Prayers for Young People

PLANNING YOUR PRAYER

Introduction

Prayers and liturgies in different styles, to use with young people

Adapt and use these prayers as part of a youth group session, retreat or day of reflection.

There are many other worship resources available in print and on the CAFOD website to tie in with the liturgical year, Fast Days, campaigns and current events. You might look at the Confirmation section of the site for a wide range of additional worship and liturgy resources with a global theme.

Tips:

- Don’t be afraid to pray: try to build it into the programme, perhaps starting small and building it up through the weeks as you get more used to praying together.
- Don’t just stick to the same style of prayer all the time.
- Don’t be intimidated by silence, although how you use it will depend on the group.
- Create your atmosphere: music, lighting, a focal point. Candles are not only helpful for creating atmosphere, but they help to bring people to prayer by representing Jesus as the light of the world.
- You may need to think creatively about how to ensure the whole group are engaged and that it’s a participative experience.
- If you’ve pre-prepared it, invite some of the group to read or lead parts of the service.
- A PowerPoint of images can be a good focus to enable people to reflect on an idea. You can speak to it, use different voices to read prayers over it or play music which either acts as background music or has relevant lyrics.
- Taking note of the liturgical year can help to give direction to your prayer, using themes of hope or expectation in Advent, preparation or reconciliation during Lent, etc.
Gather
Begin by welcoming people together and a short prayer to set the scene. A selection of prayers to use as a group begin their time of worship can be found below.

Scripture
Select a scripture reading to provide the focus for your worship. Some useful justice-related scripture passages include:

- The Sheep and the Goats Matthew 25:31-46
- The Beatitudes Matthew 5:1-12
- Act justly, walk humbly Micah 6:8
- Faith without good deeds is no faith at all James 2:14-17
- Learn to do good Isaiah 1:17
- The Spirit of the Lord is upon me Luke 4:16-22
- Good Samaritan Luke 10:29-37
- The Magnificat Luke 1:46-55

Reflect
Allow time for people to reflect on the reading, e.g. with a PowerPoint of images, a piece of music, a meditation. A powerpoint reflection on the sheep and goats an alternative powerpoint reflection on Two hands can be found at cafod.org.uk/greatgeneration

Respond
Provide opportunity for people to respond to the reading, through prayer, through singing, through drama or activities. A selection of prayers to make your prayer response to the reading can be found below. You might think of alternative ways to enable young people to respond to the reading through art, music or drama and you can find a range of options elsewhere on the website.

Send out
End the worship time with a prayer of mission, of action or of commitment. You will find some suggestions below.

And finally...
Once you become familiar with the structure you might then add things or adjust it but this pattern will help you ensure a balanced time of prayer and worship.
**PRAYERS TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Respond prayers**
Select a prayer from here to enable young people to respond to a scripture reading or when you might one a short prayer as part of a bigger session.

**Beautiful Lord,**  
may we say ‘yes’ to you  
so that the Spirit in our hearts  
will once again be set ablaze.  
Spirit of Wisdom,  
guide our actions so they tell of  
God’s love.  
Spirit of Truth,  
open our eyes to see the world as it  
really is.  
Spirit of Power,  
enthusue us to work for justice  
throughout  
the world.  
Spirit of Love,  
inspire us to respect the dignity of  
each  
person.  
Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of  
your  
faithful.  
Come, Holy Spirit, fill our hearts.  
Come, Holy Spirit, fill us.  
Come, Holy Spirit.  
Come.  
*Stephen Davies/CAFOD*

**Lord, help me to**  
cherish the last time I really laughed,  
value the last thing that I achieved,  
respect the last time I did something that scared me.  
Lord, be by my side so that I can find joy in the smallest things,  
appreciate the wonder of your creation and  
live my life to the full.  
*Amen.*  
*Anna Field/CAFOD*

**Christ our Lord,**  
You give us our lives: all that we are, our bodies and our minds.  
You inspire us to learn more about the world around us,  
about you, about ourselves and about one another.  
May we who enjoy the freedoms that you give us  
rejoice in our discoveries and work tirelessly for education for all.  
May those who take risks and make sacrifices for their own education or the education of others inspire us always in our pursuit of learning and the life of faith.  
May we learn from one another, gain the knowledge to build a better world, and realise the potential you give to all.  
*Amen.*  
*Daniel Hale/CAFOD*

**Lent fast day prayer**  
Just and generous God,  
bring us together in a community of peace  
as we mark this Lent Fast Day.  
Our world is so unbalanced and unequal,  
may our efforts, our prayer and our action  
help to bring some balance.  
*Amen*  
*Jonathan Leach/CAFOD*
We pray for the Church, that she may tirelessly serve those who lack the basic necessities of life and be a voice calling for change.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.
We pray for the world’s leaders, that they may not hide behind their power or abuse it, but work for the good of all humanity, particularly those who live in poverty.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.
We pray for ourselves, that we may show our love through our respect for each other and our environment, gladly sharing what we have with those in need.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.
Linda Jones/CAFOD

This might be led by two people with all joining in the response.
We pray for all your people, Lord.
Voice 1 For those who are homeless that they may find shelter,
We pray for all your people, Lord.
Voice 2 For those who can work to create a fairer world,
We pray for all your people, Lord.
Mo Baldwin / CAFOD

An outside sink – an amenity.
An existence – a life.
A skateboard – fun!
Help us, Lord, to see the value, the inspiration, the joy in other people’s lives even when they don’t echo our own.
Creator and guide, we remember all young people in all of their communities.
Remind us that it is too easy for us to judge, to decide how others should feel, and enable us to enable others to live their own lives in their own cultures having fun.
Stephen Davies/CAFOD

Help me to grow less.
Less concerned by my wants
Less worried by my future
Less blind to others’ suffering
So that you may grow more
More present in my life
Making me
More aware of my dignity
More trusting in your providence
More filled with love for all people
God of simplicity and abundance
Give me less and more
Amen.

cafod.org.uk/greatgeneration
I pray for the ones who help me.
I pray that the word of God will spread and live long.
I pray for rain and food because there are so many people who have neither.
I pray for more justice and peace in this world.

Evan Ellis/Caritas Australia

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Creator God, create us anew!
Teach us respect for your wonderful world,
awareness of the earth’s resources, compassion for the needy, and gratitude for our daily blessings.

Mana/CAFOD, Ethiopia

We thank you, God, for those people, events and things which warm our lives and help us to grow and develop.

We turn to the west to the setting of the sun,
We praise you, God, for sunsets, nights, for endings in our lives.

We turn to the north, and remember the challenges and difficulties in life.
We ask you, Lord, for the courage to take up your call for us.

Bending down to touch mother earth,
We praise you, Creator God, for the things which sustain our lives.

Finally, as we gaze into the sky, we think of all our dreams.
We thank you, God, for your gift of hope.

Centred in the Creator’s universe,
We recognise our part in all of your creation.

Sophie Stanes/CAFOD

Help your light to shine brightly, and especially in places of darkness.

Amen.

Jonathan Leach/CAFOD

An active prayer
In an unhurried fashion, we greet the six directions in prayer.
(This prayer works particularly well outside)
We turn to the east and face the rising sun.
We praise you, God, for the gift of new life, of new days, of youth, of beginnings.

We turn to the south to the lands which are warmed,
PRAYERS TO BEGIN A SESSION

Gathering prayers
Select a prayer from here to begin a time of worship.
We gather as your people, Lord, in this time and in this place. Give us eyes open to the needs of all your creation, hearts open to the call of all your creation and hands open to do your work for all your creation.
Amen.
Mo Baldwin / CAFOD

Loving Creator,
transform our hearts so that we walk more humbly,
live more simply and become the change we wish to see in the world.
Amen.
Kieran O’Brien/CAFOD

Lord Jesus, you told us
that in your Father’s house there are many rooms.
Make our hearts wide and welcoming so that those we meet may feel that they have found a home.
Gemma Simmonds CJ

Here and now, Lord,
I hold before you simply some of the six billion people with whom I share this world. Although I may never meet them nor even know their names,
I place them in your loving care. Guide them. Support them. Be with them. May they be full of your love and share it with those they meet, as I, once more, commit myself to do the same.
Amen.
Stephen Davies/CAFOD

PRAYERS TO END A SESSION

Send out prayers
Select a prayer from here to end a session or worship time or retreat experience.
Lord Jesus, help us to follow your call and to put faith into action. Let reflection on your word lead to action in our world.
Amen.
Annabel Shilson-Thomas/CAFOD

God of all women and men, of every time and place, watch over your people, we ask you. Encourage us, God of life! Even when things seem tough and gloomy, remind us that you are close to us. Give us the courage to stand up for what we believe in and the wisdom to trust in your guidance and love.
Amen.
Jonathan Leach/CAFOD
In our waiting
in our praying
in our being
by our actions
and our words
by our choices
and decisions
may we make your love known.
In our tears
and our anger
by our sharing
and our sheltering
through our joy
and thanksgiving
may we make your love known.
*Linda Jones/CAFOD*

We leave this place, Lord,
Inspired by your Word,
Challenged by your example,
Empowered by your Spirit.
Give us the strength to be people
who
Inspire others with your Word,
Challenge others with your example
And empower others with your Spirit.
*Amen.*
*Mo Baldwin / CAFOD*

I strive, You inspire
I intend, You challenge
I forget, You forgive
I fail, You love
Help me, Lord Jesus, to be more like you.
*Amen.*
*Anna Field/CAFOD*

Lord, you call each of us by name
to be the best person we can be.
Help us to help one another share
the fruits of your earth,