

Catholic Relief Services

Prayer Service for World Citizens[†]

Option C

[This extensive prayer service can be used at the beginning or conclusion of a retreat or workshop on Political Responsibility when Campus / Pastoral Ministers want to offer participants an engaging, formative service . It includes music and active participatory rituals for participants. Estimated time for this prayer service is one hour.

Roles and logistical needs are:

- 1) Prayer leader
- 2) Two readers for Scripture Readings and Intecessory Prayers.
- 3) Musician and Song leader
- 4) Table with cloth
- 5) Candle with matches/lighter
- 6) Prayer aid for leader, readers, and song leader
- 7) Bible for Scripture Readings (The readings need to be selected prior to the service)
- 8) Decorative prayer bowl (wood or pottery)
- 9) Catholic Relief Services action/engagement cards (at least one for each participant.
- 10) White pieces of paper (about 2” square); enough for at least one per participant.
- 11) Colored pieces of paper (about 2” square); enough for at least one per participant.
- 12) Music handouts for each participant. (The music needs to be chosen, downloaded and copied prior to the prayer service)

Environment: The table with an appropriate cloth is placed at the center of the group. The Bible, open to the first Scripture reading, Prayer Bowl and candle are placed on the table. The CRS action/engagement cards are placed on each quadrant of the table in a scattered (but neat) pattern.]

Introduction:

Leader: The symbol we use for our prayer is the table. The table represents for us many grace-filled images – the altar table at Mass, tables of banquets and celebrations, our family dining table. But tables also challenge us – around the world many families do not have a table or enough food to eat. People of power gather around tables to make life altering decisions, but many people are not represented at these tables and their voices are excluded. For our prayer this day let us bring to this table the gifts we have received from God, the needs we carry in our heart, openness to hear God’s Word and the courage to live as disciples.

Invitation to Prayer:

Leader: As we gather around this table and light this candle, we raise our voices and prayers to God, who is the source of wisdom, justice and peace.
[pause; invite people to stand; light the candle and begin the service by praying:]

All: Lord God, we praise and glorify you
Hear Our prayers and supplications.

Leader: Open our hearts and minds to your Wisdom and Grace

All: That we may join our hearts with the peoples of all the lands in singing your praise.

[†] Created by W. David Kauffman, MA., Campus Minister, Lexington, VA for Catholic Relief Services.

Opening Song: In The Day of the Lord; [Spirit & Song, #121]
-- or --
Sing of the Lord's Goodness, [Gather Comprehensive, #547]

Opening Prayer:

Leader: Lord God, you created all people in your image and likeness and call us to be one in the Body of Christ, your Son. We pray for the leaders of our nation and all world leaders that they may embrace your wisdom and justice and rule with benevolence and mercy. May we as a nation share the riches of our heritage and natural resources with peoples in need throughout the world and may we live in solidarity with all people as faithful citizens of our world. Bless and strengthen those who work to bring relief to the oppressed and hungry throughout the world. We ask these prayers through your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

[sit]

First Reading: Isaiah 11: 2-6, 9 [The Rule of Immanuel]
-- or --
Isaiah 49: 8-13, 15-16a, 22-23 [Liberation and Restoration]

Response: Psalm 72 [Lord, Every Nation] [Spirit & Song, # 70]
-- or --
Psalm 85 [Lord, Let Us See Your Kindness] [Gather Comp., # 79]

Second Reading: Matthew 25: 31 – 46 [Last Judgment]
-- or --
Luke 10: 25-37 [Greatest Commandment & Parable of Good Samaritan]

Shared Reflection or Period of Silence

[stand]

Shared Activity:

Leader:

1. Participants are invited to take two small slips of paper, one white paper and one colored and a pencil/pen. They are then invited to reflect on a "gift" they have received from God in these or similar words: God graciously gives each of us gifts for the benefit of our community and to help others. God's gifts come in all forms and include things like being a good organizer, leadership qualities, writing, speaking, being a person of patience, being a support to others, being a compassionate person, and so on. As a way of acknowledging and giving God thanks for your gifts, you are invited to write on the white paper one of the gifts that God has given you. [pause]
2. Invite participants to reflect on the needs that they bring to this prayer – these may be personal needs or the need of a loved one or friend. Then invite them to write on the colored paper the need that they want to bring to God.

3. Invite the participants to gather around the table, leaving a space at the table for those whose gifts and needs are often excluded.
4. The leader then invites the people to place in the bowl on the table the white pieces of paper, and then prays:

Leader: I now invite you to place your piece of white paper with your gift in our prayer bowl and join me in prayer [pause]
 Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, through your goodness we have these gifts to offer. You give us these gifts for the benefit of those most in need. May each gift we place in this bowl be blessed by You and may we use all of our gifts for the benefit of others. We ask this in Christ's name.

All: Amen

5. The leader then invites the people to raise their petitions to God in these or similar words:

Leader: Loving God, we place before you our needs and concerns, trusting in your compassion and mercy, and always grateful of your love and grace in our lives.

Reader: Our response is: Lord, Hear our Prayer.

- a. For the Church, that we may be a witness to Christ's love by practicing charity and promoting justice and peace throughout the world, we pray to the Lord . . .
- b. For all citizens of the United States, may our participation in the electoral process lead to a world of greater justice and peace, we pray to the Lord . . .
- c. For those who serve in elected office, may they lead with courage and wisdom, reflecting the Church's teaching that the moral test of our society is how the poor, the weak, and the vulnerable are faring, we pray to the Lord . . .
- d. For the earth, that our nation's leaders will be inspired by God's Spirit to protect all of creation, we pray to the Lord . . .
- e. For leaders around the world, may they find ways to bring an end to war and violence, and promote peace and development of all nations, we pray to the Lord . . .
- f. For those who serve the poor and afflicted, especially staff and volunteers of Catholic Relief Services, may their work and service be a beacon of hope and a source of comfort to your people, we pray to the Lord . . .

6. The leader then invites the people to place in the bowl their needs on the colored paper, and then prays:

Leader: Lord, we gather these prayers and the needs and concerns we have placed in this bowl along with those deep in our heart, and we join our voices with students and peoples around the world as we pray in the words our Savior Jesus taught us . . .

All: Our Father . . .

7. The leader then invites the participants to share with each other a sign of peace. People then re-gather at the table.
8. The leader then reads:
The First Letter of James calls out to us: If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (Jas 2: 15-16)
9. I ask you now to reflect on what you need to take from the table in order to live so that your faith is alive, not dead. As you reflect, I ask you to consider that:
 - a. In our everyday lives we can make choices that help the vulnerable.
 - b. We can join other students who have an ethic of service and a passion for justice, and be voices of justice.
 - c. We can use our voices and votes to shape a more caring community, a more just nation, and a more peaceful world.
 - d. We can support businesses that treat workers fairly.
 - e. We can live more simply so that there might be enough at the table for all.
 - f. We can be proud of what we have done, but we should commit to greater personal involvement in meeting the needs of our sisters and brothers. [pause]
10. [The leader then invites each participant to take from the table a card from Catholic Relief Services that includes a specific way one can live as a disciple]. I now invite each of you to step forward and take a card from our prayer table. On your card is a word of challenge and a quote that guides you to act on its message as a way for you to keep your faith in Christ alive. On the card is a point of contact at Catholic Relief Services that can serve as a conduit for your action. May your good work and the work of all of us in the Body of Christ, advance God’s justice and mercy and uphold the dignity of all God’s people.

Concluding Prayer and Blessing:

Leader: Loving God, you are our source of wisdom and courage and your Holy Spirit gives us power to live as disciples of your Son. May our commitment to serve You through the “least of our brothers and sisters” bring justice and dignity to them and peace to our world. We ask this in Christ’s holy name.

All: Amen

Leader: May the Lord bless us (+), protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

Concluding Song: Christ Be Our Light (Spirit & Song #105) --or—
We Are One Body (Spirit & Song #165) -- or —
Somos el Cuerpo de Cristo/We Are the Body of Christ (Spirit & Song #136)