

Healing the Broken Heart

*A community gathering for those affected
by sexual violence*

This template, for a very moving and healing assembly, was created by St. Joseph's Child Protection Task Force. It's concept was taken from and given permission by Future Church who created the original 'Liturgy of Lament for the Broken Body of Christ'

This assembly is presented by the Child Protection Task members, Support Within Reach staff, Lay people and community members. The total number of people participating is approximately 10, but can be done nicely with less. The service is about 30 minutes long, there are professionals available if needed and we offer a casual gathering after for discussion.

The music chosen is lead by 2 vocalists/participants on guitar.

We hope that this template will help others to offer similar healing. Please feel free to edit and customize to your situation or community. We also hope that this template will either start or help those on their healing journey.

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Clergy/leaders are seated in the front pews or in chairs off to the side. They are not seated on the altar space. The lights are all off except for minimal lighting in select locations, which will allow for an intimate and comforting ambience. Everyone is given a candle and enters the space in silence.

When everyone has assembled, (Leader) says:

Good evening. Please turn to the gathering song and join in singing “Litany of Peace.”

GREETING

After the song is sung (Lay person or clergy) greets the people.

**The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.**

All: And also with you.

We lovingly and humbly welcome you to “Healing the Broken Heart.” The time here tonight will be spent with music, scripture, reflection, signing of the senses and a litany of healing. We will close with music and candles.

The signing of the senses is a very powerful experience. It involves a sign of the cross over your forehead, ears, eyes, mouth, heart, shoulders, hands and feet. At no time will you be physically touched. The signing of the senses will be given to everyone through the art of a liturgical dancer.

The litany of healing will consist of prayer, a response and the lighting of a candle. The words to the Signing of the Senses and the Litany of Healing are found on the inside covers of your program.

Staff members from Support Within Reach are in attendance this evening, so if at any time you feel the need to leave this space, there will be someone to talk to if you wish. We invite you to join us for a small, quiet gathering after for refreshments. We hope, and pray, that this evening will provide comfort, hope or a step in the healing process for you.

OPENING PRAYER

(Lay person or clergy) invites all to pray.

Let us pray.

(Brief period of silence.)

Hear these words of Jesus:

**I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer,
believe that you will receive it, and you will.**

(Brief period of silence.)

Then the leader says the prayer:

**Loving God,
we have come here tonight from many places,
from east and west, north and south,
from pain and disillusionment,
from anger and confusion,
from sadness and disappointment.**

**We come together for one thing only—
to raise our hearts and voices and very bodies to God,
in the hope that the very act of raising them in faith,
we may be touched by God in our brokenness.
May we come to know the transforming and surpassing power of God's love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ.**

All: Amen

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The celebration of the word follows. There are two readings—two from Scripture and a responsorial prayer. There should be a brief interval of silence between each so that everyone may contemplate and understand the word of God more deeply.

FIRST READING (Lay person)

Matthew 11: 28-30

**A reading from the Gospel of Matthew
Come to me,
all you who labor and carry heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon your shoulders
and learn from me,
for I am humble of heart.
Here you will find rest for your souls,
for my yoke is easy
and my burden is light.
The word of God.
All: Thanks be to God.**

RESPONSORIAL PRAYER (Lay person) “Prayer for the Victims of Human Trafficking”

For the estimated 27 million women, men and children currently held in slavery-like conditions. May human dignity be restored to those who have been bought, sold or kidnapped for the monetary benefit of others.

All: We pray for a hopeful tomorrow.

For those in bonded labor, in agricultural fields, mines and factories, who have been reduced to tools of production, commodities rather than human beings.

All: We pray for a hopeful tomorrow.

For those forced to become soldiers, made into tools for violence. In particular, we pray for child soldiers in Darfur and Burma.

All: We pray for a hopeful tomorrow.

For children exploited and objectified in the commercial sex industry, that they may be free to play, learn and grow up in freedom and safety.

All: We pray for a hopeful tomorrow.

For those who cannot return home due to the stigma of prostitution, disease or shame, that they may receive the solace, healing and support they need.

All: We pray for a hopeful tomorrow.

For women, who are estimated to make up 80% of human trafficking victims, and for changes in societal attitudes that deny the equality and dignity of women.

All: We pray for a hopeful tomorrow.

For victims of trafficking in our own local community—in domestic servitude, in local businesses, in forced prostitution. May we have eyes to see and take steps to make our community slave-free.

All: We pray for a hopeful tomorrow.

For all those who are affected by sexual violence, we pray for healing.

All: We pray for a hopeful tomorrow

God of hope, guide our actions as we strive to make this dream for a hopeful tomorrow a reality. Help us to end human trafficking in our lifetimes. Please give us the wisdom to know what to do, and the courage to follow our belief. We ask this in the name of Jesus our Liberator and Redeemer.

All: Amen.

SECOND READING (Lay person)

Mark 9:40-42

A reading from the Gospel of Mark

Anyone who is not against us is with us.

The truth is, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not go without a reward.

Rather than make one of these little ones who believe in me stumble, it would be better to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone hung around your neck.

The Word of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION (15-20 min.)

Guest speaker/survivor

LITURGY OF HEALING

SIGNING OF THE SENSES (performed by a Liturgical Dancer)

Before the ritual of the signing of the senses begins, Liturgical Dancer will move to a designated location in the altar space.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SIGN OF THE CROSS (Lay person) says:

The sign of the cross is a gesture of ancient Christian origin by which we bless ourselves or others. The sign is a reminder of Christ's death on the cross as well as his healing power. If you wish to receive this healing sign, please stand as you are able. The prayers for this ritual are found inside the front cover of your program.

When all are standing, (Lay person) says:

Sign of our suffering. Sign of our salvation. On the wood of the cross, Jesus Christ bore our infirmities and took upon himself the consequences of all our sinfulness. In the wood of the cross we find solidarity with our own suffering and broken bodies. Through the wood of the cross we too are lifted up and raised to the glory of God.

(Lay person) continues, pausing briefly between each prayer to allow for reflection.

PRAYERS FOR SIGNING OF THE SENSES (Lay person)

Receive the sign of the cross on your forehead.

Emotional scars remain hidden deep within our memories, sometimes flashing back to a more painful time.

Put on the mind of Christ,

from the folly of whose cross God's wisdom was manifest.

**Receive the sign of the cross on your ears,
that in the cries of the abused and betrayed
you may hear the voice of the Lord.**

**Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes,
darkened by tears, secrets and denials,
that they may be brightened in the light of Christ.**

**Receive the sign of the cross on your lips,
silenced by fear and the shock of trauma,
that you may respond to the word of God
and speak justice and truth in love.**

**Receive the sign of the cross over your heart,
broken in pain and uncertainty, disillusionment and disappointment,
that Christ may dwell there by faith.**

**Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders,
weighted and scarred with sadness and sorrow,
that your burden be eased in the gentle yoke of Christ**

**Receive the sign of the cross on your hands,
wrung in anger and agony,
that Christ may be known in the work which you do.**

**Receive the sign of the cross on your feet,
that you may stand firm in faith and hope,
and walk in the way of Christ.**

Please be seated for a moment of silence.

INTRODUCTION TO LITANY OF HEALING

One or two lay ministers will move forward and stand next to the central candle. They will assist those who would like to come to the central candle to light their own. The lighting of candles will take place during the Litany.

(Leader) explains the procedure by saying:

Please come forward to light your candle. The candle represents the light of Christ in your life. You may take this candle home with you and light it as a reminder of Christ's presence with you always. The litany of healing is found on the inside of the back cover of the program. The sung response is the refrain from the gathering song.

LITANY OF HEALING (Lay person)

**Unable to forget the violation done to us
Still bearing the marks of our wounds
Struggling to overcome our fears, we pray...**

Response: Make me an instrument of your peace.

**Mourning our loss of innocence and self,
Not knowing where to turn in our misery and isolation,
Wondering how your grace permitted this, we pray...**

Response: Make me an instrument of your peace.

**Bowed down by the weakness of human frailty and isolation,
Longing for families who can bear our truths with us,
Looking for justice where none seems possible,
Searching for the kind of faith that once sustained us all, we pray...**

Response: Make me an instrument of your peace.

**Covered in shame and confusion, wanting to stand safe and secure again,
Hoping for kindness and truth to meet, justice and peace to kiss,
Desperate for the courage to face our own issues,
Wanting to put all this behind us and live in wholeness, we pray...**

Response: Make me an instrument of your peace.

**Outraged by the actions of those who should have known better,
Bearing with one another the burdens of our own and not of our own making,
Lost, looking for your guidance and direction,
Amidst the shattered images of godliness and ministry, we pray...**

Response: Make me an instrument of your peace.

**Out of darkness of our despair,
Into the cloud of our unknown selves,
Not even knowing how to help each other or where to go from here, we pray...**

Response: Make me an instrument of your peace.

PRAYER OF BLESSING (Lay person)

All participating Lay people stand and extend hands over all assembled. (Lay person) says:

Let us pray. (*pause*)

**God of the oppressed,
you recognize the power of faith
in the miracle of healing.
Strengthen our faith to trust in your presence
and in the power of healing.
Be with all those who struggle against evils of abuse
that would destroy minds and devour souls in its depths.
We ask your blessing on all those who work
with problems of abuse,
that this world may become a world
reflecting your image to all your children,
glorifying your name forever and ever.**

All: Amen.

DISMISSAL (Lay person)

(Lay person) concludes the service saying:

**Let us go out into the world prepared with a new awareness of abuse and a determination to work for an end to its evils.
May God, who wishes wholeness and healing for all of us, bless us and remain with us on our healing journeys.
Go in peace.**

All: Thanks be to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Lay person) says:

After the Closing Song, please join us for an informal gathering in the Founders Hall. Support Within Reach staff 'who will now stand' are available to answer questions and provide support.

CLOSING SONG

Before all disperse, the closing song is sung.

"Loving and Forgiving" by Scott Soper

Lay Ministers and counselors from Support Within Reach linger in the Gathering Space and Founders Hall to assist anyone who may need to speak to them or ask questions. Materials and cards will be made available.