

**Loyola Press Catechetical Formation Series**  
Downloadable Interactive PDF  
Session Three: Prayer and Leading Prayer

Name	Parish
Date	

**Focus**

When it comes to incorporating prayer into faith formation sessions, it is not uncommon for catechists to keep it to a minimum in order to leave time for what is often perceived of as “the important stuff” – namely doctrine. As a result, prayer quite often gets reduced to a perfunctory set of bookends: an Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be at the beginning and end of a session. This is unfortunate because prayer is one of the primary ways that we facilitate encounters with God and, as we have said before, that is our primary role – not to teach a subject but to facilitate an encounter with God. We need to remember that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is based on four pillars: the Creed, Sacraments, the moral life, AND PRAYER. Without prayer, we lose our balance. Prayer should not be thought of as the bookends of a faith formation session or as some frosting on the cake that we can add just to make things “sweeter.” Prayer is one of four key ingredients that lead to a well-built faith. In this session, we’re going to look at how you as a catechist can more thoroughly integrate prayer into your faith formation sessions and, in fact, create a climate of prayer in which we encounter Jesus.

**Learning Outcomes** – At the end of this session, the catechist will be able to...

- articulate an understanding of prayer as lifting of minds and hearts to God.
- identify various forms and expressions of prayer.
- demonstrate an understanding of liturgical prayer and its components.
- identify the skills needed to effectively lead others in liturgical prayer.
- identify steps involved in planning prayer experiences.
- articulate an understanding of reflective prayer and demonstrate an ability to effectively lead a guided reflection.
- explain what is meant by “Ignatian” approaches to prayer and be able to lead others in an experience of the Daily Examen.

**Pause #1: Forms and Expressions of Prayer**

What is your understanding of prayer? What are the various forms and expressions of prayer? With which are you most familiar/comfortable with?

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#### **Pause #2: Leading Spontaneous Prayer**

What has been your experience of spontaneous prayer? How do you feel about being called upon to lead spontaneous prayer? What “ingredients” can be kept in mind to provide a “loose structure” for spontaneous prayer?

#### **Pause #3: Leading Liturgical Prayer**

What makes a prayer “liturgical”? In other words, what are the characteristics of liturgical prayer? What are the benefits of liturgical prayer? What are the elements that go into creating an “order of service” for liturgical prayer?

#### **Pause #4: Leading Reflective Prayer**

How would you characterize reflective prayer? What has been your experience of either leading or participating in reflective prayer/guided reflections? What are the 3 main steps of leading a guided reflection? What wisdom/advice would you share about leading guided reflections?

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#### **Pause #5: Leading *Lectio Divina* and Traditional Prayers**

Describe *lectio divina* and its steps. What is your favorite traditional prayer? What are the benefits of knowing and praying traditional prayers?

#### **Pause #6: Prayer Leadership Skills**

What skills are needed as a leader of prayer? Which do you feel you already possess? Which do you need to work on? Do you know someone who is an excellent leader of prayer? What makes him/her so effective? How can you emulate him/her?

#### **Summary**

What are 3 to 5 main takeaways you gained from this session? Describe how these insights will affect your approach to serving as a catechist.

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**Assigned Reading**

After reading *Beyond the Catechist's Toolbox: Catechesis That Not Only Informs but also Transforms* and *A Simple Life-Changing Prayer: Discovering the Power of St. Ignatius Loyola's Examen*, describe 3-4 main insights you gained and how they will have impact on your role as a catechist.

