



CENTER FOR LEARNING
A DIVISION OF OCP

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS EDITION:
THIRD QUARTER

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**THE
LITURGY
FORECAST**



**CENTER FOR
LEARNING**
A DIVISION OF OCP

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PREPARATION CONSIDERATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consult the documents, and the Ordo is your best friend. Use them!
2. Plan with a “seasonal” mindset.
3. Meet early and regularly with liturgical and catechetical ministry leaders to coordinate a seamless plan for your parish from the outset.
4. Engage your entire staff to assist in preparing the season.
5. Less is more, repetition is good, and don’t neglect silence.
6. Incorporate the senses.
7. Think beyond Mass – prayer services, Stations of the Cross, Rite of Penance, etc.
8. Don’t miss the opportunity for liturgical formation and catechesis.
9. Help families extend liturgical celebration and ritual into their homes.
10. Help teachers extend liturgical celebration and ritual into their classes.
11. Look at the entire calendar, plan backwards, and budget time carefully.
12. Do your best and ask for help.

RESOURCES

Your parish, school chapel, or campus ministry office should have the following resources:

[*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*](#)

[*Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar*](#)

[*Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship*](#)

Helpful links

[Liturgy.com planning resource](#)

[“Today’s Liturgy” music planner](#)

[Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions seasonal planning guides](#)

SEASON CALENDAR

OVERVIEW

The following general calendar includes each day in the Ordinary Time I and Lenten seasons. Each date is linked to the Lectionary readings for that day's Mass. **We are in Year B of the Sunday Lectionary and Cycle II of the Weekday Lectionary.** You can find the lectionary readings for the entire liturgical year on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website: bible.usccb.org.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12/31 Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph	January/1 <u>Solemnity of the Bl. Virgin Mary, Mother of God</u>	1/2 Memorial of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen	1/3 Christmas Weekday	1/4 Memorial of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton	1/5 Memorial of Saint John Neumann	1/6 Christmas Weekday
1/7 Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord	1/8 <i>Feast of the Baptism of the Lord</i>	1/9 Tuesday of the First Week in Ordinary Time	1/10 Wednesday of the First Week in Ordinary Time	1/11 Thursday of the First Week in Ordinary Time	1/12 Friday of the First Week in Ordinary Time	1/13 Saturday of the First Week in Ordinary Time
1/14 Second Sunday in Ordinary Time	1/15 Monday of the Second Week in Ordinary Time	1/16 Tuesday of the Second Week in Ordinary Time	1/17 Memorial of Saint Anthony	1/18 Thursday of the Second Week in Ordinary Time	1/19 Friday of the Second Week in Ordinary Time	1/20 Saturday of the Second Week in Ordinary Time
1/21 Third Sunday in Ordinary Time	1/22 Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children	1/23 Wednesday of the Third Week in Ordinary Time	1/24 Memorial of Saint Francis de Sales	1/25 <i>Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul</i>	1/26 Memorial of Saints Timothy and Titus	1/27 Saturday of the Third Week in Ordinary Time
1/28 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	1/29 Monday of the Fourth Week in Ordinary Time	1/30 Tuesday of the Fourth Week in Ordinary Time	1/31 Memorial of Saint John Bosco	February/1 Thursday of the Fourth Week in Ordinary Time	2/2 <i>Feast of the Presentation of the Lord</i>	2/3 Saturday of the Fourth Week in Ordinary Time
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2024						
2/4 Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	2/5 Memorial of Saint Agatha	2/6 Memorial of Saint Paul Miki and Companions	2/7 Wednesday of the Fifth Week in Ordinary Time	2/8 Thursday of the Fifth Week in Ordinary Time	2/9 Friday of the Fifth Week in Ordinary Time	2/10 Memorial of Saint Scholastica
2/11 Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time	2/12 Monday of the Sixth Week in Ordinary Time	2/13 Tuesday of the Sixth Week in Ordinary Time	2/14 Ash Wednesday	2/15 Thursday after Ash Wednesday	2/16 Friday after Ash Wednesday	2/17 Saturday after Ash Wednesday
2/18 First Sunday of Lent	2/19 Monday of the First Week of Lent	2/20 Tuesday of the First Week of Lent	2/21 Wednesday of the First Week of Lent	2/22 <i>Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter</i>	2/23 Friday of the First Week of Lent	2/24 Saturday of the First Week of Lent
2/25 Second Sunday of Lent	2/26 Monday of the Second Week of Lent	2/27 Tuesday of the Second Week of Lent	2/28 Wednesday of the Second Week of Lent	2/29 Thursday of the Second Week of Lent	March/1 Friday of the Second Week of Lent	3/2 Saturday of the Second Week of Lent

3/3 Third Sunday of Lent	3/4 Monday of the Third Week of Lent	3/5 Tuesday of the Third Week of Lent	3/6 Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent	3/7 Thursday of the Third Week of Lent	3/8 Friday of the Third Week of Lent	3/9 Saturday of the Third Week of Lent
3/10 Fourth Sunday of Lent	3/11 Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent	3/12 Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent	3/13 Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Lent	3/14 Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent	3/15 Friday of the Fourth Week of Lent	3/16 Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent
3/17 Fifth Sunday of Lent	3/18 Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent	3/19 <u>Solemnity of Saint Joseph</u>	3/20 Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Lent	3/21 Thursday of the Fifth Week of Lent	3/22 Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent	3/23 Saturday of the Fifth Week of Lent
3/24 Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord	3/25 Monday of Holy Week	3/26 Tuesday of Holy Week	3/27 Wednesday of Holy Week	3/28 [Chrism Mass] Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper	3/29 Friday of the Passion of the Lord	3/30 Easter Vigil

Bold = Sunday underlined = Solemnity *Italicized* = Feast

OTHER DAYS OF PRAYER and OBSERVANCES

- 1.18–1.24 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 1.24 Sunday of the Word of God
- 1.28–2.3 Catholic Schools Week
- 2.2 World Day for Consecrated Life
- 2.7–2.14 National Marriage Week and World Marriage Day
- 2.8 World Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking
- 2.11 World Day of the Sick

Note that this calendar and list does not include all Optional Memorials, local or national civic holidays, or other observances or commemorations.

Spiritual formation

Intentional preparation: Spirituality in Lent

By Rawn Harbor

In the ever-unfolding richness of the liturgical year, the Church offers a period of intentional preparation for the faithful to celebrate Christ's Paschal Mystery: The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. The season of Lent is a six-and-a-half-week prescribed retreat for the whole Church. Within this season we engage in prayer experiences, often see an increase in confessions, and welcome the reprised significance of the three pillars of the season: fasting, almsgiving, and prayer. God's Spirit, manifested and experienced in all creation, guides the activities throughout this season of intention and ushers the Church toward the celebrations of Holy Week and Easter.

An important function of the Lenten period is that it is "ordered to preparing for the celebration of Easter, since the Lenten liturgy prepares for celebration of the Paschal Mystery by both catechumens through the various stages of Christian initiation, and the faithful, who recall their own baptism and do penance" (Universal Norm 27).

We hear from the Book of Wisdom in the entrance antiphon of Ash Wednesday (Wisdom 11:24, 25, 27). This sacred Scripture opens the celebration and fosters the unity of those gathered and introduces their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical time (GIRM 47). These verses brim with compassion from the Lord of Love and counsel hearers to remember that untidy spiritual entanglements, and the sins they have produced, don't matter to our caring Creator: God loves us, God does not hate us. God implores us to return with humble hearts. It is the Spirit (the Ruah, the Pneuma) that breathes new life through penance, confession, and our spiritual convictions. Our humble response to the antiphon text: "Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned."

As we receive the symbolic sign of ashes on Ash Wednesday, we participate in a ritual act that predates Jesus and unites us with our revered ancestors: Esther, Samuel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Each wore ashes as a sign of their penitence. Today we embrace this symbolic act and cling to its purpose until the beginning of Mass on Holy Thursday. It is an outward sign of an inner resolve to pray—for others and for self. We want to cleanse ourselves and this act of confession of our sinfulness mediates a *Balm in Gilead [that heals] the sin-sick soul*.

Though we hear Matthew's Gospel on Ash Wednesday, it is Mark's Gospel that is designated for our meditation during Year B. Dominican Sister Barbara Reid tells us one of the salient features of Mark's Gospel is the emphasis on suffering. She says, Jesus seems to

die without comfort, totally abandoned, as he calls out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” (Psalms 22:2). We are immediately drawn to his humanity.

The introduction to Mark’s Gospel on the USCCB website (<http://www.usccb.org/bible/mark/0>) reminds us that Jesus experienced hunger (11:12), expressed pity (1:44), anger (3:5), triumph (4:40) and sadness (14:33–34). He is truly human, yet divine.

“For when the fullness of time arrived (Galatians 4:4), the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us in His fullness of graces and truth (John 1:14). Christ established the kingdom of God on earth, manifested his Father and himself by deeds and words, and completed his work by his death, resurrection and glorious Ascension and by the sending of the Holy Spirit” (Dei Verbum 17).

The Word [who was] made flesh and dwelt among us is the one whom we seek to witness to the world. During our Lenten sacrifices of praying, fasting, and almsgiving, we espouse an adherence to the words and deeds of Jesus the Christ. We identify with his humanness. The pain we know he suffered on our behalf gives added weight to our Lenten journey. Think again about what you will give up and the uncomfortable truth it causes when habitual cravings demands attention.

Think, if you will, of Catholic spirituality as the central core of an awareness of God. An awakened spirituality revives and refreshes our relationship with the Almighty. The sacraments of baptism and confirmation frame our continuous quest for a fruitful life in Christ. Life-giving water has bathed us; the oil of gladness poured over our heads; the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ nourishes our souls. The Church offers ritual avenues of grace that strengthen our bond with God. The Ruah, the Pneuma, the Holy Spirit, the very breath of God sustains this bond.

The Eucharist is the “source and summit of Christian life” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1324) from which we gain wisdom (Pneuma), inspiration, nurture, encouragement, community, and belief. We receive bread and wine confectioned by the priest in the celebration into what we truly believe is the Body and Blood of Christ. We experience love and love others in return. We are disciplined by the Church’s teachings and transformed through our participation in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. God’s Spirit (Pneuma) and the Church’s ministry act in concert to encourage deeper spiritual meaning in our lives.

Prayer

Do you need to speak frankly, deeply, and pleadingly, but can’t bring yourself to speak to God in said manner during this penitential season? Pray with the psalms. They contain within their poetry the capacity to express: petition, praise, repentance, thanksgiving, supplication, anxiety, or even anger. They function as a reminder of what God has done in the past and surely (for the faithful) will do again. The Book of Psalms is a brimming resource that nurtures the soul.

Meditating with these two verses of the beautifully realized poetry of Bernadette Farrell, allow Psalm 139 to come to your aid when inclined to thoughts of abandonment and a weakened resolve. God is always there. *“O God, you search me and you know me. All my thoughts lie open to your gaze. When I walk or lie down you are before me: Ever the maker and keeper of my days. Before a word is on our tongue, Lord, You have known its meaning through and through. You are with me beyond my understanding: God of my present, my past and future, too.”*

Fasting

A message from the sixth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel: “Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them...when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret... When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrite... anoint your head and wash your face.”

Discontinuing the use of cell phones on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are yet other suggestions for keeping the Lenten fast. Will those actions help us to relate to Christ’s suffering? Remember: fasting is an ancient way of preparing for the Eucharist—the truest of foods. We turn our prayer and charity concerns away from ourselves and toward the other.

Almsgiving

The “surprise guest” on the April 25, 2017 TED talk was none other than Pope Francis. He makes a plea for almsgiving; one of an adjusted view of the corporal works of mercy. He said, “The future is made of you, it is made of encounters, because life flows through our relations with others.” He “lends an ear” to the migrants, to prison inmates, and those searching for jobs. Lastly, he says, “[The future is, most of all, in the hands of those people who recognize the others as a ‘you’ and themselves as part of an ‘us’.” Pope Francis calls for “A revolution of tenderness... It is the love that comes close and becomes real” (tinyurl.com/TED-Pope-Francis).

Since Christ accomplished his work of human redemption and the perfect glorification of God principally through the Paschal Mystery, in which by dying he has destroyed our death, and by rising restored our life, the sacred Paschal Triduum of the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord shines forth as the high point of the entire liturgical year (Universal Norm 18).

We are ready.

reflection questions

Read the articles “Intentional Preparation: Spirituality in Lent” by Rawn Harbor. Then, consider the questions below. Use them for individual self-reflection, or use them to guide group reflection with members of your staff, school board, committees, etc.

- 1. Rawn frames the season through the lenses of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. What are you already doing well? How can you build upon what you’re currently doing to do even better?**
- 2. As a school which Lenten practice do you feel the need to prioritize, address, or improve? How about in your classroom? Why did you identify this as an area needing improvement?**
- 3. Imagine you can focus on the practice identified above. How would your school or classroom experience of Lent be different? How would your experience of Easter be different?**
- 4. When and how will you make these changes? Who needs to be involved? What support, materials, or assistance will be needed?**

The Center for Learning is here to help! A ministry coach can help you achieve your goals, providing individualized support and accompaniment based upon your needs. Schedule a FREE coaching conversation today to see how we can help you, your school, and your ministry. Find us at www.learnwithocp.org/book-a-meeting.

Seasonal bulletin

Ordinary Time I

“Besides the times of the year that have their own distinctive character, there remain in the yearly cycle thirty-three or thirty-four weeks in which no particular aspect of the mystery of Christ is celebrated, but rather the mystery of Christ itself is honored in its fullness, especially on Sundays. This period is known as Ordinary Time” (*Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar*, 43).

The first period of Ordinary Time begins the Monday after the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (Sunday after January 6). This year, this date – January 8, 2024 – is the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Ordinary Time I concludes after Tuesday, February 13, 2024. In this year there are six weeks of Ordinary Time between the conclusion of the Christmas season and the beginning of Lent.

Lent

Lent is ordered to preparing for the celebration of Easter, since the Lenten liturgy prepares for celebration of the Paschal Mystery both catechumens, by the various stages of Christian Initiation, and the faithful, who recall their own Baptism and do penance (*Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year* 27).

The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday (February 14, 2024) and continues up to the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday (March 28, 2024). Begin your preparations by reading the season’s Scriptures in the Lectionary and its prayers in the Roman Missal.

To help us prepare, listen more intently, and embrace more fully a spirit of repentance, the liturgies of Lent are distinct in the following ways:

- The “Alleluia” is not sung or recited from Ash Wednesday until the Easter Vigil.
- The “Glory to God” is not sung or recited on Sundays or weekdays, except for Solemnities (Saint Joseph and The Annunciation) and The Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper (Holy Thursday).
- We use violet or purple, seen most clearly in the presider’s vestments, to reflect the penitential nature of the season.
- Decorations in the Church or prayer space during the season of Lent should be simple.
- Music should reflect the more somber mood of Lent, providing a contrast with the festive music of the Easter season that will follow.

Ash Wednesday (*February 14, 2024*)

Ash Wednesday is one of the most significant days on the entire liturgical calendar and is recognized everywhere as a day of fasting. If your school Mass is normally scheduled on a

different day of the week (i.e., Thursday), your school community should gather for Mass also (or instead) on Ash Wednesday.

- ❑ The rubrics for Ash Wednesday indicate that the ashes used today “are made from the olive branches or branches of other trees that were blessed the previous year.” Invite people to bring their old palm branches before Ash Wednesday, and get older students involved in burning the branches and sifting the ashes.
- ❑ On Ash Wednesday there is no Penitential Act (i.e., *Kyrie* or *Confiteor*.)
- ❑ There is both a First and Second Reading in addition to the Responsorial Psalm and Gospel. As a result, you may need to plan for an additional reader.
- ❑ The Blessing and Distribution of Ashes at Mass takes place after the homily concludes and before the Universal Prayer. The text for the Blessing and the instructions for the Distribution are included in the Roman Missal. Depending on your needs, assistance from additional ministers may be required during the Distribution of Ashes.
- ❑ The blessing and distribution of ashes may also take place at a celebration of the Liturgy of the Word. The order for an Ash Wednesday Liturgy of the Word is in the *Book of Blessings*, and this may be led by a deacon or lay minister. Since the blessing of ashes is reserved to a priest or deacon, a Liturgy of the Word led by a lay minister would include the distribution of previously blessed ashes.

Masses on a weekday in Lent

The celebration of Lenten weekdays takes precedence over any Optional or Obligatory Memorials. If an important Memorial for your school or parish community falls on a Lenten weekday (like the Memorial of Saint Polycarp on Friday, February 23), check with your presider, liturgist, and or sacristan to discuss your options.

Feast of the Chair of Saint Peter (*February 22, 2024*) and the Solemnity of Saint Joseph (*March 19, 2024*)

Because it is a Feast, consider celebrating the Chair of Saint Peter in a special way. Because it is a Solemnity, the celebration of Saint Joseph should be celebrated by your school community (move your school Mass to this day or schedule an additional Mass).

- ❑ For Feasts and Solemnities, we sing (or recite) the “Glory to God” during the Introductory Rite, even though it is Lent.
- ❑ For Solemnities there is both a First and Second Reading in addition to the Responsorial Psalm and Gospel. As a result, you may need to plan for an additional reader.
- ❑ Though they are special celebrations and there is the added festivity of a Gloria, we still use the Lenten Gospel Acclamation on Feasts and Solemnities during Lent. There are still no “Alleluias”!

Mass on a weekday during Holy Week (*April 3-5, 2024*)

If your school celebrates Mass on a weekday during Holy Week, remember that these liturgies should be generous in their simplicity and use of silence. Typically, March 25 is celebrated as the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord. However, Holy Week takes precedence, and our observance of The Annunciation is moved to Monday, April 7 (so plan ahead!).

Mass on a weekday during the Octave of Easter (*April 1-5, 2024*)

Though this planning guide does not address the Season of Easter, don't forget the following points as you plan your school Mass during the first week of Easter. This week is called the "Octave of Easter," when the Church prolongs the celebration of Easter Sunday for eight days. We do the same for the eight days following Christmas (known as the "Octave of Christmas").

- ❑ We sing (or recite) the "Glory to God" at each Mass of the Octave of Easter. No matter what day your school Mass takes place during this week, you'll need to prepare a Gloria.
- ❑ Despite the added festivity, there is no Second Reading at these weekday Masses (just like a regular weekday Mass).
- ❑ Don't forget to switch the Gospel Acclamation ("Alleluia!") and Mass acclamations (Mass Setting) to mark the change in liturgical season.

Music suggestions

See the "Music for the Season of Lent" section of this document.

School Mass Planner

Celebration: _____	Date: _____
Priest celebrant(s): _____	Assisting deacon: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Altar server(s): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Incense: <input type="checkbox"/> No

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Gathering Hymn: _____

Penitential Act: _____

[Glory to God:] _____

Processional cross carried by: _____

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: _____

Responsorial Psalm: _____

[Second Reading:] _____

Gospel Acclamation: _____

Gospel: _____

Universal Prayer: _____

Read by: _____

Sung/Read by: _____

Read by: _____

Sung/Read by: _____

Proclaimed by priest
 Proclaimed by deacon

Read by: _____

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation Hymn: _____

Eucharistic Acclamations: _____

Communion Hymn: _____

Gift bearers: _____

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion: _____

CONCLUDING RITE

Sending Hymn: _____

CHECKLIST	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication with presider (and homilist)	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice with readers
	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication with sacristan	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice with gift bearers
	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication with accompanist/musician(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice with altar server(s) <i>(if needed)</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship aid/slides prepared <i>(if needed)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of readings and Universal Prayer

SCHOOL PRAYER SERVICES

REMINDERS

To help us prepare, listen more intently, and embrace more fully a spirit of repentance, the liturgies of Lent are distinct in the following ways:

- The “Alleluia” is not sung or recited from Ash Wednesday until the Easter Vigil.
- We use violet or purple, seen most clearly in the presider’s vestments, to reflect the penitential nature of the season.
- Decorations in the Church or prayer space during the season of Lent should be simple.
- Music should reflect the more somber mood of Lent, providing a contrast with the festive music of the Easter season that will follow.

CONNECTION TO SUNDAY

As we described in the introduction, where you are able, connect your prayer to the Sunday experience. Use music that your students will encounter at Sunday Mass. Consider using the psalm and/or a reading from the past or upcoming Sunday in your prayer service. Put your prayer service in the context of what we hear on Sunday. To get some ideas, check out our overview of the Sundays of Lent in the appendix.

CONSIDERATIONS

Structure and format

The prayer service planner uses a structure drawn from the *Liturgy of the Hours*, the official daily prayer of the church. The general outline includes the following:

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Prayer usually begins with a gathering hymn or song, followed by an opening prayer. The wording of this prayer helps set the tone and focus for the prayer service. Additionally, you may wish to use a “Call to Worship,” a brief song or refrain that is repeated before the gathering hymn to focus our hearts and minds and ready ourselves to enter into prayer.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

One or two psalms are sung (or recited). These psalms are chosen because they suit the focus or time of the prayer service. A psalm prayer – or period of silence – follows each psalm. A reading from Scripture is offered, also chosen because of the focus of the prayer service. This could be a reading from the Old or New Testament, or a Gospel. If it is a Gospel reading, the Lenten Gospel Acclamation can be sung before it is proclaimed.

A reflection can be offered by a member of the school community, or a homily if a priest or deacon is presiding. Typically, the morning Canticle (*Benedictus*) follows this period of

reflection. You may or may not choose to sing (or recite) it. Sometimes a song or hymn can be used to help support meditation and quiet prayer.

The Universal Prayer brings the needs of the Church, the world, the local community, and each of us. After the Universal Prayer, the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father") is prayed by all.

CONCLUDING RITE

Before our prayer ends, we pray a closing prayer and ask for God's blessing. Like the opening prayer, the wording of the closing prayer should echo the focus of our prayer and serves to send us forth. If a priest or deacon is presiding, they may wish to offer a blessing. If not, a prayer of blessing is said or sung. Prayer usually ends with a sending hymn or song, but may also end in solemn silence, if appropriate.

This format of prayer is easily adapted to your needs: you can make it shorter or longer, add a prayer or ritual for a specific need, commemorate an important event or celebration, and so forth.

Selecting Scripture and psalms

It is recommended that you select the reading from Scripture first, as the psalms, hymns, and prayers you choose should support the reading. Liturgical prayer creates the opportunity for dialogue between God and the community gathered in prayer, and this is made possible through the Word. Don't start with that favorite song or poem, as tempting as it is to do so. Our goal is to hear God's voice, so begin with God's Word.

- **Brevity.** The reading should only be as long as it needs to be. Effective prayer is focused. Since Scripture is so very rich, it's important that the passage you select is focused, too. Beware, however, that in editing the reading you do not "editorialize" – that is, change the nature or message of the reading.
- **Context.** Use the richness of the Lenten season to help select the reading. Look to the readings of the day or the past/upcoming Sunday. Use a Concordance to find passages related to Lenten themes of fasting, prayer, penance, forgiveness, mercy, repentance, and so forth. You might also look for connections to your religion curriculum, as many lessons are structured around specific passages from Scripture.
- **The Lectionary.** It is recommended that you use Scripture from the Lectionary. These passages are usually of reasonable length already. Also, praying with these Scriptures allows for a deeper connection between your school prayer service and the liturgical life of the parish.

After the Scripture reading has been selected, look for the psalms you will pray. Because of their personal nature, the psalms play an important role in opening a dialogue with God. While it is recommended that you pray two psalms, it is possible to use only one.

- **Theme-based psalms.** Each psalm has a certain tone or focus, like praise, joy, lament, mercy, and so forth. You can choose psalms that fit the particular focus of the prayer service you are creating.
- **Appointed psalms.** Certain psalms are assigned to a time of year or a time of day. There are psalms commonly used during Lent (like Psalms 51, 91, and 130). There are also psalms typically used during morning prayer (like Psalms 63 and 149). You might also look to include the appointed psalm for the past or upcoming Sunday of Lent.

As with the readings from Scripture, it is recommended that you use psalms from the Lectionary. This also helps to ensure that a musical setting of the psalms you select both exist and are available to you.

Creating a prayerful environment

In planning your prayer service, don't forget all of the other steps necessary to creating a prayerful environment for everyone who will gather.

- **Worship aid or slides.** The goal of good liturgical prayer is the full, conscious, and active participation of the gathered community. A printed worship aid – or projection slides, if suitable – can help ensure that everyone has the texts and music needed to participate. A printed worship aid can be simple, including a simple outline of the prayer service and corresponding numbers in the hymnal.
- **Hospitality.** Intentionally plan ways to make participants feel comfortable, welcomed, and invited. This is a great opportunity to involve students who might not be able to lead or read or might feel uncomfortable doing so.
- **Environment.** This is a particularly important concern if you will be praying somewhere other than a church or chapel like a gymnasium, gathering space, auditorium, classroom, etc. Give careful consideration to the way you will arrange the prayer space and how you will use clear signs and symbols. Simple, consistent decorations make all the difference in a non-liturgical prayer space. Use the symbols, textures, colors, and signs of Lent to the extent that you are able.

RESOURCES

[*A Future with Hope: Praying with Youth Preparing for Confirmation \(Stachowski, Reichert\)*](#) is a collection of eight full prayer services and scripts for praying with young people throughout the liturgical year.

Music suggestions

See the “Music for the Season of Lent” section of this document.

Prayer Service Planner

Celebration: _____ Presider/Leader: _____ Homilist/Speaker: _____	Date: _____
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INTRODUCTORY RITE

[Call to Worship:] _____
 Gathering Hymn: _____

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Psalm A: _____	Sung/Read by:
[Psalm B:] _____	Sung/Read by:
[Gospel Acclamation:] _____	Sung/Read by:
Reading [Gospel]: _____	Proclaimed by:
[Meditation Song:] _____	
Universal Prayer: _____	Read/Sung by:

CONCLUDING RITE

[Sung Blessing:] _____
 Sending Hymn: _____

CHECKLIST	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication with presider/leader <input type="checkbox"/> Communication with homilist/speaker <input type="checkbox"/> Communication with accompanist/musician(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Plan to decorate prayer space completed <i>(if needed)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Presider script prepared <input type="checkbox"/> Worship aid/slides prepared <i>(if needed)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice with presider <input type="checkbox"/> Practice with reader(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of presider script in place <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of readings and Universal Prayer in place
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Prayer Service Script *(sample)*

The presider, reader(s), cantor(s), and other prayer leaders are seated along with the community. When it is time to begin, the presider gestures for all to stand. If there is a gathering hymn (or call to worship), the music begins immediately.

GATHERING HYMN:

insert music here

After the gathering hymn concludes, the presider continues with the opening prayer.

Presider: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Presider: Let us pray.

God of endless mercy and love,
you know what is in our hearts.
You know our joy and happiness,
our sins and our failures.
Be with us in this holy season of Lent.
Open our hearts.
Give us the grace to seek your forgiveness.
Help us to follow you more closely.

We pray this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

After the opening prayer, the presider gestures for all to be seated. The cantor (or reader) moves into place to lead the first psalm.

PSALM A

insert music here

After the psalm is proclaimed, all sit for a moment of prayerful reflection. If a psalm prayer is to be led by the presider, all stand for the prayer. If no psalm prayer is to be offered, all remain seated for the second psalm.

(optional) PSALM B

insert music here

After the psalm is proclaimed, all sit for a moment of prayerful reflection. If a psalm prayer is to be led by the presider, all stand for the prayer. If no psalm prayer is to be offered, all remain seated for the reading.

The reader moves into place to proclaim the reading from Scripture. If the reading is taken from the gospel, a Lenten gospel acclamation may be sung before the reading is proclaimed.

READING FROM SCRIPTURE: _____

After the reading has been proclaimed, the reader returns to their seat. The person offering the reflection (or homily) should move into place after the reading concludes.

REFLECTION (HOMILY) GIVEN BY: _____

After the reflection (or homily, all remain seated for a time of quiet reflection.

If a meditation or reflection song is to be used, it should begin after this period of silence.

(Optional) MEDITATION/REFLECTION SONG:

insert music here

The presider begins the Universal Prayer by proclaiming the following:

Presider: Merciful God,
hear us now as we place our needs before you.

Following the introduction, the reader leads the intercessions.

Reader: For the Church:
for authentic witness,
for communities of welcome.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

Reader: For our nation and our world:
for mercy and forgiveness,
for justice and peace.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

Reader: For our sisters and brothers in need:
for the immigrant, the imprisoned,
the unhoused, the addict, and the unemployed.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

Reader: For our school community:
for teachers and students, parents and staff,
and for all who long to deepen their faith in Christ Jesus.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

Reader: For those most in need of our prayers:
for all who are sick,
all the dying, and for all who will die this day.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

Reader: For all who have died:
for our family, friends, and neighbors in heaven,
and for all who now see Jesus, face to face.
We pray to the Lord.

All: *Lord, hear our Prayer.*

After the intercessions conclude, the presider invites the community to pray the Lord's prayer by saying the following.

Presider: Gathering all of our prayers and praise into one,
let us pray together the words that Jesus himself gave to us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptations,
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the
glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Immediately following the Lord's Prayer, the presider introduces the closing prayer with the following.

Presider: Let us pray.

Good and gracious God,
you are the source of all love and goodness.
Continue to bless us during the holy season of Lent.
Give us the strength to continue our journey
of prayer and fasting
so that our hearts will be prepared to receive you
at the celebration of Easter.

We ask this and all things through Christ, our Lord.

All: Amen.

After the closing prayer, the presider immediately introduces the blessing.

Presider: Let us now ask for God's blessing.

If a sung blessing is to be used, the music begins immediately.

SONG OF BLESSING:

insert music here

If the blessing is to be spoken, the presider leads the following as all make the Sign of the Cross.

Presider: May the Lord bless us,
protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Immediately following the blessing, the presider invites the community to share a sign of peace with the following:

Presider: Before we go forward to continue our Lenten journey toward Easter, let us share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.

All exchange a sign of peace. As the sign of peace concludes, a final hymn or song may be sung by the entire community.

SENDING HYMN:

insert music here

The prayer concludes after the sign of peace (or the final hymn). All depart.



Sacrament of Penance

A framework for communal penance services

By Mary Jo Quinn, SCL

The following is an excerpt from a longer article, originally published in Today's Liturgy magazine.

In the introduction to the Rite of Penance, the four components of the sacrament are outlined: 1) Contrition; 2) Confession; 3) Act of Penance; and 4) Absolution. Additionally, the Rite of Penance suggests a broad liturgical structure that includes a welcoming/ gathering, a proclamation of the word of God, and proclamation of praise of God and a dismissal. Even in the individual rite, this structure is important to observe. If one studies the individual form carefully, several observations are noteworthy: 1) The beginning of the rite is the sign of the cross and may include an invitation for the penitent to be open to the enlightenment and trust. There is no provision for the “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned...” as was commonly taught previous to the promulgation of the 1973 rite; 2) Even the individual rite calls for a sharing of the word of God, which may simply be a recitation of a short passage of Scripture by the confessor; 3) While the formal Confiteor (I confess to almighty God...) is possible, the rite encourages the confessor to help the penitent make an “integral confession and give suitable counsel” (44), with a focus on the penitent’s understanding of the paschal mystery. In other words, the confessor needs to be in tune with the concerns and needs of the individual; 4) Several possibilities for the penitent’s expression of sorrow are provided, along with the penitent’s own sincere expression of sorrow and desire for a change of heart.

In the communal form, this structure is expanded to accommodate the ordinary elements of any celebration of the liturgy, which is always about the “full, conscious and active participation” of all the faithful. (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 14). While the Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution calls for the opportunity for individual confession to take place within the timeframe of the liturgy with the assembly, the *moto proprio* of Pope Saint John Paul II addresses some of the challenges of this particular approach. In the outline of the rite that follows, the time for the individual confession is following the conclusion of the liturgy, when the assembly has dispersed. An appropriate number of confessors is available, each one situated in a particular chapel, with provisions for both privacy and anonymity if desired. The assembly is invited to proceed quietly to the chapel areas to celebrate the sacrament of penance.

The following outline, with musical suggestions and additional commentary, provides the framework of what has become a regular communal gathering for reconciliation in our parish. It is very important that the celebration, which ordinarily occurs during the latter

weeks of Lent, is preceded by appropriate announcements, both in the bulletin and during the Sunday liturgy. The Scripture is always chosen from the Sunday Lenten cycle and music is carefully chosen, usually from that being used during the current Lent. A worship aid is essential because it can provide much more than the music but important catechetical and ritual notes.

Prelude: As people enter, or at least a few minutes before the gathering song, the choir/cantor is usually leading a Taizé-like refrain. We have used “Jesus Christ, Inner Light” or “Wait for the Lord” (in Advent). This past Lent we used “Turn Our Hearts” by Barbara Bridge for this prelude music.

Gathering: One could ask, “What music successfully gathers your community on the Sundays of Lent?”

Word of God: The rite provides two examples for the word, with the suggestion that there might be one or several readings. If there is only one reading, the rite says that it is preferable that this reading be from the Gospel. The rite also suggests the use of a psalm, another appropriate song, or silence. It is important to note here the rite’s focus on a careful, musical and prayerful approach to the word of God, as should be the case also during the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy.

Another possibility is to choose one of the Sundays of Lent for the Gospel—all the cycles of Lent are so rich here—and also use either the Old Testament or the New Testament reading that accompanies that Gospel. Use of more Scripture than the Gospel also allows for the use of additional liturgical ministers. “Psalm 103: Loving and Forgiving” by Scott Soper, has been a good choice for our parish. Whatever Lenten Gospel Acclamation is being used should be sung before the Gospel.

Homily: This is critical to the celebration, with the reflection on the Scripture in the context of forgiveness and its relationship to the whole Lenten season.

Service of Incense: The presider introduces this part of the service with a prayer inviting all to penitence. The last part of the prayer particularly helps all to see the use of incense in this prayer. He prays: “Let this offering of incense burn away our sin and fear and surround us with compassionate love.” Several ministers of varying ages place incense on the coals and all join in singing Psalm 141, again done in a responsorial manner.

A Litany of Forgiveness: This part of the celebration functions as the examination of conscience, which is provided in the rite at #53. The examination of conscience in this setting focuses on all the ways that we as a community, a church, and as individuals, fall short of the call of the Gospel and the challenges of our daily lives. It is sung by the presider, introduced with these words: “In peace, we stand before the Lord;/in peace, we confess our sins;/in peace, we seek forgiveness;/in peace, we seek our way home again: (silence)/In peace, we pray to the Lord:/All sing: Lord, have mercy.”

The rest of the extended litany has been written in the Byzantine style of the General Intercessions so that the assembly naturally responds, “Lord, have mercy.”

Silent Reflection (for the naming of sins): The presider offers this introduction: “Gazing upon the Holy Cross, standing before the face of Christ, in the home he makes for all, we confess our trust in the love and mercy of God. In quiet prayer, let us name our sins.”

The Lord’s Prayer: Introduced by the presider after an extended time of silence and sung by all.

Concluding Prayer and Invitation to Personal Confession: Confessors, who have participated in this entire celebration, are introduced and their exact location following the liturgy is announced. At each location, a card outlining the individual rite is available for individual penitents. Absolution is part of the individual rite.

The Sign of Peace: The peace is shared according to local custom.

Sending Forth: All are invited to depart quietly, in a spirit of prayer, so that those who remain for the individual rite may continue the atmosphere of prayer. An appropriate song, from the parish Lenten repertoire, concludes the communal celebration.

Through the years, this celebration of the sacrament of penance has been a highlight of my own parish Lenten observance. Depending on the care given to the scheduling of the prayer, the publicity and preparation of the community, and the actual celebration during each season of Advent and Lent, the attendance has been strong and committed, both by the assembly and by individuals. Besides the consistent announcement of the date of the celebration in the bulletin and on the website, various other catechetical aids have been available. An excellent five-part set of bulletin inserts, authored by Most Precious Blood Sister Joyce Ann Zimmerman, published in 2009, is available from FDLC (Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, fdlc.org) and complements well the communal rite.

RESOURCES

[Example Rite of Penance Worship Aid](#)

[An Examination of Conscience for children](#)

[An Examination of Conscience for young adults](#)

[“How to go to Confession” article](#)

We can provide no better resource for school communities looking to plan a prayer service with the Sacrament of Penance than the [Liturgical Preparation Aid for Lent, the Sacred Paschal Triduum, and the Easter Season](#) from the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. The first section of this invaluable resource includes an outline of the Sacrament, suggested Scripture and music, texts, a list of sample penances (to be used by the priest), and more.

Music suggestions

See the “Music for the Season of Lent” section of this document.

RITE OF PENANCE: RECONCILIATION (Form II)

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

SONG *See Penance and Reconciliation section (#658-667 in Breaking Bread)*

GREETING

COLLECT

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *See Psalms and Canticles section (#734-822 in Breaking Bread/Music Issue)*

A

Acc #750

Owen Alstott



Note: Verses available in accompaniment books. Text © 1969, 1981, 1997, ICEL. All rights reserved. Used with permission.
Music © 1977, 1990, OCP. All rights reserved.

B

Acc #751

Owen Alstott



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SECOND READING

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

GOSPEL

HOMILY

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

RITE OF RECONCILIATION

GENERAL CONFESSION OF SINS

The Deacon or another minister invites all to kneel or bow, and to join in saying a general formula for confession (for example, I confess to almighty God).

**I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,**

(Strike breast) **in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

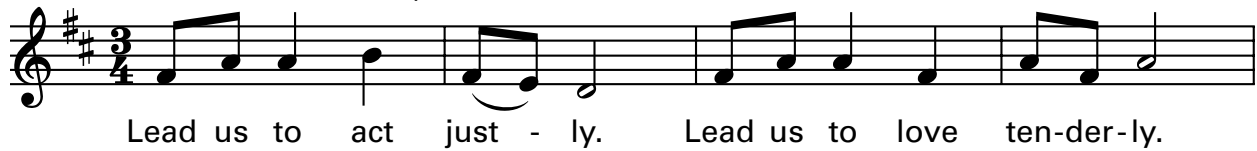
All stand and say or sing a litany or appropriate song asking for the Lord's mercy and forgiveness. (See also #401, 483 in Breaking Bread/Music Issue)

PENITENTIAL LITANY

Acc #752

Michael Prendergast and Joseph Sullivan

Refrain: 1st time: Cantor, All repeat; thereafter: All



Lead us to act just - ly. Lead us to love ten - der - ly.



Lead us to walk hum - bly. Lord, hear our prayer.

Intercessions: Cantor

Text: Based on Micah 6:8. Text and music © 2004, Michael R. Prendergast and Joseph B. Sullivan.
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THE LORD'S PRAYER

INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Then the penitents go to the Priests designated for individual confession and confess their sins. Each one receives and accepts a fitting act of satisfaction and is absolved. After hearing the confession and offering suitable counsel, the Priest extends his hands over the penitent's head (or at least extends his right hand) and gives him absolution. Everything else which is customary in individual confession is omitted.

PROCLAMATION OF PRAISE FOR GOD'S MERCY

When the individual confessions have been completed, the other Priests stand near the one who is presiding over the celebration. The latter invites all present to offer thanks and encourages them to do good works which will proclaim the grace of repentance in the life of the entire community and each of its members. It is fitting for all to sing a psalm or hymn, or to say a litany in acknowledgement of God's power and mercy, for example, the canticle of Mary (Luke 1:46-55). (For music, see # 693, 696, 819, 820, 838 in Breaking Bread/Music Issue.)

CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

THE CONCLUDING RITES

FINAL BLESSING

DISMISSAL

Q&A: ASK THE LITURGIST

Written by Dr. Glenn Byer

A. What would be a priority in our [school]’s preparation for Lent?

Focus on your liturgical celebrations. For example, consider what to do differently at school Masses in Lent. What practices will be used (kneeling during the penitential rite or using the rite of blessing and sprinkling); eucharistic prayers (e.g. of Reconciliation), final blessings? What decorations for the church, prayer space, and classrooms will be bought or created to proclaim that this is a special time?

Lent could also be a special time to address those details that have not been attended to. Focus on training and re-training students who assist as altar servers, lectors, cantors, hospitality ministers, etc. Focus on providing ongoing formation and liturgical catechesis for students, staff, and parents.

As we intentionally prepare ourselves for the Triduum and Easter season, let us go “back to basics,” ensuring that our liturgical celebrations are prayerful, well-prepared, and effective.

Supporting documentation: *CIC 1250-51; 35 Years 678, 702, 1096, 1350*

B. Who can receive the ashes on Ash Wednesday? Can infants, the homebound, and non-Catholics?

Ashes are sacramentals, and, according to the *Ecumenical Directory* (121), are available to non-Catholics. The homebound and anyone prevented from joining the assembly because of health or other serious reasons are certainly eligible and should receive ashes if they wish. Infants and anyone before the age of reason pose an interesting question. In one sense, they have no personal sin and, if they are baptized, no original sin, and so are not in need of repentance. In that light, they have no need of ashes. On the other hand, as part of the family of faith, they are part of the community of repentance. Perhaps there are some things that don’t need a hard and fast rule. If someone comes forward, let them have ashes.

Supporting documentation: *CIC 1170; GNLV 29; 35 Years 99, 1180.*

C. Can eucharistic ministers distribute ashes on Ash Wednesday?

Yes. The order for imposing ashes from the *Book of Blessings* as well as the *Ordo* for the liturgical year both permit the use of extraordinary ministers for this rite. However, two points should be considered.

1. The ordinary minister is the priest or deacon. I find a real value in the pastor imposing ashes—this is a liturgical act that models his concern to guide and

challenge his people. I think this for the same reason that the bishop is encouraged to visit his parishes in Lent. Of course, only an ordained minister can bless the ashes.

2. If you need people to do this, using Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion seems to be the simplest solution, but it may not be the best. Perhaps it would be better to have a group specifically selected for this moment. It might be especially powerful to have people who have faced death, or the death of a loved one, say to us, “Remember you are dust....” But that is just a thought.

D. What do they mean when they say Lent is 40 days long? I count at least 46 days.

The ancient tradition of the Church is that we always celebrate Sunday as the day of the resurrection. We never pretend that Jesus is dead or far away from us. Even when we celebrate Lent and do prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in order to respond to God’s call to come back to the faith, we still celebrate Sunday as a day of rejoicing. If you subtract the six Sundays from the time from Ash Wednesday to Easter, you get 40 days.

Supporting documentation: *GNLY* 28, 30.

E. Is it proper to empty holy water fonts during Lent?

While the holy water fonts are emptied from the Mass of the Lord’s Supper until they are refilled with water blessed at the Easter Vigil, they should not be emptied prior to Holy Thursday.

F. How many times do we strike the breast in the Confiteor?

The Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship addressed this question in a 1978 *dubium* (found in *Notitiæ* 14 [1978], 534-535): “While in the *Roman Missal* promulgated by the authority of the Council of Trent the words were very frequently also accompanied by minute gestures, the rubrics of the *Roman Missal* restored by the authority of the Second Vatican Council are noteworthy for their discretion with regard to gestures. Having said this: The words *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa* which are found in the Confiteor are introduced in the restored *Roman Missal* by a rubric of this sort: “All likewise... striking their breast, say...” (Order of Mass, no. 3). In the former Missal, in the same place, the rubric read like this: “He strikes his breast three times.” It does not seem, therefore, that anyone has to strike his breast three times in pronouncing those words in Latin or in another language, even if *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa* is said. It suffices that there be a striking of the breast.

Liturgical evaluation survey

This tool is intended to be used by liturgical leaders, staff, or others to assess the liturgical life of their parish or school community, prioritize needed improvements, and plan for the future. It may be used in its entirety, or your school may decide to study one particular aspect of liturgical life at a time.

Read through the questions before you plan for the season so you understand what will be evaluated. Then, soon after the season concludes, use the questions to assess your school's celebration.

LENTEN SEASON	Y	N	n/a	Note(s)
1. Did the Lenten liturgies express both a connection to baptism and penitential practices?				
2. Was Lent clearly a distinct season from others (e.g. Christmas, Advent, Ordinary Time)?				
3. Did music "do its job" in Lenten liturgies, establishing a distinct season and heightening texts?				
4. Were liturgical decorations tasteful, appropriate, and include areas besides just the church?				
5. Did Lenten liturgies reinforce the paschal character of the Mass?				
6. Did Lent feel connected to the Easter Triduum?				
<i>Other comments and observations</i>	Opportunities for growth			

PROCESSION	Y	N	n/a	Note(s)
7. Did the gathering procession look like a procession?				
8. Did the ministers walk with dignity? Too slowly or hurriedly? Did they move gracefully?				
9. Were the cross, Book of the Gospels, and other items carried and placed with dignity?				
<i>Other comments and observations</i>	Opportunities for growth			

LITURGICAL MUSIC	Y	N	n/a	Note(s)
10. Are there enough hymnals or missals for the assembly? Can visitors find them easily?				
11. Did the opening hymn accomplish the task of gathering the assembly? Were all verses sung?				
12. Did the assembly know and sing the Kyrie? the Gloria?				
13. Did the accompaniment support and enable the full participation of the assembly in sung prayer?				
<i>Other comments and observations</i>	Opportunities for growth			

LITURGY OF THE WORD	Y	N	n/a	Note(s)
14. Was there ample silence between readings? After the homily?				
15. Were the readings proclaimed clearly and confidently? Projected well so all could hear?				
16. Were the lectors trained to convey meaning of the reading, use appropriate pace, use appropriate posture, etc.?				
17. Did the assembly sing (or recite) the Responsorial Psalm well?				
18. Did the cantor lead the Psalm from the ambo?				
19. Did the assembly sing the Gospel Acclamation well? Was the appropriate verse sung or spoken?				
20. Were the General Intercessions announced by the reader prayerfully and clearly?				
21. Did the assembly participate fully, consciously, and actively through the whole Liturgy of the Word?				
<i>Other comments and observations</i>	Opportunities for growth			

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST	Y	N	n/a	Note(s)
22. Were the gifts of bread and wine brought to the altar from the midst of the assembly?				
23. Were the vessels used of genuine, beautiful, and dignified quality?				
24. Did the procession of gifts look like a procession? Were the gifts processed with care and dignity?				
25. Did the assembly sing the Eucharistic acclamations confidently?				
26. Did the acclamations match the feel of the liturgical season?				
27. Did the people share the Sign of Peace genuinely? Did the gesture feel like a ritual sign?				
28. Did Communion ministers speak clearly and confidently, using good eye contact?				
29. Did the assembly feel united as one body during the entire Communion procession?				
30. Was the whole assembly able to sing the Communion song confidently?				
31. Was there a good amount of silence after Communion?				
<i>Other comments and observations</i>	Opportunities for growth			

CONCLUDING RITE	Y	N	n/a	Note(s)
32. If there were announcements, were they brief and necessary?				
33. Was the recessional hymn or song sung by the entire assembly?				
34. Was the assembly dismissed with a sense of mission?				
<i>Other comments and observations</i>	Opportunities for growth			

Based upon the evaluation above, what opportunities should be prioritized?

Who will be responsible for addressing these priorities?

What resources (if any) will be needed, and will the parish commit to obtaining them?

What is the timeline for addressing the priorities?

When will the liturgical evaluation be conducted again to assess growth?

What liturgical formation and catechesis can be provided for liturgical leaders, lay ministers, and the congregation as a whole? Make sure to address each group.

MUSIC for the SEASON OF LENT

OVERVIEW

Music is critical to liturgical prayer. In liturgy, we sing all the time. Lent is no exception! While we might approach music in a simpler way, and while the musical elements of Lent will sound different than the Easter or Christmas seasons, we still need to sing together.

Because Lent is a season of preparation for all of us – through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving – it is important that all of us participate as fully as possible. So, wherever you can, select music that the entire community sings. Avoid “performance” or “solo” pieces, even though you might be tempted to choose them as a way to induce “reflection.” As the proverb states, “whoever sings prays twice.” Give everyone the chance to sing.

Who should be involved

Consult your parish music director or liturgist as early as possible. They can help you with suggestions, find copies of music, ensure proper reporting and licensing, and connect your plans to the Sunday experience.

Consult your students, both those who will be involved in leading the music and those who will be praying as members of the assembly. Find out what they find meaningful. They will tell you!

CONSIDERATIONS

Selecting music for Mass or prayer services

Take care to select music that is appropriate for prayer, well-matched to the context/theme of that prayer, and is accessible both to those who are gathered to pray and those who will be leading the music.

- Musical considerations: Is this song stylistically appropriate? Can the entire assembly sing this (i.e., not too high, not too low, etc.)? Can our musicians successfully lead this song?
- Liturgical considerations: Will this song help support this prayer experience? Does the text of the song enhance the focus of our prayer? Are the songs and texts appropriate for the season of Lent?
- Pastoral considerations: Will the text of this song connect or resonate with the school community? Are the themes appropriate for the focus of our prayer? Are the languages and cultures present in our community adequately presented in the songs we have chosen? Are we asking too much (or too little) of our school community in selecting this song?

Be aware of the repertoire your school community already knows. Also, be aware of the repertoire your school community doesn't know but should. Work to use what is familiar while carefully introducing new music. It is best to reinforce repertoire by using hymns and songs more than once, where possible. Use a seasonal gathering song or use psalm settings more than once. If you sing the Universal Prayer, Lord's Prayer, or Blessing, use the same setting each time – don't keep changing them! Do what you can to ensure your school community feels comfortable with the music you have chosen.

Use outside of prayer

Music is incredibly powerful. We put a lot of time and energy into selecting the right music for prayer. How can we further harness these hymns and songs? How can we help our students become more familiar with these songs so that they can enter more deeply into prayer?

All of the music suggestions listed in the appendix have recordings that can be found on YouTube and Spotify. Make a playlist and use them in your classroom. Play the recordings during quiet activities like reading or homework time, or while students are working on art projects or other activities. Send links to these playlists home and share them with parents. Everyone is looking for something to listen to with their children in the car or at home.

Fair use and copyright

All printed and recorded music, even church music, is covered by legal copyright protection. This means that you need to follow certain guidelines and licensing requirements in order to use songs and recordings at Mass and prayer. If your community uses a physical hymnal or music resource (i.e., everyone has a book in the pews), your usage is likely covered. If you are creating and printing a worship aid, making slides for projection that include music or prayer/Scripture text, or recording or livestreaming your Masses or prayer services that use copyrighted music, then you need to have the appropriate music license and complete reporting processes. Speak with your music director or liturgist for more information and for guidance. Your parish or campus ministry may already have such a license.

SUGGESTIONS

Hymns and songs for Mass and prayer (NOTE: This is not a comprehensive list, just a list to get you started)

TITLE	G	P	C	S
40 Days (Maher)	X			X
Again We Keep This Solemn Fast (ERHALT UNS, HERR)	X			X
Amazing Grace (NEW BRITAIN)	X	X		X
Ashes (Conry)	X			X
Ashes to Ashes (Schutte)		X		
Be Merciful, O Lord (Angrisano)			X	
Be Not Afraid (Dufford)		X		
Be Still and Know That I Am God (C. Walker)		X		
Be with Me, Lord (Hart)			X	
Behold the Lamb (Willett)			X	
Beyond the Days (Manalo)	X			X
Bread of Angels (Stephen)			X	
Bread of Heaven (Manibusan)			X	
Change Our Hearts (Cooney)	X			X
Christ Before Us (SUO GÂN)	X			X
Christ in Me Arise (Thomson)	X			

TITLE	G	P	C	S
Christ, Be Our Light (Farrell)			X	
Come Home (Landry)		X	X	
Come to Me and Drink (B. Hurd)			X	
Create in Me (B. Hurd)		X		
Create in Me (Kenzia)			X	
Do Not Fear to Hope (Cooney)	X			X
Do This in Memory of Me (Muglia)			X	
Eat This Bread (Berthier)			X	
Enter the Journey (Friedman)	X			X
Flow River Flow (B. Hurd)		X	X	
Fly Like a Bird (Canedo)		X	X	
Forty Days and Forty Nights (HEINLEIN)	X			X
From the Depths We Cry to Thee (HEINLEIN)	X			
From the Wounds of Christ (Zaragoza)			X	
God Be in My Head (Brown)		X		
God of Mercy (Manalo)			X	
God Our Source and Life, Unite Us (Thomson)	X			
Gracious God (Manibusan)				X
Have Mercy on Me (Hart)		X	X	
Have Mercy on Us, Lord (ATTENDE DOMINE)	X	X		
Healed in Christ (Hart)			X	
Healing Waters (Thomson)		X		
Here I Am, Lord (Schutte)			X	
High Above Our Way (Angrisano)				X
Hold On to Love (Manibusan)		X		
Hosea (Norbet)			X	
I Am the Bread of Life (Come and Follow Me) (Angrisano, Booth)			X	
I Am the Resurrection and the Life (B. Hurd)		X		X
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say (KINGSFOLD)				X
I Will Choose Christ (Booth)				X
In Every Age (Whitaker)		X		
In the Silence (Blakesley)			X	
In These Days of Lenten Journey (Manalo)	X			X
Into the Desert (Stephan)				X

TITLE	G	P	C	S
Jesu, Joy of Our Desiring (WERDE MUNTER)		X		
Jesus, Heal Me (E. García-López)		X		
Lead Me to the Desert (Hart)		X		
Lead Me, Guide Me (Akers)				X
Lead Me, Lord (Becker)				X
Lead Us to the Cross (Muglia)				X
Lift High the Cross (CRUCIFER)	X			X
Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days (ST. FLAVIAN)	X			
Loving and Forgiving (Soper)			X	
Mercy on Me (Hart)		X		
My Soul Is Thirsting (Brown)			X	
My Soul Is Thirsting/As Morning Breaks (Angrisano)			X	
Now Is the Acceptable Time (Bridge)	X			
O Bless the Lord, My Soul (ST. THOMAS)				X
O God, You Search Me (Farrell)		X		
O Jesus, Healer of Wounded Souls (Rubalcava)		X		
O Sacrament Most Holy (FULDA)			X	
Oh Dios, Crea en Mí (E. Cortés)			X	
On Eagle's Wings (Joncas)			X	
One Bread, One Cup (Fisher)			X	
Open My Eyes (Manibusan)		X		
Our God is Here (Muglia)	X			
Our God, Our Help in Ages Past (ST. ANNE)	X			
Overflow (Maher)				X
Parce Domine/Spare Your People, Lord (chant)	X	X		
Pardon Your People (Landry)				X
Purify My Heart (Doerksen)		X		
Remember Not the Things of the Past (B. Hurd)		X		
Remember Your Love (Ducote)	X		X	
Renew (Hart)	X			
Repent (J. Cortez)	X			
Revive Us, O God (Manibusan)				X
Sacred Silence (Booth)		X		
Shepherd of Souls (ST. AGNES)	X			

TITLE	G	P	C	S
Show Us Your Mercy (Friedman)			X	
Signed by Ashes (Keil)		X		
Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling (THOMPSON)			X	
Sweet Redeemer (Angrisano)	X			
Take the Word of God with You (C. Walker)				X
Take These Ashes/To the Desert Follow Me (HART)	X			
Take Up Your Cross (Cortez)				X
Take Up Your Cross (ERHALT UNS, HERR)	X			
The Breastplate of St. Patrick (Hart)				X
The Feast Meant for Everyone (Hart, Booth)			X	
The Glory of These Forty Days (ERHALT UNS, HERR)	X			
The Goodness of the Lord (Soper)			X	
The King of Love My Shepherd Is (ST. COLUMBA)	X			
The Lord is My Light (C. Walker)		X	X	
There Is a Balm in Gilead (BALM IN GILEAD)			X	
There Is a Longing (Quigley)		X		
This Season Calls Us (CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM)	X	X		X
Transfigure Us, O Lord (B. Hurd)		X	X	
Ubi Caritas (B. Hurd)		X	X	
Ubi Caritas (Rosania)		X	X	
Unless a Grain of Wheat (B. Hurd)		X	X	
We Are the Light of the World (GREIF)	X			X
We Belong to You (Thomson)	X			X
We Come to You (Blakesley)		X	X	
We Remember (Haugen)			X	
We've Come This Far by Faith (Goodson)	X			X
What Wondrous Love Is This (WONDROUS LOVE)	X	X		X
With Ashes and Sorrow (Montgomery)		X	X	
With the Lord There Is Mercy (Modlin)		X	X	
You Alone (Hart)		X		
You Are the Healing (Soper)		X		X
You Are the Light (Hart)		X	X	
You Have Called Us (Farrell)	X			X
Your Grace is Enough (Maher)				X

Responsorial Psalms

Recall that, in place of the appointed Responsorial Psalm in the Lectionary, you may choose to substitute one of the Common Psalms for the season. The Common Psalms for Lent are **Psalm 51**, **Psalm 91**, and **Psalm 130**, with **Psalm 22** for the weekday Masses during Holy Week.

The Responsorial Psalm used at Mass should be a setting of the approved Lectionary Psalm text. A paraphrase or text based on a Psalm should not be used. The hymnal or missal your school or parish uses should have at least one setting for each Common Psalm, if not more. If you are looking for additional Psalm settings, [visit this catalog of Lectionary Psalms](#) (i.e. settings approved for use at Mass) in a variety of musical styles and set in English and Spanish.

Mass Acclamations

It is especially fitting to use the Mass acclamations from the Roman Missal. These [Chant acclamations \(Roman Missal\)](#) are available for download and use, free of charge. Every student should be familiar with these chants, whether sung in English or Latin.

We encourage you to use the Mass setting employed at your parish, or common to parishes in your area. Other Mass settings you might consider for the Lenten season include:

[Missa Ubi Caritas \(B. Hurd\)](#)

[Wondrous Love Mass \(Keil, Hillebrand\)](#)

[Heritage Mass \(Alstott\)](#)

[Misa San José \(Reza\)](#)

[Mass of Renewal \(Stephan\)](#)

[Mass of Mary Magdalene \(Hart\)](#)

MUSIC FOR DEVOTIONS

Stations of the Cross

Praying the Way of the Cross is a powerful experience for students and adults, alike, especially during the Lenten season. If it is not your school's current practice to use music, we encourage you to introduce singing wherever possible. The following hymns and songs are suitable for this kind of experience. Many have a long association with the Way of the Cross. These are offered in addition to the titles in the table above.

[At the Cross Her Station Keeping/Stabat Mater Dolorosa](#)

[Behold the Cross \(Hurd\)](#)

[Behold the Wood \(Schutte\)](#)

[Jesus, Remember Me \(Berthier\)](#)

[O Sacred Head, Surrounded \(PASSION CHORALE\)](#)

[Parce Domine/Spare Your People, Lord \(chant\)](#)

[Take Up Your Cross \(HERHALT UNS, HERR\)](#)

[Way of the Cross \(Francisco\)](#)

[Were You There \(WERE YOU THERE\)](#)

[When I Survey the Wondrous Cross](#)

[Wood of the Cross \(Alstott\)](#)

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament (Adoration)

There is a basic structure to the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, where the Blessed Sacrament placed in a monstrance and particular prayers and ritual takes place. In this structure, there is great flexibility, and great opportunity to bring in Lenten themes of mercy, renewal, and preparation. If it is not your practice to offer your students time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, please consider doing so, even if it is only for a few minutes of prayer before the Tabernacle.

As with the Way of the Cross, incorporating music and sung prayer into the practice of Adoration adds to the power and depth of the devotion. The following hymns and songs are suitable, and many of them are a part of the core repertoire that all Catholics should know. These are offered in addition to the titles in the table above.

[Adoro Te Devote/Godhead Here in Hiding \(chant\)](#)

[Ave Verum Corpus \(chant\)](#)

[Exposition/O Saving Victim \(Angrisano\)](#)

[Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All \(SWEET SACRAMENT\)](#)

[Lord, to Whom Shall We Go \(Soper\)](#)

[O Lord, I Am Not Worthy \(NON DIGNUS\)](#)

[O Sacrament Most Holy \(FULDA\)](#)

[O Saving Victim/O Salutaris Hostia](#)

[Pange Lingua, Gloriosi/Sing, My Tongue the Savior's Glory](#)

[Panis Angelicus/Holy and Living Bread \(Lambillotte\)](#)

[See Us, Lord, About Your Altar \(DRAKES BROUGHTON\)](#)

[Soul of My Savior \(ANIMA CHRISTI\)](#)

Music leadership formation

Music at the Rite of Penance for First Reconciliation/Confession

The first celebration of the Rite of Penance is an important moment in the life of children, and it is an opportunity for formators, pastoral musicians, and liturgists to work together. The opportunities for congregational singing are relatively few in the rite, so it is important to make the most of them. Rather than make specific suggestions for music, this reflection on the Rite of Penance is designed to help you reflect on your own parish repertoire. It is crucial that at this celebration we work as a single community, and that we agree from the start on what music from our shared resources can be best woven into the celebration, as well as into the period of formation.

Preludes

The ritual does not explicitly speak of this, but there is nothing to prevent congregational singing as the people are gathering. For the Rite of Penance, the music should celebrate God's mercy. The reason for this is that even now, before the celebration begins, young penitents need to know that God will be merciful. We know this because the Church teaches us that our desire to celebrate the sacrament is itself a sufficient cause for God's mercy. Under certain circumstances, our repentance alone is enough to receive Holy Communion, provided we intend to confess as soon as possible afterwards. This is called perfect contrition. And so, as these young people are coming to Confession, they must be absolutely convinced that the celebration is about the richness and abundance of God's mercy. To focus on our sinfulness would be to communicate that we are buying God's forgiveness.

Entrance Song

Once the people have gathered, the ritual calls for a song while the Priest Confessors enter the church. There are two suggested antiphons. The first speaks of how our loving God is merciful, kind, and compassionate. If we sang about God's mercy before the celebration, I think the second suggested antiphon, which begins, "Let us come with confidence...." is a better inspiration for an entrance song.

We have so many tests in our lives. Confession is where we admit that we have failed at least some of these tests. So often in the rest of our life, the failure to do what is right results in punishment and even anger. So many adult Catholics bring this vision to the sacrament, thinking that confessing our faults will cause similar reactions from the Priest Confessor, from the Church, or maybe even from God. This can likewise be a cause of fear among young penitents.

But in the Sacrament of Reconciliation things are quite the contrary. Especially for these young penitents, we need to stress that God's forgiveness is assured. Whatever we can do

to give courage, to let these young people know that there is no question of God's love and forgiveness is a good thing. Unlike the rest of our lives, when we come to reconciliation we don't get in trouble when we tell God what we have done wrong. Telling God our sins is the road to freedom, happiness, and joy.

The Celebration of the Word of God

The Celebration of the Word of God that follows allows for either one reading (from the Gospel) or something more like what we experience at Mass. The comfort of having a familiar form is probably the best idea, and it allows for a Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation.

Responsorial Psalm

The Rite of Penance lists no less than 17 choices for the Responsorial Psalm. It would be a great opportunity for collaboration between all those concerned with the liturgy to select the Psalm response setting before any catechesis for the sacrament occurs. That way, whether it be in the parochial school setting, or in the parish school of religion, or in preparation sessions for the celebration of the sacrament, this response could be used frequently. Then when this celebration occurs, the music and the text are already part of the penitents' prayer. The Gospel Acclamation should likewise use a refrain that is known in both the parish and formation settings.

“Especially for [these] young penitents, we need to stress that God’s forgiveness is assured. Whatever we can do to give courage, to let these young people know that there is no question of God’s love and forgiveness is a good thing.”

Rite of Reconciliation

Examination of Conscience

The rite is a little unclear at this point, but #53 does suggest that this can take the form of “a kind of litany,” and so a sung response could be a great way to involve the whole community, especially if the “Lord, have mercy,” is sung in your parish during penitential seasons.

The Lord’s Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer is always to conclude the examination of conscience (see Rite of Penance #54); if it is not generally sung as part of the Sunday liturgy, it would be best not to sing it on this occasion either, since this is one of the moments when the participation of the whole community is relatively easy to achieve.

Music during the Individual Confessions

The document on music of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sing to the Lord* makes reference to this moment of the Rite of Penance. One of the exceptional situations when recorded music might be appropriate is during this extended period of silence (see paragraph #94). Keeping the young people present and engaged during what can be an extended timeframe might include a variety of music – some recorded, some live, some for listening, and perhaps even some for singing.

Proclamation of Praise for God's Mercy

This moment of the liturgy has had its ups and downs. For some, as soon as the penitents have completed their penance they leave, but others will stay. So a song at this point should not rely on having the entire congregation present. At the same time, it is one of the times in the liturgy where we are to sing of God's power in addition to God's mercy. Celebrating God's power is an interesting choice; we turn to God for forgiveness because we know that God has the power to forgive us. We can only ask for what we believe God has the power to do. It would be like my niece or nephew asking me if they could drive the family car. I can't grant that permission, because I don't have the power. We can ask God to forgive, precisely because God has the power to forgive sin.

If we have celebrated God's mercy in song during the prelude, and our confidence in God's mercy at the entrance of the Priest Confessors, celebrating God's power at this point of the celebration seems like a great option.

Concluding Rites

Like the Eucharist, this celebration does not officially end with music. And just like at Mass, there is nothing to prevent us from singing a song that would encourage the assembly to go forth doing good. Many of the songs about mission or discipleship would be appropriate here.

Chanting by the Priest or Deacon

There is nothing to prevent the Priest, Deacon, or even the Lector from chanting the prayers and readings of this liturgy.

I would suggest that if there was a moment at which chanting might be appropriate, it would be the blessing and dismissal, in particular, "The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace." with the response, "Thanks be to God." Again, it helps if the response is one that is known to the assembly. Given the joy that should be growing as sins are forgiven and Catholics are sent out into the world free to do good, this seems like an especially appropriate time to sing the blessing and dismissal.

Armed with these few suggestions, you should be able to develop a wonderful plan for the music at the Rite of Penance for those celebrating first confession at your parish this year

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