

About This Section

PART TWO • Prayer and Ritual

Prayer and ritual are at the heart of our faith and liturgical celebration. This program provides rich experiences of ritual and prayer using primary symbols and ritual actions in order to prepare young people for their role as full, active, conscious participants in the liturgy.

This section of the manual includes:

● Tips for Presiders

- Share the article “Tips for Presiders” with the pastor and pastoral staff. Use the reflection questions at the end of the article as a way of using the article for staff development.
- Use this article to help improve your own style of presiding at prayer.
- Share this article with catechists. (See “Catechist Training and Formation” in part five of this manual.)

● Opening Rituals for Large Groups

- Use opening rituals for a large group if your program model includes families during the preparation.

These rituals will take place as the opening for each session. They were written and intended for intergenerational groups. (See “Parent and Child Sessions” in part four of this manual.)

—Use opening rituals at regular parish family gatherings during the year.

—Use opening rituals for a large group if you want to combine several groups of children and young people only for the celebration of the opening ritual, and then have them go back with their catechist to complete the session with their smaller group.

● Additional Prayer Celebrations

Two additional prayer celebrations “Forgiveness Prayer for a Children’s Group” and “Forgiveness Prayer for Families” are included in this section. These prayer celebrations can be used as a culmination to the sacrament preparation time or may be used anytime during the preparation period.

Large Group Ritual

*Jesus, Light of the World***In advance:**

- Prepare the space for the size of your group to gather. You may be celebrating this ritual in the church or another space conducive to prayer. Make sure there is a good sound system and people will be able to see and hear during the ritual celebration.
- Prepare the parents, catechists, and assembly for the ritual action. (See below.)
- Meet with the presider. (See “Tips for Presiders” in this part of the manual.)
- Provide the reader the Scripture reading. The reader will need time to prepare the reading.

You will need:

- *Reconciliation* music CD or arrange for a musician to lead the music for the ritual
- Bible, Lectionary, or Book of the Gospels
- Easter candle, or large white candle, and taper
- Several votive candles in glass holders

Gathering

Welcome the assembly and invite them to become aware of God’s presence with and among them. Play instrumental music or an appropriate hymn.

LEADER: Let us begin by praying the Sign of the Cross to remind us of our baptism.

ALL: *Make the sign of the cross, saying,*
In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

LEADER: God of goodness and mercy,
you send us the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Open our minds and hearts to the Holy Spirit,
who is our teacher and helper.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

Scripture Reading

LEADER: Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us listen to the word of God as we sign our forehead, lips, and heart with the sign of the cross.

READER: A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

ALL: *Reverently make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and over their heart and then say, Glory to you, Lord.*

READER: *Proclaim Luke 10:29–37. Conclude the reading, saying,*
The gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Ritual: Candle Lighting

LEADER: *Light the Easter candle, saying,*
Jesus is the Light of the World.
Remind the assembly that Jesus called us to be lights in our world. Ask the assembly to name things that the Holy Spirit can help them do to be lights in the world. For example, “Be kind to others,” “Listen attentively to parents and others,” and so on. After each statement have the assembly respond,

ALL: Jesus, Light of the World, help us to be lights in the world.

LEADER: *As each response is made, have a catechist or parent light a votive candle from the Easter candle, using a taper. Votive candles can be placed around the prayer area or presented to families.*

Closing Prayer

LEADER: God of goodness and mercy,
thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Send us the Holy Spirit
to help us to live as lights in the world.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

Conclude the celebration with the same hymn from the ritual gathering or another appropriate song.