

This prayer service is best used after the students have studied the last chapter of *The Church: Our Story*.

**Prayer Service:**  
**“One in the Communion of Saints”**

**Needs:**

- a decorated prayer table with a Bible and a candle (if fire laws allow)
- soft music (to be played during the prayer ritual)
- a blank sheet of paper (possibly decorated) for each student
- masking tape (for these sheets to be hung near the prayer table)

**Introduction**

As we have read throughout our study of the Catholic Church in this course, the Church is catholic, universal. We are members of a Church that spans not only geography but also time. We do not exist as a mere point on a timeline of Church history. We are actually one with all people of all times and places who have followed Christ as members of the Church. It is a community we call the Communion of Saints. Today we gather with all of them to celebrate our unity in Christ.

**Opening Prayer**

Jesus, on the night before you died,  
you prayed that all may be one in you,  
as you are one with God.

Today we join with all the saints,  
with all who have followed you as members of your Church,  
with all Christians of ages past,  
with all Christians of every land and language,  
with our loved ones gone before us and those among us,  
and with all who will come after us.

All of us join to give you thanks for your loving sacrifice  
and join to praise our God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Reading 1: John 17: 20-26.**

*May they all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us.*

**Questions for Reflection/Journaling**

1. Think of a time when you were most grateful to be surrounded by loved ones. Why is it easier to handle difficulties when loved ones are present?
2. Think of a loved one who has passed away. Write exactly what you would say to that person if he/she were standing right in front of you right now.

**Reading 2:**

The Second Vatican Council spoke of the unity of the Communion of Saints in *Lumen Gentium*, the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*: "All are joined together in Christ. So it is that the

union of the wayfarers with the brothers and sisters who sleep in the peace of Christ is in no way interrupted but on the contrary, according to the constant faith of the church, this union is reinforced by an exchange of spiritual goods. Being more closely united with Christ, those who dwell in heaven consolidate the holiness of the whole church, add to the nobility of the worship that the church offers to God here on earth and in many ways help in a greater building up of the church. Once received into their heavenly home and being present to the Lord through him and with him and in him they do not cease to intercede with the Father for us as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus” (#49).

### **Prayer Ritual**

**Leader:** Spend a few moments calling to mind some names of people in the Communion of Saints: those whom you have studied and admired in this course, loved ones who have passed away, friends, relatives, etc. As these names come to mind, write them on the sheet you were given. Speak to each of them silently in your mind and heart, thanking them for their example as Christians or asking their help in your struggles to follow Christ. When the music begins to play, if you have written all of your names, you may come forward and tape your list to the wall near the prayer table.

*Soft music plays until all are finished.*

### **Leader:**

Surrounded by the Communion of Saints, let us pray, calling out some of the names we have written when they are mentioned:

God, your community of faith joins to give you praise.

Among us are those who have been declared saints, especially:

*(pause as students call out names of saints they listed)*

We are joined by others who have passed away, especially those closest to us:

*(pause as students call out the names of those who have died)*

We gather, too, with our family and friends, still living, who journey in faith with us:

*(pause as students call out names of living family and friends)*

We who have studied in this religion class together praise you. We are:

*(pause as students say their own names).*

All of us, in union with those who will come after us: our own children and the children of every land and time, together say:

Our Father. . . .Amen.

### **Closing Prayer**

God of all, Jesus our Savior, Spirit who unites us all,

we thank you for bringing us together in this family of faith.

As Church, may we work together to make your kingdom present in this time and place, supporting each other with the love that has its foundation in your love for us.

Amen.