

Parish Mission

Introduction and Purpose

Many parishes host parish missions throughout the year, especially during Lent. Parish missions are typically begin or end with Mass on Sunday and are held for 3-4 days with a large group session on each day—sometimes held in the morning, evening, or repeated at both times of day to accommodate parishioners with varying schedules.

Preparation for the Parish Mission

The following are key steps in preparing for a parish mission.

- Schedule the dates on the parish calendar.
- Reserve space (e.g., large meeting room, social hall, or the church) for the large group sessions.
- Promote the parish mission within the parish 2-3 months in advance of the event. Include specific information on the topic and corresponding chapters in the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* in your parish bulletin 2-3 weeks before the event.
- Coordinate hospitality (e.g., coffee and cookies, soda) and child care for the large group sessions. Address any transportation needs that parishioners might have.
- Determine the focus of the parish mission.
- Contact and hire the large group presenter or facilitator.
- Make copies of the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* available to potential participants. (Contact USCCB Publishing or your local Catholic bookstore if you would like to sell copies or buy copies to distribute free-of-charge to participants.)
- Do publicity/tie-ins with and through parish groups, e.g., Sodality, peace and justice, Knights of Columbus, small Christian communities.

Possible Overall Format

The following are possible formats for a four day parish mission that includes Sunday Mass. It is highly recommended that each day's session begin or end with formal prayer, e.g., prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours (related to the time of day during which the session takes place), Eucharistic adoration/benediction, or Mass.

Sunday-Wednesday Format

Thursday-Sunday Format

Sunday-Wednesday Format

Before Sunday

Remind participants what chapter they need to read in the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* before Sunday.

Sunday

Invite participants to attend any Mass of the day. Include a petition in the General Intercessions to pray for those who will participate in the mission.

Resources for the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*

Host the first large group session.

Remind participants what chapter they need to read in the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* before the large group session on Monday.

Monday

Host the second large group session.

Remind participants what chapter they need to read in the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* before the large group session on Tuesday.

Tuesday

Host the third large group session.

Remind participants what chapter they need to read in the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* before the large group session on Wednesday.

Wednesday

Host the last large group session.

End with prayer using the meditations and prayers at the end of any of the chapters used.

Thursday-Sunday Format

Before Thursday

Remind participants what chapter they need to read in the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* before Thursday.

Thursday

Host the first large group session.

Remind participants what chapter they need to read in the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* before the large group session on Friday.

Friday

Host the second large group session.

Remind participants what chapter they need to read in the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* before the large group session on Saturday.

Saturday

Invite participants to attend a specific Mass on Sunday.

Host the third large group session.

Remind participants what chapter they need to read in the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* before the large group session on Sunday.

Sunday

Participate in Mass as a group.

Host the last large group session after Mass.

End with prayer using the meditations and prayers at the end of any of the chapters used.

Resources for the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*

Suggestions for Individual Reflection and Large Group Sessions

Individual Reflection

In preparation for the large group sessions, encourage participants to commit time during the day to reflecting on the assigned chapter. The morning reflection should take 30-45 minutes. The Noon or afternoon reflection should require about 30-40 minutes, largely to allow for sufficient time for journaling.

Here is a possible daily schedule.

Morning

- Begin with the meditation or one of the prayers at the end of the chapter.
- Familiarize yourself with the discussion questions.
- Read the story of faith, teaching, sidebars, and culture sections (the text between the story of faith and the discussion questions.) Highlight any significant text or make notes for yourself in the margin.
- If time permits, begin writing your responses to the discussion questions in your journal.

Noon/Afternoon

- Review the doctrinal statements as you prepare to journal.
- Begin or continue your written responses to the discussion questions in your journal.

Large Group Sessions

During your preparation for the parish mission, encourage the presenter or facilitator to include opportunities for the participants to share their reflections on the material for that day. The presenter may invite the participants to form a small group with those around them to share their thoughts, or may ask participants to speak to the large group.

Content Suggestions

The following are some content suggestions using the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* as a starting point for individual and group reflection. We encourage parish leaders and presenters/facilitators to identify other groups of chapters that support the selected topic and are appropriate for the parish participants.

God (select four)

Chapter 1. My Soul Longs for You, O God

Chapter 2. God Comes to Meet Us

Chapter 3. Proclaim the Gospel to Every Creature

Chapter 5. I Believe in God

Chapter 25. The First Commandment: Believe in the True God

Chapter 26. The Second Commandment: Reverence God's Name

Chapter 27. The Third Commandment: Love the Lord's Day

Resources for the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*

God's Call and Our Response of Prayer

Chapter 1. My Soul Longs for You, O God

Chapter 2. God Comes to Meet Us

Chapter 35. God Calls Us to Pray

Chapter 36. Jesus Taught Us to Pray

The Eucharist and Paschal Mystery

Chapter 8. The Saving Death and Resurrection of Christ

Chapter 14. The Celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Christ

Chapter 17. The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Christian Life

Chapter 27. The Third Commandment: Love the Lord's Day

The Church

Chapter 9. Receive the Holy Spirit

Chapter 10. The Church: Reflecting the Light of Christ

Chapter 11. The Four Marks of the Church

Chapter 12. Mary: The Church's First and Most Perfect Member

Catholic Marriage and Families

Chapter 6. Man and Woman in the Beginning

Chapter 21. The Sacrament of Marriage

Chapter 28. The Fourth Commandment: Strengthen the Family

Chapter 30. The Sixth Commandment: Marital Fidelity

The Call to Discipleship

Chapter 1. My Soul Longs for You, O God

Chapter 7. The Good News: God Has Sent His Son

Chapter 8. The Saving Death and Resurrection of Christ

Chapter 34. Tenth Commandment: Embrace Poverty of Spirit