

BLESSING A NEW ACCESS FEATURE

Efforts to create access through accommodations such as ramps, elevators, assistive listening devices etc. should be acknowledged and celebrated. The ritual below can be adapted to bless any new accommodation and can be used as a stand alone service or for inclusion within a regular weekly worship service.

Presider: Welcome the assembly and explain the history of the new accommodation that the worshipping community has provided.

Begin the blessing ceremony with the following prayer:

OPENING PRAYER

Presider: Let us pray. Living and true God, You created all that is good and holy. Be close to your servants who gather here today. Be their constant help and protection. Enable us to reach out to all Your children to show understanding and awareness, comfort and consolation, justice and equality. We ask this through Jesus Christ Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

All: Amen

BLESSING

Presider: Creator God, you give us all good things. You know our needs and fulfill our desires. You protect all of us when we are fragile and give all of us courage when we are weak. Bless this new [*name the new access feature*] and those who will use it. May it open up a world of new possibilities for our community. May it bring worshipers to our assembly, students to Your saving Word and seekers to Your divine love.

All: Amen

Presider sprinkles the new access feature with holy water.

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INTERCESSIONS

Presider: Confident that we are all God's children, let us approach Him with our petitions.

Minister: For creativity and sensitivity in breaking down barriers in attitude and in architecture we pray...

All: Lord, make us one.

Minister: That our worshipping community may continue Jesus' mission of love for all people, offering appropriate support and services, we pray...

All: Lord, make us one.

Minister: That members with disabilities may respond with trust to our efforts to involve them more fully in the life of the Church, we pray...

All: Lord, make us one.

Minister: That we may be grateful for the gifts and abilities of every member of the Body of Christ, we pray...

All: Lord, make us one.

Minister: That the Lord will give each of us the strength to understand and accept our own disabilities, especially those that hinder our growth in God's love, we pray...

All: Lord, make us one.

Presider: God of love, our refuge and our strength, hear the prayers of Your church, which we offer in faith. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Presider: Gathering our prayer and praise into one, let us offer the prayer that Christ himself taught us to pray...

All: Our Father ...

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SIGN OF PEACE

Presider: Let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

CONCLUSION

Presider: Let us offer our final Prayer for Awareness.

All: God, Creator of all, help us to recognize that each of us has abilities and each of us has limitations. And yet we all have a part to play in bringing about Your Kingdom. You love each of us profoundly. In the spirit of gratitude and solidarity, we ask you to increase our awareness of both the gifts and the needs of those around us. Open our hearts, minds and doors to the gifts of every person. Help us to become truly welcoming communities where everyone can find a place at Your table. We ask this in Your name, Amen.

Adapted from Opening Doors, National Catholic Partnership on Disability.

ACCESS SYMBOLS

After blessing your access feature remember to advertise your accessibility. Access symbols should be used so that people will know about your congregation's accessible features.

Examples of places you'll want to promote your accessibility include: building signage, weekly bulletins, websites, advertisements, newsletters, ministry brochures, membership forms, floor plans and maps.

