

**Holy Name Province: Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
Prayer Service Template**

**“Pilgrims of Truth, Pilgrims of Peace”:
An Interfaith Service Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of
the Interfaith Assisi Gathering for Peace**

Several days/weeks prior to the service, a symbolic action should be thought of which can engage all participants in the service. This action should include some concrete activity or dedication of the local interfaith community to a witness of peace in the spirit of St. Francis. Examples would be a peace pole dedication, a movement from the prayer service to some direct service [soup kitchen work, etc.], a commitment card to personal nonviolence, etc.). Depending on the type of action, it could be incorporated into the service itself, or proceed it immediately, or after some time.

Environment: Gathering area is dimly lit as people gather. A collection of items reflective of the Franciscan tradition of peacemaking, and other symbols of peace and justice work are in a focal area in the space. Symbols from the various traditions participating in the service should also be included.

Prelude (optional – 15-20 min)

Music selected from the various repertoires of the religions present, reflecting the themes of peace and justice are presented by a combined choir or multiple choirs representing the traditions present. A combined choir for the full service is very desirable

Immediately prior to the service, lights in the gathering area are brought to minimum or turned off leaving only light for readers. No candles are lit.

Gathering Rite (10 min):

Assembly remains seated. Lit candles are brought in (or lit in place) as different (pithy) prayers are proclaimed by representatives of the various traditions present. Candles should be located in the focal area, but can also be around the space. As each is lit, more light is brought to the space. Prayers should be short. These should be collected and prepared beforehand and put in the prayer program if possible. The images of these prayers should be evocative and also convey that “peace” is not just “inner peace” or contemplation but may be confrontation to disrupt violence.

Examples that can be used are as follows:

Buddhism: May all beings everywhere plagued with sufferings of body and mind quickly be freed from their illnesses. May those frightened cease to be afraid, and may those bound be free. May the powerless find power, and may people think of befriending one another. May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful wilderness-- the children, the aged, the unprotected-- be surrounded by great compassion and lovingkindness.

A candle is lit.

Christianity: Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed, kindle in the hearts of all the true love of peace, and guide with Your pure and peaceable wisdom those who make decisions for the nations of the earth; that in tranquility Your kingdom may go forward, till the earth be filled with the knowledge of Your love; in the power of your Holy Spirit of peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A candle is lit.

Hinduism: Lead us from the unreal to the Real. Lead us from darkness to light. Lead us from death to immortality. Peace, Peace, Peace unto all. May there be peace in celestial regions. May there be peace on Earth. May the waters be appeasing. May herbs be wholesome, and may trees and plants bring peace to all. May all beneficent beings bring peace to us. May thy Law propagate peace all through the world. May all things be a source of peace to us. And may thy peace itself, bestow peace on all.

A candle is lit.

Islam: In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful. Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who has created us and made us into tribes and nations, That we may know each other, not that we may despise each other. If the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace, and trust God, for the Lord is the one that heareth and knoweth all things. And the servants of God, Most Gracious are those who walk on the Earth in humility, and when we address them, we say "PEACE."

A candle is lit.

Jainism: Peace and Universal Love is the essence of the Gospel preached by all the Enlightened Ones. The Lord has preached that equanimity is the Dharma. Forgive do I creatures all, and let all creatures forgive me. Unto all have I amity, and unto none enmity. Know that violence is the root cause of all miseries in the world. Violence, in fact, is the knot of bondage. "Do not injure any living being." This is the eternal, perennial, and unalterable way of spiritual life. A weapon howsoever powerful it may be, can always be superseded by a superior one; but no weapon can, however, be superior to non-violence and love.

A candle is lit.

Judaism: May we see the day when war and bloodshed cease, when a great peace will embrace the whole world. Then nation shall not threaten nation and humankind will not again know war. For all who live on earth shall realize we have not come into being to hate or destroy. We have come into being to praise, to labour and to love. Compassionate God, bless all the leaders of all nations with the power of compassion. Fulfill the promise conveyed in Scripture: "I will bring peace to the land, and you shall lie down and no one shall terrify you. I will rid the land of vicious beasts and it shall not be ravaged by war." Let love and justice flow like a mighty stream. Let peace fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. And let us say: Amen

A candle is lit.

Shintoism: Although the people living across the ocean surrounding us, I believe, are all our brothers and sisters, why are there constant troubles in this world? Why do winds and waves rise in the ocean surrounding us? I only earnestly wish that the wind will soon puff away all the clouds which are hanging over the tops of the mountains.

A candle is lit.

Zoroastrianism: We pray to God to eradicate all the misery in the world: that understanding triumph over ignorance, that generosity triumph over indifference, that trust triumph over contempt, and that truth triumph over falsehood.

A candle is lit.

These readings may be substituted if other religious traditions are present, or representatives from the different traditions may be asked to bring their own short prayer to share in place of these options.

As the final representative is reading, and the final candle is lit, leaders for the following prayer should move into position. The music leader uses a drum, chime, or some other instrument to call people to attention. Leader(s) should gesture for all to stand. A final prayer from the Franciscan tradition on peace should be read by all:

Leader: Let us pray together using a text reflecting the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi ..

ALL: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

Song (3 min): World Peace Prayer (arr. by Marty Haugen)¹

¹ Musical scores available from GIA Publications, Inc. (<http://www.giamusic.com>).

All remain standing and sing the song together. Leaders sit and invite all to sit after the song as needed.

Readings and Short Reflections (20 - 30 min)

A selection of short readings from the scriptures or sacred texts of the various faith traditions present is selected beforehand according to their relevance to the theme of the service, along with a person from that tradition who can offer a 3 minute meditation / reflection on the meaning of the text in their tradition and within the wider community of religions. The readings may also be chanted or sung, and/or the meditations may be musical.

Musical Meditation (3 min)

After the final reflection and a period of silence, a combined choir or other music ministers offer an appropriate closing meditation. A suggested piece would be The Peace of the Earth / La Paz de la Tierra.²

Intercessions (5 min)

The leader stands and gestures for all to stand. The leader offers the opening prayer and then a reader proclaims the intercessions. The response may be sung or recited. (If sung, the recited responses provided here are not used.) After a few prepared intercessions, the leader should open up the opportunity to make intercession to all. Each spontaneous petition is concluded by the same pattern of recited responses or sung refrain.

Leader: We come before the God of peace in prayer.

Reader: To bring about a peaceful co-existence between peoples of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions, may we maintain a dialogue of mutual respect and esteem. We pray:

All: May we seek truth.

Reader: Since a culture of dialogue is essential to authentic peace, may we work toward understanding and mutual trust among peoples. We pray:

All: May we make peace.

Reader: In working together to overcome selfishness and arrogance, hatred and violence, may we work together for justice, in order to achieve a genuine and lasting peace. We pray:

² Musical scores available from GIA Publications, Inc. (<http://www.giamusic.com>).

All: May we reverence life.

Reader: In the desire to offer men and women of our time, a genuine hope of justice and peace, let us refuse to justify violence and evil. We pray:

All: May we seek truth.

Reader: To achieve a world of solidarity and peace built on justice, let us take every opportunity to encourage leaders in government, religion, and business to establish just policies. We pray:

All: May we make peace.

Reader: The *Spirit of Assisi* calls every person to seek truth, justice, liberty, and love, may every human person enjoy their inalienable rights, and every nation, peace. We pray:

All: May we reverence life.

Leader: Please speak aloud any personal intentions at this time ...

(People add their intercessions; the responses continue in the three-fold pattern above. The leader brings the intercessions to a close by a final acclamation:)

Leader: Peace before us, peace behind us, peace under our feet. Peace within us, peace over us, let all around us be peace.

All: Let all around us be peace.

Invitation to Symbolic Action (3 min)

All are seated. A chosen representative of the community comes forward and describes the action to be undertaken and offers instructions. If the action takes place immediately and within the service, music should be added to the action as necessary.

Concluding Song (3 min) - "Let There Be Peace on Earth" by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson³

After the invitation / action has concluded (or as it is concluding) people should join in the final song, which concludes the service.

³ Musical scores available from GIA Publications, Inc. (<http://www.giamusic.com>).

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Service arranged by Mr. Marc J. DelMonico (marc.delmonico@gmail.com) for use by the Office for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation for the Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province (<http://www.hnp.org/jpic>). Please provide appropriate recognition (name and contact information) in programs and other service information.

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