



Why Dominican?

Presentation Notes for Inquiry Module 2:

Praying the Liturgy of the Hours

Objectives: At the end of this session, the Inquirer will be able to:

1. Understand that participating in the Liturgy of the Hours is participating in the universal daily prayer of the church encouraged for all baptized people not just for clergy.
2. Experience the community aspect of praying the Liturgy of the Hours.
3. Understand that each community uses slightly different versions of how to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.
4. Participate in the Liturgy of the Hours when led by experienced leaders.
5. Understand that continued participation in the Liturgy of the Hours is a blessed obligation but it does not bind someone under penalty of sin.
6. Realize that continued communal praying of the Liturgy of the Hours will increase familiarity with its complex structure.

Notes: If one of the leaders of the group is not experienced with praying the Liturgy of the Hours, please ask a priest or sister to provide some guidance in the planning and/or implementation of this session. If some people are already familiar with this prayer, utilize their expertise but encourage them to be willing to blend their knowledge into a mode that will find consensus in group procedures. There are several things to decide before the actual session:

1. It is crucial to separate instructional practice in the mechanics of praying the Liturgy of the Hours from the actual act of praying itself. Practice should encourage questions and repetition; each person should bring his/her own copy of the prayers for instruction so that the participants may mark them and make notes on them as needed. Be sure to inform the participants of exactly where to find “the script” for what you will use for instruction so that they may have a

copy without any copyright infringement. Praying, however, should proceed smoothly and uninterrupted, with participants joining in as their comfort level increases.

2. More than one practice/instructional session may be needed. Participants may choose to meet together to pray the Liturgy of the Hours daily or weekly or join with an established practice in the parish or community. Trying to standardize the format should be a major goal.
3. Communal praying of the Liturgy of the Hours should take place at each subsequent formation meeting following the meeting(s) for instruction. At the Inquiry stage of formation, using a printed script of the Liturgy of the Hours at each meeting may assist in becoming more familiar with the routine and also reduce frustration with losing one's place in the flipping back and forth from one section to another as is necessary in some books.
4. It is important for those who pray in community to use the same Liturgy of the Hours book whenever the transition to a book is made. Once some familiarity is gained (either during the practice session(s) but definitely at the beginning of Candidacy), a careful matching of the parts of the instructional printed script must be explicitly made to where in the Liturgy of the Hours book it is so that the person may continue to pray the Liturgy of the Hours daily. There are guides for this purpose which accompany commercial books. Check the Resources page on this web site for more information.
5. The Formation Team needs to decide if the instructors will use the readings from the day or from another day in the initial instruction. One may choose to (a) use a visual or auditory aid with printed accompanying prayers in the instruction and then transfer the knowledge gained to pray the Liturgy of the Hours for the day with those accompanying prayers or (b) use the same prayers from the Liturgy of the Hours for the day in both the instruction and the prayer.
6. Be sure to double-check the link to any on-line resources used both for availability and copyright restrictions.

Materials: chalk/ chalkboard or chart/markers, printed scripts of Morning or Evening Prayer, whichever is closest to the meeting time on the day(s) of instruction; prepared reflection by one of the leaders based on the Scripture Reading, room arrangement so that participants may be seated in two sections facing each other, optional recordings or videos of a community praying the Liturgy of the Hours with the accompanying printed scripts of the prayers.

Prayer/Contemplation: 1Thes. 5:17

Study:

1. Identify the parts of this instructional session, perhaps listing them on the board such as purpose, terms, history, parts, taking turns, and bodily posture. The basic plan for instruction is:
 - a. to discuss the purpose of the Divine Office (also called Liturgy of the Hours),
 - b. to use a set of prayers/readings, with or without the model of a recording or video,
 - c. to identify each part of the Liturgy of the Hours,
 - d. to learn which side prays each part,
 - e. to learn when to sit or stand, and,
 - f. to learn how to assemble the parts into a congruent and meaningful prayer by the community as well as individually when communal prayer is not possible.
2. The Liturgy of the Hours is principally a prayer of praise and petition. Note that the Mass and the Divine Office are the only two official prayers of the church. Discuss the terms the Divine Office, the Liturgy of the Hours, and the Breviary (abbreviated form).
3. Relate a brief history that the times of the day in which the prayer is prayed came from the Jewish custom of praying at the third, sixth, ninth and midnight hours, hence Terce, Sext, None, and Compline. Morning and Evening Prayer are the most common communal prayer times in non-cloistered religious congregations, including Dominican congregations.
4. Highlight the important parts of the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours (available in the front of commercial books), perhaps providing an overview through the use of an outline. A read-through these instructions would be a proper follow-up homework assignment since in-depth time can not be devoted to it during the session but an in-depth understanding is necessary. The consecration of time and the use of sacred silence are often overlooked in instruction since everyone want to learn “how to do this”, so do be sure that these important foundational points are given proper emphasis.
5. List the main parts and terms used in the Liturgy of the Hours such as Invitatory, Hymn, Psalms, strophe, antiphon, Reading, Response, Canticle, Intercessions, and Prayer. Discuss, identify, and locate each on the printed script.
6. Teach the Liturgy of the Hours version of the Glory Be and decide when it will be prayed in relation to the strophes in each psalm and canticle. Identify the recurring canticle used in Morning Prayer and in Evening Prayer.

Note: If you are going to use a visual or auditory aid, use it now. Check the Resources page for suggestions. Have the participants listen or watch as they follow

along. Tell them beforehand to note the parts that are prayed in unison and which are alternated. As an option, a viewing of a visual aid may precede step 5.

7. Start at the beginning of the printed script and decide which prayers will be recited in unison and which will alternate sides in your community. Attend to how the intercessions should be prayed by the leader and the rest of the group.
8. Demonstrate how the leader recites the first line and then the other members of his/her side join for the remainder of the strophe.
9. Stop and ask for questions.
10. Read through the prayers without any bodily posture changes. The side leaders should be aware of providing time for sacred silence. Try to do this without stopping for questions, but with the leaders using hand motions to encourage participants to speak or be silent.
11. Provide time for questions again.
12. Go back through each part and indicate where there will be changes in bodily posture. The participants should mark these on their papers.
13. Now is the time to make the transition from instruction to prayer. If an auditory or visual aid was used, distribute the new printed script from the actual Liturgy of the Hours prayers of the day. Allow a brief time for each person to indicate bodily positions on the new prayer sheets. Pray the prayers with all bodily postures used. If this is the last step of the meeting, the prayer should be tried using the actual magazine or book used by veteran members including ribbons in the book for navigational help. Pairing a new member and a veteran member will be helpful.
14. The transition from the printed script to finding the prayers in the book chosen to be used by the group may take place here in this session or at a separate session in Inquiry or even at the beginning of Candidacy. It is expected that all Candidates will have their own Liturgy of the Hours to use.
15. Provide a general overview of what is to be used using the Table of Contents. Some magazines have a free flowing script while some books require finding separate parts in separate sections of the book. This overview may be as detailed as necessary so that the person has a general idea of where to find separate parts. Using ribbons to help keep one's place is important if parts of the prayer are in separate sections.
16. Use the yearly Guide that accompanies the book from the book's publisher or the Table of Contents in the magazine to locate the readings used to pray the day's selections. Match each part of the Liturgy of the Hours from the printed script to the page in the book or magazine.
17. Be sure to remind the participants to locate the Resources page on this web site for some references (on-line or in print) for continued study and practice of the mechanics of how to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

Community: It is natural for some people to be more comfortable than others in praying the Liturgy of the Hours. This session is a perfect time to work with a buddy or for one of the members to offer to help another. What a wonderful sign of forming community!

Apostolate: Veteran members of the group may wish to provide additional instructional practice for the newcomers as their schedules will allow. Having someone available by phone to answer questions about the Liturgy of the Hours is also very helpful

Follow-up: Each formation meeting that follows this instruction should have the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours as a standard opening or closing prayer unless there is a Eucharistic celebration. If possible, Inquirers should try to join others in the parish or community daily or weekly in praying the Liturgy of the Hours together.

Assignment: Encourage the Inquirers to continue to pray the Liturgy of the Hours daily using on-line guides or other aids to help. Distribute the Study Guide with the assignment for the next session.