

The Light is
ON for You



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The Archdiocese of Washington



The Diocese of Arlington

#TheLightIsON

The Light is ON Toolkit Implementation Guide

For almost a decade, The Light is ON has helped parishes reach out to the peripheries to help practicing and inactive Catholics receive God's mercy and forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. By opening your parish doors and offering Confession and prayer on Wednesday evenings during Lent, you join in the shared commitment from parishes in the Archdiocese of Washington and the Diocese of Arlington to "keep the light on". Together, we continue to raise awareness for God's mercy and make it easier for practicing and inactive Catholics to receive the graces of the Sacrament this Lent and celebrate the Easter season. The Sacrament of Reconciliation has been called the Sacrament of the New Evangelization, and the gift of reconciliation truly changes lives.

This toolkit will help you integrate The Light is ON into your parish and school communities, extend the welcoming arms of your parish, and spread the Good News of Christ's mercy to those in your greater community who still need to hear or re-hear the message.

On behalf of the Archdiocese of Washington and the Diocese of Arlington, thank you in advance for your role in keeping the light on this Lent across the entire DC area.

If you have any questions about implementing The Light Is ON in your parish, feedback on the initiative, or if you need to request additional resources, please contact:

For the Archdiocese of Washington:

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For the Diocese of Arlington:

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Parish Toolkit Contents:

All of the content of the toolkit is available in English and Spanish. So that you can cut and paste more easily, all of these materials may also be found electronically at www.TheLightIsON.org and www.LaLuzENCENDIDA.org.

- A timeline with suggestions and weekly reminders to help your parish's participation in The Light Is ON.
- Ideas for implementing The Light Is ON.
- A summary of the printed resources which will be sent to your parish, including pew cards, examen prayer cards, and The Light Is ON yard signs.
- *New:* An introduction to daily reflections being offered via text or email with sign-up instructions.
- *New:* A summary of the themes of the initiative this year, which you may find it helpful to reference in announcements, homilies, and other messages.
- *New:* A guide for conducting a "How to Go to Confession" workshop before Wednesday confessions at your parish.
- Five sample Pulpit Announcements: Brief announcements that may be included in the spoken announcements at Mass on Sundays in Lent.
- Five sample Bulletin Announcements: Short announcements to be included in the weekly bulletin.
- Five sample Intercessions: These may be included in the Prayers of the Faithful according to your needs.
- Five sample Facebook posts: For use on parish Facebook pages to inform and invite parishioners through social media. Please update them based on your needs.
- *New:* A brief introduction to Light The City, a one-night Lenten street evangelization event at St. Matthew's Cathedral.
- Sample logos and banners that may be used in bulletins and on parish websites or Facebook pages
- *New:* Information about the CapitalCatholic app, a smart phone application which provides information and resources for local Catholics.

Timeline Suggestions for Participating in The Light Is ON

Ash Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add the pulpit announcement for the week of Ash Wednesday to the list of announcements. • You will receive the yard signs shortly after Ash Wednesday. Please display them outside your parish for all to see! • Add an image and or link to www.thelightison.org to your parish and school website
1st Sunday of Lent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute the pew cards and examen prayer cards throughout your pews and the back of your church so that all who attend Masses have the opportunity to see them and take them. • Include this week’s bulletin announcement in the bulletin. • Include this week’s bulletin reflection in the bulletin. • Include this week’s pulpit announcement in the list of spoken announcements. • Include this week’s intercession in the Prayers of the Faithful. • Share the sample Facebook posts on Wednesday through your parish’s social media accounts to remind followers that you are offering Confession.
2nd Sunday of Lent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include this week’s bulletin announcement in the bulletin. • Include this week’s bulletin reflection in the bulletin. • Include this week’s pulpit announcement in the list of spoken announcements. • Include this week’s intercession in the Prayers of the Faithful. • Share the sample Facebook posts on Wednesday through your parish’s social media accounts to remind followers that you are offering Confession.
3rd Sunday of Lent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include this week’s bulletin announcement in the bulletin. • Include this week’s bulletin reflection in the bulletin. • Include this week’s pulpit announcement in the list of spoken announcements. • Include this week’s intercession in the Prayers of the Faithful. • Share the sample Facebook posts on Wednesday through your parish’s social media accounts to remind followers that you are offering Confession. • Check your parish for confession pew cards and examen cards. If you need more, contact your local Diocesan contact (see first page.)
4th Sunday of Lent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include this week’s bulletin announcement in the bulletin. • Include this week’s bulletin reflection in the bulletin. • Include this week’s pulpit announcement in the list of spoken announcements. • Include this week’s intercession in the Prayers of the Faithful. • Share the sample Facebook posts on Wednesday through your parish’s social media accounts to remind followers that you are offering Confession.
5th Sunday of Lent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include this week’s bulletin announcement in the bulletin. • Include this week’s bulletin reflection in the bulletin. • Include this week’s pulpit announcement in the list of spoken announcements. • Include this week’s intercession in the Prayers of the Faithful. • Share the sample Facebook posts on Wednesday through your parish’s social media accounts to remind followers that you are offering Confession.

Ideas for Implementing The Light Is ON

- Consider creating an environment that makes your church most welcoming for newcomers, for example:
 - Turn on the heat 30min before if your church gets cold
 - Have the church well lit inside and out
 - Have the front of the Church wide open If possible
 - Etc.
- Place a sign outside the church or change exterior time displays to indicate the Confession is available on Wednesday evenings.
- Consider offering Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament during The Light is ON.
- Consider offering a short (30 minutes) “How to Go to Confession” refresher workshop before Confessions begin. (See attached material.)
- On a table near the church entrance or the confessionals, provide helpful information about:
 - Parish celebrations for Holy Week and Easter
 - Your parish and its activities, including Stations of the Cross, Lenten meals, materials from your parish magazine rack etc.
 - RCIA and RCIA with Children
 - How to go to confession (the Archdiocese will provide pew cards for each parish; a black/white version appropriate for copying is online at www.TheLightIsON.org and www.LaLuzENCENDIDA.org)
 - Examen cards
 - Praying in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament (available for copying online at www.TheLightIsON.org and www.LaLuzENCENDIDA.org)
- Consider forming a Prayer and Hospitality Team or invite two or three people each week from a parish group to be present at the front doors of the church to welcome people as they arrive, distribute pew cards, and help them find confession, restrooms, etc. Additionally, ask those greeting to pray the rosary or another prayer together for the parish and non-evangelized during the time when there is no one there to welcome. If appropriate, provide water, coffee, tea or light snacks in a foyer or side room.
- Invite a different parish organization or ministry to be present in the church praying each week during The Light is ON for personal spiritual renewal and to create a warm environment of prayer.
- Offer a personal invitation to at least one person a week to come to The Light is ON. Encourage parish leaders to be personal evangelizers and do the same.

Please ensure that all signs and materials are available in the languages in which Mass is celebrated in your parish. If you need additional pew cards or examen cards, please contact your local Diocesan contact (see first page.)

Themes of The Light Is ON 2015

These themes provide the outline for The Light Is ON reflections this year. Consider highlighting or referencing some of these ideas with your community throughout Lent.

1st Sunday of Lent: Be Thankful

God created us for relationship with Him and one another. The good things in our life are a sign of God's love for us. God's love for us is freely given and unconditional. (cf. Gen. 1, John 10)

2nd Sunday of Lent: Acknowledge Need for Help

In the world around us we experience pain and brokenness. We experience pain and brokenness in our own lives and relationships. We ourselves have turned away from God. We cannot fix this brokenness on our own – we need help from God to heal us. (cf. Psalm 51, Rom. 5)

3rd Sunday of Lent: Review Life Honestly

We take the time to reflect upon our daily actions to see how we have turned from God. We take personal responsibility for our sin. We express sorrow for those ways that we have turned away from our relationship with God. (cf. Psalm 51, Psalm 139)

4th Sunday of Lent: Trust in God's Forgiveness

We believe that God will forgive us because his love for us never-ending. We ask for forgiveness from God. We accept God's forgiveness. (cf. Rom. 8)

5th Sunday of Lent: Commit to Live Differently

Our experience of God's forgiveness leads to a conversion of heart. Conversion leads to a concrete change in action. (cf. John 8, Acts 9)

Palm Sunday: Share God's Mercy

Receiving the Gift of God's forgiveness calls us to forgive others. The Gift of God's mercy cannot be kept to ourselves but must be shared. (cf. Luke 10)

Additional Resources

Pew Cards:

The Light Is ON Pew Cards include an examination of conscience, a guide to making a good confession, and a wallet-sized act of contrition. The pew card was designed for ease of use in the pew, to encourage and guide participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please distribute the pew cards in a way most effective for your parish, but note that the sample materials in this toolkit refer to locating the pew cards in the pews. If your parish uses a different location, you may need to edit the provided announcements. Pew cards will be shipped directly to your parish before the 1st Sunday of Lent. If you need additional pew cards, please contact your local Diocesan contact (see first page.)

Examen Prayer Cards:

New this year is an examen prayer card. We are using the examen prayer with The Light Is ON this year because it is a daily practice which helps all people recognize God's presence in our lives and the ways we need God's mercy, which then leads to a desire for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The steps of the examen provide the specific themes for the content each week. The text of the examen in English is available in the back of this toolkit. Examen cards in English and Spanish will be shipped directly to your parish before the 1st Sunday of Lent. If you would like additional examen cards, please contact your local Diocesan contact (see first page.)

The Light Is ON Yard Signs:

Two yard signs to be placed outside of your parish and school to advertise the initiative and invite people to come in on Wednesday evenings. If you would like additional yard signs, please contact your local Diocesan contact (see first page.)

Daily Reflections

We recognize that growing in relationship with God happens daily, not just on Wednesday evenings. As such, we will be offering daily reflections via text and email this Lent. The reflections will cover the themes listed below along with discussions of the Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Please share these with your community and encourage parishioners to sign up for the reflections. To sign up, text "LENT" to 84576 or visit TheLightIsON.org.

“How to Go to Confession” Workshop Guide

Background: The Office of Evangelization learned of a parish-based initiative connected to The Light Is ON that has been quite successful over the past decade. Ten years ago the parish invited those offered a short half-hour presentation on “How to Go to Confession.” The workshop walked people through the steps and answered questions. The first week it was offered, the staff prepared for 20 people. 120 came and every year since 10-20 people attend the workshop, now offered annually 30 minutes before the Lenten Reconciliation Service.

Program: We invite you to consider offering this opportunity on one of the Wednesday evenings in Lent or before your Reconciliation Service. The steps to a successful workshop are:

- Identifying the workshop leader
- Choosing the day and time (connected to the availability of the sacrament)
- Promoting the workshop through the parish bulletin, website, pulpit announcements
- Choosing a space to set up chairs
- Preparing to use role-play or walk-through to demonstrate the steps in the sacrament
- Allowing time for questions
- Invite people to make their way to the church for Confession

Resources/Equipment

- Examination of Conscience pew cards provided by the archdiocese in connection with The Light Is ON.
- Three-minute Video presentation with Fr. Bill Byrne on the gift of reconciliation and how to go to Confession. <http://thelightison.org/guide-to-confession/>.
- A workshop leader. Please contact your Diocesan Contact (see first page) if you would like the names of workshop leaders available (free of charge) to offer the workshop at your parish.

The next page contains an outline of the steps for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The page may be copied or printed from www.TheLightIsON.org and used as a handout for participants during the workshop.