



Suggested Invocation Guidelines

Recommendations & Guidelines for Inclusive Public Prayers

"Inclusive" public prayer in a pluralistic society is effective when the person leading the prayer is sensitive to the diversity of his/her audience. Those who lead general community prayers have a responsibility to have a clear understanding about the public nature of the occasion and respectful of the makeup of the audience.

Prayer on behalf of the entire community is most honoring of all peoples' faith traditions when listeners from a wide range of religious practices can share the experience and when the language is non-offensive to their faith traditions.

- Inclusive public prayer is non-sectarian, general, and carefully planned to respect the ground that diverse faith traditions have in common.
- An intentional effort to pray using universal, inclusive language helps bridge the gap among the faith traditions. For example: Using opening language about God such as: Source of All Being; Creator and Sustainer; Our Maker; and Almighty God, or using closing words like, Hear our prayer; May Goodness Flourish; In the Name of All we hold Sacred; or Amen, can help to frame the prayer so that those gathered can affirm their personal faith tradition and still participate in a community expression of reverence.
- Inclusive public prayer remains faithful to the purpose of acknowledging the Divine Presence, giving thanks, and seeking blessing, and should not be used as a forum to preach, persuade, or testify.

Source: The Chaplain's Resource Manual, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Department of Pennsylvania, July 2010