



Ideas for Liturgists and Prayer Leaders

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYERS AND LITURGIES

One of the most profound ways that we can welcome diverse people into the Church is to include the cultural signs, symbols, music, and languages of immigrants, migrants, refugees, and other ethnic communities into our worship services. Although it is still important and necessary for newcomers and ethnic communities to have opportunities to worship primarily in their own native languages, increased opportunities for multicultural liturgies and prayer services should be encouraged, as these kinds of celebrations increase multicultural understanding and promote unity in our parishes. By interacting with diverse people who make up our parish community, we are strengthened in our “catholicity” and are made more aware that we are one in Christ, who has called us “from every tribe and tongue, people and nation” (Rev 5:9).

Following are suggestions for preparing multicultural liturgies and prayer services, including some “do’s and don’ts” for multicultural services, as well as sample prayers, readings, music, and petitions appropriate for a multicultural setting.

TIPS FOR PLANNING MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Promote the full, conscious, and active participation of all groups in the parish:

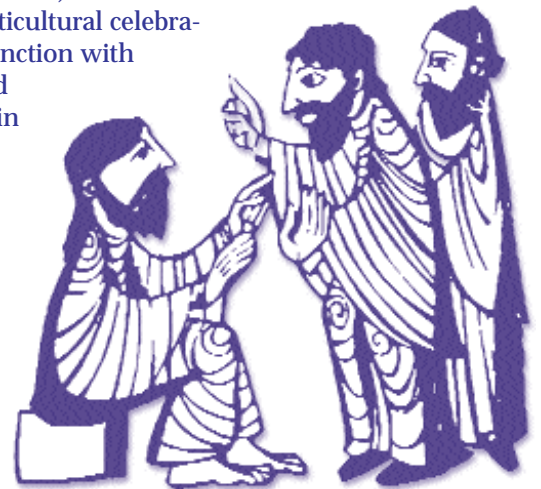
- **DO** help a diverse assembly to find unity in Christ.
- **DON’T** use the celebration to showcase cultural differences.

Unite the congregation through nonverbal elements:

- **DO** communicate the Good News through movement, music, art and other visual elements in the environment, and the spoken word.
- **DON’T** assume that the use of multiple languages in and of itself makes a celebration multicultural.

Celebrate multicultural liturgies as frequently as needed according to the size, resources, and proportion of diverse cultural groups in your parish:

- **DO** celebrate multicultural liturgies frequently in parishes where resources necessitate that each cultural group does not have regular access to services in their own tradition.
- **DON’T** schedule multicultural Masses *in place of* liturgies in the language or cultural tradition of an ethnic group in the parish *if the parish has the resources to do the latter on a regular basis* (i.e., don’t replace the weekly Spanish Mass with a multicultural Mass). It is better to schedule multicultural celebrations in conjunction with feast days and special times in the Church’s year (e.g., Epiphany, parish feast day).



Evaluate and understand your parish setting when planning the liturgy:

- **DO** know from which cultural backgrounds parishioners come; reflect on their assimilation into U.S. culture (How long have they been in this country? Are the majority bilingual?); consult with ethnic group leaders and include them in planning and leadership roles (e.g., liturgy committee); and choose commentators or deacons from the cultural groups who can assist the priest if he is not fluent in all their languages.
- **DON'T** oversimplify the differences between cultural groups by categorically lumping them together (e.g., Chinese are culturally different from Vietnamese, although both are Asian, just as Italians are different from Hungarians, although both are European).

Develop a multicultural spirituality:

- **DO** help people attend to how God is manifesting his presence in a multicultural context, and model an attitude of listening, patience, and sacrifice.
- **DON'T** underestimate the value of sacrifice; although every group will sacrifice something (i.e., full expression in their own language), it is the task of the pastoral team to bring people together and to help them focus on what will be gained from celebrating with other cultural groups in the parish.

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READINGS FOR SPECIAL LITURGIES AND PRAYER SERVICES

The following readings may be helpful in planning for prayer services, Bible study groups, or weekday liturgies when appropriate and permitted.

† **Liturgical Prayers**
Refugees and Exiles *Sacramentary*, pp. 913-914

† **Biblical Selections**
Refugees and Exiles *Lectionary*, no. 866, p. 1043

Old Testament

Dt 10:17-19; Dt 24:17-22; Tb 13:1-5; Ps 121:1-8

New Testament

Rom 12:9-16; Heb 11:13-16; Heb 13:1-3, 14-16;
2 Cor 1:3-4; Lk 10:25-37; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

Welcoming the Stranger: Unity in Diversity

Old Testament

Jer 22:3 “Do not wrong or oppress the resident alien, the orphan, or the widow.”

Lv 19:33-34 “You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt.”

Zec 7:9-10 “Render true judgment, and show kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the alien or the poor; do not plot evil against one another in your hearts.”

Is 66:18, 20 “I come to gather nations of every language; they shall come and see my glory. They shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the Lord.”

New Testament

Gal 3:28 There are no distinctions. “You are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Phil 2:1-11 (Plea for unity and humility); be a servant like Christ.

Eph 2:19-22 “You are no longer strangers and sojourners.”

Col 3:11-12 There are no distinctions between people; “but Christ is all and in all.”

Rom 15:7 “Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God.”

Mt 25:35 “I was . . . a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Lk 10:27 “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

Jn 13:34 “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.”

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

From OCP Publications
5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213
www.ocp.org

“In Christ There Is No East or West” by John Oxenham
“One Spirit, One Church” by Kevin Keil
“Pan de Vida” by Bob Hurd
“Service” by Buddy Ceaser (NARL)
“They’ll Know We Are Christians” by Peter Scholtes

Misa Del Mundo by Jesse Manibusan
Misa del Mundo is a multilingual liturgy containing lyrics in Spanish, English, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Chinese, Portuguese, Polish, Tongan, Chamoru, and Tagalog. The first half of this recording is a setting for a multicultural, multilingual Mass; the second half is a guide to pronunciation for that setting.

Somos El Cuerpo De Cristo—We Are the Body of Christ by Bob Hurd and Jaime Cortez
Somos El Cuerpo De Cristo is a complete bilingual liturgy (English/Spanish). Whether you’re in an all-English, all-Spanish, or mixed parish community, these songs can be easily adapted to suit your particular needs. They are easy to sing and will bring a special life and joy to your liturgical celebration.

From GIA Publications
7404 South Mason Avenue, Chicago, IL 60638
www.giamusic.com

“E Na Lima Hana” by David Haas and Joe Camacho
“We Are Many Parts” by Marty Haugen
“Weave One Heart” by Marty Haugen
“Diverse in Culture, Race and Nation” by Ruth Duck
“We Are Called” by David Haas
“Song of the Body of Christ” by David Haas
“Let There Be Peace On Earth”
by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson



SAMPLE INTERCESSIONS

The following intercessions may all be used together for a special liturgy, or particular intercessions may be chosen for use throughout the liturgical year.

- For migrants, refugees, and strangers in our midst, that they may find hope in our concern for justice and feel the warmth of our love, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our public officials, that they may find ways to treat immigrants and refugees with justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our community, gathered here today to celebrate our unity under the Lord and his mother, Mary, that we may come to greater understanding and acceptance of our differences, let us pray to the Lord.
- For migrant workers, immigrants, refugees, and all newcomers, that they may be welcomed in our parish, let us pray to the Lord.
- For all those who are overwhelmed by loneliness, poverty, and despair, that they may be comforted through our help and kindness, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those in special need, that the Lord in his divine mercy may heal the sick, comfort the dying, and keep travelers safe, let us pray to the Lord.

SAMPLE RESPONSES

Lord, unite us in our diversity.

or

Oh God, hear our prayer.

English

Deus, exaudi nos

Latin

Tuhan dengar doa kami

Indonesian

O Dios, escucha nuestra oración

Spanish

Le Alli e faafofoga mai

Samoan

Shu yo, watachi-tachi no inori

o kiki-irete kudasi

Japanese

Obong kop akam nyin

Ibibio/Efik

Twa Kuomba utusikie

Swahili

Xin Chua lang nghe loi cau nguyen

cua chung con

Vietnamese

O, Doamne asculta ruga noastra

Romanian

PRAYER SERVICE

“You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt.” (Lv 19:33-34)

HYMN:

Add a suitable hymn, using suggestions from the preceding section.

SCRIPTURAL READING:

Choose a scriptural passage from the preceding section (such as stories of Exodus, of the Holy Family in Bethlehem, or of their flight to Egypt).

An Alien’s Prayer

Leader:

I wear the mark of your disapproval
and your often unspoken words
pierce straight to my soul,
“Why didn’t you stay where you belong?”

I feel the icy stare that says,
“Keep your distance, you foreigner,
with your different-colored skin
and your strange-sounding speech,
with your culture, food, religion, and clothing
that are inferior to my own.”
I’m an immigrant, a wetback, an alien,
an outsider operating a sweatshop sewing machine;
cheap labor, unwanted or dirty jobs
are mine for the taking;
I’m one of the countless invisible ones
who puts fresh vegetables on your plate
or stitches the fashion dresses and shirts
that you buy in your stylish stores.

As Moses of old once said,
“Remember, you were once aliens
in the land of Egypt,”
remember that your grandfathers and grandmothers
were immigrant unwantededs,
were exploited cheap labor,
second-class citizens,
uneducated and poor,
used and abused,
ignored or looked down upon
for their foreign religion, speech, and food.

The White House
first house of this great land,
says it well:
White is this land of promise;
no room for other colors or creeds.
Someday we’ll paint the first house
in rainbow colors—
someday, not long from now.

All:

Dear God, help us to remember
that when we speak of immigrants and refugees,
we speak of Christ.
In the One who had no place to lay his head,
and in the least of his brothers and sisters,
you come to us again, a stranger seeking refuge.
We confess that we often turn away.

REFLECTION:

The prayer leader or another designate may wish to provide a guided reflection or instruction on “An Alien’s Prayer” and the chosen scriptural reading (help can be found in the enclosed *Suggestions for Homilists*) or the leader may wish to engage the participants in a guided group discussion on the prayer and reading.

INTERCESSIONS:

The prayer leader may wish to incorporate intercessions from the preceding section or to ask the participants to offer spontaneous prayers for their intentions.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Our God, you have given us in your word
the stories of persons who needed to leave
their homelands—Abraham, Sarah, Ruth, Moses.
You have chosen that the life of Jesus be filled with
events of unplanned travel and flight from enemies.
You have shown us through the modeling of Jesus
how we are called to relate to persons from
different nations and cultures.

You have called us to be teachers of your word.
We ask you, our God, to open our minds and hearts
to the challenge and invitation to model
your perfect example of love. Amen.

“An Alien’s Prayer” by Edward Hays is reprinted with permission from *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim*, copyright © 1989, Forest of Peace Publishing, 251 Muncie Rd., Leavenworth, KS 66048.