

# KWANZAA NOVENA

-Dr. Ansel Augustine

The holiday of Kwanzaa was founded by Dr. Mualana Karenga and is seen as a celebration of the best of what it means to be African and human. This African-American/Pan-African holiday is filled with many symbols and traditions that call out the best of our traits as a human community. More about the tradition of Kwanzaa can be found at <http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/index.shtml> .

It is in this spirit that we connect the 7 Principles of Kwanzaa, known as the Nguzo Saba, with our Catholic faith tradition and offer up a 7 day “Kwanzaa Novena” in which we will pray for peace and healing in our communities. We ask that you pray these prayers and share them as well.

## DAY I – UMOJA (UNITY)

“to strive for unity in the family, community, nation and race”



LET US PRAY:

Dear Lord, we thank you for the gift of yourself. We thank you for our heritage and our faith. Lord, we come to you now asking for our continued strength as a people. You have brought us from a mighty long way, but we have more to go Lord and that is why we call upon you right now. Lord we ask you to help us today as our families are under attack. We ask that you help us to strengthen our parents and parental figures. We ask that you help our children know their worth and value as children of You. Lord, we ask that you help our communities, our village, to grow strong and support ourselves and know the power in unity. Lord we ask that you unite our nation, especially now when it appears our black youth and young adults are under attack, we ask that our leaders step up and do the “right thing” not the “easy thing” so that our needs are met. Lord we ask that you help us to unite as a race. Help all to understand the true power and significance of our heritage. Help give our people the strength and knowledge to promote the unique gift of our African/African-American heritage. Finally Lord, help us to remember that we stand on the shoulders of great men and woman who sacrificed much for us to be here today and it is our responsibility to step up and make a way for those coming after us. Lord we ask these things as we unite them with Your Holy Will. Amen. Ashe’.

## DAY 2 – KUJICHAGULIA (SELF-DETERMINATION)

“to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves”



LET US PRAY:

Lord, we come to you today asking you to help us who we are and Whose we are as children of the King of Kings. Lord, help us to remember that we are not defined by the “labels/stereotypes” of the world but by your word. We are made in Your image and likeness and therefore we are good. Help us to remember that we are not only the descendants of slaves, but of great kings and queens. Help us to remember that we are a people of overcomers and conquerors. We are inventors and entertainers. Our people have many gifts that you have blessed us with. Help us to remember our greatness and that we are called to pass this greatness on to future generations so that they may know their worth. Give our leaders the support and courage to do what is right and our communities the resources to be what we need to be for ourselves. But most of all Lord, help us to remember that our greatness comes from You, the creator of all that is good. Amen. Ashe’.

## DAY 3 - UJIMA (COLLECTIVE WORKS & RESPONSIBILITY)

“to build and maintain our community together and make our brother’s and sister’s problems our problems and solve them together”



LET US PRAY:

Lord, we come to you this day asking us to see with your eyes into the hearts of those around us. Lord, help us to be your vessels to see the needs of our neighbors, help us to look beyond ourselves so that we can journey with our brothers and sisters to ease their pain and hardships. Help us to remember that life is not about us, but about what you do through us to help others. Guide us to the resources necessary to help our neighbors with their burdens and give us the strength to challenge others to do the same so that we may “put our faith into action” by helping those around us in need. Open our hearts Lord so that we may truly “do unto others as You have done unto us.” We ask this and all things in your precious Son’s name. Amen. Ashe’.

#### DAY 4 – UJAMAA (COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS)

“to build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and profit from them together”



LET US PRAY:

Lord we ask you to help us lift up our gifted adults and youth that have the potential to create their own businesses. We ask that we, as a community, step up and support those who have invested in us. Lord help our greatest investment be in our most precious resource – our youth and young adults. Although, they may think or act differently than us, help us, as a community, help them to shape and chase their dreams/goals. Also, help us to guide, and challenge them, to give back so that they use their gifts to help our communities grow and help those coming after them. We ask this and all things in Your precious name. Amen. Ashe’.

#### DAY 5 – NIA (PURPOSE)

“to make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness”



LET US PRAY:

Lord, we ask that you help us, as community, to realize our greatness once again. Help us to look at who and Whose we are according to your word, and not by the stereotypical lies promoted by the mainstream media. Help us to remind our brothers and sisters of other cultures to know that we come from greatness and are a great people and deserve the respect of that fact because we are made in Your image and likeness. Help us to lovingly help our brothers and sisters that are suffering from the ills of racism, poverty, violence, self-hate (all of which stem from the “original sin” of slavery) to see their own inner greatness and share their gifts to make our community a better place for all generations. We ask this through Your precious name. Amen. Ashe’.

## DAY 6 – KUUMBA (CREATIVITY)

“to do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful than we inherited it”



LET US PRAY:

Lord, helps us to remember that this earth is only our temporary home. We pray that we one day join our ancestors, and ultimately You, in Heaven. But while we are here, help us to make this world a better place for future generations. Lord, let not the acquisition of material things be our goal. Help us to remember that our ancestors were thought of as material possessions and subhuman, and it is because of their sacrifice that we are able to “BE.” We are our ancestors’ dreams and hopes, but we have not made it. Give us the courage to fight the ills of our society so that we can inspire future generations to do the same for those coming after them. We ask this and all other intentions in Your precious name. Amen. Ashe’.

## DAY 7 – IMANI (FAITH)

“to believe with all our hearts in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggles”



LET US PRAY:

Dear Lord, on this final day of Kwanzaa, help us move our prayers into action. Help us, as a community, to remember that we are all connected as one so that when one suffers, we all suffer and when one achieves we all achieve. Help us to support our parents, teachers, and leaders. Help us to challenge them, out of love, when we see that they can do better, and help us to provide them with the assistance and resources to do so. Help us as a community to see our situations through the eyes of faith, knowing that where we are at is not where we will stay for our future is much brighter than our present. Help us to be an inspiration for those around us and help us to provide a better future for those coming after us. We offer this, and all things, up in Your precious name. Amen. Ashe’.

*DAYS 8 & 9 were added to fulfill the 9 day requirement for Novenas. These two days are not part of the traditional Nguzo Saba of Kwanzaa but are specific spiritual principals that are important to Africans/African-Americans:*

Day 8: Sankofa

“a word in the Akan language of Ghana that translates as ‘reach back and get it’”

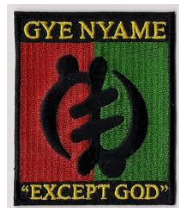


LET US PRAY:

Dear Lord, on this day let us never forget where we came from. Let us honor the sacrifice and the courage of our ancestors. Let us be empowered by their love and challenged by their work to make a better way for the generations coming after us. Lord, help us to remember that life is not about us, but about what You do through us. We ask this through your precious name. Amen. Ashe’.

Day 8 – Gye Nyame

“This Ghanaian symbol represents the SUPREMACY OF GOD.”



Dear Lord, on this final day of the Kwanzaa Novena help us to let go and to let You. Help us to remember that all things work together for our good (Romans 8:28) and that we are called not to understand, but to trust you. Help us to empty ourselves of our egos so that we can be filled with your love. Help us to remind our fellow Christians that we are called to step out and share your love to those who need it most. Give us eyes, ears, and hearts that discern the needs of our fellow man; and give us the hands and feet to serve those most in need. Finally Lord, continue to give us the mindset to continually be focused on you. We offer this prayer up in your precious name. Amen. Ashe’.