

Holy Hour Resource Pack Contents

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The Catholic Agency to Support Evangelisation (CASE) www.casesources.org



Introduction

One day last year, we had a call from a woman in a parish. She and a few others wanted to have an evening of prayer for vocations, and she wondered whether we had any materials they could use. We sent her a copy of the pack which was sent to all Parish Priests for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, with suggestions of the parts which could be adapted for her particular circumstances.

Her request really made us think. Most of the materials we were planning were aimed at teachers, catechists or priests: but we had nothing to support lay members of a parish who want to pray together on a regular basis for vocations!

With the Catholic Agency to Support Evangelisation (CASE) we have developed this pack as a series of nine holy hours. We expect that these will be held monthly, excluding holiday times (Christmas, Easter and Summer), but they could also be used on nine consecutive evenings, as a Novena.

Each holy hour focuses on vocation and evangelisation, and is set within the themes of Creation (the beginning!), each of the seven sacraments (our Christian life) and 'commissioning' – of being sent out to proclaim the Good News.

Each hour follows the same format.

- The group is welcomed and the theme introduced.
- The evening starts with a hymn, followed by a scripture reading and short reflection and a period of silent prayer.
- There is another reading and a period of prayer.
- There is another hymn, and gospel reading again with a short reflection and period of silent prayer.
- Finally, there is a period of praise and intercession, and departure.

We usually offer people a parting gift. This is always a copy of the sheet which has been used during the holy hour, and could be used for reflection during the week, but is also a small symbol of the theme of the evening (e.g. for the session on baptism we suggest that everyone takes home a small bottle of holy water).

We've also included some leader's notes to offer some practical guidance on running the holy hour for anyone who may be new to leading.

The main thing with this, as with any prayer time is that it be a simple and sincere time of being with Jesus. It doesn't have to be perfectly 'done'! And the sessions can be adapted for use to suit your particular parish – you may be able to have exposition of the Blessed Sacrament or not; you may feel that three readings are too many; you may want to expand the litany of praise and intercession to incorporate the needs of your own parish.

We hope you find the series useful, and may they bring riches and blessings to your parish!

Leaders' Notes

Thank you for leading this time of prayer – we hope it will be a time of richness and grace for the parish.

In case you're new to leading, here are a dozen practical tips to help the meeting run smoothly!

Beforehand – setting up

- Make sure there are enough session sheets / hymn books / copies of the readings and 'parting gifts' for each person to have one.
- Create a focal point for prayer – candles, icons, symbols or simply the altar with the Blessed Sacrament.
- If we have suggested a symbolic gesture or action during the hour, check to see that you have everything you will need for it.

Beforehand and on the day – to run the session

- If you are using music, get the cassette / CD player plugged in, and the tape or CD ready to play.
- Get the heating on, and if in church, switch on the microphones.
- Arrange the seating (if possible) in semi-circles towards the focal prayer point.
- Each holy hour has three scripture readings. Invite others to read these, giving them enough time beforehand to prepare. (We have used the Jerusalem Bible).
- If someone else is leading the hymns, please make sure they know what / when they're going to sing. If you're using a CD or tape player, then you might want to ask someone to be ready to press the button at the appropriate moment!

During the session

- Welcome people and tell them what to expect – encourage participation!
- We've given some rough ideas about how long each part should take – this is not set in stone, and don't be afraid to let people pray in the long silences.
- Pause during the reflections and litanies of praise and intercession as indicated
- Please read the reflections slowly and meditatively. You may find it helpful to have two people reading the points alternately.
- At the end, thank everyone for coming and invite everyone to keep their holy hour sheet for reflection during the week / month. The 'parting gift' (a small symbol of the theme of the evening) is given at the end.

Finally, relax and enjoy the holy hour! What is important is that people pray, not that it was a perfect exercise!

SUGGESTIONS FOR PARTICULAR SESSIONS

Called to life Booklet One

Parting Gift - a seed to take home as a symbol of God's creative power at work in our lives.

Celebrating Baptism Booklet Two

Parting Gift - include a small bottle of holy water to take home as a reminder of the graces received at our baptism.

Seeking the Father's forgiveness Booklet Three

Recommendation: If possible, arrange for a priest to be present, available to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the holy hour and mention this during the welcome and introduction.

Parting Gift - include a white flower to symbolise our continuing desire to be reconciled with God.

Jesus, the Bread of Life Booklet Four

Parting Gift - a piece of bread as a reminder of how Christ feeds us in the Eucharist.

Receive the Holy Spirit Booklet Five

At the beginning of the evening distribute unlit candles to those present. After the Acts 2 reading and Reflection, during the time of silent prayer, the leader lights their candle and then the candle of the person nearest. This person then passes the light on to another person and so on.

Parting Gift - The candle becomes the Parting Gift, a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit in all the baptized.

The Priesthood and Diaconate Booklet Six

Parting Gift - a prayer for vocations to the priesthood (one available from www.ukpriest.org).

Marriage and Family Life Booklet Seven

A handout with the marriage vows for the renewal of vows by married couples present.

Parting Gift - a red rose/ a flower for each person to take home as a sign of God's love for them.

Grace to carry the Cross - Booklet Eight

During the Holy Hour after the Gospel reading and reflection and before the Litany of Praise and intercession, there is the possibility of a time of prayer and anointing of the sick who are present by a priest or deacon. Alternatively, the leader could invite the group present to join hands (if feasible) and ask them to pray for the person on either side of them IN SILENCE.

After a few minutes, they begin the Litany of praise and intercession.

Parting Gift - a Palm Sunday cross as a symbol of our desire to be united with the suffering of Christ.

Commissioned to Serve -Booklet Nine

After the Commissioning Prayer, if a priest is present, invite each person to come forward to receive the commissioning blessing, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." The sign of the Cross is made on the forehead at the same time.

If there is no priest present, each person turns to the nearest person on their left and uses the same prayer while making the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

Parting Gift - a copy of the CASE prayer for evangelisation (www.casereources.org).

“The Eucharist Builds the Church.”

Ecclesia de Eucharistia 26



Photo © Glastonbury Shrine, www.glastonburyshrine.co.uk

“Could you not spend one hour with me?”

Mark 14:37

Join us to pray for vocations and the growth of the Church

Date and time:

Place:

ALL ARE WELCOME