

A Baseball Berakah (Prayer of Thanksgiving), with Intercessions.  
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*Rubrics:*

1. *The response may be sung or spoken. It may also be omitted. If omitted, a pause of about two seconds will help mark the transition points.*
2. *When used on memorial or funeral occasions, other persons could be named in the open space provided at the end of the second section. ("For \_\_\_\_\_")*
3. *A similar open spaced is provided in the third section, where petitions appropriate to an occasion may be added.*
4. *You may reprint this text for one-time use, as in a worship service bulletin, provided that the copyright information is printed on the page.*

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Blessed are you, Lord our God, giver of all good gifts.  
In your goodness, you created human beings in your image and called us good.  
You gave us a Garden to sustain us and be our delight.  
Even when we broke your commandment and lost that first Paradise,  
You gave us the gift of Sabbath, reminding us that we are not slaves to our work  
Or to anyone else.  
You commanded us to rest ... and to play.  
You put playfulness in the hearts of your creatures,  
Dogs run. Dolphins jump. Birds sing. Children run, jump, and sing.  
And you bid us participate in that joy.

In time, baseball developed in the midst of that play, invented by children,  
and by adults who wanted to keep on playing.

It doesn't really do much that's particularly useful,  
But, along with chocolate, swing sets, symphony orchestras, rose gardens,  
and blueberry pancakes, not to mention the Final Four and bright red bow  
ties, we are grateful for this gift.

***(Sung or spoken) Let all things their Creator Bless: Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia!***

We are thankful:

For those who taught and coached us and those who encouraged us to  
play games.

For those with whom we have played and those with whom we have  
watched games.

For teams that we have loved and teams that have broken our hearts.

For bats and well-oiled gloves, new balls, and baseball cards.

For hot dogs, peanuts, and Cracker Jacks.

For ballparks and playgrounds, and those who have built and maintained

them.

For games broadcast on the radio and on television.

For Little League and the Angel League.

For *Field of Dreams*, *Bull Durham*, and *A League of Their Own*

For Watson Spaelstra and the Baseball Chapel movement.<sup>2</sup>

For Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron, for Hank Greenburg and Sandy Koufax,  
for Jackie Robinson and Frank Robinson, for Luis Tiant and Juan  
Marichal, for Ichiro Suzuki and Hideo Nomo, for Dorothy  
Kamenshek, Doris Sams<sup>3</sup> and the rest of the All American Girls  
Professional Baseball League.

For \_\_\_\_\_

***(Sung or spoken) Let all things their Creator Bless: Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia!***

We pray for the following:

In repentance for racism and other forms of bigotry that have plagued the  
game and excluded people who deserved to play.

For those who teach and coach young children, that they may do so  
with love and compassion, that they may remember that  
baseball is a game, and that children are children.

For all who wish to play, especially those with disabilities, that they may  
find opportunity to do so.

For amateurs and professionals on all levels, their coaches and managers,  
that they may resist the use of performance enhancing drugs,  
especially steroids.

For \_\_\_\_\_

For cities and communities, that they may balance desire to provide teams  
and ballparks with their call to care for the sick, the poor and those  
in need.

We pray that our playing may not become a new form of selfishness.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, giver of all good gifts, for you have given  
us play, including baseball.

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<sup>1</sup> From "Canticle of the Sun," attributed to St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) and translated by William H. Draper. *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nasiville, Tennessee: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), 861.

<sup>2</sup> Spaelstra (1910-1999) was a Detroit sportswriter. A recovering alcoholic who witnessed to Jesus Christ as the source of his recovery, Spaelstra was founder of the Baseball Chapel movement. <http://worldji.com/spoelstra.asp> Accessed April 1, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Kamenshek was a seven-time All-Star in the AAGPBL and was its batting champion in 1946 and 1947 while playing for the Rockford Peaches. Sams, who played for the Muskegon Lassies, was AAGPBL Player of the Year in 1947 and 1949 and was a five-time All-Star. Source, *The Origins and History of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League* by Merrie A. Fidler. Foreword by Jean Cione. (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2006).