

## Planning a Marian Prayer Service

**Call to Worship** A call to worship is like an introduction to a prayer service. The leaders must introduce the reason why people are gathering to pray. Write a paragraph that answers these questions.

- Why are we honoring Mary?
- What is special about her?

**Opening Prayer** An opening prayer helps the people to gather themselves and to focus on the intent of the prayer service. In this case, the opening prayer will invite people to slow down the pace of the day and focus on Mary. After brainstorming several ideas, write down several sentences that ask God to calm us and to reflect on Mary.

**First Reading** The first reading will relate to the focus of the prayer service. In this case the students will copy the words of the passage from Sacred Scripture found in Luke 1:26–38. The group should also write a short homily (one paragraph) about the importance of the Annunciation. (Trust is a concern for people today and an important aspect of the reading.)

**Psalm or Reflection** This part of the prayer service comes from the Book of Psalms or can be another type of reflection related in this case to Mary. You may want to read Luke 1:46–55, Mary's *Magnificat*, or play a song about Mary.

**Second Reading** The second reading will also relate to the focus of the prayer service. Copy the words of the passage from Scripture found in Luke 2:4–7, 15–19, and then write a short homily (one paragraph) on the birth of our Lord, reflecting on the simple events surrounding this humble birth.

**Gospel** The Gospel reading always comes from the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. For this prayer service, copy John 2:1–11, the account of the wedding feast at Cana, and write a short homily focusing on the way Mary was concerned with the needs of others.

**Prayer of the Faithful** In this part of the prayer service, we lift up the prayers of the people gathered. Write prayer intentions for the following needs.

- Church leaders
- world leaders and issues
- the poor, suffering, and oppressed
- the school and parish community

Instead of the traditional response of “Lord, hear our prayer,” you may choose to create a response such as “Mary, full of grace, pray for us.”

**Closing Prayer** In the closing prayer, the leader helps us to conclude our prayer time and sends us out into the world to live as better followers of Jesus. Brainstorm together the most important concepts of the prayer service and ways that they can translate into everyday life. Then compose a short prayer of several sentences that reflects these ideas. In this case the prayer might speak of Mary's discipleship and ask her help to live like her.

