

Worship Meeting Agenda

(Editor's note: These agenda items provide a listing of possible topics to consider at your next parish liturgy committee meeting. Select the topics that will guide your planning for the liturgical season ahead.)

PRAYING TOGETHER

- Since November is the Month of All Souls, kindle a brazier and pray the Litany of the Saints antiphonally. Invite each person to place a pinch of incense into the brazier and speak the name(s) of their beloved dead. Conclude with the Prayer of Committal from the *Order of Christian Funerals*.
- Anticipating the season of Advent, designate a reader to read reflectively paragraphs 1 and 39–42 from the *Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*, found in *The Roman Missal*. Then, as the Missal is passed around the table, ask four persons to proclaim and pray each Collect (in succession) from the four Sundays in Advent. Recite three Hail Marys for all parishioners who anticipate new life through the Christian initiation process in the parish during the coming year.
- Read Colossians 3:12–17, and allow three minutes for quiet reflection about the abundance of joy, or the absence of it, in the parish. Ask a volunteer to lead the fourfold blessing for Advent, found in the Missal, “Blessings at the End of Mass and Prayers over the People.”

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

- Recollect your notes, and provide a brief review/report of last Advent (note what went well and what needed to be adjusted). Do the same for the season of Christmas, and winter Ordinary Time. Allow twenty minutes for this review, then move into the preparation for Advent, Christmas Time, and into Ordinary Time. List key liturgies on a wall chart, and quickly note who will implement, who will schedule the liturgical ministries, and who will serve the parish music needs and goals (and when special worship aids are needed). Prepare now, with the to-do lists that you've created.
- Make certain that the art and environment committee has a copy of J. Philip Horrigan's “Subtle Decor Allows Assembly to Focus on Discipleship” from this issue of *Pastoral Liturgy*®.
- The worship committee is visionary: allow forty minutes to discern the characteristics of the parish community that you serve. To support the discussion, the leaders should compose a list of questions, such as, “What age groups are in our parish?” or “Do we welcome young adults, the physically and/or mentally challenged, the deaf?” or “Do people travel a distance to worship here?” or “What social services do we offer?” The questions will aim to assess who is in and who is not in the pews during the Sunday celebration. A further goal of this social analysis is to determine if the quality and quantity of prayer and parish life is attracting new disciples.

ANTICIPATING ADVENT

- With each liturgical initiative from the committee, coordinate a catechetical piece for the assembly. This could take the form of a bulletin insert, several sentences in the announcements at Mass, a booklet/handout for every family about a topic (an example: *Disciples Making Disciples*, published by LTP, which describes the role of the assembly in the Christian initiation process), the parish website, and/or social media.
- Ask and answer: how can we set an Advent environment outside of the church to let the world know that the season is about joyful anticipation? Recruit some creative people to set a tone for the season, even before people enter the church. Ask and answer: is there a way to make the reconciliation space(s) more inviting?
- Parish music leaders and all musicians minister for additional liturgies, especially between the Solemnity of Christ the King and Ash Wednesday. Create an “appreciation card” and solicit donors for small gift cards to enclose. Distribute the cards on the First Sunday of Advent, thanking each musician for dedication to worthy worship for the congregation (wish them “Happy new [liturgical] year!”).
- Acknowledge the college students and visitors and guests with a special welcome and a blessing during the time after the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord. January is not too late to acknowledge homecomings and extended families with hospitable recognition and a blessing.

SENDING FORTH IN PRAYER

- Light several candles and share the Evening Prayer of the Church together. Sing the songs, recite the psalms, and cherish the peace of the evening. If possible, move to a sacred space to pray.
- In the *Lectionary for Mass: Introduction* (1981/1998), read paragraph 9, found in the preamble, regarding the Holy Spirit. Then recite together the Prayer to the Holy Spirit, used before each session of the Second Vatican Council (easily available online).
- Sing together the first verse of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” and select an Advent Gospel reading to share. Conclude with the second verse of the song.

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At www.PastoralLiturgy.org

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