

A Form of Prayer for the Home at Easter: An Agape Meal

This form is adapted from the Book of Alternative Services (1985).

Easter Season—on Easter Evening a new white candle may be placed on the table. It may be decorated, and may be surrounded by a small garden scene, flowers and/or eggs.

The leadership of the liturgy can be shared. All respond to the leader with the words in bold.

1 The Preparation

The candle or candles on the table or in the worship area may be lit. The one who lights them says one of the following:

May the light of Christ in glory rising scatter the darkness of heart and mind. Alleluia!
Christ is risen.

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

O God, the source of light and life, by the resurrection of your only Son you have led us out of darkness into your marvellous light, from death into life, from slavery into freedom. Bring the light of your new creation to us and to our world, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit for ever.
Amen.

This hymn may be sung. Tune: Tallis's Canon

O gracious Light, Lord Jesus Christ,
in you the Father's glory shone.
Immortal, holy, blest is he,
and blest are you, his holy Son.

Now sunset comes, but light shines forth,
the lamps are lit to pierce the night.
Praise Father, Son, and Spirit: God
who dwells in the eternal light.

Worthy are you of endless praise,
O Son of God, Life-giving Lord;
wherefore you are through all the earth
and in the highest heaven adored.

The Collect of the Day may be said.

God of glory,
by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death:
fill your church with faith and hope,
for a new day has dawned

and the way of life stands before us;
through Jesus Christ, our risen Saviour.
Amen.

2 The Meal with Breaking of the Bread

Creator of the universe, you give us this gift of food to nourish us and give us life. Bless this food that you have made and human hands have prepared. May it satisfy our hunger, and in sharing it together may we come closer to one another.
Amen.

A loaf of bread, if available, is broken and then passed from person to person. Each person in passing the bread leads the following dialogue.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

The meal continues.

3 Praise

Here may follow a psalm, hymn, song, or instrumental music.

4 Reading

¹³ On that same day, two disciples were traveling to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking to each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined them on their journey. ¹⁶ They were prevented from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He said to them, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" They stopped, their faces downcast.

¹⁸ The one named Cleopas replied, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who is unaware of the things that have taken place there over the last few days?"

¹⁹ He said to them, "What things?"

They said to him, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth. Because of his powerful deeds and words, he was recognized by God and all the people as a prophet. ²⁰ But our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the one who would redeem Israel. All these things happened three days ago. ²² But there's more: Some women from our group have left us stunned. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ and didn't find his body. They came to us saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who told them he is alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women said. They didn't see him."

²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! Your dull minds keep you from believing all that the prophets talked about. ²⁶ Wasn't it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷ Then he interpreted for them the things written about himself in all the scriptures, starting with Moses and going through all the Prophets.

²⁸ When they came to Emmaus, he acted as if he was going on ahead. ²⁹ But they urged him,

saying, "Stay with us. It's nearly evening, and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰After he took his seat at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. (Luke 24:13-31, CEB)

5 Response

Any of the following may follow the readings: silence, discussion of the scripture passage or theme of the day, reading of a related work of literature, telling of a related story, study of special material from the parish, diocese, or national Church, discussion of family concerns in the light of scripture or the theme of the day.

6 Intercession

Prayer may be offered for the Church, the Queen and all in authority, the world, the special needs of the group, those in need, and the departed. The following litany may be used, or individuals may offer their own prayers, silently or aloud.

Let us pray together to the Lord, saying, "Lord, hear our prayer."

Lord, hear our prayer.

Loving God, we thank you for your many gifts to us, for the love which brings us together, for the earth which provides for our needs, for the new life you have given us in Jesus Christ, (for . . .).

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray to you for our Christian family (especially for the Church of Saint John the Evangelist . . .) and for grace to grow in your love.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray to you for our world, for all its cares and needs, and for all who lead us and care for us, (especially . . .)

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray to you for those in need, for the sick and the lonely, for the hurt and the frightened, and for those who live without hope (especially . . .).

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those we love who have died, that you will surround them with your care and love (especially . . .).

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for one another, asking you to bless us, our friends, and relatives. Bless the places where we work, and bless our home and our life together.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Members of the home may wish to share in personal prayer.

Remain with us, Lord, for the day is far spent and evening is at hand. Kindle our hearts on our way that we may recognize you in the scriptures and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love.

Amen.

7 The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray,
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

8 Conclusion

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.

Amen.