

A GUIDE TO CREATING LITURGY

Chips With Everything

Imagine a meal that started with *avocado and chips and gravy*,
 ...followed by *chicken, avocado, chips and gravy*,
 ...followed by *ice cream, strawberries, avocado, chips and gravy*.
 ...sometimes liturgy can be like that; everything piled on everywhere.

But, we know a good meal starts with an *appetizer to prepare the appetite*,
 ...followed by *a main course to fill us up*,
 ...and then a *dessert at the end to leave us feeling good*.

This is how we typically construct liturgy : *Starter -> Mains -> Leaving*

**A really adventurous cook can also serve strawberries as the starter and avocado as the dessert – but they do so for a reason. They have planned it that way.*

Starter -> Mains -> Leaving

Acts 2:42–43 demonstrates how the early church did services:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayer. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.”

What are the key words? (*Signs, Prayers, Teaching, Fellowship, Awe, Devotion, Wonders, Breaking Bread*). What do these words mean? Where do these words, practices, and feelings occur in liturgy? Teaching and fellowship are easy! Think about awe, signs, wonders, devotion.

A good liturgy includes all the words we read of in Acts 2:42-43:

| Beginning | Praise | Word | Prayer | Action | End |
|------------|----------------|----------|--------|---|---------|
| Fellowship | Devotion & Awe | Teaching | Prayer | Our action to God: response, penitence, renewal God’s action to us: sacrament, signs & wonders | Sending |

**Sometimes Prayer, Praise, and Action will occur in different orders: The Sermon or Creed may be our action to God. Conversely, the Eucharist, Anointing, or Listening to God may be God’s action to us.*

Acts 2:42-43 helps us understand what the basic building blocks of a liturgy may be:

| Fellowship | Learning | Prayer | Sharing | Reverence, Communion, Wonder | |
|------------|----------------------|--------|-----------------------|---|---------|
| Gathering | Readings & Teachings | Prayer | The Peace & Offertory | God speaking to us and our actions: eucharist, healing prayers, anointing | Sending |

Beginning & Ending

The Presider & Greeting

The presider is usually the one that begins a liturgy. They are like the chair of a committee meeting. Traditionally a liturgy has one person who presides over the whole service. The presider will greet the whole congregation at the beginning with words like:

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you." or "The Lord be with you." or "God be with you."

And the community responds to the presider with words like: *"And also with you."* They could also just say *"Hi!"* which is good on fellowship but doesn't communicate devotion and praise, so it depends what you want to say.

*In the Anglican Tradition Eucharist must be presided over by a priest or a bishop. In liturgies where there is no Eucharist, different people can preside over different parts of the service.

Collecting The Ideas

After the greeting, if there is a theme for worship, now is the time to tell people what that is, what inspired you or how you hope the community can grow through this worship time.

After some silent time, a prayer can be offered. It is often called: *The Collect*, because it collects up our theme into one place. It helps us to focus our attention on the theme and it also asks God to help us grow as we explore it. *The Collect* is usually addressed to: God the Father, through the Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is why we often end it with something like:

"We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen."

Ending & Sending

What next? What do we hope the community goes away with? How do we want to change after this service? Have we made any new resolutions? This could be a good time to sing a song or offer a prayer about putting those resolutions into action.

Other questions to think about:

Who are we? *Who are the people actually taking part? How does what we do fit in to the Diocesan Church? How does what we do fit in to the Worldwide Church? How does what we do today fit in with past generations of Christians?*

Who are our leaders? *Who exactly does the priest represent in a service? Does the priest represent the congregation? Does the priest speak to the congregation on behalf of the congregation or on behalf of the Bishop or even of God? Is there a difference between who a priest represents and who a lay person represents in a liturgy?*

Rules & Regulations

1. The Anglican Tradition - All of our liturgies should agree with an Anglican understanding of the Christian faith.

*“ All variations in forms of service and all forms of service shall be reverent and seemly and shall be neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Anglican Church in any essential matter.” **Citation Needed!***

2. Reading & Prayer - All Christian liturgy should have at least one reading from the Bible, and it should contain the Lord's Prayer.

3. The Eucharist

The presider (priest or bishop) must say the Greeting, the Collect, The Peace, The whole Eucharistic Prayer, and must take Communion. The Gospel is normally read by a deacon, priest or lay-reader, but this rubric may be disregarded for pastoral or dramatic reasons.

The following sections are the compulsory for a Eucharist Service:

- Greeting
- Collect
- Gospel Reading
- Peace
- Eucharistic Prayer (in its entirety from “The Lord be with you – until amen.” This prayer must also be authorized)
- The Lord's Prayer
- Receiving Holy Communion

*The wine should contain alcohol, unless the bishop has granted permission for the use of non-alcoholic communion wine for pastoral reasons. The bread should be wheat bread of official gluten free communion wafers.

The following sections are desirable for a Eucharist Service:

- Music
- Penitential Rite – Confession
- Psalm – or hymn/song version of a Psalm
- Old Testament and/or other New Testament (not Gospel) reading
- Sermon or Teaching
- Prayers of the People - for the needs of the world and the church (these are prayers to God, not penitence or teaching)
- Dismissal