

Ecumenical Liturgy Planning Tool

A basic outline for an ecumenical service might look like this:

- Musical prelude while people gather
- Procession of people leading the service
- Welcome greeting by the host congregation - very brief
- Opening hymn
- Call to prayer
- Prayer focussed on the season/occasion
- First reading
- Response - probably a hymn
- Second reading
- Response - perhaps a psalm
- Third reading
- Response - probably an anthem/motet
- Homiletic response to the readings
- Hymn
- Prayers - up to five that reflect local, national, and worldwide concerns, and thanksgiving for God's bounty and the blessings of the people in the community.
- Announcements - invitation to fellowship after the postlude
- Benediction
- Closing hymn
- Musical postlude.

Depending on your musical resources, the prelude, postlude, and anthem are opportunities to showcase the church's organ and the collected choirs. A choral prelude is a better idea than a choral postlude.

How do you determine what pieces you want to offer the ecumenical planning group for inclusion?

Here are some sample questions for your congregation:

- What is your favorite prayer from our resources? Why?
- What 2 hymns do you identify most fondly with this season?
- What moment in our worship services is the moment that makes you feel most strongly "I am home in this tradition."? Why?
- Whether you do this through a survey or small group conversations, or a combination of both, you will have lots of great information. Look for common threads that you as clergy and lay leaders also resonate with to bring to the planning group for your ecumenical service.
- Be sure to include in the service bulletin brief notes about the history and significance of each of the pieces of the liturgy.

Use the Revised Common Lectionary for wisdom about what scripture readings to choose.

Consider a contemporary reading for the third reading; something that echoes the scripture readings and leads into the homily.

If you want your service to be reflective and calming, look into resources from the Celtic and Taize repertoires for prayers and music.