

The Octave for Christian Unity

A Week of Prayer & Unity

Overview

Each January Christians take time to pray for and promote true unity. It is called the week or octave of Christian Unity and always marks the feast of St. Paul's conversion. These eight days call all Christians to follow Christ more fully and to heal our divisions. This year the Ecumenical Commission of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe has a way for you to enter into this time of unity in your home, neighborhood and community. Each day you might try to do something with your fellow Christians that promotes unity and understanding within the Church. The box below gives some ideas of ways to foster ecumenism both in one's self and in the Church, among our friends and neighbors. They are only a help and you can mix them any way you see fit. You can do them at home or in a church. They involve study and prayer, feast and fast, faith and hope.

Why?

We celebrate an Octave to grow in our understanding of what it means to be the Church. To discover where Christ is calling us to be and how we might one day fulfill His prayer to be one.

Focus

The focus for this Octave is grass-root, home-based things you can do with friends and neighbors. We forget that our homes are the "Domestic Church" and what better place for us to foster ecumenism than with our neighbors and friends.

Day	Theme
I	Study Day: What is the Catholic Church's Teaching on Ecumenism?
II	The Word of God Makes Us One
III	Day of Fast
IV	Sing a New Song to the Lord
V	Christ Be Our Light
VI	Day of Personal Prayer
VII	Ecumenical Prayer and Pot Luck
VIII	We Believe: Creed & Conversion

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Day 1: Study Day-What is the Catholic Church's Teaching on Ecumenism?

Documents/Sources

Vatican II [*Unitatis Redintegratio*](#)

[Directory for Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism](#)

John Paul II [*Ut Unum Sunt*](#)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Activity:

Individual: After reading and reflecting on the above, write your own thoughts on what ecumenism means to you.

Group:

Share your reflection with friends and neighbors, Catholics and other Christians, who have done the same.

Prayer

Recite the [Creed](#) prayerfully and reflect on it in light of your study. (This can be done alone or in a group.)

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, light from light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glori-
fied,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen

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Day 2: The Word of God Makes Us One

Document/Sources

Vatican II [*Dei Verbum*](#)

Activity

Individual

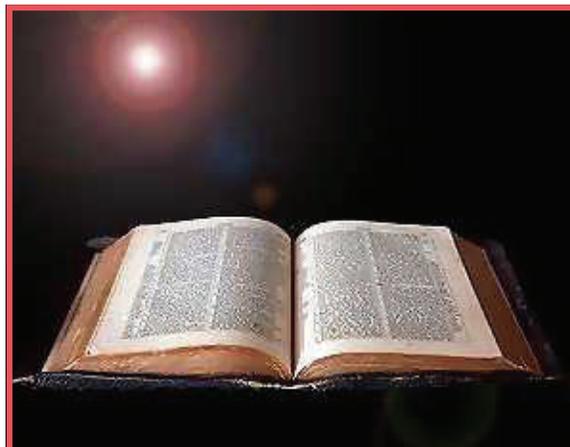
- 1) Find 2-3 different translations of the Bible (e.g. New American Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Jerusalem Bible, Good News for Modern Man, King James Version, etc)
- 2) Compare the following passages in each
 - A) Isaiah 7
 - B) Acts 9
 - C) Romans 8
 - D) John 20
- 3) How is the Bible the Word of God?

Group

Gather an ecumenical group together to discuss the Bible in your life.

Prayer

Take time for silent prayer together with the Bible placed in a central place and a candle burning by it.



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Day 3: Day of Fast

Document/Sources

Dominus Iesus

Activity

Fast for Christian Unity, pray that as you fast the Church's hunger to be one with Christ will increase.

Individual

Write a journal entry on what this day of fasting has meant for you.

Group

Gather with others who have fasted for a simple soup supper.

Prayer

Set aside some time during the day for personal prayer.



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Day 4: Sing a New Song to the Lord

Document/Sources

Vatican II [*Sacrosanctum Concilium*](#)

Activity

Individual and Group

Organize a Christian sing-a-long in your home or get your parish/church/congregation to put on an Ecumenical Choral Concert

Music Websites

WWW.OCP.ORG

WWW.GIAMUSIC.COM

WWW.JSPALUCH.COM

Prayer

Conclude the Concert/Sing-a-long with the Our Father.



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Day 5: Christ Be Our Light

Document/Sources

[*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*](#)

Activity

Individual & Group

Organize an evening prayer service in your church/parish or a neighboring congregation.

Great resource for how to do a prayer service.

[Taize](#)

- Have people bring candles to the service
- At the end of the prayer service pass the flame from an altar candle to the candles brought by people. Slowly dim the church lights and chant Taize hymn [*Ubi Caritas*](#).
- Process the candles to the front of the church and place together as a sign of unity in the light of Christ.

Prayer

End with the Creed.

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, light from light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glori-
fied,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen

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Day 6: Day of Personal Prayer

Document/Sources

[Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)
[Part Four: The Revelation of Prayer](#)
[Article 2: In the Fullness of Time](#)

Activity

Set aside time in your day to pray in your church or in a neighboring church or congregation or a place of pilgrimage, the mountains, the Cathedral, the Santuario de Chimayo

Prayer

Sing [Psalm 27: I Believe I Will See](#) (John Foley, composer)

Silent Prayer

Our Father

Kiss of Peace



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Day 7: Ecumenical Prayer and Pot Luck

Document/Sources

John 13

Activity & Prayer

3 course pot luck with prayer

1st course:	2nd course	3rd course
Soup or Salad	Potluck main dish	Potluck dessert
Baptism Sing: One Bread on Body	Christ Our Light Sing: Christ Be Our Light	Mission & Ministry Sing: City of God
Water sprinkling	Light table candles	Hold up Bible
Glory Be...	Our Father	Creed

Pre-Arrange who will provide which course (if you do a progressive potluck determine where each course will take place, someone's home or a church).

Possible Discussion Questions

Course 1

- Why does your church baptize people? What does baptism achieve?
- Have you ever attended a baptism in another church? How did it compare with the celebration of baptism in your church in terms of its wording, participants, setting?
- What is the importance of baptism for Christian unity? Into which Church is a person baptized? Is there more than one Church?
- What are the controversies you have come across on the subject of baptism? What position does your church take on these?

Course 2

- How is Christ the source of our Unity?
- What unites us as Christians?
- What does the passage from John say to you about Christian Unity?

Course 3

- What can we do to foster ecumenism and grow in our understanding of one another?
- How can we work together to bring God's compassion to our community?

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Day 8: We Believe: Creed & Conversion

Document/Sources

Creed
Acts 9

Activity

Individual

Self reflection on areas for personal conversion that opens you to Christ and a greater understanding of Ecumenism.

Group

Plan with others 2-3 activities you can do in the coming year to foster ecumenism. Some suggestions can be found on the Archdiocese Santa Fe Ecumenism Website, such as [ONE](#): Operation Neighborhood Ecumenism

Prayer

Meditate on St. Paul's conversion (Acts 9), his faith and love of Christ.

Concluding Prayer

*God our Father,
you taught the gospel to all the world
through the preaching of Paul your apostle.
May we who celebrate his conversion to the faith
follow him in bearing witness to your truth.
We ask this through Christ, Our Lord.
Amen.*

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, light from light,
true God from true God,
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through him all things were made.
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and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
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