

## Prayer Service

### Monumental Totally Catholic VBS 2022

Many parishes incorporate a prayer celebration as part of their VBS, inviting the participants, their families, and the entire parish community to join in the celebration. This prayer service may be celebrated on the eve of the final day; for example, Thursday night if the last day of Vacation Bible School is on Friday, or it may be celebrated on Friday to end the VBS week. This prayer service uses readings that highlight God's love for us. This week's VBS message is that we are Celebrating God's Greatness; he knows us, hears us, comforts us, forgives us, and chooses us.

#### Preparation and Supplies

- Confirm availability of a parish priest or deacon.
- Place an announcement in the parish bulletin inviting participant households and the entire faith community to the closing prayer celebration.
- Determine which reflection option you will use (see below) and prepare as needed.
- Choose songs from the suggestions below.
- Decorate the worship space, if desired, by displaying items from the week in an appropriate spot in the gathering space. If you have chosen to participate in the Catholic Relief Services Connecting Kids to Justice project during the week, place an appropriate display in the narthex or welcome area for people to see as they enter the gathering space.
- Recruit and prepare or practice with the necessary ministers from among the VBS participants and adult volunteers—lectors, music ministers, hospitality ministers, and so on.
- Consider including a collection for Catholic Relief Services after the reflection, unless you have incorporated the CRS collection during the week and feel that another request is too much.

#### Opening Song

“  
Monumental Love” (found on the *Monumental Sing and Play* Music soundtrack) or other gathering song of your choice.

#### Opening Prayer

Lord God, throughout history you have shown your great love to your people. Your greatest gift to us was your Son, Jesus, who gave himself to us in love. You loves us no matter what, are

with us wherever we go, you are in charge, stronger than anything, and your love is surprising. Send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us to share your love with others. Amen.

### **First Reading**

Instruct reader to begin by saying, “A reading from the book of Joshua ” and to conclude with “The word of the Lord.” At the conclusion of the reading, prompt assembly to respond, “Thanks be to God.”

### **First Reading**

First Reading: Josuha 3:7-10 (Note: This reading can be found in the Lectionary for Year A, 19<sup>th</sup> week in Ordinary Time) [Lectionary 416] )

### **Responsorial Psalm**

Psalm 66.5 (Note: This reading can be found in the Lectionary for Year A , 19<sup>th</sup> week in ordinary time) [Lectionary 415] )

### **Gospel Acclamation/Alleluia**

You may want to use a simple *Alleluia* call and response.

### **Gospel**

If a deacon or priest is not available, make sure the reader knows to begin by saying, “A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.” and to conclude with “The Gospel of the Lord.” At the conclusion of the reading, prompt assembly to respond, “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.”

Luke 24:1-12 (Note: This reading can be found in the Lectionary for Year C, Easter Vigil [Lectionary 41])

### **Reflection**

Here are two options to help the participants reflect on the readings and their experience of the week.

#### **Option One: Priest or Deacon Homily/Director Reflection**

Consider including the following points in the reflection:

- Encourage the participants to remember that, as they learned during the *VBS* experiences of this week, that God is awesome and great. God loves us no matter what, God is with us wherever we go, God is in charge, God is stronger than anything and His love is surprising. Jesus shows us God’s love by giving his very life for us.
- Challenge the participants to remember what they have learned about God’s love, and to share that love with others in what they say and do.

## **Option Two: Large Group Presentations**

Depending on the number of VBS crews that have been part of the week, consider inviting each crew or a combination of crews to come forward to share with all those gathered a brief summary of their experience of the week:

- a. Assign each group a particular aspect of the week to share with the group—the Scripture passage for a day, a favorite station, a favorite song.

Or

- b. Invite each VBS crew to create a brief presentation that summarizes their central learning from the week—it may be one of the songs that summarizes the week for them, a brief drama that they create and share, a poster with their key thoughts and reflective images on it, one of the station days from the week, or highlights of their conversations as they discussed Connecting Kids to Justice. Issue the invitations a day or two in advance so the crews will have time to prepare their presentations.

If your physical space allows, an effective way to facilitate the large group sharing is by creating a “circle theater.” In a circle theater format, everyone has easy access to the center space and everyone can see.

Place chairs for visiting adults and family members unable to sit on the floor around the perimeter of a large circle.

Inside the circle, sit each crew on the floor, as if they are sitting in a “slice” of the circle.

Leave an open space in the center of the circle for the crews to present, as well as space between each slice to serve as aisles.

To create a prayerful tone to the sharing, select a simple song that the community can sing after each crew has shared and another crew is stepping forward to share.

### **Prayer of the Faithful**

After the intercessions listed below, add any specific intentions for the VBS participants, their families, or the community in general. After each petition, please respond with, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

For Church leaders, that they may trust in God’s power and be good shepherds to God’s people, we pray to the Lord.

For leaders of all countries, that they may humbly recognize that their power comes from God, and that they may exercise it with wisdom and charity by caring for their people, we pray to the Lord.

For the poor and the suffering, especially those suffering from hunger, we pray to the Lord.

For those who are sick and dying, for hope, healing, and trust in God's power and mercy, we pray to the Lord.

For all who serve this parish as leaders, especially those who helped out with VBS this week, we pray to the Lord.

For all those gathered here. May we proclaim the Good News with boldness and love walking together in faith, we pray to the Lord.

### **Lord's Prayer**

Trusting that the Lord hears all of our prayers, let us pray the prayer that Jesus, our Good Shepherd, taught us. Our Father...

### **Sign of Peace**

### **Concluding Blessing**

*At the end of each blessing, we can all respond, "Amen."*

*May God bless you with eyes to see his love and care even in difficult times. Amen.*

*May God bless you with courage so that you can share your story and help others to know God's love in their lives. Amen.*

*May God bless you with compassion and forgiveness, so you might see the needs of others and share God's forgiveness with them. Amen.*

*And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you forever.*

**Closing Song:** *"How Great is Our God (found on the Monumental Sing and Play Music soundtrack), or another song selection of your choice.*