

Light of Truth Universal Service

Guidelines

In a Light of Truth Universal Service, offerings are made to the Light by representatives for all the major faiths and for other known faiths, as depicted in the Integral Yoga logo. The service should always be directed to the Light and emphasize the theme of God as the Supreme Light in all the faiths.

Organizing The Service

If the celebrants are going to be coming from a distance, please speak with them well in advance so that they can bring the supplies they will need, or so that you can arrange to have them. If they are specially invited guests, it's helpful to have someone assigned to each to assist with any special needs.

There should be a meeting with the celebrants the day before to discuss the manner and order of the service, the nature of their offerings, the time allotted, and any special needs they might have. They should be encouraged to wear traditional garb.

The Worship Site

The worship site should be set up so that the celebrants are facing the Light and directing their offerings to It. The congregation should be seated so that they can most readily observe the service. There should be clear passageways for the opening processional of the celebrants, the distribution of prasad, and closing recessional.

Some suggested seating arrangements are as follows:

1. Have a circular altar in the center, the celebrants in a circle around it, and the congregation in a larger circle around them. The celebrants could then rise where they are and facing the Light, make their offerings.
2. Have the altar in the center, the celebrants in a semi-circle or row in front of it and the congregation in semi-circles or rows behind it. The celebrants could then rise, adjust their positions if necessary to be directly before the Light, and make their offerings.
3. Have the altar in front, the celebrants to the side (either all on one side or half on one side and half on the other), and the congregation behind. The celebrants could then rise and stand before the Light to make their offerings. They should stand to the side so as not to obstruct the congregation's view.

Articles to be used by the celebrants could either be placed on the altar, on small tables nearby, or could be held by assistants.

The altar itself can be simply and beautifully arranged. The main article on it should be a large candle symbolizing the Supreme Light.

In decorating the site, it is most inspirational if the symbols for the various faiths, as depicted in the Integral Yoga logo, are prominently displayed. Banners could be made for each symbol and hung around the room, or a beautiful rendering of the logo could be used.

Prelude

Welcome and introduction by the MC. Invocation by a special guest.

The Processional

Right before and during the processional, music may be played.

The celebrants should enter in a slow, reverent manner, beginning with the representative for the youngest faith and proceeding to the oldest as follows: Native American, African, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, Shinto, Judaism, and Hinduism. Next should come the representative for Other Know Faiths. Each should carry a lit taper and walk until they are standing around the central Light and facing the audience. Processional music stops and a gong can be rung as a signal for the celebrants to light the central candle together. The individual tapers should then be extinguished, and the celebrants should take their seats.

If a recessional is held at the end of the service, the celebrants would relight their candles from the central Light and leave in the opposite order from which they entered.

The Service

The service should be in the form of offerings to and about the Light. Then, in order from the youngest to the oldest faith, each celebrant should make his/her offerings.

Preceding the offering of each faith, a one-minute CD musical selection from each faith may be played. The 2-3 minute offerings could be in the form of traditional ritual practices, and/or prayers from the scriptures about God as Light, or prayers composed by the celebrants on this theme. It's very inspiring if the offering is made in the original language in the traditional manner, as well as in English. The MC need only mention the faith represented. No historical or factual information about the faith should be given either by the MC or the celebrant. It is not necessary to mention the scripture from which the prayer is taken. The last offering may be a minute of silence for Other Known Faiths, or a prayer can be offered in their honor by a special guest.

A suggested format for the end of the service is as follows:

After the last offering, the MC calls for a "sign of peace to be offered to one another by the celebrants and also by the congregation." Afterward, a gong is rung as celebrants relight their candles and begin a recessional accompanied by appropriate music.

An interfaith message by one of the celebrants may be offered. The MC can lead closing prayers.

Prasad

During the distribution of prasad, music may be played. The prasad may be simple or more elaborate. This should be determined based on the context in which the service is being held, the nature of the site, the size of the congregation, and the celebrants who are officiating. Please consider the comfort and convenience of all and have ushers assigned to see that matters proceed most efficiently, easefully, and gracefully.

Some suggestions for prasad are as follows:

- Each celebrant may distribute a separate prasad, reflecting his tradition. This can be in the form of food, drink, incense, flowers, the written word, etc. The congregation comes up to receive prasad.
- The prasad may be distributed by assistants who receive it from the celebrants and then circulate through the congregation to distribute it.

Conclusion

The interfaith service should be a reverent, joyous experience that uplifts, inspires, and fills everyone with a deep sense of our essential oneness. Rooted in the knowledge of that oneness, we can fully appreciate, respect and enjoy the diversity around us, and live in peace and harmony as one family in The Light of Truth.