Diocese of Yakima

Diócesis de Yakima

Guidelines for the Preparation and Celebration of Quinceañeras in the Diocese of Yakima

Normas para la Preparación y Celebración de las Quinceañeras en la Diócesis de Yakima

Office of Hispanic Ministry
Oficina de Ministerio Hispano

October / Octubre 2005
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October 2005

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am very happy to be able to present you with this updated version of the diocesan guidelines for the celebration of a Quinceañera in the Diocese of Yakima. This manual is the result of collaboration of an advisory team under the direction of the Office of Hispanic Ministry. The manual not only contains the guidelines for the preparation and celebration of the Quinceañera, but also has a series of topics to facilitate the catechesis of the young women and their parents and gives some pastoral guidelines for the liturgy of the celebration. The fee schedule found on page 3 was set with my approval. The Council of Priests gave its favorable vote to these guidelines during its October 2005 Convocation.

The National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry reminds us that the model for Church that we have to live and promote should make it clear that our Church has to be “communitarian, evangelizing and missionary, incarnate in the reality of the Hispanic people and open to the diversity of cultures, a promoter and example of justice that develops leadership through integral education that is leaven for the Kingdom of God in society.”

The traditional celebration of the Quinceañera, even though it is not a sacrament, but a sacramental that we can use as a positive moment to bring the young women and their parents nearer to the Lord, is a “celebration of community” which renews in the young woman her capacity to give life through service to her Church.

On our part, this Hispanic cultural expression needs, not only our acceptance, but also that we respectfully offer pastoral care in such a way that our Hispanic brothers and sisters feel that they are not “a pastoral problem, but rather a blessing” within the Catholic Church in the United States.

This manual is an excellent pastoral resource; I invite you then to take full advantage of it and we can have a common criterion for the education of our young Hispanic women in this respect.

A text for the Mass of the Quinceañera was approved by the U.S. bishops at their meeting in November 2004, and that text was sent to Rome for approval. When that approval is received, the text will be available for purchase through publishers in the United States.

I am profoundly grateful to all those who took part in the preparation of this diocesan material. May God abundantly bless our pastoral efforts.

Sincerely in Christ,

Carlos A. Sevilla, S.J.
Bishop of Yakima

CAS:pr
I. Introduction

One of the customs which the Hispanic-American community has brought to the Church in this country is the celebration of the Quinceañera. This celebration consists of the presentation of a young woman to the community in two aspects, one religious and the other social. The religious aspect consists of an act of Thanksgiving to God for the gift of life, which can be done with a Celebration of the Word (Para-Liturgy), especially when the Quinceañera and her family do not receive Communion, or with a Eucharistic Celebration during which the young woman renews her baptismal promises and promises to work for the good of her community. The second aspect consists of a reception and social gathering where the young woman is presented to society by her parents.

The Quinceañera in the Church in the United States

In the Diocese of Yakima, we support the celebration of the Quinceañera as a special moment of thanksgiving and family togetherness. In order to celebrate with dignity this tradition of the Hispanic community in the Catholic Church, it is recommended that the following guidelines be followed.

Requirements:

1. The family of the Quinceañera should be registered as members of the parish; if the family is registered in another parish, they need to provide written permission from their pastor.
2. A baptismal certificate must be provided.
3. The Quinceañera has to have made her First Communion.
4. She must attend Mass regularly, on Sundays and Holy days.
5. The church must be reserved at least four months in advance of the celebration.
6. The Quinceañera must receive sufficient preparation. According to these guidelines, there are nine sessions for the Quinceañera and her parents. The parent sessions are separate from those of the quinceañeras.
7. She must actively participate in youth ministry.
8. The Quinceañera should give a minimum of 15 hours of community service. Suggestions for community service are: assistant in Religious Education, food banks, choir, youth group, acolyte, lector, hospitality ministry, church decoration, church cleaning, office help, etc.
9. The family should give a donation to the parish. (It is not for the priest, but for the parish.) The following donations are suggestions; it is left to the discretion of the pastor for adaptation to the circumstances of the family making the offering.

Donations and Stipends:

1) Registered, Active Members $250.00 Includes:
   a.- Use of the church: $150.00
   b.- Preparation $100.00

2) Members not Registered $350.00 Includes:
   a.- Use of the church $250.00
   b.- Preparation $100.

3) Refundable Deposit $100.00
   This deposit must be made to reserve the church; it is refundable if all of the following requirements and recommendations are carried out.

- 3 -
Recommendations:

Music
Before selecting the music for the quinceañera Mass, ask at the office if the music and songs are appropriate for the Church’s liturgy. The liturgical guideline for music notes that it should be some form of live music and that pre-recorded music should be avoided.

Rehearsal for the Ceremony
The rehearsal should take place the evening before the ceremony. A reservation for this rehearsal is required.

Dressing modestly
Out of respect for the house of God and the Christian community, it is recommended that the Quinceañera and her attendants dress modestly. (Ask what is acceptable to wear in Church.)

Decorations and Flowers
Neither arches nor balloons are permitted next to the altar; they can only be used at the entrance. It is suggested that the flowers (not artificial) that are placed on the altar be left as an offering, decorating the altar all weekend. The other decorations should be removed immediately after the celebration. The decorations should be simple and should not give the impression of a wedding.

Photography and Video
Only one photographer will be permitted to take photos during the Mass. Professionals are preferred who do their work with discretion and respect, without interfering with the religious celebration. Photographers are not permitted in the sanctuary or next to the altar during the celebration.

Security and Cleanup
Because of safety guidelines for the property and to avoid accidents and to keep the church clean, it is not permitted to throw rice, flower petals or confetti, neither inside nor outside of the church.

Formation:

Catechetical Formation
The preparation for the quinceañera celebration is an opportunity to catechize and evangelize the young women and their families.

Formation Goals
To understand the celebration and prepare oneself to celebrate it actively and conscientiously. This preparation for the quinceañera celebration is obligatory both for the young woman and for her parents.

Formation Plan
Plan to have 9 two-hour catechetical sessions, a group retreat and a general rehearsal for the celebration with all the Mass participants and the Quinceañera’s attendants.

Participatory Method
The catechist makes a brief presentation and then the participants break up into groups to share their experiences, reflections, and help each other with the answers to the questions on each topic.
II. Program:

1.- Appreciation and Thanksgiving for Life
   My relationship with my faith and my culture: tradition, the religious event, the social event

2.- The Bible and You
   My relationship with the Word of God

3.- Jesus Christ, Eternally Young
   My personal relationship with Jesus

4.- Mary, Model of Woman and Youth
   My relationship with the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus’ mother and my mother

5.- The Church: One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.
   My relationship with and participation in the life of the community

6.- The Sacrament of the Eucharist
   My relationship with God through the sacraments

7.- The Sacrament of Reconciliation
   My relationship with God through the sacraments

8.- Courtship: Journey to Maturity
   My emotional relationship with young men

9.- Prayer
   My relationship with God through prayer

Group Retreat
My mission in life according to God’s plan

General Rehearsal
A general practice of the celebration with all of the participants

Quinceañera Preparation Team
The Quinceañera preparation team is generally formed by the catechists, the parents, youth ministry leaders, religious and young people who have received their formation and have celebrated their Quinceañera.

Note: Because the program of preparation for the Quinceañera, consisting of nine classes, a group retreat, and general rehearsal with all of the participants, places what may be an unreasonable burden on some parishes, especially smaller ones in outlying areas, parishes are urged to organize the course of preparation by region or deanery level. This allows for the sharing of resources, and/or making their programs open to people from neighboring parishes in their region. Such arrangements can be organized at the regional level to ensure that all are aware of when and where the preparation is available, and to ensure that all are included.
TOPIC 1: APPRECIATION AND
THANKSGIVING FOR LIFE

- My relationship with my faith and my culture
- Tradition, religious and social event
- History of the Quinceañera
- Why do we celebrate the Quinceañera?
- Information session on the process of preparation and parish requirements.
  Note: It is suggested that this session be conducted with parents and Quinceañera together.

Tradition of the Quinceañera: Some Latino families in the United States have adopted the celebration of the Quinceañera as a rite that marks the passage from childhood to adolescence of young women on their 15th birthday. This celebration has a dual character, a social one where the young lady is presented to society and a religious one in which she gives thanks to God for the gift of life and youth and professes her faith before the Christian community and promises to live responsibly and in service to the community.

The religious rite: It can be as simple as the young woman, accompanied by her parents, going to the church to request a blessing from the priest. Also it can be a prayer service celebrated in the home where someone leads a simple celebration of blessing and thanksgiving. Nevertheless, many families ask that the celebration be done during a Mass. A celebration of a Quinceañera during a Mass can be done with an individual or with a group of quinceañeras who have prepared together and who celebrate together in accordance with the arrangements available in each parish.

Only for the religious celebration are the Bible, rosary and medal or cross brought to the church to be blessed and given to the Quinceañera. The other gifts are not brought to the church nor are they blessed unless the Quinceañera wears them as jewelry or other personal adornments. All of the gifts that are not religious articles should be given to the Quinceañera before the celebration if they are to be worn or afterwards at the party.

The social celebration: It is important to remind the parents and the young women to maintain decorum and to have celebrations that are not ostentatious, extravagant, or excessively costly.

Resources: This manual explains this topic in more detail; another helpful pamphlet is “You are Fifteen Years Old” from El Momento Católico, Claretian Publications.
TOPIC 2: THE BIBLE AND YOU

1. **OBJECTIVE:** To learn more about the Word of God contained in this Historical Library.

2. **LIFE EXPERIENCE**
   Ingrid has received a letter from a distant relative in which she expresses how she feels. In the letter, this relative asks her to behave properly with her teachers, with her companions, with those who live in her home, and above all, to prepare herself well for the Mass and party for her Quinceañera. Ingrid, who is obedient and a good student, did what the relative asked in her letter.

3. **LET’S SHARE:**
   How did the relative send the message to Ingrid?
   What do you think about what she told her?
   What other means could the relative have used to send the message?
   Is it true what she said to Ingrid in the letter?

4. **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:**
   1. What does the word “BIBLE” mean? ________________________________
   2. How many books does the BIBLE have? ____________________________
   3. How is the BIBLE divided? ________________________________
   4. What is the first book of the BIBLE? ____________________________
   5. What is the last book of the BIBLE? ________________________________

5. **THE CHURCH, MOTHER AND TEACHER**

   ➢ **MOTIVATION**
   1. When you look at a book or a magazine, first you notice the title, then you look for the name of the author. After you open the book, you look over the table of contents, and finally, you look at the pages. And if you are interested in the work, you buy it in order to read it slowly.
   2. We are going to do something similar here in reference to the Bible, “the most important book in the world”, knowledge of which we want to propose to you, not obligate you.

   ➢ **TITLE: WHAT IS THE BIBLE?**
   1. The word “Bible” comes from the Greek (ta biblia), which means “the books”.

   ➢ **NUMBERS: HOW MANY BOOKS ARE THERE?**
   1. There are seventy-three (73) books.
CLASSIFICATION: HOW ARE THEY DIVIDED?

1. In two groups:
   a. Old Testament – 46 books

CONTENT: WHAT DO THEY TALK ABOUT?

1. Old Testament – Old Covenant:
   It tells us the story of the Jewish people and how God helped them with their problems,
   asking that they live according to his will given in part in the Ten (10) Commandments.

   It tells us about Jesus Christ: his life, his teachings, miracles, passion, death, and
   resurrection. It gives us the history of the Church and the first Christian community.

6. OLD TESTAMENT – ITS BOOKS

   PENTATEUCH (5): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy
   * They speak to us about the beginning of the world, the origin of the Jewish people, their
     laws, worship, etc.

   HISTORICAL BOOKS (16): Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Chronicles, 1
   and 2 Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah
   * They tell us the history of the Jewish people: their struggles, difficulties, kingdoms, and
     how God helped them.

   BOOKS OF POETRY – BOOKS OF WISDOM (7): Job, Psalms (150), Proverbs,
   Ecclesiastes, Son of Songs, Wisdom, Sirach.
   * They are books of prayer by means of poems, wise sayings, books which contain teachings,
     etc.

   PROPHETIC BOOKS – TWO CLASSES OF PROPHETS
   A. Major: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
   B. Minor: Baruch, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah,
      Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
   * The “Prophets are men sent by God to proclaim his message of salvation and to denounce
     the injustices of men”.

7. NEW TESTAMENT – ITS BOOKS

   GOSPELS: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
   * They speak to us about the person, message and work of Jesus, our Lord.

   ACTS OF THE APOSTLES:
   * They tell about life in the first Christian communities.
> Pauline Letters (14), Catholic Letters (6), Letter to the Hebrews:
  * They are letters that tell us about the actions of the Apostles, etc.

> Apocalypse by John.
  * A book of hope, of optimism – Christ has conquered death and evil.

8. Chapters and Verses

The first thing we have to tell you is that the division of the books of the Bible into Chapters and Verses is not something done by the biblical authors, but something done much later.

> Chapters: They have the large numbers. In 1214, the theologian, Esteban Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, England, made this division. For example, Genesis 14.

> Verses: They have the small numbers. The division into verses of the Old Testament was done in 1527 by a Dominican monk, named Santes Pagnini, and resulted in very long verses. Then, a French typesetter, Roberto Etienne, redivid the division into verses, and since 1551, we have kept them the same. For example, Genesis 14\textsuperscript{10}.


- In the Old Testament we have 46 books and a total of 383,621 words.
- In the New Testament we have 27 books and a total of 137,986 words.
- In summary, we have 73 books and a total of 521,607 words.
TOPIC 3: JESUS CHRIST

ETERNALLY YOUNG

1. **OBJECTIVE:** To learn more about the adorable person of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

2. **TO SHARE:**
   - Where was he born?
   - Who were his parents?
   - Where did he grow up?
   - What perils did he undergo?
   - Who persecuted him?
   - What did the prophets say about him?
   - What did he do?
   - What did he say?
   - So, finally, who is he?

3. **THE CHURCH, MOTHER AND TEACHER, IS TEACHING YOU: PAY ATTENTION**

   **A. Personal Data:**
   - Name: Jesus
   - Meaning: God Saves
   - Born: Bethlehem of Judea
   - Nationality: Israelite
   - Father: God
   - Mother: Mary
   - Guardian: Joseph
   - Person: Divine
   - Nature: Human – Divine
   - Mission: Save Mankind

   **B. A Man Called Jesus of Nazareth**
   - One day Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am? ... Who do you say that I am?” (Mark 8: 27-29)
   - Our identity as a Christian, and therefore, our salvation depends on the reply we give to this question.
   - We believe and acknowledge that JESUS of NAZARETH – was born a Jew, son of a daughter of Israel (Luke 2: 7), in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1), during the reign of King Herod and Emperor Caesar Augustus (Luke 2: 1). He was a carpenter by trade (Matthew 13: 55), was crucified and died in Jerusalem (Luke 23: 22, 44-46), while Pontius Pilate was procurator (Luke 23: 1, 24) and Tiberius was emperor. (John 19: 12, 15) – He is the SON OF GOD, MADE MAN (Mark 15, 39).
• The Christian faith is very far from being just a philosophy or way of looking at life and history. The Christian faith is a PERSON: JESUS CHRIST. HE IS THE TEACHER, the center and purpose of catechesis.

• To communicate the faith is to proclaim Christ so that all might BELIEVE in HIM (John 20: 30-31) and by believing, have eternal life (John 17: 3).

C. PERSONAL REFERENCES:

+ PARENTS: Simple and humble peasants (Matthew 1: 18-19)
+ BIRTH: In a stable, of a poor family (Luke 2: 6-7)
+ CIRCUMCIZED: The rite of initiation into the Covenant (Luke 2: 21)
+ PERILS: The flight into Egypt and the massacre of the innocents (Matthew 2: 13-18)
+ INTIMACY: With his Father, GOD (Luke 2: 41-49)
+ ANNOUNCED BY: The prophets (Isaiah 7: 14; Matthew 5: 1)

D. HIS INTIMACY WITH HIS FATHER

• The importance of prayer to Jesus: Matthew 14: 23; John 17; Mark 1: 35; Matthew 26: 36-44; Luke 5: 16; 6: 12-16; 9: 18-20

E. HIS NAMES

Each one of the names with which we refer to Jesus Christ contains an aspect of the marvelous reality and richness that is He.

JESUS: means “GOD SAVES”. That is his identity and mission. It is the name that the angel gave him (Matthew 1: 12).

CHRIST: means “THE MESSIAH”, the one long awaited by all the peoples, “THE ANOINTED”. In Israel a man was anointed, was consecrated for a special mission—kings, priests, prophets. The angelproclaimed him as Messiah to the shepherds (Luke 2: 11). St. Peter declared it (Matthew 16: 61, Acts 2: 36).

LORD: “THE LORD” is the name the Old Testament uses to designate the divinity of the God of Israel. In the New Testament it is given to the Father and to Jesus (John 21:7; Acts 2:36).

ONLY SON OF GOD: This is the most exalted title, the mysterious identity of Jesus. The Father tells us so (Matthew 3: 17; Peter; Matthew 16: 16; Luke 22: 70).

SON OF MAN: expresses not only the human condition of Jesus, but also his being the fullness of mankind (Luke 9: 58).

SON OF DAVID: expresses that Jesus is a descendent in the line of David (Matthew 12: 23; 15.; 22).
4. INTERESTING FACTS: LEARN A LITTLE BIT EVERY DAY

✓ The armadillo can have as many as 104 teeth. In regards to teeth, he wins out over all the other animals of the earth.
✓ Each one of the eyes of a locust has 13,000 lenses which are like miniature eyes, all equal, forming one large eye. If a locust loses a whole eye, he will grow another one with its 13,000 lenses.
✓ A little bird called a house sparrow from India makes its nest in the highest part of the tree. In order to light up the nest, the house sparrow traps fireflies and sticks them in damp clay from which they cannot escape.

5. TO READ AT HOME:

LUKE 18: 18-23

6. FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT: BIBLICAL WORD SEARCH

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O O O T N E M A T S E T T W C C N
T R N Y C E M A O S E T T W M T W
Z W O O Q S M A P R C A O E C C N
A J T M N O K O P I C N O C O R
C J W T C I K I C L B S O O I O B
E E Z N C D N W B R A O G U O O O
T S K K Q C T I K J A C G U O O K
O U M O R P B N E J C I G R O V C
I S L M N O N N E N T R M P T E C
L K S O N T A K W N T N N O N U N
B N S A N T A C A T B C C N N N D
I T N T T T R B R A X Z D A B C D
B W C C S O R B I L X W A B C D D
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TOPIC 4: MARY, MODEL
FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH

1. OBJECTIVE: Recognize in the Most Holy Virgin Mary a valid model for living the faith and womanhood.

2. LIFE EXPERIENCE: THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF STUDENTS
For one, it is easy to learn and understand everything, but his life doesn’t follow the teachings of the Catechism. For the other, it is more difficult to learn and understand, he makes a better effort to turn himself around and to practice what the Catechism teaches. The second one has taken the Catechism seriously and that is how it must be taken.

3: LET’S SHARE:
What do you think about this story?
Is what it says true?
With which type of student do you identify?

4. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:
1. What does the name “Mary” mean?
2. Where was the Virgin Mary born?
3. What were her parents’ names?
4. What joys did she have?
5. Do you remember any words she said?

5. THE CHURCH, MOTHER AND TEACHER, IS TEACHING YOU
Today women have acquired rights which would have been inconceivable in other times—voting, public offices, the professions, etc.

In the Bible, in particular in the New Testament, we find some parts which permit us to see how women were treated.
✓ A woman could not be greeted by a man in public nor be touched by a Rabbi (John 4: 9 and Luke 7: 39).
✓ A woman could not argue with her husband.
✓ A woman did not have to know how to read or write.
✓ What a woman possessed belonged to her father or husband.
✓ A woman had to have her head and face always covered.
✓ A woman could be repudiated / divorced (sent away, thrown out) by her husband for any reason (Matthew 19:3).
✓ If a woman is caught in adultery (cheating on her husband), she is stoned to death (John 8: 1-11).
✓ A woman can be married after reaching the age of 12.
What do you think of this? Do you think that women are treated this way today? Better or worse? What do you see, hear?

It seems a lot like Ripley’s Believe it or Not? This gives us a basis to talk about Mary, a simple and feminine woman.

6. WHO WAS MARY?

A. Personal Data:

* Mary is a name which means “Lady”, “Princess”.
* She was from the town of Nazareth, in the region of Galilee.
* Her parents were Joachim and Anne.
* Her life passed in the normalness of daily tasks (washing, scrubbing, cooking, getting water at the well, etc.).
* Her piety was unmistakable, her faith firm and constant.
* She dressed in a feminine and modest fashion.

B. Mary, the Beloved of Joseph

Like all young women, Mary met and interacted with young men. One attracted her attention: Joseph, the “Just Man”. They talked, joked and their friendship led them to get to know each other better. They fell in love and became engaged to marry.

C. The Preparations for the Wedding

It was the custom in this region to wait a year before living together. Each one lived in his/her parent’s house in order to prepare themselves for the coming wedding: where to live; how many children to have; how to feed them; how to educate them.

D. A very Special Call

The gospel according to St. Luke (1: 26-38) tells us how the Lord God addressed Mary by means of an angel to propose a very important assignment: to be the Mother of God, of his Son.

E. Mary, the Mother of the Son of God

At this proposal, Mary did not make him wait for her reply: “May it be done to me according to your word.” (Luke 1: 38).

F. Mary, the Servant

When Mary became filled with the Holy Spirit, in an attitude of service, she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth for 3 months in order to wait on her. (Luke 1: 39-40)

G. Mary and Joseph: A Small Problem

The gospel according to St. Matthew tells us about the state Joseph was in when he learned about Mary’s pregnancy. He was a JUST man and he put the matter in the hands of God who let him know about the Mystery hidden in Mary (Matthew 1: 18-25).
H. Mary, the Sorrowful Mother

For Mary, being the Mother of the Son of God brought her many sorrows during her life:
1. The birth of Jesus in a poor stable (Matthew 1: 18-25)
2. The presentation in the Temple (Luke 2: 22-30)
3. The flight into Egypt (Matthew 2: 13-15)
5. Meeting Jesus on his way to the cross
6. Seeing her son die on the cross (John 19: 25-27)
7. Jesus is lowered from the cross and placed in the arms of his most holy Mother. (Luke 23: 50-56)

I. Mary, our Mother

In the gospel according to St. John (19: 25-27), we find the task that Jesus entrusted to his Mother: the task of being the Mother of his disciples.

J. Mary, model for all young people

Mary became a model of virtue for all young people: faith, hope, charity, fortitude, chastity, service.

7. TO REFLECT ON AT HOME:

✓ What is being a woman for you?
✓ What models do you have to live your femininity?
✓ What do you think about courtship and marriage?
TOPIC 5: THE CHURCH:
ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC
AND APOSTOLIC

1. OBJECTIVE: To consider ourselves
active members of the church to which
we belong through our Baptism.

2. WORD OF GOD: Matthew 16: 18

Jesus said, “You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not
prevail against it.”

3. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1. How many Popes has the Church had?
2. What does “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic” mean?
3. Who is Peter right now and what is his office?

4. THE CHURCH, MOTHER AND TEACHER, IS TEACHING YOU: PAY ATTENTION

In the previous teaching we saw the person of Our Lady, the ever Virgin Mary. Now we will look
more closely at our Holy Mother Church. She is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. But, what do
we mean by each of these words? Above all, they are not merely words; they are SIGNS
CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHURCH. We will look at each one in particular: the word
“Church” means “Meeting or Assembly” to worship God; the word “Catholic” means
“Universal” or extending all over the world.

A. THE CHURCH IS ONE

The Church is ONE through its origin. The unity of God is the origin of the Church. It is ONE
because Christ, its founder, has desired to unite in her all peoples. It is ONE because the Holy
Spirit brings about this communion of all the faithful in Christ. He is the source of the unity of
the Church. Nevertheless, within this UNITY there is a great DIVERSITY: peoples, races,
gifts, duties, ways and conditions of life.

READ: 1 Corinthians 12: 1-30

B. THE CHURCH IS HOLY

The Church is HOLY; she cannot stop from being so. Christ has loved her as his Spouse and
he has given himself to her to sanctify her. He has united her to himself and has filled her with
his spirit. She is sanctifying—word, sacraments, the Saints that are in her—in spite of the sin
that is in her.

READ: Matthew 5: 48
C. THE CHURCH IS CATHOLIC.

We have already seen that “Catholic” means universal, or extended over all the earth. She is Universal because Christ is present in her and she has been sent by Christ to all of humankind.

READ: Matthew 28: 91-20

D. THE CHURCH IS APOSTOLIC.

Founded on the apostles, witnesses chosen by Christ and sent forth by Him, the Church guards and transmits the faith that she has received from them and she continues teaching, sanctifying and guiding through those who have succeeded the Apostles, that is, the Pope and the Bishops united with him.

READ: Matthew 10: 1-2; Matthew 16: 18; Matthew 28: 19-20

5. VOCABULARY:

➢ POPE: He is the Supreme Pontiff of Rome, successor to St. Peter, Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, whom we are obliged to obey.

➢ BISHOP: Means “Watchman”. He is the successor of the Apostles who has received the fullness of the priesthood by means of the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

➢ PRESBYTERATE: Means “Elder”. In the language of the Catholic Church it means priest, father, curate.

➢ DEACON: He is a man who has received the Sacrament of Orders in order to attend to the needy. There are permanent Deacons, single and married.

➢ DIOCESE: It generally refers to a geographic area where some of the People of God live; a bishop is entrusted with their care. It is also called the “Particular Church”

➢ PARISH: It is a specific community of parishioners whose pastoral care is entrusted to a particular priest, the pastor.

6. DO YOU KNOW THAT...

✓ A COUNCIL is a meeting of the Bishops of the world to deal with questions of faith and morals.

✓ There have been 20 Councils in the Catholic Church. The first was in Jerusalem under the direction of the 12 apostles. The last was Vatican Council II from 1962 until 1965.

✓ The Catholic Church has 800 million faithful, 3,000 Bishops, 400,000 priests, 2 million religious, 40,000 missionaries, 500,000 churches in 177 countries and it has had 265 Supreme Pontiffs (Popes) up to now. Its martyrs have numbered more than 26 million.

7. TO READ AT HOME: 1 Peter 4: 1-6

Bring a written summary of what you learned from it.
TOPIC 6: THE SACRAMENT OF THE
EUCHARIST: LITURGICAL ELEMENTS
OF THE QUINCEAÑERA MASS

1. OBJECTIVE: To learn the liturgical elements
of the celebration of a Quinceañera celebrated
within a Mass.

2. TRADITION:
One of the Hispanic-American customs which the people have brought to this country is the
celebration of the Quinceañera, which consists in presenting a young woman to the community in
two ways, that is:

+ Religious: This consists in an “Act of Thanksgiving” to God for the gift of life and the ability
to give life (being a woman) along with a Eucharist full of significance and simplicity where
the young woman renews her baptismal promises and prepares herself to work responsibly of
the good of the community.
+ Social: This consists of a reception and social interaction where the young woman is presented
to the community and society in order to be recognized by all as a person capable of offering
her Christian values for the good of the family and of the Church.

3. LET'S SHARE:
What is the Holy Mass to you?
What meaning does the Quinceañera Mass have for you?
What are you going to do after your Quinceañera?

4. LITURGICAL ELEMENTS OF THE QUINCEAÑERA CELEBRATION

Below are some of the elements that you should have in mind for the celebration of your
Quinceañera Mass:

A. INTRODUCTORY RITES
   • Beginning: Introduction to the celebration
   • Greeting: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit…
   • Penitential Rite: I confess to almighty God…
   • Kyrie: Lord, have mercy
   • Opening Prayer: Indicates what is being celebrated.

B. LITURGY OF THE WORD
   • First Reading (Usually taken from the Old Testament)
   • Responsorial Psalm
   • Second Reading (Optional—usually taken from the New Testament)
   • Alleluia
   • Gospel
   • Homily or Explanation of the Word—Deed

- 18 -
• Renewal of Baptismal Promises and/or Creed
• Blessing of the religious articles
• Prayer of Consecration and the Offering of Flowers
• Prayer of the Faithful

**RENEWAL OF THE BAPTISMA...
THE ROSARY: It is a pious devotion of the Christian people. It is like a gospel meditating on the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries. It nourishes the faith of the Christian. We go to Jesus through the help of Mary.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION TO THE VIRGIN MARY

This prayer is recited by the Quinceañera as she takes a floral offering to the altar of the Virgin Mary.

I offer you, Lord, my youth. Guide my steps, my actions, my thoughts. Grant me the grace to understand your new commandment, the commandment to “love my neighbor as myself”. May your grace not be useless to me, I pray through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior.

Oh Mary, my Mother, present my offering and my life to the Lord. Always be my model of a courageous woman, my strength and my guide. You, who have the power to change hearts, take my heart and make me worthy to be your daughter. Amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION (Petitions)

C. LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- Presentation of the gifts—at this time the bread and wine are presented.
- Prayer over the gifts
- Eucharistic prayer

D. COMMUNION RITE

- Our Father…
- Peace of Christ…
- Lamb of God
- Communion—the Quinceañera, her family and friends receive Communion
- Prayer after Communion
- Solemn blessing
TOPIC 7: THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

1. OBJECTIVE: To give a review of the steps for a GOOD CONFESSION, an explanation and application.

2. LIFE EXPERIENCE: ST. JOHN BOSCO’S DREAM—THE THREE ROPES

This famous saint saw in one of his famous “Dreams”, THE THREE ROPES, with which the enemy of the soul binds up the young people so that they may not change their lifestyle or abandon their sins. The first rope is to make them not have sorrow for having sinned. The second consists in their not making promises of amending their lives and beginning to be better. The third rope tells them to be afraid and not confess their sins. Many young people are lost because of these three ropes.

3. LET’S SHARE:

Will this dream of Don Bosco be true?
How long has it been since you confessed your sins?
What are the steps for a good confession?

4. THE CHURCH, MOTHER AND TEACHER, IS TEACHING YOU: PAY ATTENTION

We are now a few days from the moment—I hope desired—of reconciliation. Nevertheless, this sacrament which we want to explain to you now should not be seen as an OBLIGATION, or BECAUSE IT’S YOUR TURN, or AS A REQUIREMENT to be in peace. It is a necessary sacrament on our journey to the Father’s House.

A. WHAT IS THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION OR PENANCE?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation, Penance or Confession is the sacrament in which we receive pardon for our sins through the priest giving us absolution if we confess our sins repentantly.

B. NAMES OF THE SACRAMENT AND THEIR EXPLANATION

➢ CONFESSION: We declare, or confess, our sins to the priest.
➢ PENANCE: It is the end of the process of repentance and reparation on the part of the sinner.
➢ RECONCILIATION: We reconcile ourselves with God, with the Church, and with our brothers and sisters.

C. STEPS FOR A GOOD CONFESSION

In the gospel according to St. Luke, Chapter 15: 11-32, we find the LOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STEPS for good reconciliation.
EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE: It consists of remembering the sins we have committed and the causes and reasons for our committing those sins. Don’t torture yourself or rack your brains looking for sins or inventing them. Reflect upon your words, thoughts, deeds….

CONTRITION IN THE HEART—SINCERE REPENTANCE: Repentance, or contrition, is a sadness or heaviness of heart for having offended God as He is so good. And at the same time, it is sorrow for having sinned, for the punishments and bad things that sin brings us and for the ugliness of sin.

Attentively read and reflect on the following story:

THE THREE WHO CRIED: A priest encountered three girls crying in the vestibule of a church and asked them, “Why are you sad?” They answered, “Because our father sent us to Mass and we stayed in the street playing and did not go to church.” “So, why are you crying?” the priest asked them. The first girl responded, “I am crying because my father is going to give me a strong punishment for not having gone to Mass.” The second girl told him, “I am crying because my father will not give me the present he has promised.” And the third girl exclaimed, “I am crying because God has been so good to me and I have disobeyed him, not wanting to go to Mass.”

Which of the three made the best act of contrition, repentance?

PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT: It consists of a firm resolution to not commit our sins again and to begin a better life, one more pleasing to God. It is applying the means to get out of sin, it is avoiding the occasions of sin, it is distancing ourselves from evil….

Read the following story:

THE CHILD WHO DIDN’T RESOLVE TO AMEND HIS WAYS: A child was confessing his sins without preparing himself, without resolving to stop offending God (one of those confessions was of no use because it was made without repentance and without proposing better behavior). The child said, “Father, I confess, I have stolen three cakes.” The priest told him, “For your penance, say three Our Fathers.” And the child responded, “Father, then for penance give me six Our Fathers to pray, because this afternoon, I am going to steal three more cakes.”

Was he forgiven? IMPOSSIBLE! The first step for God to forgive us is that we REPENT for having offended Him and we are RESOLVED (WILLING) to not offend him again.
CONFESS YOUR SINS: After carrying out the previous steps (at home or in church, go to the priest to tell him your sins. Don’t be afraid or embarrassed. You should never hide any sin: it will not be forgiven and you will commit a sin called SACRILEGE.

DO THE PENCE: The priest will impose a penance on you (it can be a prayer or specific deed) which you must perform as soon as possible.

D. PRACTICAL WAY OF CONFESSIONING

✓ In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; Hail Mary, Purest One, conceived without sin;
✓ Father, it has been _____ days (weeks, months, years) since my last confession.
✓ My sins are...
✓ Once you have finished, pay attention to the penance he will give you.
✓ Say the Act of Contrition, the prayer for pardon. Say thank you.

E. FOR A GOOD CONFESSION

1. Examine yourself with regard to: the Commandments of God – the Great Commandment, the Commandments of the Church; obligations - towards God, towards yourself, towards your neighbor.
2. Follow the five steps: examination of conscience – reflect; sorrow for sins – repent; purpose of amendment – resolve; confession – confess; penance – atone.
3. A good resolution should be small, but firm!
4. Through the priest, I confess my sins to God.
5. How often should I go to Confession?
   Obligation: once a year
   Advisable: always when sin especially weighs on me
   My resolve: every two weeks
TOPIC 8: THE COURTSHIP - 
JOURNEY TO MATURITY

1. OBJECTIVE: To get to know some of the elements that will help us to discover when a courtship is a true one or a caricature of one.

2. A LETTER FROM A MARTYR TO HIS FIANCÉE:

It tells of 22 year-old Francisco Castelló, a young chemist from Lérida, Spain. On September 28, 1936, he was condemned to death for being Catholic. A few minutes later in jail, he wrote this letter to his fiancée:

"Dearest Mariona, our lives have been united but God wishes to separate them. To Him I offer, with all possible sincerity, the love I profess for you, my ardent love, pure and sincere. I feel your disgrace, not mine. A strange thing is happening to me: I don't feel sadness for my luck; a strong and internal happiness is overcoming me. I wanted to write you a sad letter, a good-bye, but I can't. I am surrounded by happy thoughts that give me a presentiment of the Glory. I wanted to talk to you about how much I would have loved you, of the tenderness I would have had for you, of how happy we would have been. But for me, that is all secondary. I have to take a big step. I want to tell you one thing. If you can, marry. From heaven I will bless your union and your children. I don't want you to cry, I don't want it. Feel proud of me. I love you. I don't have time for more. Francisco."

3. LET'S SHARE:

What would you do if you were in this young man’s place? 
What do you say or think about his words and attitudes? 
Would we have the same attitude about death?

4. FOR MEDITATION AND REFLECTION: DELVING INTO THE MATERIAL

Interestingly, the story of Francisco and Mariona is true. Certainly it is not a fairytale, but truly the story of two Christian lovers who sacrificed themselves for true love. In songs, magazines, movies, novels, we see stories of people in love, people who swear to love each other forever. Perhaps we know a friend who says he or she is in love and wants to be engaged. But, what do we understand about courtship? Where is this relationship going? What difference exists between love and self-love? How do I know if that person to whom I say "I love you" is really my partner?

5. SELF-LOVE, ENEMY OF LOVE: ITS MANIFESTATIONS

On many occasions we have heard people in love say phrases like, "I love you with all my heart, I will never leave you." But let's not go so fast; "haste brings tiredness". We have to learn to discern if what we have is love or self-love, the enemy of love.
Self-love reduces courtship to a “love affair with oneself”. It is self-love to feel happy, but disregard the happiness of the other. It is self-love to consider amusing oneself at the expense of another.

IT IS SELF-LOVE:

- To seek one’s own interest
- To make one’s own ideas prevail as the definitive ones
- For the man to be authoritarian and the woman to have tendencies to be self-absorbed
- To desire to dominate the other
- To be intransigent in the way of being or acting toward the other
- To quash the personality of the other rather than enrich it
- To lack control of one’s passions
- To have a lack of will power which weakens that of the other
- To forget the Christian ideals of courtship
- To seek to enhance one’s own personality by means of that of the other
- To love without an effort at self-improvement
- To not keep or channel one’s love totally to the other
- “To be happy, just you two”, forgetting the serious problems of the world

If that is the situation of your courtship which you have had or lived up to now, below we invite you to look at the characteristics of the mature love of a mature courtship:

1. When love is a gift: It enriches the other! It makes the other a person, a being who gives of his/her own personal riches, joy and happiness. (John 15: 12-13)

2. When love is service: It takes into account the reality and possibility of the other and helps to fulfill them. (Genesis 2: 23)

3. To love is to feel responsible for the other. It is when you take an interest in the future of the other, of his/her life, ideals and needs. (Genesis 2:24)

4. When love is respect: It excludes all authoritarianism, all POSSESSION, all negative criticism, abuse or manipulation.

5. When love is understanding: I accept the other as he/she is, and not how I want him/her to be. One has to find oneself in the other; to discover the good qualities and help to correct the defects. (1 Corinthians 13: 1-13)

6. VIRTUES NECESSARY IN COURTSHIP

From the confrontation between self-love and mature love is born a compelling requirement: to grow in virtue.
If we ask young men what virtues they want in their sweethearts, we might see the following responses:

* Gentleness and love
* Femininity and simplicity
* To be proper and respectful
* Goodness and congeniality, without artificiality
* Honesty and purity
* To have personality, culture and a disposition for work
* To be a homemaker and capable of being a mother
* To have a spirit of service
* To have ideals for human and apostolic development
* To be pious, with a sense of God in all her life

If we ask young women what virtues they want in their sweethearts, we might see the following responses:

* Honor and manliness
* Good character and personality
* Sense of responsibility
* Sincerity
* Openness and loyalty
* Disposition for work and sacrifice
* Self control
* Honesty
* Faith
* To be happy and agreeable
* Sensitivity in the “little things”
* Sobriety and a spirit of initiative
* Esteemed by others
* Good judgment
* Open to the problems of others
* Religious

7. AND GOD CREATED THEM MAN AND WOMAN

An oriental legend once related that God created Adam only once, but Eve four times. I will tell you the story as I heard it told to one of the most learned and friendly priests I know, Fr. Calazans.

“In the beginning, God created Adam, but he didn’t consider creating anything better. Adam was happy amid the greenery, the pure water, the fruits, the rising and setting sun. From morning to night, he leapt, sang and danced, happy to have been created for feeling free to go wherever he wanted and to do whatever he wished.

But, after a few months, Adam began to feel sad.

He was happy, but none of what he did or saw satisfied him; he wanted a better reason to live than fruits, greenery, water, sunsets and comfort.

God observed that Adam was no longer the same, and he asked him, “Adam, what is worrying you so much? Are you lacking something to make your happiness complete?” And Adam answered, “Lord, I don’t want you to take my attitude to be that of an ingrate, but I feel the lack of someone
who understands me, who speaks my language and makes me feel like I am not alone and the only one of my species in this marvelous paradise. If it is not too much to ask, I would like someone with whom to happily share all that I see, feel and love.’

‘Very well,’ God told him. ‘Go to sleep and I will do my job.’ And Adam went to sleep.

When he woke up, he felt the loss of a rib and was going to ask God what had happened to him when he discovered at his side the greatest marvel that his eyes had ever seen. He could not believe what he saw and thinking that it was his imagination that was betraying him, he exclaimed, ‘Bah!’ making a gesture like someone brushing aside a bad thought.

Suddenly, he heard the voice of God saying, ‘Are you happy now?’ Adam didn’t answer. A shudder went through his whole body. He had asked for company, true, but God had exaggerated. He looked and he looked, and when she smiled, Adam began to leap and run in circles from joy, thanking God for having given him a thousand times more than what he had asked.

Six months went by. God asked Adam once again, ‘What’s the matter, Adam? Were you not happy again? Did I forget something that you are lacking?’ And Adam complained, ‘Lord, I don’t want to seem ungrateful; the woman that you gave me is enchanting. You could not have made anything more sweet and gracious.’ ‘Then,’ God asked, ‘why are you dissatisfied? Aren’t you happy with her?’ ‘Yes, but I would prefer that you take her back.’ ‘Back?’ ‘Yes, she is beautiful, gracious, enchanting, but she takes away my freedom. I can’t go where I want to go, she contradicts me all the time, she demands that I wash my feet before I enter the house, she controls what I eat, she stops me from leaving when I want to go for a walk, she wakes me up unexpectedly, she wants loving when I don’t feel like it and when I want to, she doesn’t. She cries for any reason, is unpredictable, gets angry and stubborn with incredible ease, says that I don’t understand her needs and wants, she changed the names that I gave to all the animals and she has taken possession of my life in such a way that if I am ten minutes late, she wants to know what I did, who I was with and a thousand more things.’ ‘In short,’ said God, ‘you no longer like her.’ ‘Lord, I like her, but it is not worth it to live with her in the same cave. Please, take her away. I want my freedom again.’ And God took Eve away. Two months went by. Adam was sad again, with a lost look about him. God questioned him again. And Adam admitted his sadness.

‘Don’t think me ungrateful, God, but about Eve. Yes, I asked you to take her away, but I miss her. Once again I am free, but I seem to hear her voice, see her smile, and feel her love everywhere. I don’t think it is worth it to be free without her at my side.’ ‘Then, do you want her back?’ ‘Yes, Lord, it is what I want most in life.’ And God gave her back. And again he asked God to take Eve away and He took her. And Adam got depressed. Then God promised to return Eve, but He demanded, ‘Adam, we have to stop playing this childish game. Either accept Eve with her limitations, because she also has to put up with many of yours, or you will be alone in Paradise with your orangutans. Think it over well, because I will no longer take her back. And if I do take her away, I will never return her again!’ Adam scratched his head, asked for some time and went to his cave to think. To live with her is hell, but there are beautiful moments. To live without her is always hell. It is better to live with her than alone. SO, HE STAYED WITH EVE, AND THUS WAS BORN THE INDISSOLUBLE MARRIAGE.
TOPIC 9: PRAYER: MY
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
THROUGH PRAYER

Opening Prayer: (Let’s begin with a moment of silence, placing ourselves in the Divine presence)

Lord, take me where You want me to go,
Let me meet who You want me to meet,
Tell me what You want me to say, and
Keep me out of Your way. Amen.

I. SO, WHAT IS PRAYER?

St. Thérèse of Lisieux may have said it best;
“For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy”

A. Prayer is God’s gift

God freely extends the gift of prayer towards us. It is up to us to respond or not respond, to accept or not accept that gift.

“You would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” Paradoxically our prayer of petition is a response to the plea of the living God: "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water!” Prayer is the response of faith to the free promise of salvation and also a response of love to the thirst of the only Son of God. (CCC #2561)

We do not initiate prayer; God does and we have to understand that God does not need our prayer, we do.

B. Prayer is covenant

It is important to have an understanding of covenant. There is a difference between a contract and a covenant, in that a contract is a legal exchange as in the exchange of properties, this is mine and that is yours or I’ll give you this and you do that. A covenant is more of a relationship or an exchange between persons. God told Abraham “I will be your God and you will be my People.”

The Catechism tells us: “Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ. It is the action of God and of man, springing forth from both the Holy Spirit and ourselves, wholly directed to the Father, in union with the human will of the Son of God made man.” (CCC #2564)
C. Prayer is communion

"Wherever two or three are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

When we pray, we are in communion with God and with the whole Church. That is one of the reasons the Mass is the greatest form of prayer we have. Even when we pray alone, our prayer unites us with Christ and His Church.

In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Kingdom is "the union of the entire holy and royal Trinity . . . with the whole human spirit." Thus, the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him. This communion of life is always possible because, through Baptism, we have already been united with Christ. Prayer is Christian insofar as it is communion with Christ and extends throughout the Church, which is his Body. Its dimensions are those of Christ’s love. (CCC #2565)

D. Summary

So we see that prayer is a gift from God, freely given, a covenant in which we exchange our very being with God, and through our communion with Jesus, we encounter the living God. It’s how we can communicate and have a relationship with Jesus.

II. Why do People Pray?
(Some of the reasons that people pray were given at a recent workshop)

A. Strength – People said they prayed for strength to live in communion with God.

B. Sense of need – People pray out of an intuitive sense of need, as in for family, vocations, patience, healing, etc.

C. Understanding – We sometimes pray for clarity in things like, our dependence on or our personal relationship with God, or what our gifts might be, etc.

D. Enjoyment – Sometimes we can find great tranquility and contentment in being in the presence of God.

E. Deeper knowledge and love for Christ – We cannot serve someone whom we do not know. Prayer especially with the use of scripture is how we form a personal relationship with Christ. Prayer puts us in touch with God; it opens our heart and allows God to enter in.

Prayer should be an experience – an encounter with our living God. Prayer changes us, not God.
III. Method in Prayer

What are some of the ways you pray? First of all remember that there is no best way to pray. Find what works for you and your family and stick with it.

A. Plan your prayer life.

Planning your prayer life is like planning your exercise or diet. It's easy to get carried away by enthusiasm and end up surrounded by prayer-books (or exercise equipment or diet books) that you never actually use. So-

1. Start slowly. Work out how much time you can devote to praying and halve it. That way you are likely to build a lifelong habit...you can always add time later.

2. Choose a regular time each day....whatever the time stick to it.....then it will become habit.

3. Take advantage of opportunities to pray.
   Now wait a minute. I'm a very busy person and I can't seem to find the time to go to some inner sanctum - does that mean I can't pray?
   No, it means that we should pray this way when ever possible, but at other times we can pray, while waiting in line at the store, or while commuting to work, waiting for an appointment, or even walking down the street.
   We all have periods of waiting in our lives. We should use these as opportunities to touch base with ourselves and to listen to God's voice within us. Prayer puts us in touch with God; it opens our heart and allows God to enter in.

B. Levels of Prayer

Prayer expresses itself as a human relationship with God. Just as there are four levels in a human relationship, (acquaintance, friendship, affection, and love) there are also four levels of prayer.

1. First level - Acquaintanceship or getting to know God. We might call this "small talk".
   These are the usual memorized or rote prayers. (Actually any prayers that you might read.)
   
   **Our Father** - The prayer Jesus gave us.
   *(Pray the words of the Son in the voice of the Spirit and the Father will answer.)*
   **Hail Mary** - Intercessory Prayer.
   **Act of Contrition** - This prayer is used during Reconciliation.
   **Grace at meals** – Bless us O' lord...
   **Psalms** – Called the "prayer book of God".

   These are what I call the "how’s the weather" prayers we use when we are first getting to know God, but they are also very important prayers no matter where you are in your prayer journey, as we will see later.
2. Second level - Friendship or being on familiar terms with God. This is the prayer of "discourse" or a "thinking meditation". What do I want to say to God?

3. Third level - Affection - this is prayer that has an emotional element such as "Charismatic" prayer. It is also any prayer from level one or two that is prayed with fervor or emotion - also the acclamations at Mass.

4. Fourth level - Love - This is the prayer of the heart - the prayer of silence - simply being in God’s presence in silence. This is sometimes called “Centering Prayer” or “Contemplative Meditation”.

When our prayer seems dry or we are struggling with our prayer it may be a sign that God is calling us to grow in our prayer life to another level.

C. Ways of Prayer: Anyone can pray well - praying well is simply being honest and open with God.

1. Personal forms

a. Rote - memorized prayers, or prayers that you might read, (Marion Devotions, Jesus prayer, psalms, etc).
ACTS – Adoration – Contrition – Thanks – Supplication.

b. Conversational - Just talk to God - as Tevia did in “Fiddler on the Roof”. Prayer is simple. We don’t have to be experts in anything in order to pray. We don’t need to be great theologians or understand all the teachings of the Church, or know every inch of Scripture by heart.

c. Scriptural - Praying with the Bible. What was God saying then, what is He saying now? What does it mean to me now?

d. Meditation: - Mental Prayer, rather than vocal or ritual, engages our thoughts, imagination, emotion, and desire. A traditional Jewish method of prayer is to meditate on a Scripture reading, placing yourself in the story as one of the characters or as a bystander. Try to imagine the sounds, sights, and smells of that time. Try to feel the feelings, and hear the words.

e. Contemplation - Uses a prayer word to help us clear our mind so as to seek the knowledge of God's love, to seek union with Him, to love Him, and to just place ourselves in the loving presence of Him.

f. Lectio Divina - Scripture, literature is meditated on to see how it is speaking to you. You can meditate on a word or a sentence or even rote prayer to see what it may be saying to you. Let's look a little closer at Lectio Divina.
Lectio Divina

- Build a Church, in other words, do something special to set off your prayer time, like kneeling, light a candle, kiss the Bible, etc.
- Be aware that God has already spoken. You could not even begin this prayer unless God had first summoned you to it. Your prayer has already begun as soon as you think of it. You have done your part - now it's God's turn.
- Take the Bible and open it to a passage from God that you need to hear.
- Listen to (read) just one or two verses from that passage as coming right from God to you. The Scriptures are the word of God!
- Just as you would in a conversation with a friend, stop and reply in your own words.
- Then let God have his turn again - listen to another verse or two and reply.
- Do this for a period of at least ten minutes - more, if you wish.
- To finish off just tell God in your own words how you feel about what he has told you - thank Him!

2. Communal / Ritual forms
   b. Liturgy of the Hours / Divine Office - This is how the Church is able to pray always.
   c. Rosary - When prayed within a community.
   d. Spontaneous prayer - Always begin with an invocation of the Holy Spirit and end with thanksgiving to God.

3. In Nature

Communion with nature was a source of insight for Jesus. To illustrate the Father's loving care, He said, "Look at the birds in the sky... Think of the flowers growing in the fields." (Matt. 6:26-28)

Pope John Paul II has said "We can pray perfectly when we are out in the mountains or on a lake and we feel at one with nature. Nature speaks for us, or rather, to us. We pray perfectly."

However, prayer in nature is only one way to pray. Sometimes people feel that this sort of prayer is all one needs. Aside from the continuous belief of Christians down the ages that worship in common is good and necessary, there is the statement of the Lord that when two or more are gathered in His name, He is there in their midst. (Matt. 18: 20) Thus all three, personal prayer, communal prayer and prayer in a natural environment are valuable and important.
RANDOM THOUGHTS ON PRAYER

IS PRAYER A PRIORITY IN MY LIFE?

I know that the family that prays together stays together, so I have to ask myself, how do I make my home a place of prayer? How do we pray as a family? Do we say Grace at meals?

Perseverance — Prayer, like life itself, does not remain static. Our prayer life should not be what it was five years ago, and it should not be the same in five years as it is now. We should expect to make progress, to grow in our intimacy with God. Discouragement is probably the greatest obstacle to growth in our prayer life.

When Mother Teresa of Calcutta was asked how she was able to do all the good things she did, she responded:  Pray — Pray — Pray — Pray

Remember that all prayer is answered.... sometimes the answer is no!
III. Liturgy

Note: We recommend the use of the Mass of Thanksgiving from the Roman Missal. (A text for a Mass of the quinceañera was approved by the U.S. bishops at their meeting in November 2004, and that text was sent to Rome for approval. When that approval is received, the text will be available for purchase through publishers in the United States.)

1. Celebration of a Quinceañera during a Mass of Thanksgiving (for one person or a group)

A. Opening Rites

- Procession and Entrance Hymn
- Order of procession: First, the Cross enters; second, the Lector with the Lectionary; third, the Eucharistic Ministers; fourth, the Priest; fifth, the companions in faith; sixth, Godparents with the religious articles; seventh, the parents with the quinceañera. Everyone bows before the altar, takes their place and remains standing. **Note:** The procession is a liturgical procession and not a parade; therefore, everyone should walk normally and not rhythmically and this goes for the ladies, the escorts, the sponsors and the quinceañera. The escort of honor should enter along with the other escorts and not the quinceañera in order to not give the impression that it is a wedding.
- Greeting
- Penitential Act
- Collect

B. Liturgy of the Word

- Readings
- Homily
- Renewal of Baptismal Promises
- Blessing of religious objects
- Thanksgiving and Consecration
- Offering of flower(s) to the Virgin
- Prayer of the Faithful

C. Liturgy of the Eucharist

D. Concluding Rites

- Blessing of the Quinceañera
- Final Blessing
- Recessional Hymn
2. Guide to the Selection of Readings

A. First Reading

- Isaiah 49: 1-6: *I am going to make you a light for the world.* 
  (called, service)
- Isaiah 43: 1-7: *I have called you by name.* (called, trust)
- Jeremiah 1: 4-10: *Before you were formed in your mother’s womb, 
  I knew you.* (called, discipleship, mission)
- Tobit 13: 7-10: *from Tobit’s Song of Praise* (praise, thanksgiving)

B. Responsorial Psalm

(Praise, thanksgiving)

- Psalm 99: *We are your people, the sheep of your flock.*
- Psalm 138: *I will sing for you before your angels.*
- Psalm 139: *I thank you for you have chosen me.*
- Psalm 66: *Oh God, let the peoples praise you.*

C. Gospel

- Luke 1: 39-56: *The Lord has done great things for me; 
  He has lifted up the lowly.* (Magnificat)
- Matthew 11: 25-30: *I am meek and humble of heart.* (faith, trust)
- John 15: 1-8: *If anyone remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit.*
- John 15: 9-17: *There is no greater love than this: to give one’s life for a friend.* 
  (love, commandments)
IV. Order of the Celebration

Time: __________ Name of Presiding Minister: _______________________

INTRODUCTORY RITES:
Procession and Entrance Song (welcome) __________________________
Penitential Rite ________________________________________________

LITURGY OF THE WORD:
First Reading ___________________________________________________
Responsorial Psalm _____________________________________________
Gospel Acclamation ____________________________________________
Gospel _________________________________________________________
Homily _________________________________________________________
Renewal of Baptismal Promises _________________________________
Blessing of religious articles _________________________________
Prayers of Thanksgiving and Consecration _______________________
Offering of flower(s) to the Virgin Mary _______________________
Prayer of the Faithful _________________________________________

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST
Preparation of the Gifts _________________________________________
Eucharistic Acclamations _______________________________________
Holy, Holy ___________________________________________________
Memorial Acclamation _________________________________________
Great Amen ___________________________________________________

Communion Rite:
Lord’s Prayer _________________________________________________
Lamb of God _________________________________________________
Communion Song _____________________________________________

CONCLUDING RITE:
Blessing of the Quinceañera __________________________________
Final Blessing ________________________________________________
Closing Song __________________________________________________

This form can be adapted to suit the circumstances.
RETREAT

Reflection over one's vocation and mission in life.
Morality and sexuality.

REHEARSAL

A general rehearsal before the celebration with all the attendants participating and in accordance with parish guidelines.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Advisory team formed by:
- Rev. Alberto Magaña, Pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Sunnyside
- Rev. Michael Brzezowski, Pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Prosser
- Rev. Alvaro Díez, Associate Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish, Grandview
- Mr. Pedro Romo, Director, Office of Hispanic Ministry, Diocese of Yakima
- Mrs. María Elena Treviño-Ponce, Director, Hispanic Catechesis, Diocese of Yakima

In appreciation for their collaboration:
- Rev. Isaías Hernández (who served in the Diocese of Yakima on loan from the Diocese of Santiago de Veraguas in Panama from 1999 to 2001).
- Deacon Kerry Turley (St. Joseph Parish in Sunnyside).
- Mrs. Barbara Calhoun (St. Paul Cathedral Parish in Yakima).
1. Among several Spanish-speaking countries and among many Hispanics in the United States there is the custom of celebrating the passage from childhood to adolescence with a ritual that expresses thanksgiving to God for the gift of life and that asks for a blessing from God for the years ahead. This may be done within Mass by use of the rites of blessing provided in nos. 2-17 or by a blessing outside Mass, celebrated according to the rites given in nos. 18-34.

2. Since this rite may be used for more than one person, the changes in parentheses indicate the plural forms.
A. Order for Blessing on the Fifteenth Birthday within Mass

3. Depending on the provisions of the rubrics in the liturgy of the word the readings may be taken
either from the Lectionary for Mass, Masses for Various Needs and Occasions, "In Thanksgiving."

4. The homily follows the gospel reading. In it the priest gives an explanation of the grace and
mystery of life based on the sacred texts.

5. The general intercessions follow, either in the form usual at Mass or in the form given in
n.XXX:

6. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist the Order of Mass is observed.

7. Before the final blessing the priest invites the quinceañera (quinceañeras) to make an act of
thanksgiving and of a personal commitment to lead a Christian life.

8. The quinceañera (quinceañeras) may do so in these or similar words:

Heavenly Father,
I thank you for the gift of life
for creating me in your image and likeness
and for calling me to be your daughter through baptism.
Thank you for sending your Son Jesus to save me
and your Holy Spirit to sanctify me.
To that which in your goodness and love
you will for me, I say “yes,”

With your grace I commit myself
to serve my brothers and sisters all my life.

Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother,
I dedicate myself to you.
Since you are my model of faith,
help me to continue learning from you what I need
to be a Christian woman.
Help me to hear the Word of God as you did,
holding it in my heart and loving others,
so that, as I walk with Jesus in this life,
I may worship Him with you in all eternity. Amen.
9. The priest responds:

N., (N.Y. N.) may God who has begun this good work in you, bring it to completion.

10. According to circumstances, the priest, in silence, sprinkles the quinceañera with holy water.

11. At this time, the quinceañera (quinceañeras) may take a flower or a bouquet of flowers to the image of the Blessed Mother.

12. If convenient, the priest invites the baptismal godparents and other couples acting as sponsors to bring the religious articles to be given to the quinceañera, (quinceañeras) such as a medal, a bible, a rosary which have been previously blessed.

13. Then the baptismal godparents and other couples acting as sponsors give the blessed objects to the quinceañera (quinceañeras).

14. At the end of Mass the priest blesses the quinceañera (quinceañeras), using these or similar words:

_Loving God,_

_you created all the people of the world_
_and you know each of us by name._

_We thank you for N. (these quinceañeras),_
_who today celebrates her (their) fifteenth birthday._
_Bless her (them) with your love and friendship_
_that she (they) may grow in wisdom, knowledge, and grace._
_May she (they) love her (their) family always_
_and be faithful to her (their) friends._
_Grant this through Christ our Lord._

All: _Amen._

15. Then the priest blesses all present in the usual way.

16. After the blessing, all may sing a hymn which suitably expresses thanksgiving and joy or they may sing the song of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Magnificat.
B. Order for Blessing on the Fifteenth Birthday Outside Mass

17. The present rite may be used by a priest or deacon.

18. When the community has gathered, a suitable song may be sung. Then the one presiding says:

In the name of the Father (+), and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All make the sign of the cross and reply: Amen.

19. A priest or deacon greets those present in the following or other suitable words, taken mainly from sacred Scripture.

The grace and peace of God our Father,
who granted us the gift of life
and made us his children through Baptism,
be with you all.

All: And also with you.

20. The one who presides prepares all present to listen the Word of God:

We have come together to celebrate the fifteenth birthday of N. (these quinceañeras). As we join her (them) in her (their) joy, we join her (them) also in her (their)gratitude. Let us listen to the Word of God:
READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

21. Then the quinceañera, (if well prepared, or another person) proclaims the following or another text from Sacred Scripture:

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah: 1:4-10 

New American Bible

The word of the Lord came to me thus: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you. “Ah, Lord God!” I said, "I know not how to speak; I am too young." But the Lord answered me, Say not, "I am too young." To whomever I send you, you shall go, whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them, because I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord. Then the Lord extended his hand and touched my mouth, saying, See, I place my words in your mouth! This day I set you over nations and over kingdoms, To root up and to tear down, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant.

The Word of the Lord.

All reply: Thanks be to God.

22. The one who presides invites the quinceañera (quinceañeras) to make an act of thanksgiving and of personal commitment to lead a Christian life.

23. The quinceañera (quinceañeras) may do so using these or similar words:

Heavenly Father,
I thank you for the gift of life
for creating me in your image and likeness
and for calling me to be your daughter through baptism.
Thank you for sending your Son Jesus to save me and your Holy Spirit to sanctify me.
To that which in your goodness and love
you will for me, I say “yes,”

With your grace I commit myself to serve my brothers and sisters all my life.

Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, I dedicate myself to you.
Since you are my model of faith,
help me to continue learning from you what I need
to be a Christian woman.
Help me to hear the Word of God as you did,
holding it in my heart and loving others, so that, as I walk with Jesus in this life,
I may worship Him with you in all eternity. Amen.
24. The one who presides responds:

N., (N. y N.) may God who has begun this good work in you, bring it to completion.

25. According to circumstances, the one who presides, in silence, sprinkles the *quinceañera* with holy water.

26. At this time, the *quinceañera* (*quinceañeras*) may take a flower or a bouquet of flowers to the image of the Blessed Mother.

27. If convenient, the one who presides invites the baptismal godparents and other couples acting as sponsors to bring the religious articles to be given to the *quinceañera* (*quinceañeras*), such as a medal, a bible, a rosary and other religious objects which have been previously blessed. (This is optional).

28. Then the baptismal godparents and other couples acting as sponsors give the objects to the *quinceañera* (*quinceañeras*).

29. The one who presides says these or similar words.

**Loving God,**

**you created all the people of the world**

and you know each of us by name.

**We thank you for N., (these quinceañeras )**

who today celebrate(s) her (their) fifteenth birthday.

Bless her (them) with your love and friendship

that she (they) may grow in wisdom, knowledge, and grace.

May she(they) love her (their) family always

and be faithful to her friends.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

30. The one who presides may invite all present to exchange the sign of peace using these or similar words:

**In the love of Christ,**

let us conclude our celebration,

by offering one another a sign of peace.

31. All make an appropriate sign of peace, according to local custom.

32. After the blessing, all may sing a hymn which suitably expresses thanksgiving and joy or they may sing the song of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Magnificat.
APPENDIX

33. General Intercessions

Priest: We commend our cares and concerns to God, through the person of Christ, saying: Lord, Hear our Prayer.

Deacon/Lector: For our Holy Father, N., our (arch)bishop N., our pastor N., and all those who have dedicated their life to the service of God's people, that they may continue to follow faithfully their vocation; We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, Hear our Prayer.

For our civic rulers that they may perform their duties with justice and compassion for the good of all; We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, Hear our Prayer.
For N. (these quinceañeras) who is (are) celebrating her (their) birthday today, that she (they) may continue with happiness and generosity in the way of the Lord; We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, Hear our Prayer.

For the parents, grandparents and godparents of N., (these quinceañeras), that they may continue to enjoy the fruit of their love in their children; We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, Hear our Prayer.

For the youth, particularly the 'faith companions of N. (these quinceañeras), that they may have the necessary strength to live according to their Christian principles; We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, Hear our Prayer.

For the sick and the poor in our community, that they may experience God's love for them as those around them respond to their needs; We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, Hear our Prayer.

For all our faithful departed, that they may enjoy the vision of God in heaven; We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, Hear our Prayer.

For all our personal intentions that are deep in our hearts and for all those for whom we should pray, that they may receive the graces they need; We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, Hear our Prayer.

34. The priest immediately adds the following or some other suitable prayer:

Loving Creator, we come before you with faith and love to praise your goodness and to acknowledge our need. We ask you to hear the prayers we make in the name of Jesus the Lord.

All: Amen.