

Inclusive Prayers of Thanksgiving Over Water: Resources and Model Prayers

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Introduction

The prayer of Thanksgiving over Water is an important part of the liturgy of baptism in many churches. Here I offer resources for composing such prayers, as well as several model texts. These resources and models are inclusive in that they include biblical stories of women as well as those of men.

With small changes, the same sort of prayer may also be used for liturgies of baptismal renewal. Furthermore, because baptism is the foundation for all Christian ministry, suitably adapted thanksgivings over water may also be included in celebrations of ministry.

The pattern of prayer used here includes the following elements:

- opening invocation
- short prayers of thanksgiving that refer to biblical stories of water
- short prayers of thanksgiving that refer to baptism
- one or more invocations of the Holy Spirit
- a concluding doxology and Amen

The number of short prayers of thanksgiving may vary, depending on circumstances. Appropriate texts may be selected from the resources below.

A response such as “Blessed be God forever” may be said by all following each short prayer or every two or three short prayers.

In these prayers the words “we thank you” may be replaced or alternated with “we bless you”, “we praise you”, or the like.

Resources

Opening invocation (model):

We give you thanks, generous God and mother of all,
for by the gift of water you nourish and sustain all living things.

Short prayers of thanksgiving that refer to biblical stories of water (Hebrew Scriptures)

A

We give you thanks for the waters of creation’s birth.
Over them the Spirit brooded,
bringing forth life in all its fullness.

B

We give you thanks for the waters of the Red Sea.
Through them Moses and Miriam led the covenant people;
in them you triumphed gloriously.

C

We give you thanks for the waters of the flood.
From them you saved Noah, his wife, his sons,
his three daughters-in-law,
and two of every kind of animal.

D

We give you thanks for the waters of the River Nile.
To them Jochebed entrusted her baby Moses in a reed basket.
From them he was drawn out by Pharaoh’s daughter and her Israelite maid.

E

We give you thanks for the waters of the Red Sea.
Through them the people of Israel walked on dry ground.
Then all the women took tambourines and danced
and the prophet Miriam proclaimed,
“Sing of our God, who has triumphed gloriously.”

F

We give you thanks for the waters that flowed from the rock.
With them God provided drink for the people and their livestock;
in them the holiness of God was shown forth.

G

We give you thanks for the waters of the River Jordan.
In them Naaman was washed clean of his leprosy.
To them he was sent by the Israelite slave girl
and the prophet Elisha.

H

We give you thanks for the waters of the widow of Zarephath’s cup;
through them Elijah was refreshed,
saved from death, and enabled to guide Israel.

I

We give you thanks for the waters of the desert rivers.
Through them you gave drink to your chosen people,
that they might declare your praise

Short prayers of thanksgiving that refer to biblical stories of water (Christian Scriptures)**J**

We bless you for the waters of Mary’s womb.
In them Jesus was nurtured;
out of them he was born as your good news.

K

We bless you for the waters of Jesus’ baptism.
In them he was anointed as Christ by the Holy Spirit
that he might make the whole creation new
and open to us the joy and freedom of everlasting life.

L

We bless you for the waters of Jacob's well.
From them Jesus asked a drink of the Samaritan woman;
in return he offered her the gift of living water.

M

We bless you for the waters of the pool of Siloam.
In them, at Jesus' urging, the man born blind found sight.

N

We bless you for the stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee.
To them Jesus spoke, and rebuked them,
and the wind and the sea became calm.

O

We bless you for the waters of the Sea of Galilee.
On them Jesus walked toward his disciples
and said, "Do not be afraid."

P

We bless you for the waters of the Sea of Galilee;
Into them Jesus' disciples cast their nets,
out of them they caught many fish.

Q

We bless you for the waters of the woman's tears.
With them she washed Jesus' feet.
In return he affirmed her faith and sent her forth in peace.

R

We bless you for the water and blood
that flowed from Christ's side as he hung upon the cross;
in them he gave birth to his sisters and brothers.

S

We bless you for the water of baptism.
Through them Lydia, Phoebe, Prisca, Junia and many others
became our foremothers in the faith.

Short prayers of thanksgiving that refer to baptism

For liturgies of baptism

AA

We give you thanks for the gift of baptism.
In this water these [children / women and men]
will become one with Jesus Christ
and incorporated into Christ's body the church;
through this water they will be made temples of your Spirit..

BB

We give you thanks for the gift of baptism.
In this water these [children / women and men]
will be buried with Christ in his death;
from this water they will be raised up to share in the resurrection;
through this water they will be reborn of the Holy Spirit.

For liturgies of baptismal renewal

CC

We give you thanks for the gift of baptism.
In this water we became one with Jesus Christ
and were incorporated into Christ's body the church;
through this water we were made temples of your Spirit.

DD

We give you thanks for the gift of baptism.
In this water we were buried with Christ in his death;
from this water we were raised to share in the resurrection;
through this water we were reborn of the Holy Spirit.

Invocations of the Holy Spirit

For liturgies of baptism

EE

Pour out your Holy Spirit,
that through these baptismal waters these [children / women and men]
may be empowered
to preach good news to the poor,
proclaim release to the captives,
and set at liberty those who are oppressed.

FF

Pour out your Holy Spirit,
that these [children / women and men]
may be clothed with Christ
through the waters of baptism
and come to experience freedom and equality in Jesus Christ.

For liturgies of baptismal renewal

GG

Pour out your Holy Spirit,
that as we died and rose again in the water of baptism,
we may now preach good news to the poor,
proclaim release to the captives,
and set at liberty those who are oppressed.

HH

Pour out your Holy Spirit,
that as we were clothed with Christ
through the waters of baptism,
we may proclaim:
 There is no longer slave or free,
 there is no longer male or female;
 all are one in Christ Jesus.

For liturgies of baptismal renewal and celebration of ministry

II

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us now,
enlighten us with your Sophia:
renew our call to ministry and strengthen us for loving service,
that we may proclaim and live Christ's good news.

Doxology and Amen

JJ

To Christ, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory
now and for ever.
Amen

Model Prayer for Baptism

We give you thanks, generous God and mother of all,
for by the gift of water you nourish and sustain all living things.

R. Blessed be God for ever. (Or similar response)

We give you thanks for the waters of creation's birth.
Over them the Spirit brooded,
bringing forth life in all its fullness. R

We give you thanks for the waters of the River Nile.
To them Jochebed entrusted her baby Moses in a reed basket.
From them he was drawn out by Pharaoh's daughter and her Israelite maid. R

We bless you for the waters of Mary's womb.
In them Jesus was nurtured;
out of them he was born as your good news. R

We bless you for the waters of the Sea of Galilee.
On them Jesus walked toward his disciples
and said, "Do not be afraid." R

We give you thanks for the gift of baptism.
In this water these [children / women and men]
will become one with Jesus Christ
and incorporated into Christ's body the church;
through this water they will be made temples of your Spirit. R

Pour out your Holy Spirit
that through these baptismal waters these [children / women and men]
may be empowered
to preach good news to the poor,
proclaim release to the captives,
and set at liberty those who are oppressed. R

To Christ, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory
now and for ever.
R. Amen.

Model Prayer for Baptismal Renewal

We give you thanks, generous God and mother of all,
for by the gift of water you nourish and sustain all living things.

R. Blessed be God forever. (Or similar response)

We give you thanks for the waters of the Red Sea.
Through them Moses and Miriam led the covenant people;
in them you triumphed gloriously. R

We give you thanks for the waters of the desert rivers.
Through them you gave drink to your chosen people,
that they might declare your praise. R

We bless you for the waters of Jacob's well.
From them Jesus asked a drink of the Samaritan woman;
in return he offered her the gift of living water. R

We bless you for the water and blood
that flowed from Christ's side as he hung upon the cross;
in them he gave birth to his sisters and brothers. R

We give you thanks for the gift of baptism.
In this water we were buried with Christ in his death;
from this water we were raised to share in the resurrection;
through this water we were reborn of the Holy Spirit. R

Pour out your Holy Spirit,
that as we were clothed with Christ
through the waters of baptism,
we may proclaim:
There is no longer slave or free;
there is no longer male or female;
all are one in Christ Jesus. R

To Christ, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory
now and for ever.
R. Amen.

Model Prayer for Baptismal Renewal and Celebration of Ministry

We give you thanks, generous God and mother of all,
for by the gift of water you nourish and sustain all living things.

R. Blessed be God forever. (Or similar response)

We give you thanks for the waters of the flood.
From them you saved Noah, his wife, his sons,
his three daughters-in-law,
and two of every kind of animal. R

We give you thanks for the waters of the River Jordan.
In them Naaman was washed clean of his leprosy.
To them he was sent by the Israelite slave girl
and the prophet Elisha. R

We bless you for the waters of Jesus' baptism.
In them he was anointed as Christ by the Holy Spirit
that he might make the whole creation new
and open to us the joy and freedom of everlasting life. R

We bless you for the waters of the woman's tears.
With them she washed Jesus' feet.
In return he affirmed her faith and sent her forth in peace. R

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us now,
enlighten us with your Sophia:
renew our call to ministry and strengthen us for loving service,
that we may proclaim and live Christ's good news. R

To Christ, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory
now and for ever.
R. Amen.