

ACTION GUIDE

ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE: JANUARY 2020

INTRODUCTION

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion throughout the United States in its companion decisions *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*. Since that time, millions of children have lost their lives and millions of women and families have been wounded by abortion.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), no. 373, designates January 22 as a particular day of prayer and penance, called the "**Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children.**" The Church directs:

In all the Dioceses of the United States of America, January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion.

As individuals, we are called to observe this day through the penitential practices of prayer, fasting and/or almsgiving. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provides resources to help parishes, schools, families, ministries, and individual Catholics participate in this important day of prayer and penance.

In addition, the USCCB also sponsors an annual, nationwide novena called "**9 Days for Life,**" which surrounds the liturgical observance of the Day of Prayer. Each day for nine days, a different intention is featured, accompanied by a short reflection, suggested actions, and related information as we pray for the respect and protection of every human life. In 2020, the novena will take place **Tuesday, January 21 - Wednesday, January 29.**

Free downloads and additional electronic resources can be found at respectlife.org/january.

A sample timeline and activity, homily helps, announcements, and more are provided to help you get started. You are encouraged to adapt these resources as needed to fit your specific parish, school, or ministry.

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SIMPLE STEPS

Here is a list of simple steps that you can use in your parish, school, ministry, or home to assist your efforts to commemorate the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* and participate in the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. These steps offer ideas on how to use the provided resources. Each step may not apply to your specific circumstance, but most can be adapted to suit your needs. Don't be afraid to get creative!

All **resources** mentioned below can be found at respectlife.org/january and respectlife.org/leaders-resources.

1. Spread the word!

Include the 9 Days for Life **flyer** in your bulletins for the weekends of January 11-12 and 18-19, or include the flyer in an email newsletter. [9 Days for Life](#) is designed so that Catholics all across the nation can unite their prayers for life together. Encourage those in your community to sign up so they automatically receive the novena when it begins! **Short bulletin announcements** are also provided. On the weekend of January 18-19, use one of the sample bulletin announcements for the [Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children](#) to inform your community about the observance.

2. Invite others to participate.

Announce 9 Days for Life from the pulpit on the weekends of January 11-12 and 18-19 or during your regularly-scheduled ministry gathering. During the weekend of January 18-19, share about the Church's observance of the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children, and encourage parishioners to participate by taking up a personal act of prayer or penance. Information on the Day of Prayer can be included during announcements before or after Mass, or even highlighted during the homily. **Sample announcements** are available to help you invite others to join in these important prayer opportunities.

3. Preach on respect for human life the weekend of January 18-19 and on January 22.

Sample homily helps are provided to aid priests and deacons in preaching on respect for human life in their Sunday homily and to observe the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children (January 22). [Suggested readings for January 22](#) are also provided. For more information on this observance, visit www.respectlife.org/january-22.

4. Pray for the protection of human life during the Prayer of the Faithful. **Sample intercessions**

are provided for use in the Prayer of the Faithful during Masses the weekend of January 18-19 and on January 22. Schools can use these intercessions to observe the Day of Prayer by praying together at the beginning of class. Families can include these intercessions in their regular prayers in the morning, evening, or before or after a family meal.

5. Share what you're doing.

Use social media to share the daily, 9 Days for Life prayer intentions with the hashtag **#9DaysforLife**. Highlight parts of each day's reflection that stuck out to you. Other tools will be made available on respectlife.org/january to help you engage others in building a culture of life. If a group from your parish is praying the novena together, share that on your parish social media pages, and invite others to join you!

We would love to see how you and your family, parish, or school participate!

Email us at prolife@uscbb.org or tag us on Facebook ([@peopleoflife](https://www.facebook.com/peopleoflife)) or Twitter ([@uscbbprolife](https://twitter.com/uscbbprolife)).