

Liturgy of Light Celebration at Home

Image of Light

The image of light is one of powerful significance. Light conquers darkness, its presence chases away the shadows and brings forth hope and joy. It helps us to reflect on the victory of life over death. As we share this light it helps us to reflect on God's plan to share Jesus' resurrected life with us.

The Liturgy of Light is celebrated during the Easter Vigil. It begins outside the church where the new light is prepared and then shared by all as they enter the church and rejoice in this Light conquering the darkness.

The Liturgy of Light at Home - How to Begin

You can celebrate around your prayer table or just a coffee table or similar space where your family can gather, inside or outside. It will be most effective if done in the dark. You could even begin outside and then carry the light into your home, much as we do at the Easter Vigil.

If you have a prayer table, take everything off it, so that it is empty and waiting. It is nice to begin in another place, outside or in another room, this is the place of preparation.

Preparing the candle

You may already have a large candle at home that would be suitable, if not Bunnings or a discount shop may have a large pillar candle that is not too expensive. The children could decorate the candle with symbols we see on the large Paschal candle at church. It has a large cross with the Greek letters: alpha and omega above and below it. Then the numbers for the year around it. See pictures. You can paint these on (acrylic paint works well) or use something to stick them on to the candle (tape or paper and glue stick).



Items you will need in the place of preparation

Have ready the following items:

- a white or gold cloth to adorn your prayer table
- a large candle to represent the light of the risen Christ
- Bible on a stand or cushion
- a vase of flowers
- image of the Resurrection (drawn by the children or printed from the computer)
- a prayer card with the word ALLELUIA
- a tray of smaller candles (one for each family member), you could use tealights on a saucer.

The Celebration - Simplified

This celebration could be as simple as lighting the large Paschal or Easter candle in the darkness and processing with it into your prayer space. There you can set the table then listen to the scripture of the Resurrection. After that, light a candle for each family member from the Paschal candle. This symbolises the light of the risen Christ spreading to each one of us. You could then sing some songs that the children know such as "He's Alive", "God's not Dead", "Alleluia", etc.



The Celebration – With More Detail

You may want to include more of the prayers we say in the Liturgy of Light at the Easter Vigil. Below is an outline you can use. If your children are older, they may want to say some of the prayers, we have included some cards you can print out for them to read from. You can leave out parts to meet the needs of your particular family group and their ages. You can also just allow the children to choose the ones that interest them.

A sample prayer liturgy

PROCLAMATION:

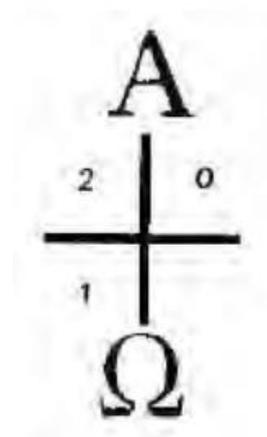
Dear brothers and sisters, on this most sacred night, in which our Lord Jesus Christ passed over from death to life, the Church invites her sons and daughters, scattered throughout the world, to come together to watch in vigil and pray. If we keep the memorial of the Lord’s paschal solemnity in this way, listening to his word and celebrating his mysteries, then we shall have the sure hope of sharing his triumph over death and living with him in God.

BLESSING AND PREPARATION OF THE CANDLE:

Prepare the paschal candle using the following instructions. The children can help do this. Take turns with each line.

To prepare, say the following words as you trace or point to the symbols (indicated below) on your candle.

1. Christ yesterday and today (Vertical bar)
2. the Beginning and the End (Horizontal bar)
3. the Alpha (Above cross)
4. and the Omega (Below cross)
5. All time belongs to him (Upper left number)
6. and all the ages (Upper right number)
7. To him be glory and power (Lower left number)
8. through every age and for ever. Amen. (Lower right number)



OPTIONAL PRAYER WITH NAILS

(You may choose to include adding the 5 pins depicting the 5 wounds of Christ, depending on the age of your children and time available you may decide to omit this part. If you include this, you may want to place some pins into your candle at the appropriate places)

1. *by his holy*
2. *and glorious wounds*
3. *may Christ our Lord*
4. *guard us*
5. *and keep us. Amen*



LIGHT THE CANDLE

After lighting the candle pray:

May the Light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.



PROCESSION

The paschal candle is carried in procession to your prayer space. During the procession the candle is lifted three times. Each time the candle bearer sings out:

“The Light of Christ”

Each time the people gathered respond:

“Thanks be to God”

Then place the Paschal Candle on or near your prayer table.

When you arrive at the prayer table, place items that have been carried in procession, or that you have stored near the prayer table, onto the table. The cloth, Bible and stand, prayer card with stand, statue of Jesus or image of the resurrection, flowers. The tray of smaller candles can be placed on or near the prayer table as space permits.



LITURGY AT THE PRAYER TABLE

Begin with a song (e.g. “Alleluia!”).

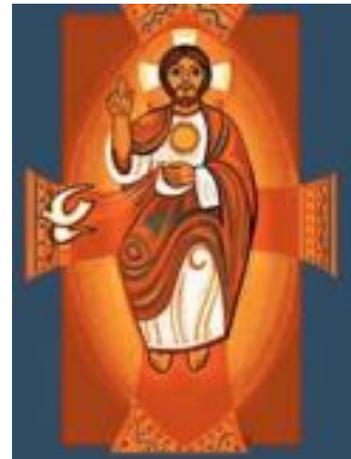
Scripture Reading: choose one of Matthew 28:1-10 or Mark 16:1-7, this can be read by an adult or a competent reading child.

Second song. (e.g. “He's Alive”)

EXULTET

The Exultet or Proclamation of Easter (read by an adult)

Exult, let them exult, the hosts of heaven,
exult, let Angel ministers of God exult,
let the trumpet of salvation sound aloud
our mighty King's triumph!
Be glad, let earth be glad, as glory floods her,
ablaze with light from her eternal King,
let all corners of the earth be glad,
knowing an end to gloom and darkness.
Rejoice, let Mother Church also rejoice,
arrayed with the lightning of his glory,
let this holy building shake with joy,
filled with the mighty voices of the peoples.



Third song. (e.g. “The light of Christ surrounds us”)

LIGHTING OF THE INDIVIDUAL CANDLES

A parent lights a candle and presents it to each child one at a time saying:

“Jesus Christ has died and is risen! He shares his light with us! [NAME], Receive the Light of Christ”

Children can hold their candle, or the candle can be placed on the floor in front of the Child or on the prayer table.

When everyone (including parents) has a candle, sing (e.g. “This little light of mine!”)

Other songs may be sung.



CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:

May this flame be found still burning by the Morning Star:
the one Morning Star who never sets,
Christ your Son, who, coming back from death's domain,
has shed his peaceful light on humanity,
and lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen

RECESSIONAL

You can end with some more songs, some examples are: “Shout for joy”, “God's Not Dead”, “Alleluia!”

Some Practical Considerations

Safety – ensure the children have their hair tied back and clothing is not able to drape over the open flames. Ideally have a candle holder that holds the candle (like a glass cup).

If you decide to share prayers with your older children. Please see the document “Cards to Aid the Prayer Liturgy of Light with Children”. These have individual prayer parts on cards you can cut out for the readers. Decide who will do what and practise their parts with your children beforehand.

You may choose to have your Liturgy of Light after Holy Saturday (especially if you are watching a live telecast that night). Since the Easter season goes for 50 days, choose a day or two after Easter Sunday to remember how the light of the risen Christ spreads to drive out all darkness.