

PREPARING FOR PENTECOST

Northampton Diocesan Evangelisation Team



INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES FOR LEADERS

***A New Evangelisation is only possible in the power of a New Pentecost.
We therefore offer these simple resources to encourage and facilitate prayer for
a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit for a New Evangelisation.***

The Pentecost Novena Order of Services, prayer cards and other resources are offered as templates to help parishes, and groups in other settings, organise prayer services as part of a Pentecost novena.

RESOURCES

Short, medium length and full length Pentecost Novena services take approximately 15 mins, 30-40 mins or an hour respectively to pray through. The templates along with an **ecumenical prayer service** are available online from the Northampton Diocesan website www.northamptondiocese.org (follow links to 'Faith' and 'Evangelisation') and from the NORES office (see www.nores.org.uk). As well as the service sheets, there are also a number of additional resources available.

SUGGESTED USES

The Pentecost Novena Prayer Services may be used whenever people gather during the nine days of the novena. They can be prayed before or after Mass or other liturgies, in prayer meetings, as part of other meetings or at home. These resources are suitable for use by Churches, prayer groups, families and individuals for their personal prayer.

Over the last few years we have also had parishes and groups from other parts of the UK making use of them. It would be great to hear from you if you plan to use these resources whatever part of the world you are from.

www.northamptondiocese.org
Follow links to 'Faith' then 'Evangelisation'

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- **Leaders are free to be creative** and adapt the prayer services to best suit the needs of their groups. However, in order to maintain unity with the other groups praying the novena, leaders are asked to observe the following guidance when preparing their service:
- **The 9 days of prayer of the Novena begin on Friday of the 6th Week of Easter**, even though the Solemnity of the Ascension is transferred to the 7th Sunday of Easter, and goes through to the Saturday before Pentecost Sunday.
- **Leaders must arrange prayer services in full co-operation with their parish priests.** It is important to keep our priests informed and to follow any guidance they give e.g. If you would like to use a Church/ Church hall as a venue or include a time of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament as part of your prayer service, this needs to be with the full knowledge and support of your parish priest and arranged in advance. In planning and organising your service you must follow the relevant parish and Diocesan policies (e.g. safeguarding/ health and safety).
- **When planning your prayer service please retain the overall structure and themes** given in the templates. Feel free to change or adapt the suggested hymns and intercessions and to organise the last section of the full length version (adoration) as best suits your group. If you don't have any musicians feel free to sing unaccompanied or to use recorded music. There is a hymn 'Holy Spirit Lord of Love' available as part of these resources with a free MP3 file and sheet music.
- **The prayer service should be as inclusive as possible.** It is a very simple service. The full length version includes some basic teaching from Scripture about the Holy Spirit, some well-known hymns and some prayers that everyone can join in with. Make sure that everyone has a copy of the prayer responses and hymns so that everyone can join in. The prayer service should be inclusive in its approach and spirituality. Try to organise your service so that it is 'seeker friendly' i.e. in such a way that anyone new who comes along will be able to fully participate and feel included.
- **The basic full length service should be up to an hour long.** You may wish to extend the service and include more time for adoration, if so, you can arrange it so that everyone can join in with the core service and then feel free to leave or stay on for longer if they are able to. The medium length, shorter version and ecumenical versions are shorter. Please adapt the services to best suit your needs and available time.
- **Practical Issues:** If possible put together a small team to help organise the event. That way you can pray and plan together and share out the jobs that need to be done. In your planning give some thought to the welcome and hospitality you will offer, also be creative with your advertising of the event and try to extend the invitation as widely as possible using different means of communication e.g. flyers that can be used with a personal invitation, as well as the more usual forms of communication (posters, newsletters). Make use of modern means of communication too like social media if you can.
- You may wish to organise a follow up event to help you celebrate Pentecost following the novena prayer.

SPECIFIC GUIDANCE ABOUT THE FULL LENGTH NOVENA PRAYER SERVICE

Themed Readings from Scripture, Prayer Responses and Hymns

Gather a team of confident readers who can read the Scripture readings and reflections. Make sure you have a Bible ready with the prepared readings and that readers have a chance to practice with any PA system beforehand.

If you have musicians and singers make sure they are familiar with the hymns you have chosen and have had a chance to practice. Make sure also that there are enough copies of hymn books for everyone and that you have someone to hand them out to people along with the order of service as people gather.

INTERCESSIONS

For the prayers of intercession, you may wish to compose your own, praying for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church and the world. Make sure to include particular intentions e.g. for the Universal Church, our own Diocese, for a New Evangelisation and any other intentions. You also may wish to use the intercessions given in the Prayer of the Church (Divine Office) for the day you are gathering to pray.

ADORATION

You may wish to begin with a hymn followed by a time of quiet prayer in church, then choose some or all of the following options:

- With the permission and support of your parish priest you may wish to include a time of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament
- A time for being still before the Lord and silent prayer. This can help us to have a sense of waiting on the Lord with expectant faith just as the early disciples waited in the Upper Room for the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- You may wish to sing some hymns of adoration e.g. Be still for the presence of the Lord
- You may wish to pray the prayer of the Church e.g. if you are gathering in the evening you may wish to pray evening prayer of the Church.
- You may wish to recite psalms of praise and adoration (you can choose suitable psalms from the Bible or select psalms from the Prayer of the Church/ Liturgy of the day).

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CONTEXT OF THE NOVENA AND ADAPTING THE PRAYERS

Some parishes have asked whether prayers for the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (received in the Sacrament of Confirmation) can be included.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit received at Confirmation are:

Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord.



The main context and focus of our particular resources is simple prayer for Holy Spirit, the gift that contains all gifts and God's first gift to those who believe, a gift that leads us to mission. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that:

"God is Love" and love is his first gift, containing all others. "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." (CCC 733)

Groups may however, if they wish, adapt the resources to include prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, those listed above as well as other gifts/charisms of the Holy Spirit e.g. those found in 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

We wish you every blessing as you prepare for and celebrate Pentecost.

Alex Heath, Chair of the Northampton Diocesan Evangelisation Team
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*This resource has been produced by the Northampton Diocesan Evangelisation Team
and can be freely used along with the Prayer Service Templates
to resource Pentecost Novena initiatives.*



NORTHAMPTON DIOCESAN EVANGELISATION TEAM
*Promoting local and practical initiatives for the New Evangelisation
NORES- Religious Education, Evangelisation, Catechesis & Schools*