

Simple Tips for Leading a Simple Prayer — by Joe Paprocki, DMin

- Arrange a prayer space: cloth, bible (bookmarked for reading), candle, icon, crucifix.
- Consult the liturgical calendar to identify the season, feast, etc. that the Church is celebrating (or will be celebrating that week or that coming Sunday) - <http://www.usccb.org/about/divine-worship/liturgical-calendar/> For a little background on the Saint of the Day, go to www.divineoffice.org.
- **Call to Prayer** – if needed, introduce yourself, warmly welcome people to join in an opportunity to pray. Say something about the season or feast or day of the liturgical calendar. Go over any directions needed for the prayer and assign any roles. Invite people to place themselves in God’s presence. Example:

Good morning! My name is Joe Paprocki and I’m the National Consultant for Faith Formation for Loyola Press, a Jesuit ministry. I’m privileged to have the opportunity to lead you in prayer. Take a look at the prayer aide and notice the parts marked ALL as well as the Psalm response for which we will divide the verses according to Side A (indicate) and Side B (indicate). So, let’s take a moment now to place ourselves in God’s presence as we prepare to encounter him in prayer.

- **Pause** – allow 10 or 15 seconds of silence
- **Sign of the Cross** – Invite all to begin the prayer by praying the Sign of the Cross. Example (spoken and gestured slowly):

We begin...in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- **Ritual Greeting** – A priest or deacon will begin with “The Lord be with you” to which people respond, “And with your spirit.” A lay leader of prayer may select from a variety of greetings. Examples:

Leader: This is the day the Lord has made!

All: Let us rejoice and be glad!

Leader: O Lord, open my lips...

All: And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

Leader: God, come to my assistance...

All: Lord, make haste to help me.

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord for he is good...

All: His mercy endures forever.

- **Praise and thanksgiving** – Play a recording or sing a song of praise/thanksgiving. If no music is available, invite the assembly to pray a Psalm and alternate the verses (side A and B; left side/right side; male/female; etc.) Cut and paste a Psalm (or part of a Psalm) from <http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-International-Version-NIV-Bible/#books>. Psalms of praise and thanksgiving include: 8, 9, 19, 24, 28, 29, 30, 34, 65, 66, 69, 70, 92, 95, 98, 100, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 111, 113, 118, 135, 136, 138, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150. Example:

Psalm 100

A: Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

B: Know that the LORD is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

A: Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

B: For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

- **Scripture Reading** – proclaim a Scripture reading either from the day (<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/101713.cfm>) or from an upcoming feast or Sunday (<http://www.usccb.org/about/divine-worship/liturgical-calendar/>).
 - Approach the Bible, bow from the waist, pick up the Bible, and face the assembly.
 - For readings that are not from the Gospels, say, “A reading from the Book/Letter of...” and at the end, “The Word of the Lord...Thanks be to God.”
 - If a Gospel reading, invite all to stand, and say, “A reading from the Holy Gospel according to...” (make threefold sign of the cross on forehead, lips, and heart) “Glory to You O Lord” and at the end, “The Gospel of the Lord...Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - Return the Bible to its place of enthronement and once again bow from the waist.
- **Silent Pause** – pause for 15-20 seconds in silence
- **Intercessions** – invite all to join in offering intercessions. Example: “We turn to our Lord, now, confident that he hears our prayers.”
 - Offer several intercessions that you have prepared. Here is a site that offers daily intercessions: <http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/our-faith/daily-intercessions> (I recommend that you stick with “Lord hear our prayer” as the response.

- If you have no access to prepared intercessions, offer intercessions for the following (going from general to specific): church, world, nation, local community, the sick, those who have died.)
 - Invite the assembly to add their intentions. Example: *“Please add your own intentions.”*
 - After a suitable period, conclude. Example: *“Lord, you hear all of our prayers...those spoken and those that remain in the silence of our hearts. Hear our prayers that we may grow closer to you. Amen.”*
- **Closing Prayer** – invite all to join in a closing prayer. Example: *“We conclude our prayer by joining our voices together as we pray...”*
 - Our Father; Hail, Mary; Glory be
 - A prayer from the saint of the day (<http://www.catholicdoors.com/prayers/saints.htm>)
 - The “Collect” from that day’s Mass: <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2013-10-17>. Example: October 17, 2013, Feast of St. Ignatius of Antioch)

All: Almighty ever-living God, who adorn the sacred body of your Church with the confessions of holy Martyrs, grant, we pray, that, just as the glorious passion of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, which we celebrate today, brought him eternal splendor, so it may be for us unending protection. 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. Amen.

- **Conclude with the Sign of the Cross**
- **Options** – Music and singing are an important part of Catholic prayer and worship. Consider the following opportunities: opening song, responsorial, reflection after Scripture, closing song.

Likewise, ritual gestures and movements can be incorporated: consider the following opportunities: procession to “dress” the prayer space/enthroned the Bible, sprinkling with holy water, sign of peace, lighting of candle(s), etc.

Here’s what my prayer aid for a prayer service on Friday, October 18, 2013 might look like. See following page:

Opening Prayer

Friday, October 18, 2013-10-17

Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist

Call to Prayer

Sign of the Cross

Greeting:

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord for he is good...

All: His mercy endures forever.



Psalm of Praise and Thanksgiving: Psalm 100

A: Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

B: Know that the LORD is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

A: Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

B: For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Scripture: Lk 10:1-9 (The harvest is abundant but laborers are few)

Intercessions

Closing Prayer

All: Lord God, who chose Saint Luke to reveal by his preaching and writings the mystery of your love for the poor, grant that those who already glory in your name may persevere as one heart and one soul and that all nations may merit to see your salvation. 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. Amen.

Sign of the Cross

© 2013 Loyola Press. All rights reserved.

Find this and more resources for catechists at <http://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com>