



# A guided liturgy

## Welcome and introduction

We believe that God, through infinite power and love, created heaven and earth, the sun and the stars, people and all living creatures. Yet the poorest of our sisters and brothers are still living without electricity, and are being held back from living life to the full.

We gather today to give thanks for God's gifts. By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we be moved to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. And let us respond with hope, that the world's children will have the power to fulfil their dreams and flourish.

- › You can use these symbolic objects if you wish during this liturgy: a loaf of bread, a glass of water, a school book and seeds.
- › Everyone in your group will need a campaign action card.
- › You can also include a creative activity as part of this liturgy. Details are included in the leader's notes.
- › Order cards and download leader's notes from [cafod.org.uk/power2obe](https://cafod.org.uk/power2obe)



## Stage one – Light and life

*(Start with the lights off if possible)*

**Leader:** Give thanks to God for he is good,

**Group: For his faithful love endures forever.** *(Psalm 136)*

**Leader:** “In the beginning God created heaven and earth. God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. *(Turn lights on if appropriate)* God saw that light was good, and God divided light from darkness.” *(Genesis 1:1,3-4)*

**Reader one:** God has given us the sun, bringing light to all of creation and energy which will never run out. Yet over a billion people around the world are living without electricity.

*(Hand out campaign action cards)*

**Reader two:** Look at the picture on the card. Every child and young person has the power in them to achieve great things. What are the hopes and dreams of your child, grandchild, brother or sister? Without the simple things that all people need to live well – such as medical help when they are sick – many children can’t even begin to achieve their potential.

**Reader three:** Lucy is a mother living in a small village in Kenya, where she works as a community health worker. She says, “One afternoon, my baby Robert became unwell and started crying. I knew he must have been in a lot of pain. The health centre had closed for the evening. It was raining, and we had to take the child all the way to the district hospital on foot. When we got there, the doctors diagnosed him with pneumonia. But my child passed away.”

*(Pause)*

**Reader one:** Lucy’s local health centre is now running on solar power. The solar panels give lighting at night and run fridges to keep vaccines cool, helping to provide emergency care for all who need it. Lucy says, “The solar panels have made a big difference. When it gets dark, we look at the health centre like it’s paradise. There is a new light in our neighbourhood.”

*(Pause)*

**Leader:** Let us pray:

**Group: Christ our light,  
we pray for those who feel lost in the darkness,  
that they may see the dawn of day.  
Inspire us to be a light shining brightly for others,  
bringing your hope and life to all.**

**Amen.** (RACHEL McCARTHY/CAFOD)

**All sing/say: The Lord hears the cry of the poor, blessed be the Lord.**



## Stage two – Our daily bread

**Leader:** Give thanks to God for he is good,

**Group: For his faithful love endures forever.**

**Leader:** (*Hand out bread for all to share*) Take this bread in your hands. Tear it apart in your fingers, smell the freshness. Bread gives nourishment for our bodies. And when we eat together as a family or as a community, we are nourished by the love and laughter we share.

**Reader one:** In the miracle of the loaves, Jesus broke bread and said to the disciples, “Give them something to eat yourselves” (*Mark 6:37*). Everyone is called to share in the feast – no one is left out. But the world’s poorest children are struggling to have their daily bread.

**Reader two:** Over a third of the world’s population cook their meals using firewood or charcoal. Burning wood creates toxic smoke in family homes. Millions of people die from this pollution every year – more than malaria and HIV and AIDS combined.

**Reader three:** Women and girls have the burden of collecting firewood. If girls didn’t have to spend hours looking for fuel, they would have the power to learn, to play, to be with their families.

*(Pause)*

**Reader one:** Lisvania lives in Nicaragua, in Central America, with her three young children. She cooks using a new stove which has been specially designed to use far less firewood than she did before.

**Reader two:** She says, “My new cooker is good news. The new one doesn’t use so much wood and there is a chimney which takes the smoke away. Thanks to God, my children are healthy. I feel proud of my children and my home.”

*(Pause)*

**Leader:** Let us pray:

**Group: Living God, source of light and hope,  
we are your children, you know us by name.**

**Give us the strength  
to walk in your way of truth and peace,  
so all people may come to share  
in the fruits of your creation.**

**Amen.** (ANNE MARIE COPPOCK/CAFOD)

**All sing/say: The Lord hears the cry of the poor, blessed be the Lord.**



## Stage three – The water we drink

**Leader:** Give thanks to God for he is good,

**Group: For his faithful love endures forever.**

**Leader:** (*Holds up a glass of water*) We all need water to live. It is a gift from God for all creatures of the earth.

**Reader one:** Yet across the world, fresh drinking water is in short supply. Women and girls walk for up to six hours a day to collect water for their families. In some places, this has not changed since the time of Jesus' ministry.

**Reader two:** "Jesus, tired by the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me something to drink.'" (*John 4:6-7*)

**Reader three:** The Samaritan woman was amazed by this encounter with Jesus – it changed her life. Similarly, gaining access to clean water transforms the lives of women and girls today.

*(Pause)*

**Reader one:** Martha lives in a village in Zimbabwe, eastern Africa. She lives on top of a mountain with a steep, rocky path leading down to a well. Martha used to climb down the hill and back up again, three times a day, balancing a heavy bucket on her head.

**Reader two:** But now, Martha has easier access to clean water, thanks to a pump which is powered by the sun to bring water to her village.

**Reader three:** She says, "It is a great change we have experienced as a community. Now I can collect water from nearby. Our children have more time to go to school. We can see the difference for our children's future."

*(Pause)*

**Leader:** Let us pray:

**Group: Standing tall,  
strong and determined,  
stretching out a hand to those around her.  
God of all, bless and keep her  
and inspire us to reach out to others  
as she does  
so that all may blossom.**

**Amen.** (CATHERINE GORMAN/CAFOD)

**All sing/say: The Lord hears the cry of the poor, blessed be the Lord.**



## Stage four – The dreams we hold

**Leader:** Give thanks to God for he is good,

**Group:** For his faithful love endures forever.

**Leader:** Jesus tells us, “I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full”.  
(John 10:10)

**Reader one:** (*Holds up school book*) Renewable energy helps children to learn and live life to the full. It gives light for classrooms so children can read their school books, and provides hot meals at lunchtime.

**Reader two:** We hear the words of Pope Francis: “Dear young friends – don’t ever lose hope! The Lord has a great dream which, with your help, he wants to come true!”  
(Pope Francis, Message for the Jubilee of Mercy for Young Boys and Girls, January 2016)

**Reader three:** Yet millions of children around the world have no access to energy at school to help them fulfil their dreams. And at home in the evening, many students have no light to do their homework and are falling behind.

(Pause)

**Reader one:** Veronica is a bright 16 year old who lives in Kenya. She says, “We have a solar lantern at home. It’s stopped us from having to use the paraffin lamps which were really smoky. Now that we have the solar panels at school, I’ll be able to do the extra school work I need to. It’s important to have this time, as I have big exams coming up. School empowers me to achieve my plans for the future.”

(Pause)

**Leader:** Let us pray:

**Group:** God of hope,  
every child is precious in your sight.  
Open our hearts with child-like trust  
that one day our world  
will be free from poverty.  
Through Christ our Lord,  
Amen. (RACHEL McCARTHY/CAFOD)

**All sing/say:** The Lord hears the cry of the poor, blessed be the Lord.



## Stage five – The work of our hands

**Leader:** Give thanks to God for he is good,

**Group: For his faithful love endures forever.**

**Leader:** (*Share seeds with group*) Come and take a seed in your hands. Feel how tiny it is – yet it has the potential to grow into something beautiful.

**Reader one:** Each one of us is called, through the work of our hands, to care for creation. We read in the first pages of Scripture: “The Lord God took man (and woman) and settled (them) in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it.” (*Genesis 2:15*)

**Reader two:** Mohammed works on his small plot of land in Sudan. He stands by the neat rows of seeds he has planted, and pulls up the weeds. He steps back, and is satisfied.

**Reader three:** “I learnt these skills as a young boy in my village,” he says. “We were all farmers, growing food to sell in the market. It was a peaceful life.”

**Reader one:** A few years ago, Mohammed’s life was torn apart by war. He lost his farm, tools and seeds. He is now living in a refugee camp. “When I arrived here, I had nothing. Those were dark days, not being able to provide for my family.”

(Pause)

**Reader two:** Mohammed was determined to get back on his feet and start using his skills again. He joined a group of farmers who received a new supply of tools, seeds and a solar-powered water pump. The pump uses energy from the sun to pump water to irrigate their crops.

**Reader three:** He now has the power to provide for his family and earn a living. He says, “I’m content now that my hands are busy growing food. I feel proud when I survey my crops.”

(Pause)

**Leader:** Let us pray:

**Group: God of all,  
you entrust the earth to our care.  
Through our hands and through our hearts,  
help us to work alongside our sisters and brothers,  
to grow a garden of life, love and peace.**

**Amen.** (RACHEL McCARTHY/CAFOD)

**All sing/say: The Lord hears the cry of the poor, blessed be the Lord.**



## Stage six – Our common home

**Leader:** Give thanks to God for he is good,

**Group:** **For his faithful love endures forever.**

**Leader:** We share the earth, our beautiful common home. In the words of Pope Francis, “The Lord often stopped to contemplate the beauty sown by his Father. He was in constant touch with nature, lending it an attention full of fondness and wonder.” (*Laudato Si’* #97)

**Reader one:** But not everyone is able to witness the earth’s natural beauty. In the village of Boquerón, Colombia, people’s livelihoods are under threat from an open-cast coal mine. The water and environment have been contaminated, and people can no longer farm, fish or hunt.

**Reader two:** Over thirty years ago when the mine was first built, the community hoped it would bring prosperity. But this was not the case. The coal is sold abroad, and local people only have unreliable electricity themselves.

*(Pause)*

**Reader one:** Community members are now taking power back into their own hands and standing together for their rights.

**Reader two:** Lenís, a businesswoman who lives in Boquerón, shares her hopes for the future. “I want my daughters to breathe fresh air (with) no coal particles in it, to enjoy the rivers, nature and the landscape.”

*(Pause)*

**Leader:** Let us pray:

**Group:** **God of justice,  
we see you in people who refuse to give up  
who will not lose faith and keep on fighting  
for your earth and for your people.  
Lift us, so that we may never lose hope.**

**Amen.** (MICHAELA MCGUIGAN/CAFOD)

**All sing/say:** **The Lord hears the cry of the poor, blessed be the Lord.**



## Stage seven – Together we act

**Leader:** Give thanks to God for he is good,

**Group: For his faithful love endures forever.**

*(If you have used the Power to be creative activity, bring the sun you have made forward now)*

**Leader:** We pray for all those whom we have walked alongside today:

**Reader one:** Lucy, who has the power to heal through her health clinic.

**Reader two:** Lisvania, who has the power to cook healthy meals for her family.

**Reader three:** Martha, who has the power to draw clean water in her village.

**Reader one:** Veronica, who has the power to finish school and fulfil her dreams.

**Reader two:** Mohammed, who has the power to plant seeds and earn a living.

**Reader three:** Lenis, who has the power to speak up to protect our common home.

**Leader:** We believe that every child should have the opportunity to flourish. But without access to sustainable energy, the world's children cannot break free from poverty. There is hope – if we speak out.

**Reader one:** The UK government funds energy access for poor communities overseas through the World Bank. Yet only a tiny proportion of this investment currently brings power to the people who need it most.

*(Look at your campaign action card which was given out in stage one)*

**Leader:** In your hands you have a card with a child's picture on it. Inside the card is CAFOD's petition, calling on the World Bank to support local, renewable energy for the poorest communities. By adding our names, we can help give every child the chance to fulfil their God-given potential.

**Leader:** As the music plays, please take time to read the card and to reflect on the stories, hopes and prayers you have heard today. I invite you to sign the card if you would like, then to bring it to the front. You may keep the picture on the card.

*(Quiet music plays)*

**Leader:** Let us pray:

**Group: God of all that is good,  
you make the sun rise across the earth,  
you breathe wind through the fields,  
you pour water from the mountains.**

**Move us to change our lives,  
and bring the power of your love,  
so that all may flourish.**

**Through Christ our Lord, Amen.** (RACHEL McCARTHY/CAFOD)

**Leader:** As we prepare to leave this place, let us commit ourselves to create a brighter future and help God's people flourish. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (†), the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all as we make our earthly pilgrimage, now and for ever. **Group: Amen.**