

THE FORMAT OF MORNING/EVENING PRAYER: HANDOUT

MORNING PRAYER

STAND

OPENING VERSE 🎵

Leader: O God, come to our aid.

All: O Lord, make haste to help us. Glory be to the Father ... Alleluia

Alternatively for Morning Prayer

Leader: O Lord, open our lips.

All: And we shall praise your name. Glory be to the Father ... Alleluia

Alternatively for Evening Prayer

Leader: Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

EVENING PRAYER

STAND

HYMN

PSALMODY 🎵

SIT

Antiphon 1 read by leader

A Morning Psalm

Antiphon repeated by all

Silent prayer

Antiphon 2 read by leader

An Old Testament Canticle

Antiphon repeated by all

Silent prayer

Antiphon 3 read by leader

A Psalm

Antiphon repeated by all

Silent prayer

SIT

Antiphon 1 read by leader

An Evening Psalm

Antiphon repeated by all

Silent prayer

Antiphon 2 read by leader

A Psalm

Antiphon repeated by all

Silent prayer

Antiphon 3 read by leader

A New Testament Canticle

Antiphon repeated by all

Silent prayer

*The number of psalms prayed can be reduced. This might be particularly wise in the early stages as people get used to this form of prayer.

SCRIPTURE READING

Silent Prayer/Reflection

SHORT RESPONSORY

***May be omitted**

STAND

GOSPEL CANTICLE 🎵

STAND

Antiphon read by leader

Canticle of Zechariah (the Benedictus)

Antiphon repeated by all

Antiphon read by leader

Canticle of Mary (The Magnificat)

Antiphon repeated by all

INTERCESSIONS 🎵

THE LORD'S PRAYER 🎵

CONCLUDING PRAYER AND CONCLUSION OF THE HOUR 🎵

Leader: The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

🎵 Indicates parts that can be sung where resources allow.

NOTES ON MORNING/EVENING PRAYER: HANDOUT

The Opening Verse

The prayer leader begins the prayer from their appointed place. The leader does not sit in the presider's chair (or the priest's chair) but is in a position where he/she is both visible and audible. Just as we do at any other liturgical prayer in the Church, we stand for the opening. Remembering the promise of Jesus, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name I am there.' In our posture of standing we are showing honour to Christ and greeting the Risen Lord in our midst.

As is also customary, we mark ourselves with the Sign of the Cross. This is typically done as people make the response to the leader, 'O Lord, make haste to help us'/'And my mouth will proclaim your praise'. This verse can be recited or sung.

The Hymn

The opening hymn is intended to be a familiar one that all present can sing, for example 'Christ be Beside Me' or 'Be Thou my Vision'. It might speak to the time of day, for example, 'Day is Done' as a hymn for Evening Prayer. It might speak of praise, creation or gathering. During the seasons of Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter, a seasonal hymn can be used. In many instances in a local parish this will be without accompaniment, so care should be taken in its selection.

Psalmody

The people are seated for the praying of the psalms. The praying of the psalms is at the heart of the Liturgy of the Hours. Over the course of four weeks, through the various hours that are prayed in the Church, practically all one hundred and fifty psalms are prayed. Thus, in a four-week cycle, each hour is assigned particular psalms and canticles.

For a local community starting out with this prayer, it may be too ambitious to do all the psalms assigned to a particular hour on a particular day. A community might decide to do two, or even one, initially. A community might also decide to settle on a particular set of psalms and repeat them daily/weekly, before expanding over time the repertoire of psalms prayed.

A psalm can be sung using a psalm tone or it can be sung using a responsorial style, as we experience at Mass. Alternatively, the psalms can be recited in a number of different ways: 1) alternating between two groups, for example men/women, one side of the church and the other; 2) alternating between the leader and the whole group or 3) recited by just one person. Typically, recited or chanted psalms conclude with the prayer Glory Be. If recited, think about how you will facilitate the psalm being prayed meditatively and slowly rather than being rushed through.

Each psalm has an **antiphon** that is recited by the leader before the psalm and by all at the end of the psalm. This psalm or scripture verse contains the central thought of the psalm and can assist in praying the psalm in the particular liturgical season we find ourselves. During the Easter season the antiphon is concluded with an **Alleluia**.

The **silence** between the psalms is very necessary, allowing time for what we have just prayed in the psalm to enter deeper into our hearts before moving on to the next one.

The two psalms of the hour are traditionally accompanied by an Old Testament canticle (hymn) in the morning and a New Testament canticle in the evening.

Scripture Reading

This can be led from the ambo (the place from where readings are normally proclaimed in church) and is read by someone other than the prayer leader. Unlike in the Mass, the reader simply proclaims the verses without an introduction or conclusion, i.e. without saying 'A reading from ...' or 'The

NOTES ON MORNING/EVENING PRAYER: HANDOUT

Word of the Lord'. Each Hour on a given day has a particular reading assigned to it. As this is a very short reading, those preparing the prayer might consider going to the Bible text itself and extending the verses read. After this reading, people are given time to ponder, pray and reflect on the Word of God they have just received.

Short Responsory

In both of these hours a short responsory verse is assigned to follow the scripture reading. If used, it is led by the leader with the people responding. The responsory is linked to the reading that has gone before it. It serves as a kind of acclamation, enabling God's Word to enter deeper into the heart and mind of the one listening or reading.

Gospel Cantic

The leader introduces the cantic by standing and reciting its antiphon. This Gospel text is the high point of both Morning and Evening Prayer. We mark this high point by moving to a standing posture and by blessing ourselves at the beginning of the cantic. This high point can be further experienced through the use of incense. This might be as simple as placing grains of incense on the already lit coal, which is in a thurible or incense bowl, as the cantic begins.

Ideally the cantic is sung. It might be part of the goals of a leadership group to work towards having a setting for the Benedictus/Magnificat that is both familiar and popular in your particular parish. This is especially recommended given that the Gospel cantic will be prayed every time you gather for Morning/Evening Prayer.

Intercessions

While remaining standing, we present our prayers and intercessions to God. Again there are intercessions assigned to each Hour but these can be adapted or added to, depending on local needs. As shared prayers they can be led by someone other than the prayer leader. Some parishes might choose to sing a simple response to the intercessions.

The Lord's Prayer

The prayer leader invites all to pray the Lord's Prayer together. Praying the Lord's Prayer at Morning and Evening Prayer flows from the early Church tradition of Christians praying the Lord's Prayer thrice daily. Recited or sung, it reminds us of the daily nourishment we receive from God, even in the absence of Eucharist.

Concluding Prayer and Conclusion of Hour

The prayer leader draws the time of prayer to a close with a concluding prayer. This concluding prayer may be one that 1) is taken from the Hour of the day, 2) is repeated at each gathering or 3) may be one that is seasonal in nature and tone. Examples of concluding prayers can be found in *Weekday Celebrations for the Christian Community* by John McCann (Veritas, 2000).

Those gathered make the Sign of the Cross as the prayer leader asks God's blessing on him/her and those gathered. The people respond 'Amen.' This conclusion can be sung.

Set Up

Aside from other set-up considerations, before people gather for this prayer, any candles that are usually in place near or on the ambo and altar are lit.

THE FORMAT OF A CELEBRATION OF THE WORD: HANDOUT*

*Elements in () are offered as suggestions. Indicates parts that can be sung where resources allow.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Opening Hymn 🎵

STAND

(Carrying in of the Lectionary)

Greeting and Sign of the Cross

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **All:** Amen.

Leader: Your word, O God, is a lamp for our steps. **All:** And a light for our path.

(Words of Introduction)

Penitential Act 🎵

Collect

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First reading

SIT

Silence

Responsorial Psalm 🎵

Silence

Gospel Acclamation 🎵

STAND

Gospel

Silence

SIT

(Short Reflection)

(Sung Response 🎵)

STAND

Intercessions 🎵

STAND

Our Father 🎵

CONCLUDING RITE

Concluding Prayer

(Gesture of Reverence to the Scriptures)

Closing verse with Sign of the Cross

Leader: Let us bless the Lord. **All:** Thanks be to God.

Or

Leader: The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. **All:** Amen.

Dismissal

Leader: Go in the peace of Christ. **All:** Thanks be to God.

Closing Hymn 🎵

NOTES ON A CELEBRATION OF THE WORD: HANDOUT

Opening Hymn

The opening hymn unites all who have gathered into one voice as they stand to greet the Risen Lord in their midst and begin their time of prayer together. Therefore this hymn, of necessity, is one that is known and familiar to those who have gathered. Familiar seasonal hymns are also very appropriate. (See notes on opening hymn for Morning/Evening Prayer for more suggestions.)

The opening hymn typically begins when the prayer leader stands in his/her place, marking the beginning of the time of prayer. Again, the prayer leader does not sit in the presider's chair (priest's chair) but is positioned in a location where he/she is both visible and audible.

Carrying in of the Lectionary

Given the focus of this liturgy on the Word of God, it would be very appropriate for a member of the community to carry the Lectionary (the ritual book containing the readings) in procession to the ambo during the singing of the opening hymn, and to place it on the ambo.

Opening Verse

The text of this exchange between prayer leader and people once more highlights the importance of God's Word. It begins with all present making the Sign of the Cross.

Words of Introduction

These words, spoken by the prayer leader, might acknowledge from the outset that we are gathering in the absence of an ordained priest and, because of this, we are unable to celebrate the Eucharist. Alternatively, they may very succinctly look forward to something that will be heard in the readings to come, or they might make reference to the particular day in the liturgical calendar on which the celebration is taking place.

For example: Once again we gather here to be Church. Christ is present with us, as he promised – present in this assembly of his people and in the proclamation of God's Word. As an ordained priest cannot be with us we are unable to celebrate the Eucharist. Today, let us be united in the spirit of Christ with the Church around the world, let us hear and respond to God's Word and give God thanks and praise. We look forward to when we can once more gather together to celebrate the Eucharist.

Penitential Act

To prepare ourselves to hear the Word of God we acknowledge our need for God's mercy and love in the Penitential Act using formulae similar to what we find in the Mass.

Collect

The Collect, or what used to be called the Opening Prayer, is led by the prayer leader. Again a variety of suitable Collects can be found in John McCann's book. Parishes may wish to choose one set prayer for use in Ordinary Time, with some seasonal alternatives. As in the case of all opening and closing prayers, the prayer begins with an invitation to the people to pray, 'Let us pray', which is followed by a moment of silence. In this silence people bring their own prayer to the common prayer to follow. In this way, the common prayer literally *collects* the people's prayers into one. The people give their assent to this prayer with their Amen.

NOTES ON A CELEBRATION OF THE WORD: HANDOUT

Liturgy of the Word: Texts

The Liturgy of the Word in a celebration such as this one will typically employ the texts for the Mass of the day. However, on particular occasions parishes may choose to deviate from these texts. Volume III of the Lectionary provides a selection of readings for various needs and occasions. What is happening in the life of the parish might also inspire readings.

The Readings

The readings are proclaimed by a variety of parish readers and by people other than the prayer leader. As is always the case, there is no need to say 'The first reading' or 'The responsorial psalm, the response is ...' The Gospel is introduced with the following words: 'A reading from the Holy Gospel according to N.'

The Psalm

As always we strive, if we can, to sing the psalm. To this end, we might build up a small repertoire of psalms and use these often, rather than using the psalm of the day. Alternatively, the response might be sung with spoken verses, or all of the psalm might be recited with people reciting the response and a reader reciting the verses.

Gospel Acclamation

All stand for the Gospel Acclamation which is intended to be sung.

Silence

Silence is observed between all the readings in order for people to have time to ponder God's Word. This silence can be developed as time goes on and people get used to it. Any sense of rush should be avoided to the utmost. People will need to be invited to sit for a time of silence after the reading of the Gospel.

Reflection

The prayer leader or other member of the community may read a reflection or commentary on the readings. This is typically done from the ambo. There is a growing body of commentaries available for use. The reflection is based on the scriptures or, where appropriate, on the saint/feast of the day. The group leading this prayer might work with the local clergy in ensuring that any reflections used are suitable and appropriate to those who are gathering for this prayer.

Sung Response

Having pondered God's Word, the people may stand and join in singing a hymn in response to the gift and nourishment of the Word.

Intercessions

There are many resources to draw on for these intercessions, which are introduced by the prayer leader and led by another member of the community. All stand for the intercessions, which can have a sung response.

NOTES ON A CELEBRATION OF THE WORD: HANDOUT

Our Father

The prayer leader invites people to pray the Lord's Prayer.

Concluding prayer

As in the case of the Collect, a set prayer can be put in place for any celebrations of the Word that take place in the parish, or this prayer might take a seasonal tone.

Gesture of Reverence to the Scriptures

As one of the final actions of this time of prayer, parishes might consider inviting those who have gathered to make a gesture of reverence to the scriptures. Depending on circumstance, this might involve one of the readers of the day coming forward at this point and holding the closed Lectionary aloft in the centre of the sanctuary while the prayer leader and the congregation bow to it. Or it might involve all who have gathered coming forward to kiss the Lectionary.

Closing Verse and Dismissal

The prayer closes with the invitation to bless the Lord, after which all respond and make the Sign of the Cross, before concluding with the words of dismissal and response. Again both of these verses can be sung if desired.

Closing Hymn

A well-known hymn can conclude the time of prayer. Again this can be seasonal in nature. Alternatively people may depart in silence.

Set up

Aside from other set-up considerations, before people gather for this prayer, any candles that are usually in place near or on the ambo and altar are lit.

FORMAT OF A CELEBRATION OF THE WORD WITH DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION: HANDOUT

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Opening Hymn 🎵 (🎵 Denotes what can be sung where resources allow) **STAND**

Sign of the Cross and Greeting

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **All:** Amen.

Leader: Let us praise the Lord Jesus Christ, who is present among us and in the Word, who keeps us united in love. Bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. **All:** Blessed be God for ever.

(Words of Introduction)

Penitential Act

Collect

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading **SIT**
Silence

Psalm 🎵

Gospel Acclamation 🎵 **STAND**

Gospel **SIT**
Silence

(Reflection on the Readings)

(Sung Response 🎵) **STAND**

Intercessions 🎵

COMMUNION RITE

Bringing of the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar

The Lord's Prayer 🎵
(Sign of Peace)

Invitation to Communion

Communion (with suitable hymn 🎵)

Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament and silent prayer **SIT/KNEEL**

Prayer after Communion **STAND**

CONCLUDING RITE

Closing Verse with Sign of the Cross 🎵

Leader: The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. **All:** Amen.

Or

Leader: Let us bless the Lord. **All:** Thanks be to God.

Dismissal 🎵

Leader: Go in the peace of Christ

All: Thanks be to God.

(Closing Hymn 🎵)

NOTES ON A CELEBRATION OF THE WORD WITH DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION: HANDOUT

Notes on a Celebration of the Word with Distribution of Holy Communion

See the previous notes for a celebration of the Word in regard to the opening hymn, the collect, the Liturgy of the Word, the sung response, closing verse with Sign of the Cross, dismissal and closing hymn.

Words of Introduction

These words, spoken by the prayer leader, acknowledge from the outset that we are gathering in the absence of an ordained priest and, because of this, we are unable to celebrate the Eucharist.

For example: Once again we gather here to be Church. Christ is present with us, as he promised: present in this assembly of his people, in the proclamation of God's Word, and in the communion of his body and blood.

As an ordained priest cannot be with us we are unable to celebrate the Eucharist. Let us be united in the spirit of Christ with the Church around the world this day, let us reflect on the Word and pray together and then share Christ's body and blood consecrated for us at a previous Eucharist. We look forward to when we can once more gather together to celebrate the Eucharist.

Penitential Act

To help prepare the assembly (the congregation) to enter into this celebration, the prayer leader invites all to pray the Confiteor together, or alternatively to pray one of the other formulae of the Penitential Act found in the *Missal*.

An example of an invitation: Gathered together in Christ, let us ask for forgiveness with confidence, for God is full of gentleness and compassion.

Bringing of the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar

After the Intercessions and as people remain standing, an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion brings the ciborium (the vessel containing the consecrated hosts) from the tabernacle and places the Blessed Sacrament on the altar upon a corporal (a cloth placed on the altar cloth). If more than one ciborium is being placed on the altar, other extraordinary ministers can assist. This is done with simple dignity. After placing the vessels on the altar, a genuflection is made by those who placed the ciborium/ciboria.

When the vessels for Holy Communion are in place, the prayer leader or the minister of Holy Communion who is to lead the Rite of Communion comes to the altar and stands at it, facing the people. Any extraordinary ministers needed for the distribution of Communion take their place near the altar.

The Lord's Prayer

The minister then invites the people to pray the Lord's Prayer. For example, 'With trust in our Father in heaven we pray as Jesus taught us, saying ...'

Invitation to Communion

Having first genuflected, the minister who leads the distribution of Communion takes the host and

NOTES ON A CELEBRATION OF THE WORD WITH DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION: HANDOUT

raises it slightly over the vessel and, facing the people, says: 'Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those who are called to his supper.' To which the people and minister respond as normal. When the minister receives Communion, he/she says quietly, 'May the body of Christ bring me to everlasting life.'

Holy Communion

Having received Holy Communion him/herself, the minister distributes to any other extraordinary ministers, who then proceed to their stations. The singing of a Communion hymn may suitably be sung during this time.

Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Silence

Once all have had the opportunity to receive Holy Communion, time is given for people to offer their prayer to God in silence. During this time any remaining hosts are returned to the tabernacle. Any empty Communion vessels are brought to a side table, and may be reverently purified after the celebration.

Prayer after Communion

The Communion Rite concludes with the Prayer after Communion and is most suitably led by whoever led the Communion Rite itself. If this was the prayer leader then they simply return to their place for this prayer. If it was an extraordinary minister other than the prayer leader, this minister leads the Prayer after Communion from the altar before returning to his/her place among the people.)

The Prayer Follows the Pattern of the Collect

For example: Let us pray (pause).

Lord, we have been fed at this table with the bread of heaven. Give us this food always, that it may strengthen your love in our hearts and inspire us to serve you in our brothers and sisters. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.