

Vigil Guidelines and Information

***Note:** This is a basic outline of the vigils, so please feel free to add or subtract from this outline. This is just an outline, so there is room for you to be creative and add or subtract from it.

The Vigils last for approximately 1 hour – typically they have been held from 3:30-4:30 on a Sunday afternoon. (We have tried Saturdays; however, due to work schedules, the attendance has not been as strong).

*Welcome to the families and the attendees (The families may be late, so this might be moved back – fill in this time with chants in English that should be translated – anything to be translated should be sent to the translator at least a week before the vigil)

*A chant or song in Spanish

*Opening prayer (the families represent both Catholic and Evangelical Protestant communities; the people attending the vigil come from many different and from no faith communities. The vigil may be attended or led by members of the Islamic Society, and the Jewish faith – please be sensitive and inclusive.) Also should be translated.

*Songs – English or Spanish (the more groups represented, the better)

*Message of hope/encouragement- This message should focus on the families and that they are not forgotten and are not alone. We admire their courage and stand with them. This will need to be translated.

*Chants and songs- English and Spanish

*Opportunity for the families to sing to us – leave a space for them to do so.

*Songs by Make the Road singers

*Closing prayer – translated

*Closing songs:

Notes:

•**Signs and banners are welcome.**

***After you decide on when to hold your vigil, please let Shut Down Berks Interfaith Witness know so that a flyer can be created to promote the event.**

Important Additional Info:

Training:

We encourage all vigil hosts or a representative from host groups to attend one of Shut Down Berks Coalition's trainings. The trainings help put the vigils within the larger context of the movement to try and shut down the Berks County Residential Center. The trainings usually take place the First Thursday of every month at 6:00 p.m.

Note of Encouragement:

It is important to have as many people as possible at these vigils, so please encourage your congregation/group/organization to take ownership of these vigils and get as many people to attend as possible. Please advertise the vigils as much as possible! We, Shut Down Berks Interfaith Witness, appreciate your willingness to lead a vigil.

Where to Park:

The center's address is: 1040 Berks Rd, Leesport, PA 19533 according to Google. There isn't any parking at the actual center, so you will be parking across the road, and the group will gather on the grass right across the road from the center.

Signs:

You are allowed and encouraged to bring signs that encourage the families, but also call for their release.

Translation:

It would be helpful if you brought someone along who can translate English into Spanish, since the families' first or second language is Spanish. There are translators available if you need one. Please contact John-Michael at johnmichael@pachurches.org and he can arrange a translator for you. You will need to send your vigil materials to the translator at least 1 week before the vigil in order for the translator to have enough time to translate the materials.

Sound System:

A portable sound system is available to use if you need it. Please let John-Michael know if you need it. You can reach him at johnmichael@pachurches.org