

National Days of Remembrance

CEREMONY TEMPLATE: FAITH COMMUNITIES

The structure and order suggested below may be adapted to fit specific circumstances, and faith leaders might wish to incorporate prayers or other liturgical elements from their traditions.

The resources listed are available on Museum’s website, ushmm.org. More ideas and resources for faith communities are available at ushmm.org/research/center/church.

Suggested program element	Rationale	Resources
Opening music	Music can help set the tone and framework for an observance. Musical selections can be used before, during, or following a commemoration.	Musical Selections
Invocation		
Opening remarks	Setting the appropriate tone and framework for a Days of Remembrance ceremony is important. The short video “Why We Remember the Holocaust” may be used for this purpose, or an individual may open with remarks.	<i>Why We Remember</i> video
Reading of the official state or city Days of Remembrance proclamation	The reading of an official proclamation from a mayor or governor may be included in a Days of Remembrance commemoration. A request, along with the sample proclamation, should be sent to the mayor’s or governor’s office several weeks before the observance. Inviting the mayor or governor to the commemoration is also appropriate.	Sample Proclamations for Mayors Sample Proclamations for Governors
Candle-lighting ceremony	The lighting of candles is often part of a Days of Remembrance ceremony. Local dignitaries, survivors and their families, rescuers, or liberators are often chosen to light the candles. During the candle lighting, a short poem or literary selection may be read, music may be played, or both may be done.	Selected Readings Musical Selections

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Musical interlude	See “Opening music”	
Keynote address or homily	The main remarks at a Holocaust commemoration can take many forms, depending on time available and type of audience. It could be delivered by a Holocaust survivor, liberator, or rescuer; a political dignitary; or a religious leader. Other possible options are creating programs that interview Holocaust survivors or showing films or other multimedia presentations about the Holocaust or a selected theme.	Theme Videos <i>The Path to Nazi Genocide</i> video Guidelines for Hosting a Holocaust Survivor Sample Questions for Interviewing Holocaust Survivors
Readings	Reading selections for a Days of Remembrance commemoration take a variety of forms, depending on the audience, location, and type of observance being held. Readings may be distributed to the audience or read aloud by an individual. A candle might be lit immediately after or during the reading.	Selected Readings
Benediction		
Closing music	See “Opening music”	
Other resources	Providing additional resources helps educate people about the Holocaust and provides context. Historical overview articles might be distributed or made available for people to read. Personal histories of individuals from the Holocaust might also be distributed or incorporated into a ceremony. Posters and PowerPoint displays are also available for presentation or display.	ushmm.org/survivors-victims