

RURAL LIFE CELEBRATION



A GUIDE TO PREPARATION, PLANNING AND CONTENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Benefits.....Page 3

Themes, Components, and Timing.....Page 3

PART II: PLANNING THE CELEBRATION

Hosting the Celebration.....Page 4

Planning Committee Guidelines.....Page 4

Invitees.....Page 5

Scheduling the Celebration.....Page 5

Location of the Celebration.....Page 5

Publicity.....Page 5

The Program: Components to Consider.....Page 6

Food.....Page 6

Entertainment.....Page 6

PART III: RESOURCES

Appendix A: Prayers, Blessings and Worship Aids.....Page 7-15

Appendix B: Alternative Prayer Services.....Page 18-24

Appendix C: Samples of Promotional Materials.....Page 25-27

Appendix D: Example of an Event Budget.....Page 28-29

Appendix E: Suggested Timeline.....Page 30

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND BENEFITS

The purpose of a Rural Life Celebration is to affirm, edify, bless and celebrate those in rural communities.

A Rural Life Celebration helps highlight the life of the rural church and reminds us that our roots are deep in the soil of this earth, and that we and the earth belong to God. Rural people are stewards of the thin layer of topsoil that feeds our world. Our Creator placed us here to till the garden, not to despoil it; to grow and share food, not to hoard it; and to leave this treasure of soil, air, and water more productive than we found it.

On these special days, we celebrate that rural and urban people, country and city, wilderness and village, are bound together by the need for food and the care of creation. We come to celebrate and recognize all who provide food for God's children.

This handbook is written to give you ideas and information. You may use all or part of the information or items provided. You are encouraged to develop rural life celebrations in the manner that best suits your situation. This resource was written with the intention that it would be used with a Catholic audience, but it can be used in any ecumenical setting.

CELEBRATION THEMES, COMPONENTS AND TIMING

The celebration can include or be built around any or several of the following:

- Honoring local leaders in the community who have exemplified extraordinary stewardship or service.
- Honoring “Century Farms”, those whose farms have been in operation for 100 years or more.
- Rogation Days, traditionally celebrated just before Ascension Thursday and include a blessing of seed, soil and sower.
- Earth Day, normally celebrated on April 22, but may be celebrated anytime in April or May and usually accompanies tree planting ceremonies or other traditions that focus on respect for the earth.
- Soil and Water Stewardship Week is usually celebrated from the last Sunday in April through the first Sunday in May. (See www.nacdnet.org/stewardship. The National Association of Conservation Districts publishes materials for activities throughout the week.)
- Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi (October 4), patron saint of animals.
- St. Isidore (May 15), patron saint of farmers; and his wife, St. Maria (September 14).
- Feast of the Assumption (August 15) celebrates the first fruits of the harvest.

Please note: It is recommended that planning a Rural Life Celebration begin a year in advance. See sample timeline in Appendix D.

PLANNING THE CELEBRATION

HOSTING THE CELEBRATION

A different parish or parish cluster in the (arch)diocese could host each year; or one parish or parish cluster could be the consistent host.

PLANNING COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

The (Arch)Bishop, Rural Life Committee, or other representative of the (arch)diocese may suggest a location and timing for the Rural Life Celebration.

The current planning committee could recommend a location for the following year's event.

The planning committee may include the following members: (A) Two Co-chairs plus at least one person in charge of each of the following: (B) Program, (C) Food and Entertainment, (D) Logistics, (E) Publicity/Promotion, and (F) Volunteers.

Chairs or Co-chairs: Oversee the work of the committee including: choosing the host family farm in collaboration with Bishop's office as appropriate; establishing the overall plan for the celebration (date, theme, food, entertainment, etc.); tracking the timeline of events; keeping committees on schedule; communicating regularly with committee members and helping them as needed; collecting money for expenses; acting as primary liaison for (Arch)Bishop's office.



Program: Arranges the liturgy, music, seating arrangements, Eucharistic ministers, and decorations.

Food/Entertainment: Provides for food, refreshments and entertainment. May want to split this between two people or groups depending on the elaborateness of the plan.

Logistics: Provides contingency plan for inclement weather; arranges for portable outhouses; parking plans; orders tent; works with promotions team and places directional signage where needed; addresses local concerns, regulations and establishes liability insurance.

Publicity/Promotions: Provides all promotions for the event; distributes flyers to parishes; arranges for diocesan newspaper promotion; works with logistics team to prepare needed directional signage.

Volunteers: Coordinates volunteers for set-up; food service; parking; transportation; take down and clean up. This committee can be eliminated if each committee stated above agrees to find their own volunteers.

INVITEES

You may invite all members of each parish in the (Arch)diocese, and other neighboring churches as appropriate.

If possible, it is best to send a personal invitation to those invited; especially members of the host parish(es), priests/diocesan personnel, and the neighboring parishes.

SCHEDULING THE CELEBRATION

- Any season
- During the week or on Sundays
- One day or over several days

Considerations

- Experience dictates that Sundays yield the best attendance.
- A weekday celebration may also allow local Catholic school students, teachers and administrators to attend as a group.
- In general, considerations should be made to include as many people as possible; however, some rural communities may prefer a smaller, more local event depending on the diocese or venue restrictions.
- The schedule of the (Arch)Bishop should be taken into consideration before a date can be established.

LOCATION OF THE CELEBRATION

- Family Farm
- Park
- Parish Center
- Religious Community Center
- Church
- Multiple sites

Considerations

- Experience dictates that family farms and parks are the best locations to host the Celebration. Ask within the parishes if any family farmers would be willing to host the Celebration.
- It is recommended that there always be a tent and alternative site identified if the Celebration is to take place outside.

PUBLICITY

Community newspapers

There is often a community bulletin board section that publishes events for free. Contact the editor to ask if they would like to cover the event.

(Arch)diocesan newspaper

Contact the editor to let them know the details of the event.

Collaboration

Work with (Arch)diocese to promote the event throughout all the parishes, including: bulletin announcements, posters, and pulpit announcements. Promotion can begin six months in advance of the event with a “save the date” announcement.

Schools

You may promote the event through the local schools via posters and flyers. Contact the (Arch)diocese to ask if they would be willing to print the flyers and posters for you.



THE PROGRAM: COMPONENTS TO CONSIDER

- Mass or prayer service.
- Local (Arch)Bishop, guest Bishop, and/or other guest speakers.
- Banners from each attending parish.
- Catholic Rural Life display and materials will be provided.
- Special recognition for century farms (plaque, ceremonial honoring, comments by recipient, etc.).
- Blessing ceremony (sower, seed, crops, land, equipment, etc.).
- Seeds, cuttings, etc. to share.
- Tree planting ceremony.
- Many resources are available to support these components.



FOOD

Those who understand the role of the farmer as provider of food and sustainer of God's resources, have values that focus on the relationship between food, agriculture and rural concerns in a common search for justice. A shared meal helps celebrate these common values and all those who provide food for us.

Considerations

- A local farmer may donate some of the food.
- Potluck lunch or dinner.
- Sack lunch, or "bring your own meal plus something to share".
- Caterer for all or part of the meal.
- Encourage in-kind donations.
- Simple meals work best.

ENTERTAINMENT

This is an optional component, but it helps build relationships and a sense of community.

Considerations

- Petting zoo
- Door prizes donated by local businesses
- Outdoor games
- Local talent (musicians, plays, skits, etc.)
- Music
- Dancing
- Speakers (local farmers, community members, students, Mayor, etc.)

Note: It is important to avoid inviting anyone currently campaigning for office unless you plan on inviting ALL candidates. This is not a political event.

RESOURCES

APPENDIX A: PRAYERS, BLESSINGS AND WORSHIP AIDS

CALLS TO WORSHIP

THE CALL TO WORSHIP DIRECTS OUR ATTENTION TO GOD. IT REMINDS US WHY GOD IS PRAISEWORTHY AND DESERVING OF OUR WORSHIP.

1. This is the day that the Lord has given us through which we may experience the wonder of life and the created universe. Today we are being encouraged to think about and to celebrate through our worship the meaning of community. Let us, in prayer together, ask for the help and presence of God's Spirit.

2. When God chose a people and a place, God bypassed the great nations and peoples and chose the smallest of all nations, Israel. Coming to earth in flesh, God chose not a palace, but a stable. God came not in kingly greatness, but in the smallness of a babe. Our Lord looked not to councils and people in positions of power for the disciples, but to people of the land --those who fished, tax collectors and people of small stature. God continues to make a covenant with people gathered in small places.

3. We come together to worship God on this day set apart. God has blessed us with the returning season of spring, a time to plant and share in a new miracle. Let us together offer our praise and gratitude and seek God's guidance.

OPENING PRAYERS

OPENING PRAYERS SET THE STAGE THAT THE DIRECTION OF THE SERVICE WILL TAKE, THANKING GOD THAT HE IS HERE WITH US.

1. Almighty God, all knowing, all seeing, we thank you for the blessing of countryside and open space, for trees and hills, lakes and rivers, for fields and their harvests; for caring neighbors who know us by name and who enter into the joys and sorrows of our lives. Help us to make responsible use of our blessings and the advantages we have in country living. Help us to make our community also a communion. As you renew your earth, renew us, so that we will fulfill your perfect intention for our lives; so that we will become new creations in Christ in whose name we pray. (R. Amen.)

2. Great and eternal God, creator and provider, we offer our thanks for this season of spring and the new life in the soil that is appearing before our eyes. We praise you that the seasons are constant; that after winter's rest, there is resurgence of life. May your spirit so touch our lives today that we may face life with new joy and hope; where we are able to take part in planting gardens or in forest renewal, may we be guided by your Spirit to act according to your will. (R. Amen.)

OPENING PRAYERS (CONTINUED)

3. Creator God, we continue to praise you for the glorious goodness of your creation as we go about daily growing, planting, and harvesting the gifts your bounteous creation provides. Make us aware that the noble task of being a steward of your creation is a holy way of life that enables us to participate in the deepest mysteries of life. In the cyclic pattern of planting, nurturing, and harvesting we participate in the life, death and resurrection of your son, Jesus Christ. We ask now that just as Jesus unconditionally gave up His life on the cross, so, too, may we give one hundred fold in stewarding your gift of creation. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns forever and ever. (R. Amen.)

4. O God of earth, sky and sea, of all creation; God of outer space and inner spirit; God whose fullness is revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ. We come to you with humble and contrite hearts as we realize all that you have done for us and are doing still. We are moved to awe and wonder as we experience the constant renewal of the earth. Our lives are made meaningful as we learn to live in harmony with your will. Hear this our prayer in the name of Jesus.
(R. Amen.)

5. Lord God, Creator Father, Healing Redeemer, Nurturing Mother: We come to you in a time of great need for our rural community. Heal the earth of the scars of our exploitation. Heal us, your people, as we struggle to live humbly and simply as stewards of soil and community.

We ask you to fill us with renewed hope in you and trust in one another. Make us faithful to your word. Bless and honor what we do so that our action here today may be fully for your honor and glory. We ask this through Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (R. Amen.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

THESE SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES CAN BE USED TO HELP DESCRIBE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN GOD AND CREATION.

Christian Stewardship Begins with Earth Stewardship

When God created all things, human creatures were accorded the status of co-creators with God, and the special creation of a "helper" in the task of caring for the garden (Genesis 2:20-22). God placed the human creature in the garden "to till it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15). Today, faithful Christian stewardship begins with awareness of our responsibility to till the earth, make its productive powers flourish, and to keep the earth and protect its God-created life systems.

Creative, Caring Earth-Stewardship Brings Shalom

The biblical concept of shalom or "wholeness" is at the heart of Christian earth stewardship. God views each act of the creation, according to Genesis 1, as "good," but the created order in its wholeness is "very good." Today, faithful Christian stewardship strives to maintain that God-created wholeness by working for the health (wholeness) of each creature and by protecting the unity (wholeness) of earth's ecosystems.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES (CONTINUED)

Earth Stewardship Is a Vital Part of the Christian Life

Throughout Scripture, there are indications of the special responsibility of the human creature for the continued wholeness of the earth. Noah's efforts on behalf of the beasts (Genesis 6-9), Joseph's conservation plan in the face of famine (Genesis 41), Solomon's wise dominion growing from his knowledge of nature (1 Kings 4), various provisions for Israel's use of the land (Exodus 23, Leviticus 25), and Jesus' concerns for the physical as well as spiritual wholeness--these are all reminders of our need to acknowledge our creatureliness in gratitude and exercise our stewardship in love.

The Earth Lies Polluted

"...under its inhabitants, for they have ... broken the everlasting covenant" (Isaiah 24). The covenant God made with the whole earth after the flood (Genesis 9) is set in the context of Noah's obedience to God's natural laws. As Hosea makes clear, the neglect of our responsibilities to the earth are indistinguishable from our other transgressions, in God's sight.

The Earth Is Good

"For everything created by God is good" (1 Timothy 4) and therefore is to be cherished. And beyond the grateful acceptance of each creature as a blessing from God, we are called to behold that the interdependence of the created order, the ecosystems that make up God's world, are all together "very good" (Genesis 1).

QUOTES

QUOTES CAN BE USED AS A RESOURCE FOR PUBLICITY OR FOR REFLECTIONS AND HOMILIES. THE FOLLOWING QUOTES ARE EXAMPLES THAT HAVE BEEN USED IN PREVIOUS RURAL LIFE DAY CELEBRATIONS.

"All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents."

- **Pope Francis: "Laudato Si"**

"Local individuals and groups can make a real difference. They are able to instill a greater sense of responsibility, a strong sense of community, a readiness to protect others, a spirit of creativity and a deep love for the land."

- **Pope Francis: "Laudato Si"**

"While the farmer holds title to the land, actually it belongs to all the people because civilization itself rests upon the soil. Those who labor on the earth are the chosen people of God."

- **Thomas Jefferson**

"To own a bit of ground, to scratch it with a hoe, to plant seeds and watch the renewal of life -this is the commonest delight of the race, the most satisfactory thing a person can do."

- **Charles Dudley Warner**

"We must move from the idea that the world is one big factory, and that farmers are just a cog in that food producing machine."

- **Dean Freudenberger**

QUOTES (CONTINUED)

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends the other way."

- Aldo Leopold

"In the earliest writings we find that the prophet and scholar alike have lamented the loss of soils and have warned people of the consequences of their wasteful ways. It seems that we have forever talked about soil stewardship and the need for a land ethic, and all the while soil destruction continues, in many places at an accelerated pace. Is it possible that we simply lack enough stretch in our ethical potential to evolve a set of values capable of promoting a sustainable agriculture?"

- Wes Jackson

"To accept the idea that land is not just a resource for humans, that it has rights and we are bound by responsibilities to it, will drastically change our way of being here."

- Joe and Nancy Paddock and Carol Bly: "Soil and Survival"

HOMILY OUTLINES

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF REFLECTIONS AND SCRIPTURE READINGS THAT MAY BE USED TO PREPARE A HOMILY FOR A RURAL LIFE DAY CELEBRATION.

Compendium Of The Social Doctrine Of The Church by Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004

Chapter 1- I. God's Liberating action in the history of Israel--God's gratuitous presence and the principle of creation and God's gratuitous actions

Chapter 6, I. Biblical Aspect--The duty to cultivate and care for the earth

Chapter 10, IV. A Common Responsibility--The environment, a collective good, and the environment and sharing of goods

See:

www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html



HOMILY OUTLINES (CONTINUED)

Laudato Si by Pope Francis, 2015

God's masterful creation is not only good, but it works like clockwork, as "everything is connected."
(§91)

This harmonious connection certainly exists in nature, but a central point of *Laudato Si* is that human activity has an impact--and is in turn impacted--by our natural environment. In other words, there is a fundamental link between mankind and creation. (§66)

Our Holy Father illustrates how certain farming techniques injure not only natural ecology--through pollution and deforestation--but also human ecology--by disrupting rural communities and forcing family and proprietary farmers out of business. He suggests alternatives that are sustainable, working in harmony not only with nature but also healthy patterns of human living.

Thirdly, Pope Francis reminds us that we are created for relationship: a relationship with God, with our fellow human beings, and with the earth.

Finally, Pope Francis calls all of us, especially those living in rural communities, to a spiritual renewal: a conversion of heart and mind, that recognizes our errors, sins, faults and failures, and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change.

See:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Scripture Readings

Saint Isidore

Readings for May 15, Saint Isidore's feast day, are suitable for this celebration and are listed below. However, if a liturgy takes place on a Sunday, the readings of that Sunday are to be used.

Genesis 1:25 and 2:25

Psalms 26:4-5

Romans 12:9-12

II Thessalonians 3:8-12

I Timothy 4:15-16

James 5:7-10

Matthew 6:19-20

Philippians 4:4-7

Hebrews 10:12-14

Old Testament

Isaiah 32:15-20 (#831.2) The effect of justice will be peace.

Genesis 1:11-12 (#851.1) Let the earth produce vegetation and seed-bearing plants.

Genesis 1:26-2:3 (#846.1) Fill the earth and subdue it.

Genesis 2:4b-9, 15 (#846.2) God took Adam and settled him in the garden to cultivate it.

New Testament

James 3:13-18 (#832.2) May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts.

2 Corinthians 9:8-11 (#852) God will provide bread to eat.

Gospel

Matthew 5:1-12a (#835.1) The Beatitudes.

Matthew 13:1-9 (#855.1) The sower went out to sow seed.

Mark 4:26-29 (#855.2) While the sower sleeps, the seed is sprouting and growing.

HOMILY OUTLINES (CONTINUED)

Biblical reflections from the United Methodist Rural Fellowship, Columbia, Missouri

We Care for the Earth Because God Owns It (Psalm 24, Leviticus 25)

Christians believe that "the earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it," as the Psalmist declares. We respect the property of another, and use or enjoy God's creation, only to God's glory, not our own. We do not pretend to the rights of ownership, "for the land is mine," says the Lord, "and you are strangers and sojourners with me."

Covenant and Creation (Genesis 6-9)

In the story of Noah, the first of God's covenants extends to the whole created order. The promise of God's continued blessing, first made in the Genesis story, is set in the context of an interdependent household or "oikos", a Greek word from which our "ecology" is derived. So long as the human creature (represented by Noah) protects the welfare of the other inhabitants of the ark, God sees to it that the needs of all creatures will be met.

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

INTERCESSORY PRAYER IS THE ACT OF PRAYING ON BEHALF OF OTHERS. CHOOSE 4-6 THAT YOU FEEL FIT BEST WITH YOUR COMMUNITY.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer

1. God made people stewards of creation. We pray that we may always work to protect what God has made, we pray to the Lord...

2. For all who work the land, that they may derive a just livelihood for themselves and their families, we pray to the Lord...

3. For nurturing the rural way of life, its values, and its traditions, we pray to the Lord...

4. For the health and safety of those who work to provide food for all people, we pray to the Lord...

5. For people who love the land and care for it well, making farming sustainable for future generations, we pray to the Lord...

6. For strategists, planners, policy makers and advisors, offering new ways to grow food and care for the land in changing times, we pray to the Lord...

7. For seasonable weather, good growth and good yields, so that there may be abundant harvests to feed hungry people, we pray to the Lord...

8. For health and happiness in the home life of all farmers, and for families to work together with love, respect and harmony, we pray to the Lord...

9. That God's creation may be revered by our use of materials for food, clothing, housing, artistic expression, and goods for human service, we pray to the Lord...

10. That the talents, customs, and gifts of all cultures in this nation and throughout the world will be respected and nurtured, we pray to the Lord...

CLOSING PRAYERS

CLOSING PRAYERS THANK GOD FOR BEING WITH US AND ASK HIM TO CONTINUE TO INSPIRE AND PROTECT US AS WE LEAVE.

1. Lord, we go now as a community of believers going into a larger community. Community is more than contact; it is caring, compassion, concern, comforting, celebrating, conversing, communion and service. Community is always becoming and never complete. Two or more share life together, risking to show pain, loneliness, fears, anger; receiving understanding, support, encouragement and relationship. Community involves risking error for another's sake, losing oneself for a greater cause, responding to a need for enhancing the qualitative character of human life. We go now, O Lord, to build the kind of community that can be called the Kingdom of God on earth. (R. Amen.)

2. God, may we go forth resolved to care for your earth and your people. We thank you for our rural life and rural community. We thank you for daily challenges and difficult decisions. Help us to be your witnesses today. Give us your spirit of love and power, through Jesus Christ our Lord. (R. Amen.)



3. Lord, it all began with little things: one breath of life, a tongue of fire within a bush, one small stone in a shepherd boy's hand, a voice in the night, a teenage girl who said "yes", a small point of light in an eastern sky, a little cup of wine, a crumb of bread, a rusty nail, a shot of joy in the early morning. Your power lies in the simple, the humble, and the small corners of life. Your voice is found in the species that disappears quietly and in the river that sinks into the sand before reaching the ocean. Let us go and share with others your message and the glory of the "little things". (R. Amen.)

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

THERE ARE MANY MUSIC SELECTIONS THAT WILL WORK WELL FOR USE IN A RURAL LIFE CELEBRATION. THESE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS AND RESOURCES.

Songs inspired by Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, 2015.

"Be Praised My Lord"

by Teresa Cobarrubia

To Listen:

www.teresacobarrubiaodermusic.wordpress.com/2015/09/05/song-be-praised-my-lord-laudato-si/

"Laudato Sii, O Mi Signore"

by Kevin Mayhew

Sheet Music Available at:

www.kevinmayhew.com/hymn-of-the-week.html

To Listen: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSpyKsPiUhs

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS (CONTINUED)

Examples from the United Methodist Rural Fellowship (lyrics from a rural perspective put to well-known music)

"A Hymn for the Rural Community"

Tune: "Finlandia" by the Rev. Ed Kail

This is your land, O God of all creation,
The land by which you gave us daily bread.
This is your land, and all eyes look to you, Lord,
From your good earth by grace we all are fed.
This is your land, you let us make our homes here,
And we enjoy the blessings 'round us spread.

This is your land, but only as a trust, Lord.
We are your stewards, here to do your will.
This is our land, but not as our possession;
Though we may tend it, our place of earthly labor,
Our land to love, conserve, preserve and till.

You give us life on farms, in towns and cities:
All bound together, one community.
But sin and pride and greed for wealth and power,
Threaten that life, destroy our unity.
Our rural life is sacrificed to idols;
To gods of war and prosperity.

Let righteousness roll down like living waters,
And justice like an ever-flowing stream.
Let us be neighbors, caring for each other,
Working together to preserve the dream.
A life on farms, in rural towns and cities,
God's land and ours, community redeemed.

"Praise and Thanksgiving"

Tune: "Morning Has Broken" by Albert F. Bailey

Praise and thanksgiving, now we would offer, For all
things living, created good;
Harvest of sown fields, fruits of the orchard, Hay from
mown fields, blossom and wood.

Bless, Lord, the labor we bring to serve you, That
with our neighbor we may be fed.
Sowing or tilling, we would work for you, Harvesting,
milling for daily bread.

You are providing food for your children, By your
wise guiding teach us to share.
With one another, so that, rejoicing, With us, all
others may know your care.

Then will your blessing reach ev'ry people; Freely
confessing your gracious hand.
Where all obey you, no one will hunger; In your love's
way, you nourish the land.

"God of the Fertile Fields"

Tune: "My Country 'Tis Of Thee" by Georgia Harkness

God of the fertile fields, Lord of the earth that yields
our daily bread;
Forth from thy bounteous hand, Come gifts thy love
has planned;
That we through all the land be clothed and fed.

...

MUSIC SUGGESTIONS (CONTINUED)

...

We would thy stewards be, holding in trust from
thee, All thou dost give; Help us in love to share,
Teach us like thee to care, That earth may all be fair,
and all may live.

As grows the hidden seed, to fruit that serves our
need, thy kingdom grows, so let our toil be used,
No gift of thine abused, No humblest task refused,
Thy love bestows.

Other Music Resources

Worship Fourth Edition (GIA)

All Creatures of Our God and King
All Things Bright and Beautiful
Before the fruit Is Ripened By the Sun
Earth and All Stars
Father, We Thank Thee
For the Beauty of the Earth
For the Fruit Is Ripened By the Sun
For the Fruits of This Creation
For the Healing of the Nations
Gift of Finest Wheat
God Whose Farm Is All Creation
How Lovely Are Your Works, O Lord
Let Saints on Earth in Concert
Lord of All Hopefulness
O Blessed Are Those Who Fear the Lord
Those Who Love and Those Who Labor
What Does the Lord Require

Glory and Praise Third Edition (NALR)

All My Days
Anthem
Come to the Water
Dwelling Place

Earthen Vessels
Glory and Praise to Our God
In Praise of His Name
In the Day of the Lord
Jesus is Life
Like a Sunflower
Lord, Send Out Your Spirit
Mountains and Hills
One Bread, One Body
Peace Prayer
Praise the Lord, My Soul
Son of David
Speak, Lord

Gather Third Edition (GIA)

Blessed Be God
Canticle of the Sun
Glory and Praise to Our God
God of All Creation
Harvest of Justice
I Want to Praise Your Name
In Praise of His Name
Morning Has Broken
Nature's Praise
Spirit Blowing Through Creation
The Stars Declare His Glory
To God with Gladness Sing
We Praise You
Wind Upon the Water

For more help, or to look up hymns see:
www.hymnary.org

Suggestions from The United Methodist Hymnal and
the Lutheran Book of Worship are available upon
request by contacting Catholic Rural Life at
Info@CatholicRuralLife.org.

APPENDIX B: ALTERNATIVE PRAYER SERVICES

THE FOLLOWING ARE ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR USE IN A PRAYER SERVICE DURING A RURAL LIFE CELEBRATION. THESE ARE DIFFERENT PRAYERS, BLESSINGS, ACTIVITIES AND LITANIES FOR SMALL GROUPS OR LARGE GROUPS. THEY HAVE BEEN COLLECTED FROM VARIOUS PEOPLE AND REPRESENT A VARIETY OF RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS. THESE MAY BE USED IN PART, IN FULL, OR FOR IDEAS.

LITANY OF SAINT ISIDORE

Introduction

We, as farmers and gardeners, have a sacred calling because we are collaborators with God in the work of creation. In partnership with God, we provide food, fiber, and shelter for all. As a rural people, tillers of the soil, we have special gifts and challenges as we care for and use the earth and its riches.

We have the use of soil, water, and air, and are challenged to steward these natural resources. We are challenged to take good care of them, to share them generously, and to pass them on to others in at least as good of condition as when we started using them.



St. Isidore, who lived as a farmer in Spain during the 12th century, has been designated patron of farmers. He was a very prayerful man with particular devotion to the Mass and Holy Communion. He loved his work as a farmer, and is said to have had a special relationship with and influence on the animals he worked with. As he plowed the fields, it is said that his boss saw two angels helping Isidore. Thus, the saying arose "St. Isidore, plowing with angels, did the work of three farmers."

Let us join, now, in praying the Litany of St. Isidore. This prayer recalls for us some of the traits of Isidore, our patron and model. In it we ask for his help on our journey as a rural people, a people close to the land and to God.

Litany

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.

God, the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.

God, the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, pray for us.

St. Isidore, pray for us.

Litany (Continued)

St. Isidore, patron of farmers, pray for us.
St. Isidore, illustrious tiller of the soil, pray for us.
St. Isidore, model of laborers, pray for us.
St. Isidore, devoted to duty, pray for us.
St. Isidore, loaded down with the labors of the field, pray for us.
St. Isidore, model of filial piety, pray for us.
St. Isidore, support of family life, pray for us.
St. Isidore, confessor of the faith, pray for us.
St. Isidore, example of mortification, pray for us.
St. Isidore, assisted by angels, pray for us.
St. Isidore, possessor of the gift of miracles, pray for us.
St. Isidore, burning with lively faith, pray for us.
St. Isidore, zealous in prayer, pray for us.
St. Isidore, ardent lover of the blessed sacrament, pray for us.
St. Isidore, lover of God's earth, pray for us.
St. Isidore, lover of poverty, pray for us.
St. Isidore, lover of humankind, pray for us.
St. Isidore, most patient, pray for us.
St. Isidore, most humble, pray for us.
St. Isidore, most pure, pray for us.
St. Isidore, most just, pray for us.
St. Isidore, most obedient, pray for us.
St. Isidore, most faithful, pray for us.
St. Isidore, most grateful, pray for us.
Jesus our Lord, we beg of you, hear us.
That you would protect all tillers of the soil, we beg of you, hear us.
That you would bring to all a true knowledge of the stewardship of the land, we beg of you, hear us.
That you would preserve and increase our fields and flocks, we beg of you, hear us.

That you would give and preserve the fruits of the earth, we beg of you, hear us.
That you would bless our fields, we beg of you, hear us.
That you would preserve all rural pastors, we beg of you, hear us.
That you would grant harmony in our homes, we beg of you, hear us.
That you would lift up our hearts to you, we beg of you, hear us.
Be merciful, spare us, O Lord. Be merciful, graciously hear us, O Lord.
From lightning and tempest, deliver us, O Lord.
From pestilence and flood, deliver us, O Lord.
From winds and drought, deliver us, O Lord.
From hail and storm, deliver us, O Lord.
From the scourge of insects, deliver us, O Lord.
From the spirit of selfishness, deliver us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.

Let us pray.
Grant, O Lord, that through the intercession of St. Isidore and his wife, St. Maria, we may follow their example of patience and humility, and so walk faithfully in his footsteps that in the evening of life we may be able to present to you an abundant harvest of merit and good works, Who lives and reigns, world without end. Amen.

The Introduction to the Litany of Saint Isidore and the Litany of Saint Isidore are taken from Catholic Rural Life's Rural Life Prayerbook, ©1956.

DEDICATION OF SEED, WATER, SOIL AND WORKERS

Introduction

At the beginning of the planting season it is customary for farmers to seek God's blessing on their crops. As the seeds are planted, God is asked to protect them from disease and destruction and to bring forth them an abundant yield.

(For this dedication, four people and a leader can be appointed to participate. Items needed are seeds, a pitcher of water, and a small amount of soil.)

Blessing

Leader We are assembled for the purpose of dedicating the seed that shall be planted, the water that will nourish the seed, the soil that shall be cultivated, and the sowers that labor to the service of God and for the good of humankind. (Say to the person with seed) What have you brought before the Lord and the people this day?

Person 1 I have brought seed, which represents various types of seed that shall be planted in this community. When sown it will bring forth fruit, food and fiber, so that children may eat and become strong, so that the wheels of industry may turn and so that life may be maintained among all. This seed is holy, for it contains life, and all seed shall be counted as holy in the sight of God. It will be planted with faith and cultivated and harvested with gratitude. (Person gives seed to leader.)

Leader (to person with water) and what have you brought before the Lord and the people this day?

Person 2 The soil will be watered by the rains of God. I have brought water as a reminder of its necessity for the growth of the seed and for all of life. The waters of life remind us of God, the giver of all life. (presents pitcher of water)

Leader (to person with soil) And what have you brought before the Lord and the people this day?

Person 3 I have brought soil, the good earth of this community in which seed is planted in hope, and from which the harvest shall be anticipated with joy. This soil, this earth, is the result of the creative activity of God. It was created by God for all of life. It contains the minerals, salts and fertilizers necessary to nourish the seed and bring forth sturdy plants capable of producing food for all life. It will be warmed by the sunshine of God. This soil is holy and shall be cultivated and cared for as a gift of God. (presents soil)

Leader (to fourth person) What have you brought before the people this day?



PRAYER OF BLESSING

Dedication (Continued)

Person 4 I represent the sowers of the seed. I have brought myself -my mind, my body, and my talents to be dedicated as God's co-worker in the sowing and cultivating of the seed. I represent not only myself, but all the farmers and gardeners of the world who hope for a peaceful world in which our talents may find their fulfillment. We dedicate ourselves to bringing about this kind of world.

Leader Let us all dedicate ourselves. Celebrating God's good gifts helps us remember God's call, that we hunger and thirst for what is right and just and that we share God's creation with all who are in need. Together, let us pray.

Leader and People We thank you, O God, that you have given us the seed, the water and soil upon which all of us depend. Fill our hearts with a sense of the seriousness of the responsibility in caring for them. Guide us as we sow, in order that the seed may fall on good soil. May we be ever conscious of your presence while we work. Amen.



Introduction

A prayer of blessing and adoration is one that offers adoration and thanks to God for his role in a life.

Prayer

Leader O God, source of all light and life, we acknowledge the responsibility you have given us as people of the rural countryside.

People We are grateful for day and night and for seasons unfailing in their yearly course.

Leader You depend on some of us to plant seed, till the crops, and reap the harvest. You depend on some of us to grow food for people in cities and seed for another year.

People We thank you that you give us so great a task.

Leader May it be that all who live in city or country will realize the true value of food and water.

People We pray, O God, that you will make us faithful stewards of food, water and all the resources you have provided.

Leader O God, source of all light and life, though we have hurt ourselves with waste and pollution, you are ever with us and never fail us. We pray for your continuing care, in the name of your son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

Introduction

A prayer of repentance is one in which we turn away from the evil and distractions and look to God and how he would like us to live.

Prayer

Leader Creator and preserver of all life, we come to you for wisdom in renewing the balances of our environment. We have discovered many ways of using the resources you have provided, but we have often failed to think and act unselfishly.

People Forgive us and help us, we pray.

Leader We are creating deserts where trees and other vegetation once grew, and where brooks and streams flowed. The lack of food, water and the lack of shelter for all your people are the evils that we must endure.

People We confess our lack of concern for the balances you have set in the atmosphere. We have polluted the air all people must breathe and we are causing both floods and drought. Teach us to understand your good plan, that the earth may again have pure air, and that rainfall may be good for all living things.

Leader We are thankful for your patience with us, and for your forgiveness. We thank you that there is still time. Renew our earth, O God, and we offer ourselves that your will may be done. Amen.

PRAYER FOR STEWARDSHIP

Introduction

A prayer for stewardship is one that thanks God for all that He has given to us as well as the talents we have thanks to Him.

Prayer

Leader O Lord, you have given us the gift of land.

People May we ever protect and preserve it.

Leader O Lord, you have given us the gift of water.

People May we keep it pure and safe.

Leader O Lord, you have given us the gift of air.

People May we keep it pure and fresh.

Leader O Lord, you have given us the gift of plants and trees.

People May we use and protect them justly.

Leader O Lord, you have given us the care of the earth.

All O Lord, we accept the care of the gifts of the earth as a sacred stewardship. Amen.



STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

Introduction

A prayer for stewardship is one that thanks God for all that He has given to us as well as the talents we have thanks to Him.

Prayer

Leader We come into God's presence as sowers of stewardship.

People For God has made everything in its season.

Leader The pathways of life can leave our discipleship exposed to the birds of ignorance.

People Hear us, O God.

Leader The rocky ground of easy success may temper our deep commitment to faithful stewardship.

People Hear us, O God.

Leader May we resist the thorns of temptation when they call us to cheap pleasures.

People Hear us, O God.

Leader The firm soil of Your presence, can grow good fruit thirtyfold.

People All people praise Thy name together.

Leader The fertile soil of our steadfast stewardship can produce sixty fold.



People All people praise Thy name together.

Leader From the deep soil of our faith in God will come forth a harvest one hundred fold.

People All people praise Thy name together.

Leader They who have ears, let them hear the strength of God's word.

People Glory be to Thee, Creator, Redeemer, God only wise. Amen.

PRAYER FOR SPRINGTIME

Introduction

A prayer for springtime reflects on the new life that has arose and all new life that is to come.

Prayer

Leader We thank you, Lord, for the joyous springtime, when we can work in partnership with you to produce food for a hungry world.

People Keep us humbly mindful of our dependence upon you, our Creator.

Leader Upon the good seed, sea and earth, which you have given to your servants, we now ask your blessing.

People Bless with fertility the seed, the animals of the fields, and the fish of the sea.

Leader Send rain to refresh the earth, and sunshine to warm the ocean's depths.

People Allow your blessing to fall upon all forms of life in the oceans of the world, and on the flocks and herds which you have given to your people, O Lord.

Leader Grant to us, your children, strength and patience to care for nets, crops, trees and herds.

People Of the increase we shall surely give a dedicated portion to you, our God.

Leader Because you have made us and we are yours, we present ourselves to you as our supreme gift.

People Help us to be your true children. Give us clean hands and a pure heart. Give us grace to become more like our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Introduction

A prayer of thanksgiving acknowledges the gratitude of God's blessings upon us.

Prayer

Leader For the marvelous grace of your creation, we pour out our thanks to you, our God.

People For the sun and moon and stars, for rain and dew and winds, for winter cold and summer heat.

Leader We pour forth our praise to you.

People For mountains and hills, for springs and valleys, for rivers and seas.

Leader We praise you, O Lord.

People For plants growing in earth and water, for life inhabiting lakes and seas, for life creeping in soils and land, for creatures living in wetland and waters, for life flying above earth and sea, for beasts dwelling in woods and fields.

CONSIDER AS YOU SOW

Prayer of Thanksgiving (Continued)

Leader How many wonderful are your works, our God!

People In wisdom you have made them all.

Leader May thy kingdom come and they will be done on earth! In our hearts, Lord, we promise anew.

People To reverence creation as a convincing witness of your presence, eternal power, and divine majesty.

Leader We promise to reverence your creation as a gracious gift.

People Entrusted to us by you, our God.

Leader We promise anew to be stewards.

People And not pillagers of what you have entrusted to us.

Leader Creator God, you have given us every reason to learn and promote the wisdom of lives lived in harmony with creation.

People May we, your servants, increasingly serve. May we, your servants, increasingly come to love your creation as we also increasingly come to love you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Written by Edward Hays for *Prayers for the Domestic Church*. Printed by Permission of Forest of Peace, Easton, Kansas 66020

And on the sixth day, God ordered the earth to bring /
Forth humanity to have dominion over each living thing /
To share in the blessings of the land, sea and air /
And the Word went forth to those far and near.

God's commands were made to sow and to reap, /
To work diligently, to harvest and to wisely keep /
The earth fertile and to nourish the need /
Of all God's children who must go forward and lead.

In the stewardship of the land against the time /
When the environment could be doomed by humanity's crime /
Of neglect and profit at the expense of God's creation /
Thus leaving the earth ravaged beyond all salvation.

We must foresee that the earth is guaranteed /
To protection against our own destructive greed that allows a wetland to be drained or a forest cut down /
To be replaced with a highway or a high-rise town.

God's Word must be heeded -and learning must replace /
Mistaken priorities to protect the human race /
From the fate that has fallen on much of nature's design /
Careless extinction of life and land by the neglect we find.

Care must be taken by people in all the world's nations /
To sow the seeds of tomorrow for future generations. /
Seeds of stewardship sown by following God's commands /
Making human efforts an extension of God's hands. /
Consider as you sow, you shall reap.



BLESSING THE TREE

Introduction

A tree planting service might be used at the planting of a tree in memory of the death of a loved one or member of your community, commemorate a significant beginning or ending or an event brought to life in your congregation, to celebrate an anniversary, a birth or a significant change, or a tree blessing could be used when a tree is planted to bring life and beauty to the earth.

Blessing

O God of life, be with us! Come, stand with us in what we are doing! We have opened the earth and prepared this soil to receive this tree. As the womb receives the seed and nurtures it to maturity, bless this soil, Lord, and make it fertile; bless this tree, Lord, and make it a symbol of our hope in you and in each other. You will water the earth with rain and we will irrigate this planting, to assure its growth so the birds can come to nest in its branches. In the same way, make living waters flow into and through our lives to make this community a place where your people will live peaceably for generations to come. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing Prayer for the Planting of a Tree

Lord and Holy Creator of trees and forests, come and place your blessing of life upon this tree that we are planting today. In the Garden of Eden, you planted both the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. May this tree be a tree of life to all the earth, may its leaves breath forth the life-breath of oxygen. May its branches be living space for those who climb among them and for birds of the air that shall nest there. May those in need of shelter from the summer heat find in its shade a refreshing refuge.

May it give to all who look upon it the gift of life - renewing beauty. We sprinkle it with water, sacred sign of life, asking that it may be embraced by our mother the earth, fed by rain and kissed gently by the sun. In caring for this tree we shall experience the most ancient profession of the human family, the primal vocation of being workers in the garden.

As blessing, peace and life were the fruits of the tree of the cross of your son, Jesus, may those same fruits flow from this tree, which we plant in your holy name, Creator, Redeemer, and Counselor. Amen.

APPENDIX C: PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENTS

8 Months Away:

"The (Arch)diocese has chosen X and Y parishes to host Rural Life Celebration this year. We are excited to have you all mark your calendars for [date]. There will be more information to come and we will be looking for committee members as well as volunteers!"

5 Months Away

"The (Arch)diocese has chosen X (and Y) parish(es) to host Rural Life Celebration this year. Mark your calendars for [date]. There will be more information to come but we will be looking for committee members right now to help in the planning of this celebration! Please contact [name] with your information so we can keep planning this incredible event. We are so excited!"

2 Months Away

"As a reminder, the (Arch)diocese has chosen X (and Y) parish(es) to host Rural Life Celebration this year. We are excited to have you all mark your calendars for [date]. We are looking for several volunteers to help out with this soon to be event of the year! Please contact [name] to show your interest and ability to help out! Bishop will celebrate Mass on [date] at [time] at the [location]. We hope to see you all there!"

3, 2 and 1 Week Away

"The (Arch)diocese has chosen X (and Y) parish(es) to host Rural Life Celebration this year. Bishop will celebrate Mass on [date] at [time] at the [location]. We hope to see you all there!"

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Example

Sunday, June 23, 2013 – 1:30 pm Mass

Celebrant: Bishop

Sue & Bob's Farm

Mass cancellations for June 23, 2013: Please note that the 9:00 a.m. Mass at St. Francis and the 10:30 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph have been cancelled. Join us for Mass at Rural Life Sunday instead!

Singers and musicians, contact the office by June 3rd if you would like to be part of the choir.

Volunteers are needed for all aspects of this event from setup through clean up. Potted flowers are also needed for the altar.

Contact a committee member from your parish if you are able to help:

X Committee Members:

Tom (tel no) Beth (tel no)

Y Committee Members:

Mary (tel no) Jim (tel no)

POSTERS, FLYERS, AND DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

DIOCESE OF (NAME) / (NAME) PARISH
RURAL LIFE CELEBRATION
(YEAR)



JOIN US (DATE)
FOR FOOD, FUN & MASS

ALL ARE WELCOME!

HOSTED BY: (NAMES OF PARISHES HOSTING)

LOCATION: (NAME OF LOCATION)

MASS: (TIME) CELEBRATED BY: (NAME OF PRIEST)

Add Any notes here. Ex: Please bring x, y, and, z; seats provided; etc.
In case of rain: (What will happen, location, etc.)



DIRECTIONS

LOGO OF
DIOCESE
OR PARISH

LOGO
OF
SPONSOR

FOR MORE INFO • (CONTACT NAME) • (CONTACT PHONE)

(Diocesan) Rural Life Celebration (Year)

(TITLE OR THEME OF CELEBRATION)

(TIME) MASS WITH

Bishop (Name)

Followed by:

(Entertainment, food, etc.)

HOSTED BY: (NAME)

LOCATION: (ADDRESS)

DATE: (DATE)

All are Welcome!

LOGO
OF
SPONSOR

LOGO
OF
DIOCESE
OR PARISH

LOGO
OF
SPONSOR

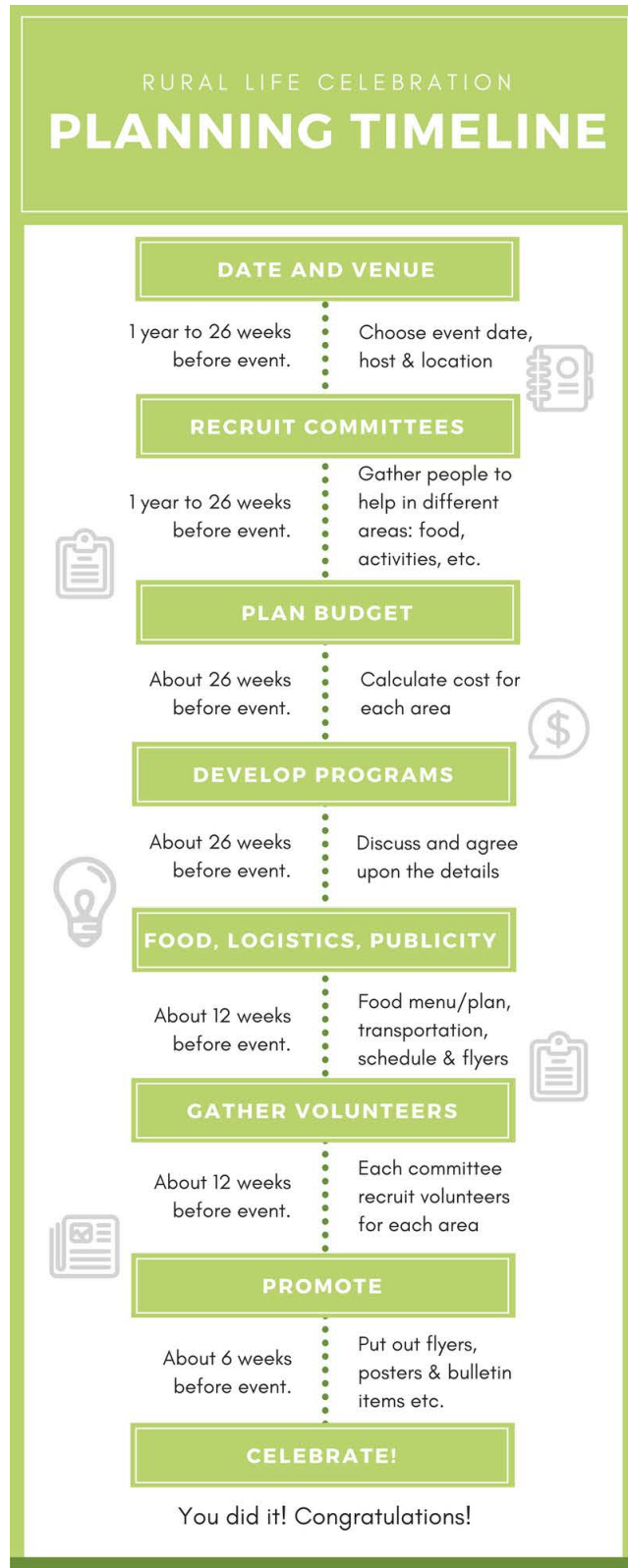
For More Info: (Contact name & Number)

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE EVENT BUDGET

Event Budget for Rural Life Celebration		
Site	Quantity	Cost
Room and hall fees		
Site staff		
Equipment		
Outhouses		
Parking		
Directional signs		
Tent		
Tables and chairs		
Total		
Decorations	Quantity	Cost
Flowers		
Lighting		
Balloons		
Paper supplies		
Hay bales		
Total		
Publicity	Quantity	Cost
Graphics work		
Photocopying/Printing		
Flyers/Handouts		
Newspaper promotions		
Postage		
Total		
Refreshments	Quantity	Cost
Food		
Drinks		
Linens		
Plates		
Napkins		
Cutlery		
Cups/Glasses		
Staff and gratuities		
Total		
Program	Quantity	Cost
Performers		
Speakers		
Travel		
Petting zoo		
Banners for each parish		
Tree (for planting)		
Outdoor games		
Music/DJ		

Other		
Total		
Prizes	Quantity	Cost
Plaques for century farms		
Door prizes		
Thank You gift(s)		
Total		
Miscellaneous	Quantity	Cost
Total		
Total Expenses		

APPENDIX E: SUGGESTED TIMELINE





CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE

Catholic Rural Life (CRL) is a faith-based membership organization focused on renewing Catholic faith in rural communities. Since 1923, CRL has been applying the teachings of Jesus Christ for the social, economic, and spiritual development of rural America, strengthening and sustaining the Church in the countryside by educating and inspiring leaders and advocating on their behalf.

UST Mail 4080,
2115 Summit Ave.,
St. Paul, MN 55105
CatholicRuralLife.org
651-962-5955