

# A Method for Preparing Liturgy

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Usually when we prepare liturgy, we make it primarily an intellectual process. And, because of this, our rituals become mostly an exercise of our minds. The fact is we are complex human beings and our communal prayer needs to captivate not just our intellects, but our hearts and imaginations as well. It is primarily through images and feelings that we are moved to deeper faith. The following planning method engages us on these levels.

The method is also efficient. It can be used by a single individual or by a group of people. When used in a group setting, a facilitator is a great advantage in keeping people focused as they speak, allowing short responses but not explanations. Any reaction to the reading is valid and there is no need to explain it. In addition, the group doesn't spend time making final decisions about specific elements. Those are left up to the person who has the expertise to do that, i.e. the music director, the presider, the one in charge of the environment, etc. Our purpose here is to use our imaginations to brainstorm ideas.

**OBJECTIVE:** As we listen to the readings of the day, we engage our mind, heart, and imagination. We respond in the form of words, images, moods, and feelings. As we begin to brainstorm ideas about how to prepare the rites and what choices we will make, we use these WIMF as a guide.

## The Process

1. Brief period of silent centering prayer.
2. We listen as the Old Testament reading is read and pay attention to words, images, moods, and feelings that the reading evokes in us. (If done in a group setting, it can be read aloud by one of the members.)
3. We respond by noting the WIMF the readings have elicited. Allow only 3-4 minutes for this. (When done in a group setting, a facilitator should limit people to short answers with no explanations. Notes are taken by someone in the group or can be written on large newsprint.)
4. The gospel reading is read in the same manner. Again we take note of the WIMF evoked in us.
5. Finally, if there are three readings, the New Testament reading is read and the same process is followed.

6. After all readings are read and reactions listed, we study the overall flow of the readings, noting the predominant W I M F and how they blend together or contrast with one another. If planning an entire season, we study the progression of the W I M F through the weeks.

7. Finally, we spend some time brainstorming about how we might en flesh the WIMF through sight, sound, smell, etc. We brainstorm possible musical selections, colors for environment, symbols to be used, or special ritual elements. We also pay attention to current events in the world or local community.

8. The results are passed on to the music director, presider, homilist, readers, and coordinator of environment. These people, using their own expertise, make the final decisions.