

***Liturgy Planning
Suggestions***

Liturgy Planning

The planning group usually consists of two members and the priest. The major task when you start planning a liturgy is to decide on a theme. The theme will be the focus of the response to the lectionary readings, or alternative scripture readings may be used occasionally. The theme will guide the selection of the other prayers such as the Gathering Prayer and the Penitential Rite, and the music. Songs can be selected from our songbook. When the music group is very small, tapes or CD's may provide an alternative with suitable lyrics or instrumental music. Once you decide on a theme, the rest of the planning can be as simple or as complex as you like.

Ideas for Generating a Theme

Always, read the lectionary readings first. A theme you are comfortable with may immediately be obvious. It might be the usual point of the gospel. It might be a line or thought you never noticed before, or one that resonates with the current state of the world or with your own life. It could be a word, or two words ("peace," "simple peace," "joyful peace," "trust as peace," etc.)

Read *Celebration*, a weekly publication written for homilists. You can use the internet for ideas. You can search by typing in the reading (e.g., "Luke 12:34-42") or go to a website that includes homilies or commentaries.

Ideas for the Response to the Readings

The goal is to help participants at the liturgy break open the Word together and thus increase our understanding of the scriptures. The participants have an opportunity to use personal faith or life experience by reflecting on the scripture and relating it to their own times or their own lives. This can help keep the message about sharing rather than exhorting. Possible formats include:

Ask a question for the participants to reflect on and share their answers. When the sharing begins, it is more effective if the planners begin the sharing. This gives time for the congregants to think about the question, and helps guide the answers.

- Write out question(s) for people to discuss in small groups.
- Our presiders can be very creative; sometimes they may want to give their own homily or provide the planners with other suggestions.
- Silence.
- Meditation with tapes or CD's.
- Print out copies of the readings for participants to read themselves, meditate, and respond to, if desired.
- Present the reading as a play by having different people read different parts.
- Have people write thoughts to be read aloud by the leader, or taken home with which to reflect further.
- Ideas for questions:
 - Whom do you relate to or identify with in the Gospel?
 - Why did Jesus respond to (Peter, the rich man, Martha, etc.) as he did?
 - How would Jesus have responded?
 - Assign roles from the Gospel (e.g., Mary and Martha) and ask for reactions from that point of view,
 - How does the Gospel apply to you?
 - Who is (Pilate, John, Mary of Magdala, etc.) for us today?
 - Who/what do you think your (vocation, stranger, friend, temptation, manna, etc.) is?
 - Why do we find (this message, etc.) so difficult?
 - How am I called to (respond, etc.)?

Websites

These websites vary in their quality but are all of interest and most have links to other websites. There are a huge number of sites that deal with Catholic, Christian, or other religious content. There are many websites that have general or official-sounding names, but turn out to be personal writings. Some of the sites have narrow interpretations but excellent search tools. In short, use websites with a critical eye, but they are a very rich source of materials.

Website address and description

2004 Andrew Greeley Homilies

<http://www.agreeley.com/homilies.html>

Brings you his homilies from Nov. 1995 on, and a whole lot more. However, for each Sunday there is a "Background" section that describes Fr. Greeley's take on the meaning of the gospel which can be useful. He then has a "Story" to illustrate a point he wishes to emphasize.

Bible Revised Standard Version

<http://www.hti.umich.edu/r/rsv/citation.html>

To look up any verse or chapter or book of the Bible in the RSV (United Church of Christ.) Can also do word and phrase searches. No commentary, just the biblical text.

Blue Letter Bible

<http://blueletterbible.org/search.html#verse>

A conservative but very useful search tool with scholarly information. Primarily uses the King James Version. Can plug in exact verse you want to search for if desired. Also can search by word or phrases. Only Catholic translation is the Vulgate (in Latin) but is a place to compare and contrast difficult passages.

From Where I Stand

www.nationalcatholicreporter.org/fwis/archives

Joan Chittister's weekly column about a current event from her Catholic point of view.

Lectionary Resources for Catholics

www.word-sunday.com

This site is written by a director of religious education and contains the translations of the lectionary by the author with explanations of terms. Indexed by Sunday, Cycle, Biblical text. Has his idea for a homily. Very good help for the first reading of the text. Free for copying.

LiturgyHelp.com

<http://www.liturgyhelp.com/lithelp/index.htm>

"LiturgyHelp is a comprehensive range of liturgical and integrate liturgy into their diverse ministries." Cost is \$120 for a single user, for us the \$350 subscription would be adequate. Catholic source, many resources, homilies, etc.

The Catholic Bible Study Outlines

www.icubed.com

A personal collection of outlines by "Robin" which describes the text of Matthew, Luke and John. Gives a quick overview of chapters and is useful to get some context of a gospel reading. Some verse explanations.