



Interfaith Philadelphia

MULTI-FAITH PRAYER GATHERINGS QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Adapted from the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia Administrative Group for the April 19, 2018 Gathering of Ministeriums & Multi-Faith Councils

“The Council recognizes the distinction between praying together and coming together to pray. In praying together, we make an effort to pray with a common voice using common language, a challenge in an interfaith setting – yet possible, and fruitful. In coming together to pray, we each pray from our own traditions, and we listen with respect to our brothers and sisters from other faith traditions.”

The quote above is from the Religious Leaders Council’s 2009 Liturgy Task Force Report. The following list of questions is a product of extensive discernment and work by the Administrative Group of the Religious Leaders Council in 2016; produced to serve as a guide in planning multi-faith prayer gatherings - in times of community crisis and/or celebration.

PURPOSE & ARTICULATION OF THAT PURPOSE

1. What is the purpose and theme for this event?
2. Who needs to be involved in planning this event?
3. How, when, and to whom shall the purpose of the event explicitly be articulated?

LOCATION AND ROLE OF HOST

1. Based on the purposes of the event, where should it be held? Would sacred or secular space best serve the gathering?
2. How can the location and host best extend hospitality and welcome to those of diverse traditions and backgrounds?
3. How can the values, traditions and language of the host community/organization best be honored, appreciated and utilized in an authentic way?
4. What is the host offering to provide and what needs to be contributed by others?

PRAYER, MUSIC, AND OTHER LITURGICAL ELEMENTS

1. What are appropriate guidelines for representing all religious and spiritual voices on the Council and present at the service?
2. At which points are those gathered “praying together”, and at which points are those gathered “coming together to pray”?
3. How are the various elements / rituals in the service being introduced and is space being created for people to respectfully observe rather than participate?
4. Are diverse forms of worship being utilized and respected?

LIST OF RESOURCES

Benedict, Daniel T. “Planning an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service in Your Community.”

Umcdiscipleship.org. December 11, 2001. Accessed February 28, 2018.

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/planning-an-interfaith-thanksgiving-service-in-your-community>

Kazanjian, Victor H. “Designing Multi-Faith Celebrations.” Wellesley College. Accessed February 28,

2018. <http://web.wellesley.edu/RelLife/rel/transformation/guide/Multifaith%20Celebrations.html>

London Inter Faith Centre. “Resources on Multi Faith Worship and Prayer.” Resource List on Multi Faith Worship and Prayer. 2008. Accessed February 28, 2018.

<http://londoninterfaith.org.uk/resources/themed-reading-material-and-websites/resource-list-on-multi-faith-worship-and-prayer/>.

McKenna, Paul. “Guidelines for Designing a Multifaith Prayer Service.” 2008. Accessed February 28,

2018. <http://www.scarboromissions.ca/interfaith-dialogue/principles-and-guidelines-for-interfaith-dialogue/guidelines-for-designing-a-multifaith-prayer-service>.

Presbyterian Mission Agency. “Guidelines for Interfaith Celebration of Thanksgiving.” November 7,

2011. Accessed February 28, 2018. <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/guideline-interfaith-celebrations-thanksgiving/>

Resnicoff, Arnold E., “Prayers that Hurt: Public Prayer in Interfaith Settings,” in *Military Chaplain's Review* (1987); expanded and reprinted in *Curtana: A Journal for the Study of the Military Chaplaincy*, inaugural edition, vol. 1, no. 1 (2009).