

Service of the Word

(sanajumalanpalvelus)

This order of worship may be used for the main service on a Sunday or church holiday, and it may be used on weekdays or special occasions, such as youth services and worship in schools or the armed forces. This order also lends itself to thematic services. On special occasions the order is used as applicable.

In a service of the Word, the assembly concentrates on God's word and prayer. An opportunity for private counseling and confession should be arranged either before or after the service.

This order of worship is also used in exceptional cases mentioned in the Church Order (chapter 2, clause 7).

I Gathering

1. Opening hymn

Instead of a hymn, a psalm, choir music, or an instrumental prelude may be used.

During the hymn or musical presentation those assisting in the service may enter in procession, during which the assembly stands.

2. Invocation and greeting

The invocation and greeting may be sung or spoken.

Invocation

P In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A Amen.

Greeting

P The Lord be with you,

A also with you.¹

3. Introductory words

Introductory words may be freely formulated, taking into account special features of the day and the service.

These introductory words may be shaped so as to lead directly to the confession.

Generalized examples may be found in SUPPLEMENT ONE.

¹ Literally, the Finnish wording of the response means "So also with your spirit."

4. Confession and forgiveness

Confession and forgiveness may occur after the sermon (# 13).

Confession of sins

The confession may be read in unison. Kneeling is a possibility. The confession may also be divided into parts with interpolated sentences, sung verses of prayer, or with periods of silence. The confession may include silent personal prayer preceded by an exhortative or introductory phrase, such as "Hear my silent confession."

Suitable stanzas of a hymn may be used as the confession of sins.

Examples for confession of sins are in SUPPLEMENT TWO.

Declaration of forgiveness (Absolution)

The "Amen" following the declaration of forgiveness may be sung or spoken.

Some alternative declarations of forgiveness are in SUPPLEMENT THREE.

– the declaration

A Amen.

Prayer of thanksgiving

The prayer may be read in unison.

A suitable hymn or song may be sung instead as a prayer of thanksgiving. In that case, the following hymn (# 5) is omitted.

P Dear heavenly Father,
you forgive our sins for Jesus' sake,
and we bring our thanks to you.
Help us to depend on your grace in our life.

A Amen.

or

P God, our Father,
we thank you for the way that Jesus has opened up
for us to come to you.
Strengthen our faith, revive our hope,
and kindle renewed love among us.

A Amen.

or

P Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul,

and do not forget all his benefits.
He forgives all my iniquity
and heals all my diseases.
He redeems me from the grip of death
and crowns me with love and compassion.

A Amen.

5. Hymn

The hymn may be replaced by other suitable song, a psalm, or instrumental music.

6. Prayer of the day (the Collect)

Any part of this prayer (the call to prayer, the prayer itself or the amen) may either be sung or spoken. The call to prayer may be followed by a moment for silent prayer.

P Let us pray.

– the prayer

A Amen.

II God's Word

7. First reading

The reader announces the passage. The assembly remains seated during the reading.

The passage or a part of it may be sung.

The acclamations that follow may be sung or spoken.

– the reading

[R This is God's Word.

A Thanks be to God.]

8. Response

A psalm, hymn, song, instrumental music or a time for silent meditation may follow the reading.

9. Second reading

The reader announces the passage. The assembly remains seated during the reading.
The passage or a part of it may be sung.
The acclamations that follow may be sung or spoken.

– the reading

[R This is God's Word.
A Thanks be to God.]

10. Hymn of the day

This hymn may be replaced by other music.

*11. Gospel reading

The gospel is announced with words such as, "Let us rise to hear the holy gospel."
Before and/or after the gospel, alleluias may be sung. Alleluias are omitted during Lent.
The gospel lesson or a part of it may be sung.
The acclamations that follow may be sung or spoken.

– the gospel lesson

[P/R This is the holy gospel.
A Praise to you, O Christ.]

12. Hymn

This hymn may be replaced by other music.

13. Sermon

If the sermon is followed by confession and forgiveness (see # 4 above), the creed is said after the declaration of forgiveness. In this case a hymn or other music leading to penitence may precede the confession of sins.

*14. Creed

The creed is said in unison. Other accepted English wordings of the creed may be used instead.
A hymn paraphrase of the creed may also be used. In that case, the following hymn (# 15) is omitted.

Apostles' Creed

A I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

15. Hymn

The offering may be collected during this hymn or at the end of the service. The beneficiary of the offering is announced before the hymn, and the offering may be blessed after the collection is completed. If the offering is collected at the end of the service, the beneficiary may be announced as an item of prayer before the prayer of intercession.

This hymn may be replaced with other music.

III Prayer

16. Prayer of intercession

It is recommended that the prayer of intercession be prepared together with members of the congregation. Important topics include prayer for the church and the local congregation, and the spreading of the gospel, prayer for public authorities and for peace, prayer for those in various kinds of trouble, and prayer about current matters. When names of deceased members of the congregation are announced, the prayer should include intercession for the bereaved. There should also be time for silent prayer.

It is possible to divide the prayer into parts with interpolated sentences with sung verses of prayer, or with moments of silence.

Examples for the prayer of intercession are in SUPPLEMENT FOUR. The prayer "Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal" (Trishagion, included in the supplement) or a litany from some Lutheran or Anglican book of worship (not provided in this manual) are especially suitable during Lent. A suitable hymn may also be used as the prayer of intercession.

The call to prayer and the amen may be sung or spoken.

On Sundays, names of newly baptized members of the congregation, couples soon to be married or newly wed, as well as names of the deceased are announced before or during the prayer of intercession. Music or symbolic elements such as lighting of candles may accompany these announcements.

Occasionally the prayer of intercession may be extended e.g. to include personal counseling, and separate altars may be used to facilitate prayer and meditation.

P Let us pray.

– the prayer

A Amen.

17. Lord's prayer

The Lord's prayer is spoken or sung in unison.

A 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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

IV Conclusion

*18. Hymn of praise

The *Benedicamus* (Communion service # 26) may be used instead of a hymn.

No hymn is sung at this point in services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Quiet Saturday (Easter eve).

*19. Benediction

The benediction may be sung.

P The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;

the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.
In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A Amen.

Dismissal

The dismissal is said just before the people leave.

P/R Go in peace and serve the Lord with gladness.

or

P/R Go in peace.
Have courage,
hold on to what is good,
[do not repay evil for evil.
encourage the faint-hearted,
help the weak,
lift burdens of the oppressed,]
treat all people with respect.
Love and serve the Lord with gladness
in the power of the Holy Spirit.

20. Concluding music

A hymn, choir music, or an instrumental postlude is suitable here.

During the music a cross can be carried to the door. The assembly follows the cross and exits in procession.