

CATHOLIC PRAYER SERVICE OUTLINE

Here is a basic outline for prayer services based loosely on the [Catholic Mass](#) that you can use in class or in larger groups of students and educators:

1. Sign of the Cross
2. Opening Prayer
3. Scripture Reading
4. Meditation/Reflection Questions/Homily
5. Prayers of Petition
6. Contemplative Prayer Experience
7. Closing Prayer
8. Sign of the Cross

CATHOLIC PRAYER SERVICE FORMAT EXPLAINED

Let's explain each part of this format for a prayer service in a little more detail:

SIGN OF THE CROSS

This helps remind the students that they are initiating a prayerful experience that is different from the rest of the class. It invokes the Blessed Trinity's presence especially during this prayer time.

OPENING PRAYER

You can compose the opening or closing prayers yourself or find traditional prayers to adapt and use in class.

Popular prayers such as the Prayer of St. Francis or St. Ignatius's prayer for generosity, for example, work well at the opening and closing of the service.

The key is to make sure the prayers align with the focus of the lesson and the prayer service.

SCRIPTURE READING

What excerpt from the Bible would fit best for the topic of your prayer service?

If nothing comes to mind, search online or use a Bible concordance with a list of words to browse through to discover an appropriate reading. Try to find something that takes only 1-2 minutes to read.

MEDITATION OR REFLECTION QUESTIONS

After the reading, have the students reflect on what they have heard.

Give them some questions to help make personal connections to the topic of the prayer service through the lens of the Scripture verse they heard. Essentially, we want the students to think about what God is saying to them through this reading and through this prayer experience.

In many ways, this is what a good homily can do during Mass so feel free to offer a brief reflection for the students to help them make those personal connections.

PRAYERS OF PETITION

During Mass after the homily, we stand and pray together the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful). This series of petitions includes a prayer to God and a response from everyone usually with the words “Lord, hear our prayer.”

You can compose your own petitions or have the students do it in preparation for the prayer service. [Composing prayers like this is a great group activity](#) for students to work on together.

According to the [USCCB website and the Roman Missal](#), in the Universal Prayer we pray a series of petitions for:

- our Church
- our country and political leaders
- those experiencing difficulty
- our local community

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER EXPERIENCE

In addition to a guided meditation and petitions tailored to the lesson, the prayer service can include a meaningful opportunity for contemplative prayer.

This may mean silent reflection on something from the reading. It can be silent time before the Eucharist. It can be silent prayer before a holy image or icon.

Nothing needs to be said or done other than to focus on the Lord and allow the students to meet him in some unique way.

CLOSING PRAYER

Wrap up the prayer service with another appropriate prayer or simply end together in the Lord's Prayer and maybe even the Sign of Peace.

Read more about integrating prayer into the classroom in [Christ in the Classroom](#).