

Solidarity

- Display a board or photo album with photos and short biography of parishioner in the military. Fellow parishioners can view the album and/or board to write wishes of support and prayer.
 - Designate an area of your grounds as a peace/prayer garden.
 - Dedicate a peace pole.
 - List names of military in parish bulletin and/or gathering space.
- Celebrate a prayer service or special mass for peace.

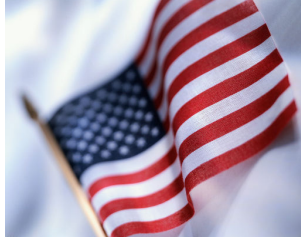
....We remain concerned for the safety of the men and women who serve generously in the U.S. military. We are grateful for their heroic sacrifices on behalf of the Iraqi people....We especially offer our support and solidarity to those who have loved one serving and who have lost loved ones....

*Statement on Iraq, November 2006
USCCB President,
Bishop William S. Skjeltstad*

Thank You!

The Office for Family Ministry thanks the parishes who responded and helped contribute to this resource.

If you would like to be included in our future office correspondence, please send your current email address to krajcirovic.kathrine@aod.org



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The Parish Community Reaches Out to Families in the Military



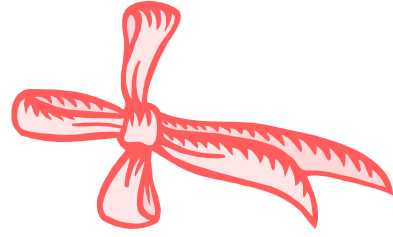
*Best practices from parishes
who responded to the
Office for Family Ministry
email survey.*



Office for Family
Ministry
Archdiocese of
Detroit

Care

- Monthly support meetings for family members where someone is deployed, child care provided during the meeting. Perhaps beginning each session by *Breaking Open the Word*.
- Hold a special tribute for those in the military.
- Have parishioners adopt a soldier for prayer and correspondence.
- Cards and care packages to military—connect with post office for names.
- Have Youth Group offer free babysitting for families when someone is deployed.
- Phone call from parish staff to family members.
- Cards or activities with local VA Hospital.



Prayer

Blessing at Mass

To follow the homily (invite individual(s) to come forward and face the congregation)

Upon deployment

Heavenly Father, You always show mercy toward those who love you and you are never far away from those who seek you. Guide N. as he/she begins this journey. Bless him/her with your peace throughout his/her tour and embrace him/her in your love..

(invite the congregation to extend their hands in blessing)

All powerful and ever-living God, when Abraham left his own land and departed from his own people, you accompanied him throughout his journey. Protect N., our friend and your servant, walk by his/her side to help him/her. Be his/her companion and strength on this journey, and his/her refuge in every adversity. Fill his/her heart, O Lord, with your peace and your love.

We ask this grace through Christ our Lord. AMEN

Upon returning home

(invite the returnee and their family to come forward)

Almighty and eternal God, Your unconditional love never ceases to provide for our needs. We ask you now to bestow on this family the riches of your blessings.

(invite the congregation to extend their hands in blessing)

Bless N. and his/her family, may the joy of your love fill their home during this time of celebration, thanksgiving and reconnection. Through the gifts of your grace, may they care for one another and recognize your presence in the midst of their transition.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, your son. AMEN

Prayers of the Faithful

- For the families and friends whose loved ones have been deployed in war that God's peace and strength fill their hearts throughout the difficult days of waiting...
- That this community of faith continue to support in love and prayer families who await the return of their loved ones who have been deployed in war...
- For all those men and women in the military serving their tour that they feel God's loving embrace through the care and prayer of our faith community...
- For all those in the Armed Forces that they come to know God as their constant companion and strength in their battles and their refuge in every adversity...
- That this community of faith stand in solidarity and prayer with all families who have a loved one serving in the military....

Prayer by Terence Cardinal Cooke

O God, almighty and most gracious, give to the men and women of the Armed Services the wisdom and courage to so live and sacrifice that, with justice maintained and true liberty safeguarded, all people everywhere may be possessed of that peace which you alone can give. As they are called to engage in dangerous missions, be with them, their constant support and their ultimate goal. May they know your continuous care and protection as they give of themselves that others may know security and peace. AMEN