

Prayer resource for families unable to attend Mass

There are many ways that families can pray together. Simple things such as praying the Rosary together or doing a liturgy of the Word are often good approaches. Here are two possibilities for a liturgy of the Word: a shorter version and a more detailed version.

Simple Liturgy of the Word

Organise a time on Sunday to meet as a family.

Find the Gospel of that Sunday (universalis.com)

Prepare some prayers of the faithful, and ask others to do so too.

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Pray: "Lord, we know you are always with us, but especially when two or three of us are gathered in your name. Be with us in our time of need. Help us to hear your word, and live it through love of you and our neighbour. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord."

Read the gospel.

Spend some moments in silence. After this, ask if anyone wants to say anything.

Pray your prayers that you have prepared. Ask if anyone else has prayers.

Conclude these prayers by praying the Lord's Prayer: Our Father...

Have everyone make an act of spiritual communion:

"My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen"

Finish by making the Sign of the Cross.

More detailed Liturgy of the Word

Find the readings in a Missal or online (universalis.com) and give them to all family members who can read.

Ask everyone to read them beforehand and to think about two things to say about the readings.

Ask someone to do each reading.

Also, ask each family member:

- to think of one person or group to pray for,
- to think of one thing or person they are thankful for and
- to write a prayer for each of these.

Set a time when the family will meet.

Prepare the room for prayer:

- Clean the room.
- Find a crucifix.
- Light a candle (if possible).

When everyone is ready, begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Follow with a penitential rite:

“To prepare us to listen to the Word of God, let us remember when we have failed to live as sons and daughters of God.

- For the times when we have not loved as God loves us. Lord, have mercy.
- For the times when we have not forgiven as God forgives us. Christ, have mercy.
- For the times when we have not been thankful for all God’s gifts. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and lead us to life everlasting.”

Since it is Lent, you do not need to read the Gloria. However, it is important to read a prayer. If you can, read the opening prayer from Mass. You can find this online (<https://us.magnificat.net/free>).

Afterwards, begin the readings as normal. Make sure there is silence during the readings, and some silence after each reading.

Have people stand for the reading of the Gospel.

After the gospel, invite people to share what they have prepared about the readings. Remind people not to criticise what each other person says, just to listen. If you need to correct something, it is probably better to do it later.

After people have said what they want to say, recite the Creed like normal.

After the Creed, say “Lord, we know you are close to us. You know our hearts better than we do. Please hear our prayers for us, for our family and our community.”

Now ask people to say their prayers that they have prepared. Use the normal ending of each prayer (“Lord, hear us”) and response (“Lord, hear our prayer.”)

Finish these prayer with: “Lord, you never leave us when we are in trouble. Hear these our prayers and any other prayers in our hearts. And let us sum up all our prayers in the words the Christ taught us.”

Pray the Lord’s Prayer.

Finish with an act of spiritual communion said by everyone:

“My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen”

Make the sign of the Cross.