



Prayer Service

True North Totally Catholic VBS 2025

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 that God is a friend to us, and we can thank him for his friendship and invite others into friendship with him.

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 prayer 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 Coats for Kids VBS Outreach 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 the Coats for Kids VBS Outreach Project after the reflection, unless you have incorporated the VBS Outreach Project collection during the week and feel that another request is too much.

Opening Song

“This is the Day” (found on the *True North Sing and Play Peak Music Soundtrack*) or another gathering

song of your choice

Opening Prayer

Holy God, our Lord and our Friend, throughout history you have been faithful your people. Your Son, Jesus, was the fulfillment of your promise to save us from sin. Send us your Holy Spirit upon us, that we may learn to trust you more and spread the God news that in a world gone wild, we can trust in you. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Instruct reader to begin by saying, “A reading from the prophet Jeremiah” 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: Jer 1:1, 4-10 (Note: This reading can be found in the Lectionary for Cycle II, Wednesday of the Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time, Lectionary 397])
- Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 37:3-4, 18-19, 27-28, 39-40 (Note: This reading can be found in the Lectionary for Cycle II, Tuesday of the Seventh Week in Ordinary Time, Lectionary 342])
- Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)

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 ” 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.”

- Gospel: Mt 11:28-30 (Note: This reading can be found in the Lectionary for Cycle I, Thursday of the Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time [Lectionary 392])

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:

- Jesus is a friend we can trust – when we need answers, when we feel alone, when we feel powerless, when we need hope, and when we need help.
- We are called to share the trustworthiness of Jesus and the hope we have in him. We have a special opportunity to celebrate and share the hope we have in Jesus in this Jubilee Year of Hope.

- In this year’s VBS, we focused on aspects of our Catholic Tradition that remind us of the trustworthiness of Jesus and his Church. Catholic IDs this week included Catechism, the Tabernacle, the Brown Scapular, the Act of Hope, and the Sacrament of Confirmation.

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 what they learned 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 the Cats for Kids VBS Outreach project. Extend 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, seat 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 Jesus and be trustworthy shepherds to God’s people, we pray to the Lord.

For leaders of all countries, that they may be trustworthy by caring for all their people, we pray to the Lord.

For the poor and the suffering, especially those suffering from hunger, that God may use us to show them they can trust Jesus and his people to care for their needs, we pray to the Lord.

For those who are sick and dying and all those who are living in dark times, that in this Jubilee Year of Hope, they might find hope and healing by trusting in Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

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

For all those gathered here. May our trust in Jesus be a light to the world, we pray to the Lord.

Lord's Prayer

Trusting that the Lord hears all our prayers, let us pray the prayer that Jesus, our Lord and our friend, 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 grace to see that you can always trust in him. Amen.

May God bless you with mercy so that you can share the message of hope in Jesus with others. Amen.

May God bless you with compassion and forgiveness, so you might see the needs of others and show God's love and trustworthiness to 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: "Let's Trust in Jesus" (found on the *True North Sing and Play Peak* music soundtrack), or another song selection of your choice.