



Prayer School – February 2022

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Why Pray at all? What is the purpose of prayer?

Morning Prayer Walk Through

1. Opening Sentence (pg. 75-78)

Beginning on page 75 of the BCP. The small fine print is the “rubrics” or liturgical instructions. The first one tells us that we should begin by reading one of the following sentences of scripture. There are roughly 4.5 pages of options to choose from. They are categorized by liturgical season. During Ordinary Time in the Liturgical Calendar (when the vestments are green), or at any time of year, you can look to page 78 and select a sentence from under the heading “At any time.” An easy way to select is to just go down the list and pick the next one in the list you haven’t done yet. When you finish the list, start over.

2. Confession (pg. 79)

You may choose to say either the longer or the shorter introduction to the confession. After that there is a rubric suggesting silence may be kept. During this time of silence, call to mind anything in particular of which you are repentant. Then, once an appropriate amount of silent time has elapsed, pray the confession.

3. Absolution (pg. 80)

Following the Confession, we turn to page 80 for the Absolution. While only a priest can properly pronounce God's absolution on a penitent, you as the Officiant are empowered to pray for God's absolution. You simply substitute pronouns, as provided for in the rubric near the top of page 80.

4. The Invitatory (pg. 80)

Next comes the piece called the *Invitatory* – this is a portion of a psalm or scripture, the themes of which are praise and a call to prayer (it invites us to prayer). Still on page 80, these opening lines (Lord, open our lips...) are very ancient and have been prayed for centuries. Following them is said the *Gloria Patri* (Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit...). If not in Lent, "Alleluia" is added.

Before and after the Invitatory a seasonal antiphon is said. Again, you'll select one from a list on pages 81-82 appropriate to the season we're in or you can choose from "On other Sundays and weekdays."

Then we say one of three options for the Invitatory, the *Venite* (Psalm 95: 1-7), the *Jubilate* (Psalm 100), or the *Christ our Passover (Pascha Nostrum)*, all found on pages 82-83. After you pray the Invitatory, you repeat the antiphon you said before it.

5. The Psalm or Psalms Appointed (pg. 84)

Pray a psalm appointed for the day. To find the day's readings, start on page 934 of the BCP. Here you'll find the "Daily Office Lectionary" which has not only the appointed psalms, but also the appointed scripture readings for every day. These are divided up into two, one-year reading tracks: Year One and Year Two. The fine print rubrics on p. 934 it tells what year we are in.

In order to find the psalm for today, you'll need to know what Sunday in the church year was celebrated last. You can find this at the top of the Sunday morning bulletin, or online at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/lectionary-calendar> When you figure out week of the calendar we are in, you can look it up in the Daily Office Lectionary (beginning on page 933) and find where it gives the readings specific for today.

The entry looks something like this:

Monday 25 * 9, 15
Eccus. 4: 20 – 5:7 Rev. 7: 1-8 Luke 9: 51-62

The numbers separated by an asterisks are the psalm numbers. The numbers before the asterisk are for Morning Prayer, the ones after it are for Evening Prayer. So, in this example, we know that for Morning Prayer we read Psalm 25. The Psalms can be found in the BCP beginning on page 585.

6. The Lessons (pg. 84)

“The Lessons” on page 84 says you may choose to read either one or two of the appointed lessons. You’ll find the appointed lessons in the same place you found the appointed psalm. A Canticle is traditionally said after each reading. If three Lessons are listed, the Lesson from the Gospel is read after the second Canticle.

Remember, the entry looks something like this:

Monday 25 * 9, 15
Ecclus. 4: 20 – 5:7 Rev. 7: 1-8 Luke 9: 51-62

The three scripture references on the second line are the appointed lessons for Morning and Evening Prayer together. You can choose to read them in any pattern you want.

The Reading can be introduced as “A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiasticus.” Following the reading there should be a distinct pause to allow the reading to end and then is said, “The Word of the Lord.” To which is said “Thanks be to God,” as a response. Sometimes you’ll read a lesson that is unsettling in some way for which you don’t necessarily know if you want to thank the Lord for it or not! But remember, it is not for that specific reading that we thank the Lord, but for the reading of Scripture in general.

7. The Canticles (pg. 85)

After each reading a Canticle is typically said. Canticles are generally poetic or lyrical pieces of Scripture. The suggested Canticles for Morning Prayer begin on page 85 and go through page 96. Turning to page 86, the first thing you’ll note is that the first canticle is labeled as being number 8. The first seven canticles are found in the Rite I service and are repeated in Rite II but in contemporary language. Some canticles are more appropriate for different seasons and you’ll see those labeled as such.

Canticles 8-14 are from Old Testament or Apocryphal books and thus are best suited to be said following the Old Testament reading. Canticles 9-21 are from the New Testament or church tradition and thus are best suited to follow New Testament readings. Of course, this is a suggestion and not a rule. If the amount of choice is overwhelming, there is a helpful table on page 144 that gives a selection for each day for both the Old and New Testament readings.

8. The Apostles’ Creed (pg. 96)

After the second canticle is properly said read the Apostles’ Creed. This appears at the end of the set of canticles, on page 96.

9. The Prayers (Salutation, Lord's Prayer, and Suffrages) (pg. 97)

The *Salutation* ("The Lord be with you. And also with you. Let us pray.") is said, followed by the *Lord's Prayer*. After the Lord's Prayer, you will pray one of two sets of suffrages. *Suffrages* are a set of short, intercessory prayers. The two sets are labeled "A" and "B." Each set of suffrages has letters in front of them – "V." and "R." – these are shorthand for "Versicle" and "Response" where the Officiant says the Versicle and the people say the Response. Of course, if you're by yourself, you say both.

10. The Collects (pg. 98)

After the suffrages comes the Collects beginning on page 98. Collects are traditional, and in many cases ancient, prayers. At Morning Prayer, 3 collects should be said: The *Collect for the Day*, one of the "named" collects, and a *Collect for Mission*.

The Collect of the Day is always the Collect from the previous Sunday. You can find the Collect from the previous Sunday located in a section of the BCP, beginning on page 211.

One of the "Named Collects" is said second. I call them the "Named Collects" because they all have a name, like "A Collect for Fridays," or "A Collect for Peace." Obviously, the ones named for days of the week are for those days. The others can be used on any day - do whichever one feels right to you that day!

Finally, the Collects for Mission begin on the bottom of p. 100. Somewhat unhelpfully, they are not clearly labeled as such, but are only called "Prayers for Mission" in the rubrics which appear right above them. There are three to pick from, so select whichever one you want.

11. Intercessions

On page 101, the rubric states "authorized intercessions and thanksgivings may follow." This is an important part of Morning Prayer where "unscripted prayers" may be prayed. This is where you can take time to pray for others and lift up needs to God, or give thanks to God for a particular blessing He's given you recently.

12. The Concluding Prayers (General Thanksgiving & Prayer of St. Chrysostom)

Then a rubric instructs us to pray "one or both of the following prayers," where the following prayers are "*The General Thanksgiving*," and "*The Prayer of St. Chrysostom*." You can choose to do one or the other, or both.

13. The Concluding Blessings

The concluding blessing is found in the middle of page 102. Then, to end, you may add one of the final blessings from scripture, found on the bottom of the page.