

COMMISSIONING SERVICE

This ceremony for the blessing and commissioning of catechists is intended to take place at the Eucharistic liturgy on Catechetical Sunday. If this is not possible, the blessing and commissioning may be celebrated at Mass at another time, or it may be used outside of Mass, perhaps with the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours or at a simple commissioning service. The rite of blessing that follows is from the *Book of Blessings*, chapter 4, section I, "Order for the Blessing of Those Appointed as Catechists."

In the homily, the celebrant gives an explanation of the celebration of catechesis that is based on the sacred text. See page 12 of this booklet for additional ideas for the development of the homily.

Following the homily, the celebrant, deacon, or other suitable minister calls the catechists to come forward, either individually by name or as a group. The celebrant may then introduce the blessing, using the following or other similar words.

ORDER OF BLESSING WITHIN MASS

Introduction of Catechists

The celebrant addresses the assembly.

CELEBRANT:

For the pastoral activity of the Church, the cooperation of a great many people is needed, so that communities as well as individuals may advance to full maturity in faith and continually show forth their faith through the celebration of the liturgy, through study, and through their manner of life.

This cooperation is provided by those who devote themselves to catechesis. Enlightened by God's Word and the teaching of the Church, catechists impart to others an initiation or a deeper formation in those realities that they themselves have learned as truths to be followed in living and to be celebrated in liturgy.

In this celebration we will bless the name of the Lord for giving us such co-workers and pray that through the Holy Spirit they will receive the grace they need in their service to the Church.

Blessing of Catechists

Addressing catechists new to the ministry, a deacon or veteran catechist says the following:

Would those who are willing to serve as catechists in [name of parish] please stand?

Or ask them to come forward, depending on the number and the place.

CELEBRANT:

Now I ask you, are you willing to exercise the ministry of catechesis here at [name of parish]?

CATECHISTS:

With the help of God, I am ready and willing to serve as a catechist along with all the catechists of this parish.

CELEBRANT:

May God help you to be good stewards to what has been entrusted to you, and may you and all the catechists who serve in this parish receive the grace you need for your service here at [name of parish].

General Intercessions

The general intercessions follow the introduction to the blessing. These intercessions may be used in whole or in part. Always include your own intentions for local needs.

CELEBRANT:

God created us to live and grow in love. By being stewards of God's gifts, we take an active part in bringing this vision of life into being. Confident in the power of prayer to transform us, we bring our needs to God who hears and answers us.

ASSISTING MINISTER:

The response is "Lord, hear our prayer."

For the Church: May it grow stronger in its resolve to welcome and embrace those who are living on the margins of society. For this, we pray to the Lord: **R/**.

For the leaders of nations: May their first concern be to preserve and foster peace through compassionate policies and just systems. For this, we pray to the Lord: **R/**.

For those who suffer from physical and mental illness: May they be healed through God's infinite mercy and be comforted by those who care for them. For this, we pray to the Lord: **R/**.

For families: May they grow stronger in their love and commitment to one another. For this, we pray to the Lord: **R/**.

For catechists: May they be blessed with creativity and enthusiasm as stewards of God's gifts. For this, we pray to the Lord: **R/**.

Blessing

The blessing of catechists follows the general intercessions. As an alternative, the prayer of blessing may be used at the end of Mass after an invitation such as, "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing."

With hands outstretched, the celebrant prays the blessing for the catechists.

CELEBRANT:

With your fatherly blessing, Lord,
strengthen these servants of yours
in their resolve to dedicate themselves as catechists.
Grant that they will strive to share with others
what they themselves derive from pondering
your Word
and studying the Church's teaching.
And let them gladly join those they teach
in honoring and serving your name.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **R/**. Amen.

or

CELEBRANT:

Lord God,
source of all wisdom and knowledge,
you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to live among us
and to proclaim his message of faith, hope, and love
to all nations.
In your goodness
bless our brothers and sisters
who have offered themselves as catechists for
your Church.
Strengthen them with your gifts,
that they may teach by word and by example
the truth that comes from you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **R/**. Amen.

After the prayer of blessing, each catechist may be presented with a Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and/or a certificate of commissioning. If desirable, the congregation may signify its support by applause, an acclamation, or an appropriate hymn.

Note: Some parishes offer a "Response Sunday" the week after Catechetical Sunday. On that day, following the homily, the celebrant reminds the community of the commissioning of the catechists. He asks the community to respond to the parish catechetical ministry by pledging to give it the support and involvement it deserves. A statement of "I do" from the community may be the affirmative response.

Blessing of Parents and Guardians (optional)

Following the prayer after communion, this special blessing for parents and guardians may be offered as recognition of their critical role in forming their children in faith.

CELEBRANT:

Parents and guardians are entrusted with a special role and responsibility in forming their children in faith. It is fitting on this Catechetical Sunday that we offer a blessing for them.

The celebrant invites parents and guardians to stand. Stretching out his hands over them and inviting the rest of the community to do the same, he prays the following:

CELEBRANT:

God our Father,
let your peace settle within the hearts of these
mothers, fathers, and guardians.
Give them strength and wisdom as they care for
their children.
Show them how to raise their families with patience
and tenderness.
Give them strength during the times of greatest
difficulty and help them recognize the little joys
that are part of each day.
May they grow in wisdom, understanding, and grace.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is one
with you and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.
R/. Amen.