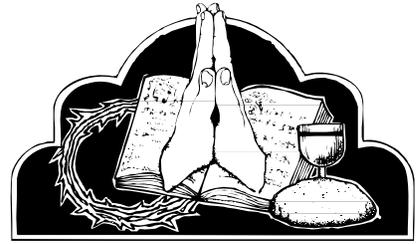


SUGGESTIONS FOR PLANNING PRAYER SERVICES & SACRED SPACE



Throughout the year, volunteers will be asked to plan and execute either the sacred space or the opening and closing liturgies, in teams of two or three. As you plan, keep in mind the biblical themes of the month, and consult liturgical calendars as a tie-in for the season. Avoid simply assigning one person to do the planning for the team, but work together. Plan together during the breaks or lunch period of prior months. If necessary, consult with one another by phone. Feel free to call on the talents of others in the Bible Institute, e.g., artists, lectors, or musicians. Plan well in advance of your team's assigned date.

SACRED SPACE:

Sacred Space is a visual aid that helps us get in touch with the holy in our lives. The Sacred Space flows from the biblical theme for the day and, secondarily, may express the liturgical season. Use good taste and appropriate symbols and colors (avoid non-scriptural feasts like St. Patrick's, President's Day, etc). Set up the sacred space in a visible location. You may use materials that have been collected and stored by the CBI leadership team or provide your own.

The Sacred Space might include the following:

- The Bible (or a Lectionary)
- Cloth of various textures and colors
- Flowers and/or plants; biblical food items
- Religious symbols (water, rocks, icons, etc.; a crucifix during the NT year)
- Battery-powered candles in appropriate liturgical colors (no real candles may be lit)

OPENING AND CLOSING PRAYER SERVICES:

The prayer services should be closely linked with the theme for the day and the liturgical season. Through song, readings, processions, etc., the entire gathering becomes actively engaged in the liturgical ritual. A careful selection of readings, music, and symbols with appropriately formulated responses and rituals help facilitate the service. The opening service draws all of us present into an experience that opens us to the Spirit speaking through the day's activities. The closing service, usually shorter, concludes the day with a shared encounter with God and one another based on the revelation of the day. Some suggestions for the prayer liturgy are as follows:

- The prayer liturgy may contain contemporary or traditional material. It may follow a conventional format or be original. It may be quiet or spirited, as long as it leads the assembled community to worship together.
- Use a variety of resources, readings, prayers, hymns, etc.
- Make the services participatory, with roles for the leaders, readers, and all the assembly.
- Use inclusive language for people and expansive language for God. That is, use phrases such as "brothers and sisters" rather than "brothers," and "people of God" or "the human family" rather than "men" or "mankind." In addition to "Father," use other biblical images also, such as "Creator God," "Rock of Salvation," "Holy One," and so forth.
- Give brief instructions to the assembly *before* and *not during* the worship.
- Send any worship aides to be photocopied to Marie Acosta at least one week in advance.