

Resources For Sacramental Preparation Meetings With Parents

Revised 2016



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The following resources may be adapted for use in prayer rituals and reflections with Parents during Sacramental Preparation meetings in parish or school communities. These resources are not intended to stand alone, but to be integrated into the parent meeting in an appropriate context and manner.

Gathering Prayer and Ritual:

This simple ritual could be used after the welcome and introductory talk.

Opening Prayer

Prayer Leader:

Let us pray together...

Parents:

God of love,
In you we find the source of all love.
We your people gather now,
Believing in your unconditional love for all.
May we who have been entrusted
With the faith formation of our children,
Be given the grace we need
To draw our children into the mystery of your love,
Through our loving care of them.
Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 18: 15-17

"Let the children come to me ...do not stop them"

Reflection On The Word:

Having allowed time for silent reflection, have someone proclaim in a reflective tone some of the key words from this text e.g. "children"... "come to me"... "welcome"... "touch"... "belongs"...

Repeat the key words, once or twice in a reflective manner.

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Accompany this with appropriate instrumental music, such as *In The Silence* or *Enfold Me In Your Love* (Monica Brown – Instrumental Version -Quiet My Soul)

Ritual:

The Prayer Leader invites parents to come forward to light a blessing candle for their child. Each parent(s) comes forward and receives a candle from one of the catechist/teachers. They then go and light the candle from the Paschal Candle near the sacred space. As they do so they say, **“We light this blessing candle for _____ (name of their child).** They then place the lit candle in the sacred space, around the Word of God and the symbols of which ever Sacrament is being prepared e.g. Glass bowl of water for Baptism, Jug of Oil for Confirmation, Bread and Wine for Eucharist.

Accompany this with quiet instrumental music.

If the group is large, have three or four ritual points with baskets of candles. Have catechist/teachers come forward and light a smaller candle/taper from the Paschal Candle. They then stand with their lit candle beside the baskets of candles. Parents go to them and light their candles for their children. They then place them in the sacred space and return to their seats.

When all have lit their candle for their child, the Prayer Leader invites them to sing together one of the following hymns.

Jesus Is The Light (Michael Mangan – Setting Hearts On Fire)

Christ Be Our Light (Bernadette Farrell – As One Voice/1)

Meditations:

One of the following meditations could be used at an appropriate time within the meeting.

1. Scripture Meditation:

(This meditation needs to be directed in a reflective tone and carefully paced . The dots... below indicate appropriate pauses.)

Direct the parents to be still..., to close their eyes and relax their bodies... Begin playing some quiet instrumental music here... Having allowed a moment or two for people to settle, invite the parents to hold before them the face of their child who is the Sacramental candidate... Invite them to focus on their child as they listen to the following scripture text: Fade the music down as the text is proclaimed in a reflective tone.

“Jesus took a little child and set him in front of them, put his arms round the child and said to them, ‘Anyone who welcomes one of these little ones, welcomes me’”
... (JBT - Mark 9:36 – 37a)

Allow the music to play on for a moment or two and then repeat the key words... **Jesus embraced the child...** Invite the parents to imagine and to actually try to visualize Jesus embracing their child and blessing their child. Allow a moment or two for this and then say in a reflective tone, **Imagine... Jesus sees your child... Jesus embraces your child..., Jesus blesses your child....** Direct the parents to place their hand upon their heart and to pray in a special way for God’s blessing upon their child. As this is happening, fade the instrumental music out and play one of the following blessing songs.

My Peace Be With You Always (John Burland – One Family)

Song Of Blessing (Michael Mangan – Setting Hearts On Fire)

May The Lord Bless You & Keep You (Monica Brown – Our God Is Near)

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A Blessing Song (Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings)
The Blessing Of Jesus(Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings)

When the blessing has finished, invite the parents to conclude this meditation by saying together the following prayer.

Concluding Prayer

**Loving God,
Pour out your blessing
Upon our beloved children,
That during this time of Sacramental preparation
They may grow closer to you,
And come to know your special love for them.
May this time of preparation be a time of blessing
For our families and our community,
And unite us all in your great love.
Amen.**

2. Child Meditation:

(This guided meditation needs to be directed in a reflective tone and carefully paced . The dots... below indicate appropriate pauses.)

Settle the parents and direct them to close their eyes and to think of their child... Invite them to remember their very first memories of their child... the first time they saw their child...the first time they held their child...Allow a moment or two for this. Direct them to say in the silence of their heart their child's name and to think of what they love the most about their child... Invite them to think of their happiest memory of their child...Allow time for this. Then invite them to be aware of a time when they were particularly concerned about their child... Begin playing some appropriate instrumental music e.g. **Shekinah** or **Enfold Me In Your Love** (Monica Brown – Instrumental Version -Quiet My Soul). Having allowed time for this, fade the music down a little and invite the parents to ask God for a special blessing for their child. After a minute or two fade the music out and direct the parents to open their eyes and sing together one of the following blessings for their child.

My Peace Be With You Always (John Burland – One Family)
Song Of Blessing (Michael Mangan – Setting Hearts On Fire)
May The Lord Bless You (Monica Brown – Our God Is Near)
A Blessing Song (Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings)
The Blessing Of Jesus(Monica Brown – Praise & Blessings)

Sacramental Preparation Candle & Commissioning Of Parents

This ritual could form part of the closing ritual for the meeting.

A candle with each child's name written on it, is given to the Parent(s).

The Prayer Leader calls forth the parent(s) of each child. S/he hands them their child's unlit candle and says, "**You are entrusted by God to safeguard the flame of faith in** _____ (child's name). The parent(s) take the candle and light it from the Paschal candle and return to their seats with the candle. *(The logistics of this ritual may need to be adapted for large groups, in a similar manner to the logistics used in candle ritual in the Gathering Ritual above.)*

When all have received and lit their candles, the Prayer Leader directs them to stand and hold their candle to their heart. *(If both parents are there then have both of them hold the candle between them.)*

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The Prayer Leader prays the following prayer.

**Holy living God,
You call these parents and guardians,
To be the living presence
Of your love for their children.
You entrust them with the development and nurturing
Of their child's growth and spiritual formation.
Bless them now in their willingness,
To prepare their children for this Sacrament,
So that they, together with their children,
May grow more deeply in faith and love.
Amen.**

Following this, the Prayer Leader directs the parents to hold their candles high as they and their candles are blessed with Holy Water. The Prayer Leader moves around and sprinkles them with Holy Water. Sing an appropriate refrain here, such as one of the following.

Music for the Sprinkling Rite (Erica Marshall - Sing the Seasons)
Flow River Flow (Bob Hurd -As One Voice/Vol I)
Baptised in Water (Sung to the tune of *Morning Has Broken* text by Michael Saward in Gather Australia)
The Water of Life (Michael Mangan -Children of the Light)

After this blessing, the Prayer Leader invites the parents to hold their candle close and to pray silently for their child. Having allowed time for this the parents are directed to focus on the candle flame. S/he directs them to slowly extinguish it *and as they do so*, to close their eyes and imagine drawing the flame deep in their hearts, allowing it to burn and kindle in them the fire of faith and love.

Conclude this ritual by inviting the parents to sing together one of the following hymns:

Jesus Is The Light (Michael Mangan – Setting Hearts On Fire)
Christ Be Our Light (Bernadette Farrell – As One Voice/1)

The Prayer Leader directs the parents to take the candle home and to share with their child the candle ritual. Suggest that they make time to decorate the candle with their child and that they light the candle every evening as they pray together as part of their family Sacramental Preparation.

(This candle ritual could be adapted and linked to the candle ritual in the Gathering Prayer and Ritual above, so that the candle used in the Gathering Ritual is handed back to the parents in the context of the above ritual.)

Scripture Reflection For Parents

The following ritual could be integrated into the meeting at an appropriate time to assist with the spiritual development and enrichment of the parent(s) themselves.

As preparation for the meeting, set up a prayer focus or sacred space with the Word of God and a candle enthroned in it, together with symbols of the specific Sacrament. Scatter throughout this sacred space the **Adult edition** of the ***I Am With You Always*** Scripture Affirmation Prayer Cards. (See www.emmausproductions.com or email emmausaustalia@emmausproductions.com or phone +(0) 2 9484 0252) *(Ensure there is one card for each person. If the group is large have these Prayer Cards sitting in several baskets.)*

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At an appropriate time in the meeting, and in an appropriate manner, reflect with the parent(s) about their own journey and the need they may feel for spiritual enrichment and formation.

Having done so, invite the parent(s) to reflect silently on whatever they want to ask of God for themselves. Begin playing the instrumental version of the mantra ***I Am With You Always*** (Monica Brown- I Am With You Always).

Allow time for reflection here. Direct the parent(s) to then come forward to the sacred space, and aware of their prayer intention, to choose an ***I Am With You Always*** Scripture Affirmation Prayer Card. (*If the group is large then pass the baskets around and have them choose a Prayer Card from the basket.*) Let the instrumental music play on as people are choosing their Prayer Card.

Direct the parent(s) to turn their card face down so that the text is not seen and to wait until all have received a card before reading theirs.

When all the parent(s) have their card, direct them to turn their card over and to reflectively read it and do the ritual that is given to them on the card.

Having allowed a few minutes for this, fade the instrumental music out and play the vocal version of the mantra ***I Am With You Always*** (Monica Brown – I Am With You Always).

When the mantra has ended, advise the parent(s) to take the Prayer Card home and place it somewhere that will remind them of God's commitment to be with them always.

OnLine Video Prayer and Meditations for Children, Families and Adults

Visit www.liturgyritualprayer.com for a library of video prayer, meditations and reflections. A special series for Family Prayer and Ritual will be available from August 2016.

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