



SACRAMENT OF EVANGELIST BLESSING GUIDELINES

Basic Elements of all Sacraments

- Tangible sign or symbol of God's grace revealed in Jesus Christ
- Grounded in the ministry of Jesus Christ
- Spoken words of blessing and petition; articulation of the covenant involved, and related opportunities, responsibilities, and promises
- Eligible priesthood perform the sacrament
- Spiritual anticipation and preparation in a worship setting

Name of Sacrament: Evangelist Blessing

This sacrament is offered to individuals, couples, families, households, congregations, and groups. In all applications it is the sacrament of evangelist blessing. Here is the appropriate terminology:

- evangelist blessing
- evangelist blessing for an individual or couple
- evangelist blessing for a family or household
- evangelist blessing for a congregation
- evangelist blessing for a group

Definition of Sacrament of Evangelist Blessing

The sacrament of evangelist blessing is a powerful symbol and unique expression of God's eternal love and concern for people. The sacrament of evangelist blessing includes:

- a time of spiritual preparation;
- a prayer offered by a member(s) of the Order of Evangelists;
- access to a written or digital copy of the prayer;
- and, after the prayer, sharing by the evangelist(s) and participant(s) in ongoing reflection on God's continuous blessings followed by active implementation of what the participant(s) discern as guidance for their lives.

The gifts of grace offered to participants are for transformation blessed by awareness of God's abiding presence, acceptance, and love. This dynamic process moves participants into the future as they continue to discern and then live into the meaning of the blessing.

The sacrament of evangelist blessing provides opportunities for persons to:

- Talk about God and their relationship to God's purposes.

- Experience the heart of God—God's grace and total acceptance, including the assurance of divine love awakening them to new life.
- Tangibly deepen and strengthen their relationship with the Divine.
- See and value their connectedness to God, one another, and all of creation.
- Be blessed to be a blessing to others.

Continuing life blessing describes the availability of an additional evangelist blessing(s) when conditions and circumstances warrant another experience involving the sacrament. The sacrament of evangelist blessing is not necessarily a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence. Continuing life blessings usually happen at times of transition and new challenges for the individual, couple, family, household, congregation, or group.

Scriptural Foundation

Numbers 6:22–27 NRSV; Luke 24:50–53 NRSV; John 17 NRSV; 3 Nephi 9:20–23; Doctrine and Covenants 125:3a–b; Doctrine and Covenants 165:5

Primary Symbol: Hands of Blessing

Hands are primary symbols in the eight sacraments of the church. Laying on of hands signifies the sacred connection between the Divine and the recipient. The hands of ordained priesthood in moments of sacrament represent the strength and love of God in covenant relationship. In each expression of the evangelist blessing, hands of blessing symbolize the promise of the comforting and commissioning presence of the Holy Spirit to all those who receive this sacrament.

Priesthood

Evangelist or team of evangelists

Preparation

Those requesting the sacrament will demonstrate a willingness to enter into the blessing experience and covenant relationship in faith. It is expected that the evangelist(s) will design and implement with the candidate(s) a preparation process that precedes the blessing. Once the appropriate preparation is complete, the evangelist(s) and candidate(s) will gather at the appointed time and place in a spirit of worship.

Primary Process

Every participant addressed within an evangelist blessing needs to experience the symbol of hands of blessing and, following the blessing, have access to a written copy, or in some cases, an audio/video record of the blessing.

Individuals

The evangelist places hands of blessing on the head of the individual during the blessing.

Couples

The evangelist(s) places hands of blessing on each person's head during the blessing.

Family or Household

One or more evangelists may be involved. The evangelist(s) may place hands on the head of each participant at an appropriate moment in the blessing, assuring that everyone receives the touch of hands of blessing at some point during the sacrament. Or the evangelist(s) can speak the words of blessing first, followed by laying hands of blessing on each participant.

Congregation or Group

A team of two or more evangelists offers the sacrament through spoken word and the symbol of hands of blessing. The evangelist(s) may speak words of blessing first, followed by laying hands of blessing on each participant (with or without spoken comment). In circumstances where touch is not practical, the evangelist may raise hands of blessing (see Luke 24:50–53).

Evangelist Blessing for an Individual

The sacrament includes a prayer of blessing that addresses a person's life and faith journey.

Evangelist Blessing for a Couple

The sacrament includes a prayer of blessing that addresses a couple's ongoing faith journey and covenant relationship.

Evangelist Blessing for a Family or Household

The sacrament includes a prayer of blessing that addresses the family or household as a covenant community that shapes the lives of its members.

Evangelist Blessing for a Congregation

The sacrament includes a prayer of blessing that addresses the identity, vision, and mission of the congregation as an expression of the body of Christ.

Evangelist Blessing for a Group

The sacrament includes a prayer of blessing that addresses the purpose and potential of the group to bless the lives of its participants. These disciples, seekers, or friends meet for a specific purpose related to Christ's mission and have a shared expectation to be in relationship while fulfilling their purpose.

Evangelist Discernment

Evangelists, ministers with the wisdom of life experience and spiritual sensitivity, are trusted to discern the appropriate timing, readiness, and applicability of the sacrament of evangelist blessing when receiving a request. They have the freedom and flexibility to sense if the request is one they can accept or need to decline. Evangelists are not required to accept an invitation to perform the sacrament. In the event of declining the request, evangelists communicate with the candidate(s) regarding the timing, readiness, or appropriateness of the sacrament from their perspective. Sometimes this may result in evangelists referring the requestor(s) to another evangelist(s) in a sensitive, pastoral manner.

Where appropriate, the sacrament of laying on of hands for the sick may be suggested as a more immediate response to the needs expressed. The overriding consideration is for people to feel beloved and connected to God.

In preparing for the blessing and at the time of the spoken prayer, evangelists and participants are in vulnerable positions, giving and receiving through confidential, private conversations. This is especially true of the sacrament of evangelist blessing for an individual. It is expected that such vulnerability is handled in healthy and safe ways. When the situation calls for privacy, be sure to adhere to the guidance offered to youth workers and other ministers to invite a second person to be nearby, able to visually witness the interactions. Evangelists are to use wisdom in protecting themselves as well as their participant(s) in following this practice. The additional person may be a spouse, close friend, or companion of the participant(s) or another person whom the evangelist and participant(s) agree on. Ideally, the person should be able to see the interactions, but not hear them. Ultimately, the evangelist must discern the appropriate arrangements so that following this guidance does not interfere with or distract from the preparation and offering of the sacrament of evangelist blessing.

For online evangelist resources visit, www.CofChrist.org/order-of-evangelist.