This section contains suggestions for prayer that could become patterns for your community and some that could add interest and variety.

### Background Reading

- ◆ *Catholic Youth Bible* article connections: the *CYB* is filled with Pray It! connections that can enrich a youth community’s patterns of prayer. Use the helpful indexes at the back of the *CYB* to find these resources.

### Word Prayer

One way to help participants place themselves into a communal prayer is to invite a personal, spoken response. Sometimes new communities and new individuals are uncomfortable with praying out loud. In these situations, consider using the word prayer. To use this style of prayer, invite participants to share a word or a phrase as a prayer response. The example that follows is just one way to use this prayer.

- ◆ Word Prayer
  - ◇ Prayer for a Blessing of Our Time
  - ◇ Naming People Who Are Signs of God
- ◆ Praying with Saints
- ◆ Praying with Scripture on Any Occasion
- ◆ Praying with the Gospel for the Coming Sunday Liturgy
- ◆ Praying with Music
  - ◇ Scripture and Song
- ◆ May the Lord Bless You and Keep You

## Prayer for a Blessing of Our Time

Invite the community to stand in a circle and hold hands.

### Opening Prayer

- Loving God, you gather us into a circle as a sign of your love.  
Be with us today, and give us your blessings that we need to be the people you call us to be.

### Invitation

- I invite you to consider a blessing that our community needs in order for us to grow and to appreciate this time together. Take a moment to think about a word or two that describes that blessing. I will ask you to share the blessing after a time of silence.

Pause for a moment of silence.

### Sharing

- I invite you to share the word or two that signifies the blessing that you ask of God for this community. I invite each person to share, even if someone has already shared your request. Generous God, we ask for these blessings:

Share your “word” and allow for the participants to share as well.

### Conclusion

- Most holy God, we pray for all these blessings and for the many more that you have planned. Open our hearts that we may receive these gifts, and open our arms that we may be ministers of these gifts to one another. We ask this as we pray together.

Lead group in praying the Lord’s Prayer or the Glory Be.

## Naming People Who Are Signs of God

For all that God gives, we are grateful. We thank God for many things. Perhaps the most important thing we thank God for is the people in our life.

In this prayer, participants will name people they see as signs of God’s love.

Invite the community to gather in a circle and hold hands.

### Opening Prayer

- Good and gracious God, you give us everything. We are grateful for all the gifts in our lives. We pray especially today for the people you have put into our lives who show us your love.

Pause for a moment of silence.

- God showers our lives with people who shine with God’s love and kindness. I invite you to share the names of people for whom you are thankful.

Share the name or names of people who come to your heart, and allow for the participants to share as well.

### Conclusion

- God, we thank you for these people we have named. Continue to provide us with gentle and strong companions on this journey. Help us become signs of your love for others. We ask this as we pray together.

Lead the group in praying the Lord's Prayer or the Glory Be.

## Praying with Saints

When we pray, we pray in communion with the holy women and men who have gone before us. We also ask for the intercession of these saints. We can also pray to have the qualities of the saints in our lives. To choose a saint, consult a book of saints, or go to the St. Anthony Messenger Web site at [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org), and click on "Saint of the Day." From this page you can search for saints by name, by day, or as patron saints.

### Opening Prayer

Begin with the sign of the cross, then say:

- Almighty ever-living God,  
by whose gift we venerate in one celebration  
the merits of all the Saints,  
bestow on us, we pray,  
through the prayers of so many intercessors,  
an abundance of the reconciliation with you  
for which we earnestly long.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

*(Roman Missal)*

### Listen

- Saints are holy people who lived extraordinary lives. Each saint the Church honors responded to God's invitation to use his or her unique gifts. God also calls each of us to be a saint. Let us listen to this story and listen especially for qualities of this saint that we can pray for.

Insert the story of the saint you have selected.

### Prayer

- What qualities of this saint shall we pray for today? Our response to each sharing will be "Strengthen us, O God."

Share the qualities that come to your mind and allow for the participants to also share.

### Closing Prayer

- Generous God, you take care of us in every way. We pray through the intercession of all the saints that you will give us everything we need to be faithful disciples.

Challenge us. Strengthen us. Guide us and keep us close to your heart. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

## TryThis

Adapt the "Praying with Saints" prayer to pray for the strengths and qualities of biblical characters. In the *CYB*, the "People" list within "Events, People, and Teachings" names biblical figures and provides scriptural citations. Or adapt this prayer to pray with modern-day figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day, or Mother Teresa.

## TryThis

After the Gospel, offer a short reflection based upon the commentary you read in your preparation. Create petitions for the group to pray in the response portion of the prayer. Many commentaries also include a prayer written to correspond with the Gospel; therefore, you might want to substitute that prayer for the concluding prayer in this service.

## Praying with Scripture on Any Occasion

Anywhere we go, in anything we do, God's Word can speak to us. Use resource 10, "Anytime, Anywhere Prayer," to lead young people in prayer wherever you might be. Consider duplicating this resource on both sides of 5-by-7-inch card stock and trimming it to fit inside a Bible so that you can distribute it to all leaders in the community who work with youth, and bring it with you wherever you go.

## Praying with the Gospel for the Coming Sunday Liturgy

This prayer helps connect the gathering and the week with the Sunday worship. To prepare for this prayer, set up a prayer focus table with a Bible stand, a cloth and a candle. You can prepare for the Sunday Gospel or readings by consulting a commentary or by using online resources. The Center for Liturgy at Saint Louis University, [liturgy.slu.edu](http://liturgy.slu.edu), has a free online resource that includes commentary, spirituality articles, and prayers.

Light the candle and begin with a silent sign of the cross.

### Opening Prayer

- Loving God, we can always count on your Word, the thing we treasure the most. When we keep your commands, we experience blessings too many to mention or imagine! Keep us humble, save us from our worst selves, help us face our fears, keep us in your thoughts and in your heart. You are the rock we cling to—keep us strong! We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen. (Adapted from David Haas, *Prayers Before an Awesome God*, pp. 25–26)

### Opening Song

Sing "Thy Word Is a Lamp," by Michael W. Smith; "Your Words Are Spirit and Life," by Bernadette Farrell; or another song with the theme of God's Word. In silence or during the opening song, pass the Bible or the *Lectio-nary* among the community. Instruct the participants that each person should take the Bible in both hands and pray a brief silent prayer before passing it to the next person. As prayer leader, you will receive the Bible last and place it on the stand on the prayer focus table.

### Listen

Proclaim the Gospel for the coming Sunday's liturgy.

### Respond

- God's Word challenges us to grow and brings peace and healing to all people. For what shall we pray in response to the word today?

Invite the participants to share petitions out loud. Let them know that their response should be "Lord, hear our prayer." Be prepared to offer one or two petitions to get things started.



### Concluding Prayer

- Your Word speaks truth to our lives today. As we prepare this week to hear your Word at Sunday Mass, strengthen us to allow the Word to find a home in our hearts. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Praying with Music

A simple way to pray with music is to select a song and match the words to the Scriptures. Choose a popular song that youth are listening to, a song from a contemporary Christian artist, or a hymn that the participants sing at church. The opening and the closing prayers work well with a variety of songs.

### Gather

Now,  
O Lord,  
calm us into a quietness  
that heals  
and listens,  
and molds our longings  
and passions,  
our wounds  
and wonderings  
into a more holy  
and human  
shape.  
We pray this in Jesus' name.

(Adapted from *Guerrillas of Grace*, p. 21)

### Listen

Proclaim the Scripture reading.  
Play the song you have selected.

### Respond

- In God's Word and in our song, we hear about our lives today. For what shall we pray in response to God's loving Word?

Invite the participants to share petitions out loud. Be prepared to offer one or two prayers to get things started.

### Closing Prayer

God, you rule the universe,  
and we are glad!  
You guide us with justice and wisdom.  
Come, God, show us  
new possibilities for our lives and our world.  
We pray in Jesus' name.

(Adapted from *Prayers Before an Awesome God*, p. 87)

## The Scriptures and Song

Consider using these pairings:

- **Scripture Reading.** Dan. 6:10–27 (Daniel in the lion’s den)
- **Song.** “Daniel’s Heart,” by Steve Angrisano, on *Set Free* (Portland, OR: Oregon Catholic Press, 2002)
  
- **Scripture Reading.** Rom. 8:18–25 (Have hope in God.)
- **Song.** “I Will Have Faith in You,” by Sarah Hart, on *Obvious* (Portland, OR: Oregon Catholic Press, 2001)
  
- **Scripture Reading.** 1 Cor. 13:1–7 (If I have not love . . . )
- **Song.** “The Heart of Worship,” recorded by Matt Maher, on *The End and the Beginning* (Portland, OR: Oregon Catholic Press, 2001)
  
- **Scripture Reading.** Mark 6:30–34 (Come aside and rest.)
- **Song.** “Come Away with Me,” by Norah Jones, on *Come Away with Me* (Capitol Records, 2002)
  
- **Scripture Reading.** Matthew 4:18–22 and 8:18–20 (Call of the disciples)
- **Song.** “Where Are You Going,” by Dave Matthews Band, on *Busted Stuff* (RCA Records, 2002)
  
- **Scripture Reading.** Luke 24:13–35 (Walk to Emmaus)
- **Song.** “I Can Only Imagine,” recorded by Mercy Me, on *Almost There* (Word Records, 2001); or “Imagine/Sing the Wondrous Love of Jesus,” by Amy Grant, on *Hymns and Faith* (Word Records, 2002)
  
- **Scripture Reading.** Phil. 4:4–7 (Rejoice and give thanks.)
- **Song.** “Malo! Malo! Thanks Be to God,” by Jesse Manibusan, available on *Spirit & Song*, vol. 2, disc C (Portland, OR: Oregon Catholic Press, 1999)
  
- **Scripture Reading.** Rom. 13:11–14 (Now is the time.)
- **Song.** “This Is Your Time,” by Michael W. Smith, on *This Is Your Time* (Reunion, 1999)

## May the Lord Bless and Keep You!

Hearing our own name raised in prayer is a beautiful and prayerful sound. As a closing blessing, ask the group to stand in a circle and to be sure they know the name of the person on their left. Begin the prayer with a sign of the cross, saying, “We are gathered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

### Opening Prayer

- Lord, you call us, and you know us by name. We ask you to bless and keep us as we move from this community but continue to journey in your care.

Turn to the person on your left and say, “The Lord bless and keep (name).” Ask that person to turn to the person on his or her left and continue the prayer. When the prayer goes around the circle, end by saying, “We pray in Jesus’ name.”

### *Spirit & Song* connections

For morning or evening prayer, consider using the prayer of the Church, which is the *Liturgy of the Hours*. For a modified version of these prayers that includes responses and music suggestions, see “Liturgical Prayer: Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer” in *Spirit & Song*.

# Anytime, Anywhere Prayer



*Gather in a circle, standing or seated. Begin with the sign of the cross.*

## **Opening Prayer**

Almighty God, “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). We are gathered in your name, and we are standing in the need of prayer. We need to thank you and ask you to guide us, to heal us and to be with us in this moment. Quiet our hearts and open us to your loving word. We ask this in Jesus’ name.

## **Listen**

Choose a Scripture reading that matches your situation. Consider:

- Matthew 18:18–20 (God’s promise to be with us)
- Psalm 141 (prayer for protection from evil)
- James 2:1–13 (call to justice)
- Romans 8:26–30 (hope)
- Matthew 6:25–34 (trust)
- Philippians 4:4–9 (joy and thanks)
- 1 Timothy 4:11–16 (call to holiness)
- Ephesians 3:15–21 (growth and renewal)
- Micah 4:1–5 (peace and sharing)



- John 8:2–11 (forgiveness and compassion)
- Psalm 139 or Romans 8:31–35 (God’s love)
- Acts 2:43–47 (community)
- Psalm 23 (God’s providence)

### **Respond**

*Allow a moment of silence.*

In response to God’s word of love and challenge, for what shall we pray? Our response today is “Be with us, Loving God.”

*Invite participants to share petitions aloud. Begin with one or two petitions to get things started.*

### **Go Forth**

We thank you, God, for your word of love and life. Hear our petitions, those we have voiced and those we hold in the silence of our hearts. Join our many prayers into one as we pray together in the words that Jesus taught us.

*Lead the group in praying the Lord’s Prayer.*

(The scriptural quotation in the opening prayer is from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic Edition. Copyright 1993 and 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved.)

# 18 Planning for Communal Prayer

## AT A GLANCE

- ◆ Introduction  
(20 minutes)
- ◆ Opening Prayer  
(15 minutes)
- ◆ Review the Context  
for the Prayer  
(15 minutes)
- ◆ Choose a Focus and  
a Theme for the Prayer  
(15 minutes)
- ◆ Brainstorm the Elements  
of the Prayer  
(20 minutes)
- ◆ Put It All Together  
(30 minutes)
- ◆ Preparation and Rehearsal  
(45 minutes)
- ◆ Check-In and  
Closing Prayer  
(15 minutes)
- ◆ Experience the Prayer
- ◆ Evaluate the Prayer

## Overview

This guided process for preparing communal prayer with and for youth is best done as a workshop or a training session for leaders. This session is designed as a three-hour process to be used with a prayer preparation team. This team should have a minimum of five and a maximum of twelve members and at least two adults, including a facilitator. What follows are suggestions for preparing youth for roles in leading prayer and resources for use within prayer services.

## Planning for Communal Prayer

### Preparation

- Gather the following items:
  - ☐ newsprint and markers
  - ☐ masking tape
  - ☐ pens or pencils, one for each participant
  - ☐ blank paper
  - ☐ a *Catholic Youth Bible* or other Bible
  - ☐ lists of prayer books and books of poetry or stories for additional suggested prayer resources can be found on pages 25–27 in chapter 1 of this manual.
  - ☐ copies of handout 17, “Preparing for Communal Prayer Worksheet,” one for each participant
  - ☐ copies of handout 18, “Ministerial Roles,” one for each participant
  - ☐ *Spirit & Song* books or another hymnal of your choosing, music CDs, and a CD player
  - ☐ TV, VCR, laptop computer, PowerPoint, projection screen (all optional)

- candles, cloths, crosses, icons or statues, Bible holder, variety of symbols, various art supplies, and other decorative items
- Write the following two phrases on separate sheets of newsprint:
  - Helps and Encourages
  - Distracts and Discourages
 Hang both sheets on the wall.
- Select a gathering song, such as “Send Out Your Spirit,” by Jesse Manibusan; “Holy Spirit,” by Ken Canedo; or another song with the theme of the Holy Spirit.
- Invite a team member to proclaim Luke 4:16–19.
- On four separate sheets of newsprint, write the following questions (one question per sheet):
  - Who will be present for this prayer?
  - What is the occasion for this prayer?
  - Where will the prayer be held?
  - When will the prayer be held?

## Introduction

**1.** Welcome the team to the prayer preparation session, and thank them for accepting the invitation to share leadership for the community’s prayer.

**2.** Give each team member a marker, and refer to the two sheets of newsprint posted on the wall. Provide the following directions:

- On the appropriate newsprint, write down what helps or encourages you to pray and those things that distract or discourage you from praying. After team members have had time to write the lists, facilitate a discussion to identify the key helps and distractions young people experience when it comes to their prayer.

Then offer the following key points, which focus on the expectations of the team members when it comes to planning prayer:

- Be focused on and responsible to the team and the task.
- Rely on God’s Spirit to inspire.
- Remember that we are ministers who serve the assembly.
- Practice and rehearse so we understand our roles and responsibilities.
- Feel free to be creative throughout the process.
- Learn from this experience of preparing prayer to use what is learned in the future.
- Work to make this a meaningful experience for all.

## Opening Prayer

### Gather

3. Invite the team members to gather in a circle for prayer. Distribute a songbook to each, and then offer this call to prayer:

- In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Spirit of God, be with us, your people, as we serve our community by offering our time, energy, and abilities to prepare a gift of prayer to you. May we be blessed by your presence here and inspired by our call to give honor, praise, and thanksgiving to you, O God.

4. Invite the participants to join in singing the gathering song you have selected.

### Listen

5. Invite the chosen team member to proclaim Luke 4:16–19. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection to follow, then offer these comments:

- All of us have been sent by God to proclaim the Good News. By our Baptism, we are called to share our faith in Jesus with others.
- The people in the Temple were listening to Jesus, someone they had known all his life, and they might have wondered who he was to be teaching them.
- Today, as we learn how to plan prayer for the community, we do so with openness so we can learn how to encourage one another in prayer—and to recognize we have something to learn about God from one another.

### Respond

6. Give these instructions to the participants:

- Recognizing that the Spirit of God promised to be with us always, we will offer one another a prayer of blessing.
- I will begin by placing a hand on the shoulder of the person to my right and saying these words, "May the Spirit of the Lord be upon you as you share your gifts with our community today." Then that person will bless the person next to him or her and so on around the circle. [Many young people are not comfortable being touched by someone they do not know well; consider extending your hands over the person instead.]
- Offer your blessing to the person on your right, and indicate to that person that he or she should then bless the next person. [The blessing is passed around the circle from one person to the next until you are the last person blessed.]

### Go Forth

7. Invite the group to stand, join hands, and pray the Lord's Prayer. Conclude the prayer by inviting everyone to make the sign of the cross.



## Review the Context for the Prayer

8. Distribute handout 17 and a pen or pencil to each participant. Post the four sheets of newsprint with the questions on the wall. Then make the following comments:

- As we work together to prepare this prayer, we need to remember that this will be a communal experience.
- Communal prayer is a public action of worship shared by a diversity of individuals.
- We call those gathered for prayer the “assembly.”
- We will be working to create an experience that invites the participation of each person in the prayer.
- In order to prepare well, we must be in tune with what is happening in the lives of the assembly. Being “in tune” is called the “context” of the prayer.
- When we talk about the context of prayer, we are referring to the circumstances that create a setting for the prayer experience.
- It is important that the prayer identify with the community that gathers together to pray.
- In order to understand the context of the prayer, we have to ask the following questions:
  - **Who will be present for this prayer?** This question helps us know the assembly. Think about the persons who will make up the community assembled to pray. Think about their age, gender, the cultures they represent, and so forth. Think about the quality of their relationship to one another. If they know one another well or share something in common, it will affect how well they can pray together.
  - **What is the occasion for this prayer?** This question helps us focus the topic and the theme of the prayer. What are some of the important events happening in school or the community, the church, or possibly some current news event? Is the prayer part of a larger event?
  - **Where will the prayer be held?** This question helps plan for the prayer space and environment. Where the prayer is held can help or detract from the prayer.
  - **When will the prayer be held?** This question helps us know the parameters of time for the prayer. Knowing when can also give us information to help with the environment and with how simple or intricate the prayer might be.
- Answering these questions will help us know why we are preparing for a prayer service. This information also gives the preparation a focus and provides a measuring stick for evaluating all ideas.

9. Invite the team members to provide their responses to each of the preceding questions, and post them on the appropriate newsprint sheet.

Discuss their responses, and come to a mutual understanding of the context of the prayer.

## Choose a Focus and a Theme for the Prayer

**10.** Once the team has completed the context discussion, ask them to select a focus and a theme for the prayer. The focus is what the assembly will pray for and about; the theme is the way the assembly will pray about that focus in this prayer. For example, the team might feel called to pray for peace as the focus and might choose a theme of “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace.” The focus and theme statement must emerge from the team’s responses to the who? what? where? when? context questions. The focus theme statement should be written on newsprint and posted for the team to refer to in its planning. Allow ample time for the team to discuss and decide on a focus and a theme.

## Brainstorm the Elements of the Prayer

**11.** Facilitate the planning for the prayer elements with the whole team. Consider asking one team member to record responses on newsprint. Invite the brainstorming process in each of the following areas of preparation:

- Create the right environment.  
Consider these questions and suggestions:
  - What objects, decorations, or symbolic items will set the right tone?  
Choose symbols or decorations appropriate to the theme and useful for settling the participants into the mood of the prayer service. Be sure the symbols and decorations are appropriate for the liturgical season.
  - What sounds will enhance the service? Make sure everyone can hear the readings and the music.
  - What space will you use? Will everyone be able to see? How will you arrange the seating to fit the space, the topic, and the theme?
- Select the readings.
  - One or two readings from the Scriptures or another source may be selected.
  - These readings should provide the members of the assembly with some perspective on the theme. Poems, stories, lyrics of songs, or paragraphs from books or magazine articles may also serve as readings for prayer services and can work well with a scriptural reading. Drama or movement may also be used.
  - The key consideration in selecting readings is that they connect with the theme and can inform or inspire those gathered at the service.

- Involve people through symbolic action.
  - Effective prayer services often include symbolic actions or rituals.
  - Choose a symbolic action that will not need a lot of explanation but will relate easily to the theme of the prayer. This often entails some visible, tangible item or some act or movement that gets people to do more than just sit and listen.
  - For instance, during a prayer about “Jesus, the Living Water,” you might have a baptismal font or a bowl of water present. After a reading, all could be invited to come forward and bless themselves with the water.
- Select and plan for the music.
  - Prayer services commonly begin with a song. Another piece of music may end the service or be used elsewhere.
  - Music may be played for reflective listening, as a starter for discussion or shared prayer, for people to sing or to hum along with, or as background to a symbolic action—or all of these. Whatever its form, the music should relate closely to the theme.
- Create a way to share reflections.
  - Shared reflections, in which spontaneous prayers or comments are offered aloud, invite people to relate their personal insights into the theme. If a group has the right level of trust, you may invite the participants to share their personal insights, stories, or reflections about a reading or theme.
  - One technique that helps people start sharing on this level is to allow them to write their reflections during a period of silence.

## Put It All Together

**12.** Once the team has selected the elements of the prayer, invite them to begin to craft their final outline and plan for the prayer service. Introduce the four movements of prayer, as well as the purpose of each movement, in this way:

- Gather
  - The purpose of this movement is to call the entire assembly to attention to the fact that prayer is beginning. When the assembly gathers, each activity within the movement brings participants toward an openness and an attentiveness to what they are about to experience.
  - We can use a call to prayer, a procession, a song, or a gesture in this movement.
  - We can also consider how the symbols or special objects in the environment may present a specific place of focus for the prayer.

- Everything we do to gather the assembly moves the participants closer to acknowledging the presence of God in their midst and their desire as one faith community to express themselves by lifting their minds and hearts to God.
- Listen
  - In this movement the assembly gives authority to God's word.
  - Through a proclamation of the Scriptures, poetry, music, storytelling, witness, drama, or current readings, God speaks to all. And as the assembly listens, they come to understand that God has a message for all.
  - It is here that the topic and the theme statements emerge with great clarity. How we present that message is critical to the assembly's ability to reflect more deeply on what God is trying to communicate to each person praying.
- Respond
  - Once the assembly has had the chance to listen and to reflect on God's message, as believers they need to respond to that message. It is here that symbolic actions or sharing reflections can best serve the members of the assembly.
  - We can use ritual actions, gestures, prayers of intercession, a song, journaling, or the Lord's Prayer as ways of communicating with God.
- Go Forth
  - The final movement of prayer is intended to motivate the assembly to leave the place where they are gathered and "go therefore and make disciples" (Matt. 28:19), just as Jesus did.
  - When the assembly prays, it not only strengthens their bond with God but also inspires them to love and serve the Lord and one another. The sending forth points all to where the world needs Christian action.
  - Some elements in sending the members of the assembly forth include closing prayers, blessings, songs, commissioning, a procession, a sign of peace, or a ritual action.
- The difficult aspect of preparing prayer is putting all the ideas together and practicing. These are the things we are about to do. We have spent a lot of time today learning what we need to know in order to prepare well. Now we will apply all that new information to putting a prayer service together.
- It is important to remember that preparing prayer is more like sculpting or painting than building an engine. It is less science and more art. Sometimes, we will have to step back to see if all the movements flow well together. Then we will need to make sure each minister of the prayer understands his or her role and responsibility within the prayer.

**13.** Invite the team to prepare the movements of the prayer and to create a final draft of the prayer service, demonstrating each piece and activity of the Gather, Listen, Respond, and Go Forth movements.

**14.** Distribute handout 18. Lead the group in prayerfully discerning the ministerial roles needed for the prayer they have prepared.

## **Preparation and Rehearsal**

**15.** Move the team from the movements into rehearsal. This planning session design assumes that the members of the team will also serve as the ministers of prayer. If additional people are needed to assume ministerial roles, it may be best to use this time to “walk through” the prayer service, with some team members substituting for persons who are not present. However, before the experience of the prayer service, time must be dedicated to preparation and rehearsal with all the ministers present.

## **Check-In and Closing Prayer**

**16.** Provide the team a final opportunity to check in with one another and to ensure that all aspects of the prayer have been adequately prepared. Then summarize the session by reminding the team that preparing prayer is an intentional activity that involves a great investment of time and people.

Conclude by inviting the team to offer their prayers of thanksgiving and petition to close the planning session.

## **Experience the Prayer**

The team should lead the prayer service with the assembly for whom it is intended. All the preparation efforts come together as the team and the assembly offer their worship as one community of faith. If the prayer is experienced with time apart from the planning session, walk through the service with the preparation team before its implementation to help team members remember their roles.

## **Evaluate the Prayer**

At an appropriate time after the prayer is experienced, the team should re-gather to evaluate the prayer service. Comments from the assembly may be solicited and compiled. During evaluation, consider the effectiveness of the preparation process, the ministers, and the participation of the assembly. An important element of the evaluation is to provide words or gestures of affirmation and appreciation for the members of the prayer preparation team.

# Preparing for Communal Prayer Worksheet

Occasion / Event / Feast: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Date / Day / Time: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Planning Leader:

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Presider:

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## Step One

What is the context for the prayer?

- Who will be present?
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- What is the occasion for this prayer?
- 
- 

- Where will the prayer be held?
- 
- 

- When will the prayer be held?
- 
- 

## Step Two

Select a topic and a theme for the prayer.

- Based on the answers to the above questions, write a sentence that describes the topic and theme for the prayer.
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### Step Three

What elements should be part of the prayer?

- Environment (objects, decorative or symbolic items, room set-up, lighting, how people will be welcomed to the prayer)

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- Readings (the Scriptures, other sources such as poems, stories, excerpts from books or magazines, storytelling, witness, drama or movement)

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- Symbolic action (something people can do to be more involved)

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- Music (liturgical, praise, secular; will people sing along or reflect quietly?)

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- Reflections or faith sharing (sharing with a partner or small group, spontaneous prayer, journaling)

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### Step Four

Put it all together.

Where do the elements selected fit into the four movements of prayer? (Note: Record the sequence of the elements of prayer, including who will be responsible for each element. For instance, identify Opening Prayer by resource number, page number, and presider's name.)

#### Gather

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#### Listen

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#### Respond

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#### Go Forth

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### Step Five

Prepare and rehearse.

Who will assume the following roles?

Planning leader

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Presider

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Proclaimer(s) of the Word

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Ministers of music and song

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Ministers of environment and hospitality

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Ministers of ritual and movement

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### Step Six

Check-in and pray.

Is everything ready? Are there any last-minute questions?

Take a few minutes to pray with one another, asking God to bless your efforts and to be instruments of his message to others.

### Step Seven

Experience the prayer.

### Step Eight

Evaluate the prayer.

Reflect on the following questions:

- How effective was our planning process?
- As ministers of prayer, how did we do in our various roles?
- How did the assembly experience the prayer?
- What did we learn? What would we change? What would we keep the same?

Affirm one another in the good work you have done!

# Ministerial Roles

- **Planning Leader**
  - Is responsible for the overall process of preparing, implementing, and evaluating the prayer.
  - Makes sure everyone has the materials needed for their roles and that ministers are comfortable and confident in their roles.
  - Points out areas for improvement or helps to eliminate loose ends, and affirms when the team and the individual ministers are working well.
  - Communicates the expectations of the prayer and facilitates the ministers' spiritual and functional preparations, while listening to the valuable input from the preparation team.
- **Presider**
  - Acts as a guide to the assembly by leading prayer, giving instructions, and facilitating rituals.
  - Speaks with appropriate tone, volume, and clarity.
  - Gives instructions, leads the assembly to become more comfortable with gestures, and models what is expected of those gathered for the prayer.
  - During rehearsal, asks for feedback regarding his or her role. In this way the presider can focus on the needs of the assembly and make adjustments when necessary.
- **Proclaimer(s) of the Word**
  - Is responsible for helping the assembly hear God's Word.
  - Rehearses with an eye and ear to the volume and clarity of their voice, as well as practices pronunciation of difficult words.
  - Is mindful of the cues that signal when it is time to move into his or her role.
  - If the proclamation will be presented in the form of a drama, this rehearsal time is very important to ensure that the elements of the drama synchronize with one another.
- **Minister(s) of Music and Song**
  - Works toward creating opportunity for the members of the assembly to participate with their voices.
  - Attends to volume, instrumentation, tempo, and arrangements of songs that encourage the assembly to participate and pray.
  - The energy behind the music and the encouragement of the assembly is part of this minister's responsibilities.
  - May need to create and supply worship aids for the assembly.

- Minister(s) of Environment and Hospitality
  - Helps the members of the assembly to be comfortable enough so they can focus on the prayer.
  - Supports the prayer experience in a sensory way. Help the assembly see and hear all that is going on.
  - Works to create an atmosphere that immerses the assembly into the theme and focus of the prayer through the selection and placement of symbols, seating arrangements, and use of space.
  - Welcomes the assembly in a personal way that brings a quality of openness to the prayer.
- Minister(s) of Ritual and Movement
  - Sets a pace for gestures and ritual, may give instructions, and is the first to present a ritual so the members of the assembly can follow with understanding.
  - Uses rehearsal time to determine whether gestures and rituals can be learned easily by the assembly, and adjust them accordingly.
  - Teaches or demonstrates the movement or ritual to the assembly.
  - Has the appropriate materials in correct quantities needed for a ritual, creating an opportunity for full participation by the individuals gathered as community at the prayer.

# 19

## AT A GLANCE

- ◆ Principles for Preparing Mass
- ◆ Form a Preparation Team
- ◆ Prepare Yourself as Team Leader
- ◆ The Preparation Process

## Preparing for Mass

### Overview

Involving youth in preparing Mass has many benefits. Youth who help prepare the Mass learn about and understand liturgy in a deeper and different way. Working side by side with adults to prepare for liturgy, the young people will help guide the preparations so that all members, regardless of age, can participate more fully in liturgy. Youth can be involved in preparing for special liturgies that are provided occasionally for youth. Young people can also be involved in preparing liturgies for the whole community. Ultimately, it would be wonderful for them to participate with adults in preparation for all liturgies in the community.

### Principles for Preparing for Mass

Liturgy is the central prayer of our faith and the source and summit of the Church's life (See *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 10). Given the importance of this prayer and the way this prayer celebrates our relationship with our loving God, there are important considerations to keep in mind as we prepare.

#### Prepare, Do Not Plan

We do not have to plan for liturgies, but we always have to prepare. It may seem like splitting hairs, but the difference is real. Sometimes when liturgy is planned, it changes from its intended purpose, form, and structure. Preparing for liturgy acknowledges that there already is a plan for this, the central prayer of our faith; there is a structure for the prayer, selected readings, assigned space, and designated ministry roles, all of which are essential to full and active participation by the congregation.

## Focus Prayer for the Assembly

Every liturgy has the Paschal mystery as its theme: Jesus' death, Resurrection, and promise to come again. Because this theme is at the heart of each liturgy, an additional theme does not need to be chosen. However, it is important to be aware of the needs of the community at the time of the Eucharistic celebration. This relationship is often described as a traditional recipe with fresh ingredients. Liturgy, like a traditional recipe, has been handed down to us and entrusted to us in a way that calls us to be faithful to its form. Our lives today are the fresh ingredients that make this recipe come alive.

One community experienced this relationship when tragedy struck. They had prepared the elements for a Fourth of July liturgy, using the suggested readings. After the preparations, a fire swept through their community, and one-fourth of the parish community had to evacuate their homes. Many people lost their homes or experienced serious damage to their homes. The liturgy preparation team came together to examine the elements for the liturgy and to incorporate the experience of the fire within the prayer intentions and the choices for hymns and prayers. The readings and the occasion for liturgy had not changed, but their lives had. As a result, the community prayed their experience of loss and hope in the prepared liturgy.

## Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing

In liturgy preparation, the main objective is the shared prayer of the community. This means you need to keep the main thing the main thing. If you draw too much attention to some elements, you do so at the expense of the central mysteries of liturgy. Sometimes, in the name of creativity or innovation, elements are added to liturgy to try to make it more fun and exciting, but in the end it is less recognizable as a Mass. When preparing for liturgy, choose and prepare for the elements and prepare the ministers. Keep in mind the elements that are naturally a part of liturgy: silence, songs and hymns, sung prayers, processions, gestures, posture, and responses. To promote fuller participation, the preparations should honor and leave room for these elements to guide the community's prayer.

## Form a Preparation Team

The Mass is Christ's work: the members of the Body of Christ join in celebrating the Paschal mystery. Because by its nature the Mass is a communal prayer, involve several persons as you prepare, especially the priest who will preside. A liturgy preparation team that regularly works together is able to learn from its past efforts to help the community pray more fully.

## Commentary Resources

- ◆ For a commentary book, consider *Days of the Lord: The Liturgical Year series* (Collegville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993). Liturgists and homilists often use this series.
- ◆ A simpler resource is *Living Liturgy—Sundays and Solemnities, Year A, B or C*, published annually by The Liturgical Press.
- ◆ The Center for Liturgy at Saint Louis University has a free online resource at [liturgy.slu.edu](http://liturgy.slu.edu) that includes commentary, spirituality articles, and prayers.

The team leader is responsible for leading the session and keeping everyone on task and involved. When choosing a team leader, look for someone who is skilled in facilitation and can work well with youth and adults. The team leader is also responsible for communicating with the priest if the priest is not present. If the presider will not be part of the preparation team and if the team leader is not experienced and educated in the documents and the process for liturgy, be sure to involve someone from the community who has a liturgical background. Without such expertise key elements can be overlooked or misunderstood. This leader can help the team sort out ideas and suggestions so that together they can discern elements that match with liturgy. Many of the generated ideas might be more appropriate for other forms of communal prayer; these ideas can be saved for times when planning prayer.

Ideally, you will use three other adults, in addition to the team leader, so you have one for each task group: Readings and Prayers, Music and Song, and Ritual and Environment. Recruit a music minister who can work with youth and adults to prepare the music for the liturgy and who can help lead the music in the service. As young people become more experienced in preparing for Mass, involve them in sharing leadership with adults on the team. For instance, one youth could colead with the team leader and assist in the overall planning, and three youth could colead with the leaders of each of the three task groups. In any case, it is important to have more than one adult present.

## Prepare Yourself as Team Leader

Liturgical preparation has three steps. The first task is to prepare by reviewing and renewing your own understanding of liturgy. As team leader, you will find it valuable to familiarize yourself with the principles of liturgy that are found in the Church's foundational documents and commentaries. You may not be able to read every document or article, but try to set aside reflective time to read about liturgy each time you are involved in preparation. See the suggested articles and resources on page 37 of chapter 2, "Youth and Liturgy: Promoting Full Participation," for suggested readings.

Second, you will want to prayerfully read the Scriptures of the day and reflect on the liturgy you are preparing. If it is a Sunday liturgy, consult a commentary about the liturgy as part of your preparation.

Third, prepare practically for this liturgy by meeting with the presider and other key leaders involved in the liturgy, such as the music director or liturgist. When you meet, provide an overview of your plans for liturgy preparation. Discuss the liturgy and any factors that would affect your preparations.

## Determine the Givens for Liturgy

With any liturgy preparation, some elements will be open to adaptation, and some things cannot be changed. Some of these limitations are due to the nature of liturgy itself, and some are determined in advance by the community and its leaders. Limitations might include the time of the liturgy, events that occur before or after the liturgy, the place for worship, and guidelines outlining who is able or unable to participate in certain roles within the liturgy. You can find out the givens in your situation by talking to the presider and other leaders in your community. If you learn what these factors are in advance of your meeting with the preparation team, you can focus the energies of the team on the possibilities and elements that they can be involved in preparing.

## Gather Preparation Resources

You will want to gather and have the following items available for the meeting with the preparation team:

- ☐ *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States*, second typical edition (the book of readings), or copies of the readings for team members
- ☐ The *Roman Missal* (book of prayers and rituals)
- ☐ hymnals you will use for the liturgy, other music resources, and equipment such as microphones, music stands, and so forth
- ☐ copies of handout 19, “Mass Preparation Form,” one for each team member
- ☐ copies of handout 20, “Preparing the Elements of Mass,” one for each team member
- ☐ pens or pencils, one for each team member
- ☐ periodicals and books that assist in understanding readings of the day (see Commentary Resources)
- ☐ books or periodicals that assist in selecting music, such as:
  - *Music & the Mass—A Practical Guide for Ministers of Music*, by David Haas and Victoria M. Tufano (Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, 1998).
  - For a periodical that includes music suggestions, see *Today’s Liturgy*, a magazine published quarterly by Oregon Catholic Press. OCP also has a subscription-based Web site resource at [www.liturgy.com](http://www.liturgy.com).

## The Preparation Process

During the preparation process, take time to prepare for the people who will assemble for liturgy and the Scriptures you will hear in the liturgy, the ritual actions of the community, the songs, and the prayers. As team leader, choose

## Overview of Process

- ◆ Welcome and Prayer
- ◆ Discuss the People and Setting for This Mass
- ◆ Who, What, Where, and When
- ◆ Reflect on the Scriptures
- ◆ Identify a Focus for Preparation
- ◆ Prepare the Elements of the Mass
- ◆ Review the Overall Plan
- ◆ Evaluate the Mass and the Preparation

which elements, based on the experience level of your team, you will concentrate on during preparations. For example, you do not have to involve team members in reviewing the prayers from *The Roman Missal*. Ask the presider to make these choices.

Choose the Mass setting and the setting for the psalm response in advance so you can focus the team's time on rehearsal and selection of hymns. As the team becomes more experienced, add additional tasks in each area.

When you gather with the preparation team, expect the liturgy preparation process that follows (steps 1 to 5) to take 90 minutes to 2 hours. Follow up with an additional meeting, closer to the date of the liturgy, for reviewing the overall plan, preparing ministers, and making final preparations (step 6). Music rehearsal and ministers' preparation might take additional time, depending on the experience level of those participating. If this is the first time this team is preparing liturgy, consider including an additional meeting to provide catechesis about the pattern and nature of liturgy.

## Welcome and Prayer

1. Welcome the preparation team, and provide an overview of the preparation process. Facilitate introductions (if needed), and lead the team in prayer. For prayer, consider a moment of silence, followed by the opening prayer for the liturgy you are preparing. The opening prayer is found in *The Roman Missal*, listed according to the season and day or feast.

## Discuss the People and the Setting for This Mass

2. The people who will be present, the time, the place, and the surrounding events make every Mass unique. It is important for the team to discuss the *context* of each liturgy so you can prepare the Word, the music, and the rituals for full participation. Share with the team the givens or factors for this liturgy that are already decided. Here are several simple questions to think about and discuss (it may be helpful to record this discussion by posting the responses on newsprint):

- **Who** is likely to be present for this Mass? What is the mix of age and culture among those who will be attending this Mass? How well do the participants know each other? Are there any other special circumstances that will affect their attention and participation? (Examples: a retreat group, certain visitors.)
- **What** local, national, world, or church events will influence or shape the prayer and participation of those gathered for this Mass? Are there any particular needs for prayer? (Examples: a local tragedy, an anniversary, a feast or special occasion.)



- **Where** will the Mass take place? Are there particular advantages or limitations to keep in mind? (Examples: a large church for a small group, no official chapel at the retreat site.)
- **When** will the Mass take place? What time of day? Is this a regularly scheduled liturgy or a special occasion? What is the liturgical season? Is this a special season or a calendar holiday? (Examples: World Youth Day, Fourth of July, local graduations, during a conference, late evening versus an early morning Mass.)

## Reflect on the Scriptures

3. Read and reflect on the Scriptures assigned for the day, keeping in mind some of the elements you have just identified. Read the Gospel first. It will set the stage for hearing the first and second readings and the psalm response. As necessary, review other sources for additional background information on the scriptural passages. Discuss how these readings apply to the assembly that will gather for this Mass. Record this discussion by posting the responses on newsprint.

**Special Note:** Always use the assigned readings of the day. If you need to choose other readings because of the nature of the group or event, first check the votive and ritual Masses in the back of the *Lectionary* for suggestions rather than select passages directly from the Scriptures.

## Identify a Focus for Preparation

4. Several key ideas will begin to emerge as the team discusses the Scriptures in light of the context of this Mass. Summarize (through discussion and note taking) those ideas into several words or a short phrase that can be used to focus the rest of the preparation. Remember, every Mass has the same *theme*—the Paschal mystery that Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again. *Focus* the preparation to help the assembly pray and participate more fully in the Paschal mystery.

## Prepare the Elements of Mass

5. Provide each team member with copies of handout 19 and handout 20, and a pen or pencil. Three sets of tasks must be accomplished. You may choose to have the group as a whole work together or in smaller teams. Whichever approach you choose, be sure all the questions and the tasks are discussed and determined. Note: Provide handout 21, “Preparing the Prayer of the Faithful,” and handout 22, “The Prayer of the Faithful Worksheet,” to the leaders who are preparing the petitions.

## Review the Overall Plan

6. The Mass is the responsibility of *everyone gathered*. Make sure the preparations allow for the assembly to *pray together*. Some final tasks to keep in mind:

- Review the work of each task group.
- Meet with the priest presider and review the order of worship.
- Rehearse readings, music cues, processions, and so forth.
- Identify what will happen first.
- Pray as a team.

## Evaluate the Celebration and the Preparation

7. Evaluation is the last step in Mass preparation. Take time at the beginning of the next team meeting to ask the question, “Did our preparations help the assembly to pray?” Evaluation is not for listing the ways things went wrong but for reviewing whether the preparations were successful in helping the assembly pray more fully. After evaluating the Celebration, take time to evaluate the preparation process. Preparation for liturgy should be prayerful and efficient—celebrate the successes and learn from the mistakes.

# Mass Preparation Form

Day/Date/Time of Mass

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Presider

\_\_\_\_\_

Givens for this liturgy

\_\_\_\_\_

Focus for preparation

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Order of Liturgy**

Prelude

\_\_\_\_\_

Assembly preparation

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Introductory Rites**

Entrance Chant

\_\_\_\_\_

Penitential Act

\_\_\_\_\_

Gloria (when appropriate)

\_\_\_\_\_

Opening Prayer

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Liturgy of the Word**

First Reading/lector

\_\_\_\_\_

Responsorial Psalm

\_\_\_\_\_

Second Reading/lector

\_\_\_\_\_

Gospel Acclamation

\_\_\_\_\_

Gospel

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Homily

---

Creed (Sundays and feasts)

---

Prayer of the Faithful

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**Liturgy of the Eucharist**

Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts

---

Mass setting

---

Lord's Prayer

---

Sign of Peace

---

Lamb of God

---

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

---

Communion song(s)

---

Prayer after Communion

---

**Concluding Rites**

Final blessing

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Dismissal

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Notes:

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# Preparing the Elements of Mass

## Readings and Prayer Tasks

- ☐ Determine who will lector and how the Scriptures will be proclaimed.
- ☐ Compose or prepare the petitions for the Prayer of the Faithful, using handout 21, “Preparing the Prayer of the Faithful.” Determine who will present them. Check with the music group if the response will be sung.
- ☐ Prepare texts or prayers for any special blessings or rituals. (Examples: commissioning a team leaving on a service event, a blessing prayer on World Youth Day.)
- ☐ (Optional) Share the notes from your preparation with the priest-presider and homilist. This may be particularly helpful to someone who is unfamiliar with the group or occasion.
- ☐ (Optional) Review and set the *Roman Missal* prayers. Make any necessary suggestions to the presider.

## Music and Song Tasks

- ☐ Choose a Mass setting: Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation; Holy, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, and Lamb of God. Note: The Mass setting includes the sung prayers and should be familiar to the assembly. Choose these elements first, before selecting hymns.
- ☐ Choose a setting for the Responsorial Psalm. The psalm is intended to be sung. It is not appropriate to substitute a hymn or song in place of the psalm.
- ☐ Choose songs for gathering and sending forth. When selecting these songs, choose by function first, then consider the focus that you discerned for this liturgy. Consider the readings for this liturgy and this community. What would be a song that gathers the community for prayer? What song will send them forth?
- ☐ Choose a song for the Communion procession. The song should connect with our action of procession and receiving Communion. As much as possible, Communion hymns should be familiar and memorable so as to work well even when people do not have the words in front of them.
- ☐ Select other ritual music or songs for the Penitential Act or Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of water, the Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts, or the blessings.

- ☐ Consider music or songs to be played for practice before the start of Mass.
- ☐ Prepare hymnals or additional song sheets for the assembly. Secure necessary copyright permissions.
- ☐ Rehearse the music.
- ☐ Set up the sound equipment, music stands, and other related items.

#### **Rituals and Environment Tasks**

- ☐ Prepare the church, or arrange the place where Mass will be held.
- ☐ Assist the sacristan in preparing the altar and ambo with appropriate cloths, candles, *Lectionary*, and *Roman Missal*.
- ☐ Prepare hosts, water and wine, Communion vessels, purificators, and vestments as needed.
- ☐ Decorate with appropriate and seasonal art, flowers, plants, cloths, or cultural artifacts.
- ☐ Prepare and practice any processions, liturgical movement, or ritual gestures.
- ☐ Plan for how the gifts will be presented and the altar prepared at the offertory.
- ☐ Assign Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and plan how Communion will be distributed.
- ☐ Make a plan for greeting the assembly before and after Mass, for distributing songbooks or guides to the order of worship, and for arranging the seating (if necessary).

# Preparing the Prayer of the Faithful

During the Prayer of the Faithful, the assembled people join in prayer for the needs of their community and all humanity. The petitions should be for all people who have a special need. They are “we” prayers more than an “I” prayers. This means that the petitions are written to include special intentions in a way that touches many people. For instance, instead of “I pray for my Aunt Jane, who is sick,” a more appropriate form is, “We pray for Jane Smith and for all those who are sick, that they be healed and touched by God’s peace.”

The response is a way to lift our prayers to God. It is a request. We ask God to do something special. The response can be a way to reflect a special meaning in the liturgy. The response can be said or sung.

Typical responses include:

- *Lord, hear our prayer.*
- *Christ, hear us.*
- *Guide us, O God.*
- *Be near us, God.*
- *Loving God, help us and guide us.*
- *Strengthen us, O God.*

**The order** of the petitions follows a pattern.

We pray for the needs of the Church, including leaders and all the community.  
We pray for public leaders of nations and those leaders in our community.  
We pray for the salvation of the world.  
We pray for special needs.  
We pray for our local community.

# The Prayer of the Faithful Worksheet

## **Prayer Introduction**

Read by the presider. The introduction and closing can be composed or chosen from the sample formulas for the Prayer of the Faithful in the *Roman Missal*).

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## **Prayer Response** (choose a response for the Prayer of the Faithful)

Compose a petition for each category, and repeat the response.

### *Prayer 1: For the Church*

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### *Response*

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### *Prayer 2: For public leaders*

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### *Response*

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*Prayer 3:* For the salvation of the world

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*Response*

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*Prayer 4:* For special needs

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*Response*

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*Prayer 5:* For our local community

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*Response*

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**Concluding Prayer**

Read by the presider (see Prayer Introduction on page 1 of this handout)

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Principles 58, 39, 41, 84, and 37 cited on pages 29, 30, 32, 35, and 36, respectively, are from *From Age to Age: The Challenge of Worship with Adolescents* (Washington, DC: The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, 1997), pages 13, 9, 8, and 18, respectively. Copyright © 1997 by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. Used with permission.

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Portions of handout 8 are from a translation of *Apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe*, from the original story known as “Nican Mopohua,” by Antonio Valeriano and translated by Fr. Angel Cerda, on the EWTN Web site, [www.ewtn.com/jp99/apparition.htm](http://www.ewtn.com/jp99/apparition.htm), accessed May 7, 2003.

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## Endnotes Cited in Quotations from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

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2. Saint John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 3, 24: J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris, 1857–1866) 94, 1089C.
3. Saint John Damascene, *De fide orth.* 3, 24: J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris, 1857–1866) 94, 1089C.
4. Cf. 1 John 2:20,27; 2 Corinthians 1:21

