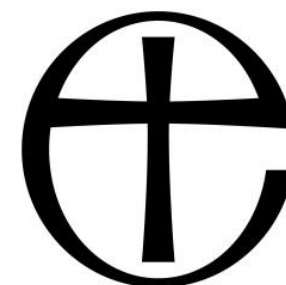




CREATIVE PRAYER RESOURCES FOR CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS

**Prepared for Coventry DBE by
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2019**



**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**



'Prayer is not just a formula of words, or a series of desires springing up in the heart – it is the orientation of our whole body, mind, and spirit to God in silence, attention, and adoration... prayer is a conversion of our entire self to God.'
~ Thomas Merton

Prayer in our church schools is **invitational**. It presents an opportunity to use bodies, voices, hands, feet, silence, stillness and movement in prayerful ways, something most children and young people can engage with in their own way. Through engaging with acts of prayer they develop an understanding of themselves as spiritual beings and grow their own beliefs, hopes and responses as part of living in an ever-changing, ever-challenging world.



Prayer can form an important part of a child's spiritual development. It is the way in which we, as individuals and gathered together in groups, engage in communication with God.

Prayer consists of:

- ***Listening*** - listening for the voice of God in every moment of life, in the mundane and the significant times.
- ***Speaking*** - expressing our hopes and fears and the deepest desires of our hearts to God as someone who completely understands us.
- ***Reflecting*** - reflecting on our relationship with God. Thinking about the God of history and of our own lives.
- ***Resting*** - sitting quietly in the presence of God and the knowledge that we are deeply loved.



Creative Prayer Resources

Christians believe that prayer is an essential factor in feeling fulfilled as humans, as it is only in God that our true selves can be discovered, the ultimate meaning in being here and life's purpose.



Prayer doesn't have to be overly serious when you are approaching it with children. You can teach them the value of prayer and different types and expressions of prayer through reflective, creative acts. This pack hopes to support you in exploring prayer in a variety of ways your pupils will find engaging and meaningful. Alternatives to prayer can be offered where pupils do not wish to pray, such as sitting quietly, drawing/creating something, or writing a poem.



SIAMS and Prayer

Strand 2: Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills



- How well the school's staff and leaders apply their Christian vision to ensure curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities meet the academic and spiritual needs of all learners.
- How well does the school support all pupils in their spiritual development, enabling all pupils to flourish?

<p>Good</p> 	<p>The school has a broad and balanced curriculum which is shaped by its Christian vision and recognition that each pupil is a unique individual. This ensures the rounded development of the whole child through academic achievement and spiritual development. The school has a clear and secure understanding of spiritual development that is distinguishable from social, moral and cultural development and is shared by staff. Progressively deeper opportunities exist across the curriculum which enable pupils to develop curiosity through questioning that helps them explore and articulate spiritual and ethical issues.</p>
<p>Excellent</p> 	<p>The school community applies its own understanding of spiritual development so that teachers have the confidence and ability to move beyond planned opportunities to make the most of questions raised by the curiosity of pupils and opportunities that occur spontaneously across the curriculum.</p>

Strand 6: The Impact of Collective Worship

The ways in which collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision.

- Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.

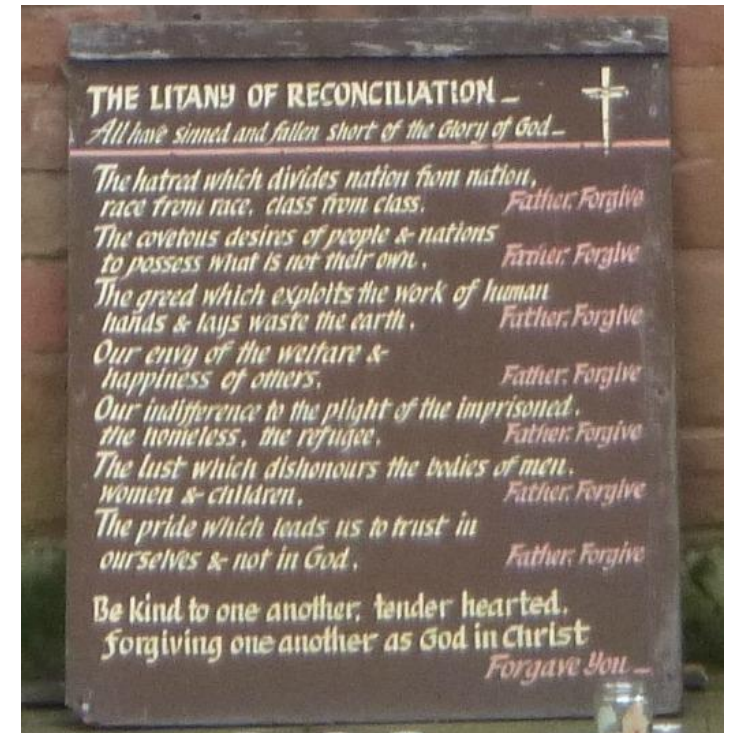
<p>Good</p> 	<p>Pupils talk about the value of prayer and reflection both in formal and informal contexts and how being still and reflective in their own lives can be helpful. As appropriate to context, pupils speak of their personal use of prayer and reflection.</p>
<p>Excellent</p> 	<p>Pupils articulate an informed and evaluative understanding of the value and use of prayer and reflection. There are varied and interactive prayer and reflection activities on offer to all pupils which they find helpful and supportive.</p>

Liturgical Prayers

In many church school settings it is appropriate to use some form of liturgical prayers at set points in the day or week. These are some suitable for school:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you.
And also with you.



The Litany of Reconciliation from Coventry Cathedral is a locally significant prayer. Some schools have written their own versions.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all,
now and evermore.
Amen.

Curriculum Prayer Opportunities

Set up a 'prayer chair' or 'reflection table' that links to the area of the curriculum you are teaching. Examples:



- The Great Fire of London topic links well with a prayer chair with a Holy Spirit theme, exploring the symbol of 'fire' used in association with the Holy Spirit.
- A seaside topic lends itself to some verses from the Psalms about water and God's power eg '*You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them*' ~ Psalm 89, Verse 9
- A prayer chair linked to a topic on Shakespeare might include a line from one of his plays with a question to ponder eg '*All the world's a stage and the men and women merely players.*' How do you use your life to make a difference to others? What do you want your story to be?



Things to include on your prayer chair/reflection table:

Props and cloth that link to your curriculum area (use colour and pattern creatively and thematically)

- A Bible verse or prayer that fits with the theme (a concordance can be really helpful for that)
- Images that fit with the theme
- A question to ponder or reflect upon
- Objects that fit with the theme and can be used to hold as a focus for prayer or reflection eg pebbles, shells, candles
- A responsive activity such as a template for writing a prayer or the symbolic placing of an object



The following pages offer prayer activities that cover a range of themes and links with everyday life:

- † Thanksgiving Prayers
- † Forgiveness Prayers
- † Celebration Prayers
- † Compassion Prayers
- † Prayers for Everyday Life
- † Inspired Prayers
- † Prayers for the World
- † Quiet, Reflective Prayers
- † Praying the Bible
- † The Lord's Prayer

Thanksgiving Prayers

- † **Thanksgiving Tree:** 'Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!' 2 Corinthians 9:15

Using a tree shape (cardboard or wire work well or use a found branch), pupils write thanksgiving prayers on to gift tags and hang on the tree.



Idea adapted from *80 Reflective Prayer Ideas* by Claire Daniel

- † **Thank you cards:** 'I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds' Psalm 9:1

Pupils write a prayer in the form of a thank you card or letter.

- † **Button Box Prayers:** 'I thank my God every time I remember you' Philippians 1:3

Choose a button that reminds you of a special person and say prayers of thanks for them as you hold it. You could write your prayer and send it to the person/people you chose, along with your button.



Idea adapted from *80 Reflective Prayer Ideas* by Claire Daniel

Forgiveness Prayers

- † **Magic dissolving prayers:** 'Wash me and I will be whiter than snow' Psalm 51:7
Using white cotton and water-soluble pens, write prayers for forgiveness and then wash these away in a bowl of water so no trace remains, praising God for the gift of forgiveness. Dissolving paper in tape form also works well for this as a quick way to get a larger group involved. This offers a good link into the Lord's Prayer: 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us' *[see later in the document for more ideas linked with The Lord's Prayer]*



- † **Magic flash paper prayers:** 'He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west' Psalm 103:12
This is paper used by magicians for tricks. Write prayers for forgiveness on the paper (you might want to agree some group prayers as this paper is fairly expensive) and set fire to the paper. The paper will completely vanish, along with the things we have done wrong. *[This is should be done as a demonstration by a responsible adult due to health and safety risks posed by ignition]*

- † **Shredding prayers:** Invite pupils to write prayers for forgiveness onto sheets of paper. Use the shredder to symbolise them being rid of the things they have done wrong. *[This should be done as a demonstration by a responsible adult due to health and safety risks posed by using the shredder]*

SHRED IT

&



FORGET IT

- † **Patchwork cross prayers:** You will need a cross made of wood or very thick cardboard. Give each pupil a scrap of paper (scrapbook/collage paper works well for this) and ask them to think about the things for which they need forgiveness and write these on the **back** of the paper. Paste everyone's prayers onto the cross so the writing is face down. Apply an extra layer of glue and leave to dry. Once it is dry and shiny, show the pupils the cross and explain that our sins have moved from us to the cross, where Jesus has dealt with them all.

Idea adapted from *100 Creative Prayer Ideas for Kids* by Karen Holford

Celebration Prayers

- † **Rainbow prayers:** 'Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies' Psalm 36:5

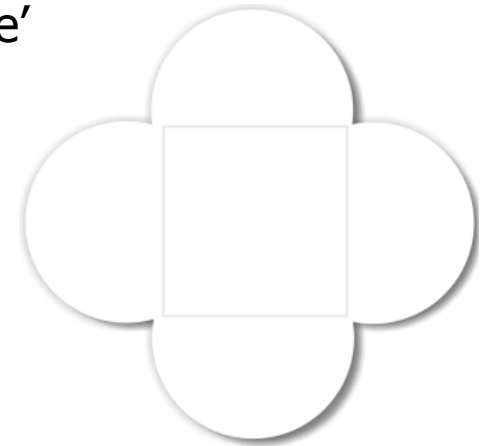
Remind pupils that God sent a rainbow after the flood in the Noah story to remind us of his promises. Rainbows form after rain and storms and are a symbol of hope and something to be celebrated. Provide a selection of ribbons for pupils to choose from. They can spend a moment appreciating the smoothness and thanking God for the ways in which he led them on 'smooth paths' in life or they may look at the vibrant colours and ask for him to shine his light in places that are dark in their lives. Write the prayers on the ribbons and tie them to a hoop of wire to hang in the window or onto a length of cord/rope to create a prayer curtain.



Idea adapted from *80 Reflective Prayer Ideas* by Claire Daniel



- † **Flower prayers:** 'For the spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline' 2 Timothy 1:7
- Using a template copied onto plain or pastel-coloured paper, ask pupils to hold their flower shape and think about their talents and how they need God's help to make them bloom. Write a word or prayers in the centre of the flower and fold in the petals so the flower is flat. Set the flowers down carefully onto the surface of water in a large bowl. As the flower petals open, ask the pupils to say their own quiet prayers to ask God to help them to develop their gifts and talents.



Flower template example

Idea adapted from *80 Reflective Prayer Ideas* by Claire Daniel

- † **Treasure hunt prayers:** 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart' Jeremiah 29:13
- Pupils go on a treasure hunt around school to find things that remind them of God's loving relationship with us. As they bring the things back, sit in a circle and create a prayerful atmosphere using music and/or a candle as pupils share their items and the connections they have made e.g. a book because God speaks to us, a plaster because God heals us, a scarf because God's love wraps all around us.

Idea adapted from *100 Creative Prayer Ideas for Kids* by Karen Holford

Creative Prayer Resources

- † **Prayer flags:** Prayer flags build on the Buddhist tradition. Traditionally, Buddhist **prayer flags** are used to promote peace, compassion, strength, and wisdom. The Tibetans believe the **prayers** and mantras will be blown by the wind to spread the good will and compassion into all-pervading space. Create prayer flags around your school's values or the example Jesus gives us in his ministry. Whilst they capture the prayers of that moment, over time they will also serve as prayer prompts as pupils and staff gaze at them and are reminded to ask or thank or praise God on behalf of your school community. Make them as colourful as possible and display in the school hall, along corridors or in outdoor spaces such as Peace Gardens and Forest School.



Compassion Prayers

- † **Love heart confetti prayers:** 'Trust in Him at all times, you people: pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge' Psalm 62:8
- Talk about the concept of prayer as 'pouring out our hearts to God', especially when we are troubled or we have hopes for ourselves and others. Place pots of heart-shaped confetti on the table in front of pupils. Ask them to think about what their hearts are full of. What do they feel concern and compassion about? What troubles them in the world? What do they wish was different? What hopes do they have for themselves and for others? Ask pupils to (sensibly?!) take a pinch of the confetti and gently let it fall as they consider these things prayerfully. Remind them God's love scatters everywhere, for all. They may want to take home one of the hearts as a reminder to continue prayers about these things.



Idea adapted from *80 Reflective Prayer Ideas* by Claire Daniel

Creative Prayer Resources

- † **Broken heart prayers:** 'He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds' Psalm 147: 3

It is often hard to pray with pupils at times that are deeply sad. Symbolic prayer may help. Cut out heart shapes and cut the hearts in half using a zig-zag to show the heart is broken. Encourage pupils to write the name of the person or a short summary of the situation on one half and to write 'God' on the other half. As they think about the person or the situation and offer up prayers they can bring the two pieces together in their hands. They may want to also do a heart for themselves.



Prayers for Every Day Life

- † **Jigsaw Prayers:** Talk with pupils about how they are all important, valued members of your school community, the wider church family and God's global family. Using a ready-bought blank jigsaw puzzle or photocopying jigsaw pieces on to card, give each pupil a jigsaw piece. Ask them to draw themselves and/or write their name on the piece and then hold it prayerfully in their hands. What gifts do they bring to the wider group? How do they serve their fellow classmates? Do they need to ask for God's help to do these things or something new? Pupils then write or draw these things onto their piece. Assemble the pieces back together to show belonging and the collective prayers of the group/class.





Creative Prayer Resources

- † **Tapestry of Emotions:** 'You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' Psalm 139:13-14 Create small, square wooden frames by gluing 4 lollipop sticks together. Have a large selection of coloured yarn/wool available, cut into manageable lengths. Pupils think about themselves as wonderful individuals created by God as they tie the end of the wool to the frame and begin randomly weaving in across and up and down. You may wish to suggest colours might have meanings, such as blue for sadness and green for growth areas. Each tapestry will be unique and vibrant, just like the wonderful diversity of the class. Pupils may wish to attach a tag with a small prayer to their completed tapestries.

Idea adapted from *80 Reflective Prayer Ideas* by Claire Daniel

- † **Stamping Prayers:** 'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.' 1 Peter 5:7 Save any bubble wrap that arrives in parcels at school because this is a prayer activity pupils will love, especially younger ones! Lay the bubble wrap onto the floor ***[give a healthy and safety notice at this point!]*** and explain that we are going to name the things that give us worries and then stamp them out on the bubble wrap!





Creative Prayer Resources

- † **Chrysalis prayers:** Ask pupils to think about the things they would like to change, about themselves or about situations in their lives. Give each child a cardboard tube and ask them to write these things as prayers on butterfly-shaped pieces of paper and then fold and poke them into the tube. Wrap the tubes with brown paper, scrunching the ends to 'cocoon' the prayers inside. When they see the changes written on their prayers they can go back to their chrysalis and let their butterfly prayers emerge and give thanks.



- † **Loud and Quiet prayers:** Spend some time in quiet listening. You may want to talk about how Quakers begin their meetings in silent waiting until someone feels they have something to say or pray out loud. Introduce a time of stillness and silence, inviting pupils to just sit and listen. Can they hear their own heartbeat? Does anything come to mind in the stillness? You may want to frame the silence in some way. This suggestion from the *Messy Prayer* book by Jane Leadbetter is helpful: "*For example, you might pray, 'Lord of wild winds and crackling flames, thank you for times that are **loud** [Everyone shouts 'yay!' or other words of praise and strums instruments] Lord of breathing and of heartbeats, thank you for times that are **quiet**. [Everyone listens]*"

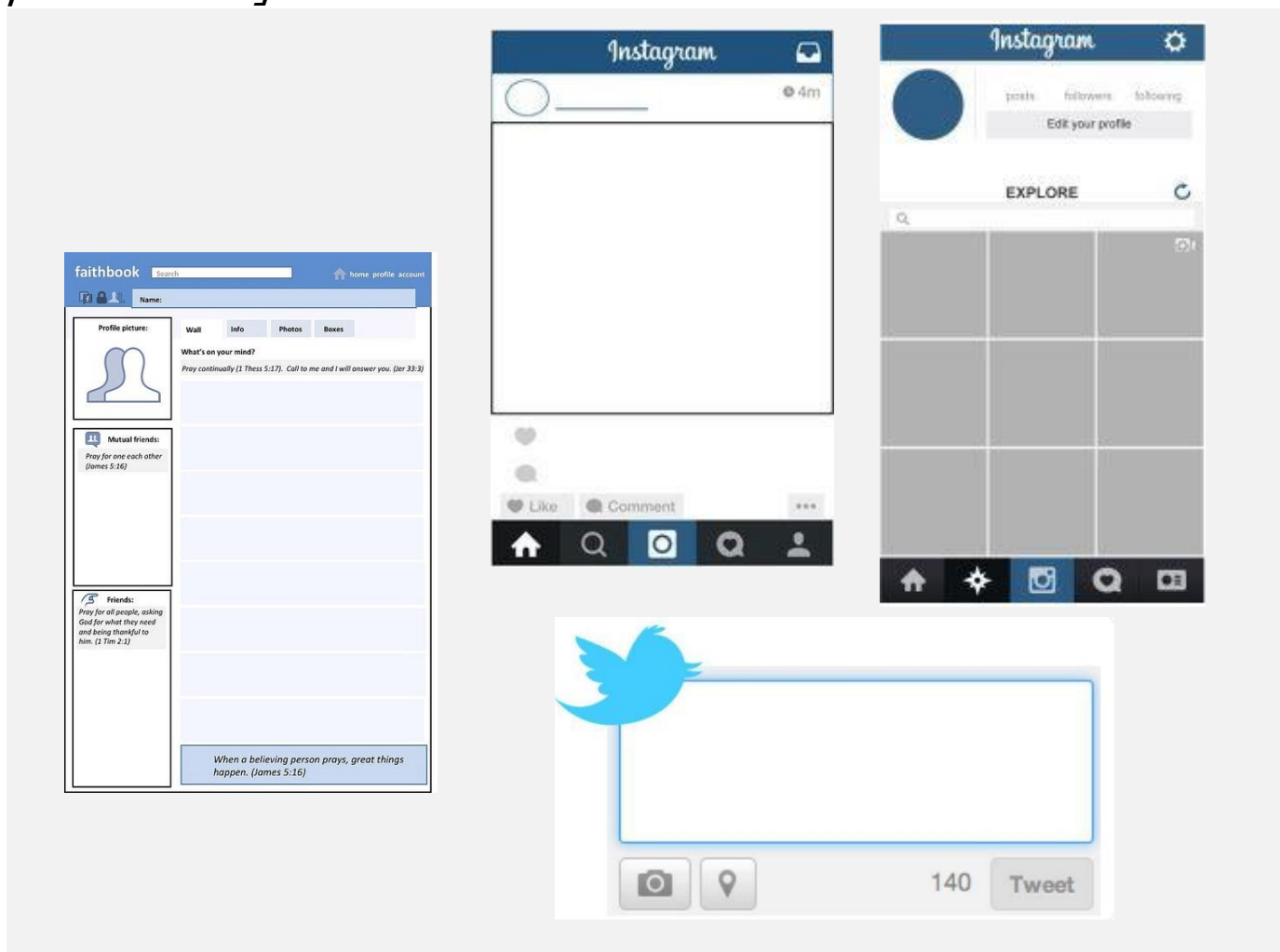


Creative Prayer Resources

- † **Mountain Prayers (with 'cairns')**: 'I lift up my eyes to the hills- from where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth' Psalm 121:1-2
- Have a large cut out of a mountain in front of pupils and ask them to consider what feels like a large obstacle in their lives. This could be something they are struggling to do, a relationship that is difficult or a future task they are daunted by (eg SATS or the move to secondary school). If they cannot think of anything that fits that category, ask them to call to mind a time of natural beauty and give thanks. Pupils can write their prayers on post-its to stick on the mountain, reflecting on God's ability to do the impossible and help them in times of difficulty. Another lovely way to approach the mountain concept prayerfully is through the use of 'cairns'. Cairns are used as markers on a journey or to build a memorial of a significant event. It is essentially just stones/pebbles placed on top of each other. To use this approach, have pebbles/stones of different sizes available ***[not too large, so as to avoid dropping injuries!]*** and allow pupils to hold these prayerfully as they bring to mind each situation they are bringing to God. They can then build their cairn. This would be a wonderful prayer activity linked to a topic on mountains or a geographical location like the Lake District. You may want to introduce the story of David and Goliath here and use this prayer opportunity to call to mind David's sling shot and the small stone that slayed a giant!

Creative Prayer Resources

- † **Social media-inspired prayers:** Use the templates from social media platforms to compose prayers eg 'Faithbook', Instagram for 'picture' prayers and Twitter to compose prayers on given subjects in 140 characters [see templates below].



Creative Prayer Resources

† **Tree Prayer:** Use a tree shape (2D or 3D will do) to pray. Use the following as focal points for prayer:

- **Roots** ~ prayers to be rooted in God's love
- **Trunk** ~ prayers to grow strong and tall in the faith
- **Branches** ~ to stay connected to God and to others
- **Twigs** ~ to remember that some people live at the edge of society and need to be included
- **Leaves** ~ prayers to flourish and grow
- **Blossom** ~ prayers to bring beauty, love and kindness to a cold and dark world
- **Fruit** ~ prayers to develop the fruits of the Holy Spirit:



Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control

Idea adapted from *100 Creative Prayer Ideas for Kids* by Karen Holford

Inspired Prayers

- † **Western Wall 'Cross'**: Introduce pupils to the idea of the 'Western Wall' in Jerusalem and how people 'post' their prayers between cracks in the wall. Using cardboard tubes and a glue gun, create a cross that pupils can use to post their prayers or light **LED** tea lights.



Creative Prayer Resources

- † **Quote Prayer Station:** 'God loves each of us as if there were only one of us' ~ Augustine of Hippo
Set up a large heart shape. Ask pupils to write the name of somebody who needs to know God loves them. Choose other quotes by famous Christians to act as stimulus for prayers.

- † **This is Knot Love:** 'Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His love endures forever.' Psalm 136:1
Introduce pupils to the Celtic knot as a design without beginning or end. As they colour in their own Celtic knot symbols (easily found via a Google search), ask them to reflect upon the everlasting nature of God and His love.



Prayers for the World

† **Headline Prayers:** Use a selection of newspaper headings focused on current issues locally, nationally and globally and ask pupils to choose one that they feel particularly moved by. Can they highlight one particular word from the headline that really inspires them to pray? Invite them to spend some time reflecting on the word and then to write a prayer in response to the issue from the headline, using the word as guiding thread.

† **Globe Prayers:** There are a lot of troubled places in the world. The Global Peace Index is a useful tool for identifying places of unrest in the world:
<http://visionofhumanity.org/indexes/global-peace-index/>

Use a map of the world or a globe and 'Handle with Care' stickers to focus pupils on saying/writing prayers for troubled areas of the world.



- † **Tear Drop Prayers:** Pose the question: 'What makes God sad?' Provide tear drop shapes (paper or old acetate both work well) for pupils to write their responses on. Fix the tear drop prayers on to a large cross shape.



Idea adapted from *Messy Prayer* by Jane Leadbeater

- † **Graffiti Prayers 'It's Not Fair!':** Set up a large blank wall using sugar paper or old wallpaper roll and write the title 'It's Not Fair!' centrally. Invite pupils to add their prayer responses, sharing the injustices they are aware of in the world and in their local area.

Idea adapted from *Messy Prayer* by Jane Leadbeater

- † **Gazing Prayers:** Purchase the 'Gazing Prayers' photo pack (£15, available locally at St Clare's opposite Coventry Cathedral), or create your own set of pictures, to facilitate silent prayer in a circle whilst gazing at images gathered around a central globe to prompt prayers for our world and the current challenges we all face. Alternatively, a candle in the centre might also help to focus prayers in a positive way: 'The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it' John 1:5

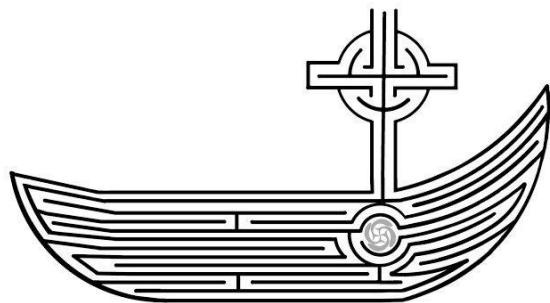


- † **Paper Airplane prayers:** This is likely to be especially popular with more energetic members of your class! Pupils write their prayers (you can set the theme) onto the wings of their planes and then go somewhere spacious (the school hall or outside are ideal) to 'fly their prayers'. They can pick up prayer planes that land near them and read the prayers aloud.

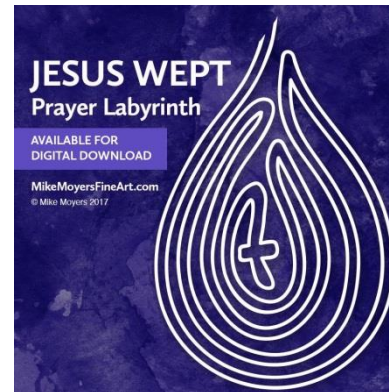


Quiet, Reflective Prayers

- † **The Labyrinth** ~ hand, personal, large, prayer labyrinths
A labyrinth is a path which leads, via a circuitous route, to the center of an intricate design and back out again. A labyrinth's route has only a single path. Unlike a maze, a labyrinth is designed for ease of navigation, and it is impossible to get lost within one (though I'm sure there will be some pupils who will test this hypothesis!). A prayer labyrinth is a labyrinth used to facilitate prayer, meditation and spiritual transformation. A labyrinth is a path which leads, via a circuitous route, to the center of an intricate design and back out again. Labyrinths have been used by a wide variety of cultures for at least 3,500 years.



fear not for God will be unto us a helper a
mariner and a pilot may God do unto us his
servants and his little vessel as he willeth



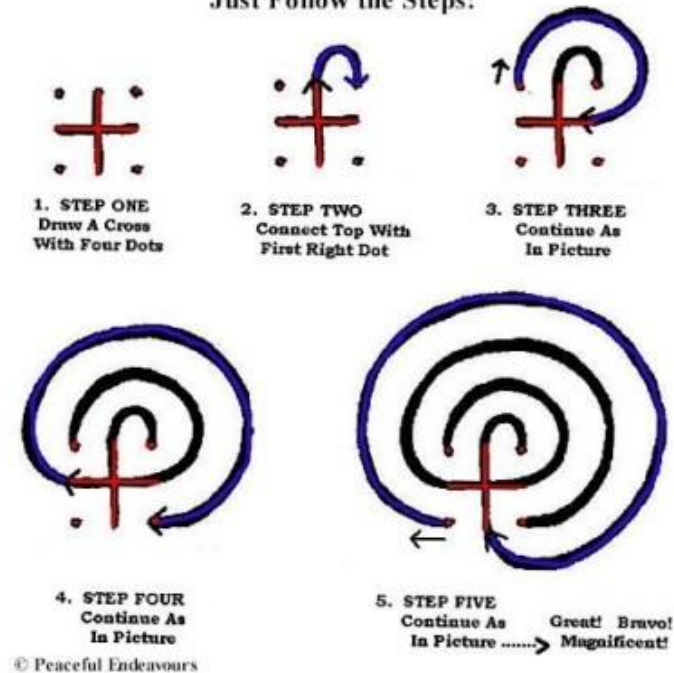


Labyrinths lend themselves to quiet, individual prayer. You can choose labyrinths that have a specific focus or theme (such as those above) or provide pupils with a specific prayer topic to reflect on whilst they use the labyrinth. They can be hand-held or large labyrinths that can actually be walked. There are 3 stages to walking or tracing a labyrinth:

- **Purgation** (releasing) ~ entering the labyrinth and moving towards the centre. Key thought: what do I need to let go of? What do I need to open my heart and mind to?
- **Illumination** (receiving) ~ at the centre of the labyrinth. Key thought: What is here for me to think about? What is knocking at my heart? [pupils should spend some time in quiet stillness and reflection when they reach the centre of the labyrinth]
- **Union** (returning) ~ leading back out of the labyrinth. Key thought: What can I bring to the world from my labyrinth experience? How can I share it with others?

Give each pupil a labyrinth and instruct them to reflect on each of the key thoughts above when they encounter each stage of the labyrinth. In response to the last question, pupils may choose their own way of conveying their labyrinth encounter with others eg through prayer, poetry, art, music, song.

How To Draw a Simple Three Path Labyrinth Just Follow the Steps!



Creative Prayer Resources

- † **Hidden Prayers:** Pupils write their prayers using white wax crayon onto white paper. Encourage them to consider that God hears our prayers even when we say them in secret. Use watery paint to wash over the prayers and gently reveal them.

- † **Big Questions:** The world can be a difficult place for our children and young people to navigate. A 'Big Questions' prayer station invites them to ask the difficult, ultimate questions and bring them before God as a prayer. Writing them on scraps of recycled cardboard gives them the ideas that these are questions humans have asked over and over through the generations and it is ok for them to feel unsure and bring them to God in prayer.



Creative Prayer Resources

† **Prayer Weave:** Setting up a simple loom will provide many opportunities for prayer in your school. It can be a permanent prayer station, with long strips of paper always available for pupils to weave their prayers in. Alternatively, add a focus/title to the top of the weaving loom so that prayers are gathered on a central theme at set times. It provides a good illustration of community and how our prayers come together, along with our actions, to change the things that trouble us or express gratitude for the things that inspire us.

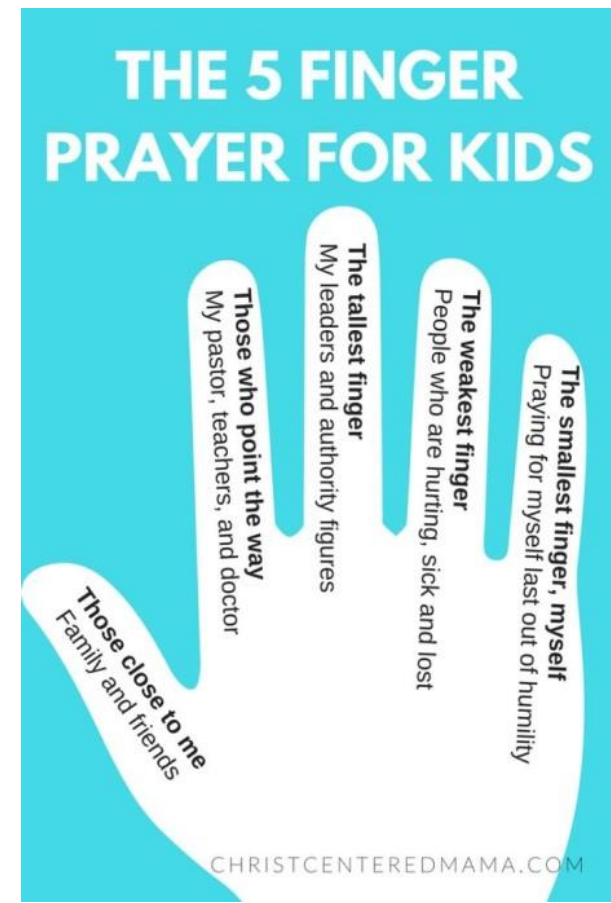


† **Prayer Doodles:** Invite children to write a name for God, or the name of a person or place they wish to pray for. After writing it, invite them to draw a shape around it and then begin to doodle as they quietly offer prayers to God.

Creative Prayer Resources

- † **Prayer Paper Chains:** This is a great prayer activity for younger pupils. They can write or draw their prayers on a strip of paper and then join it to the chain. Prayer chains can be done in colourful paper and displayed afterwards, added to when appropriate.

- † **Prayer Hands:** Use a guide such as the one on the right or come up with your own ideas with the class based on the different functions of our different fingers.



Creative Prayer Resources

- † **'Examen' prayer:** The 'examen' prayer is a beautiful practice of prayer popularised by St Ignatius of Loyola that helps those who pray it to see the ways that God is moving in their daily lives. You could take a few minutes of undistracted quiet at mid-day or at the end of the school day for this prayer. 'Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests' Ephesians 6:18

The prayer consists of 5 stages or 'movements':

Movement 1: **THANKSGIVING** express gratitude to God

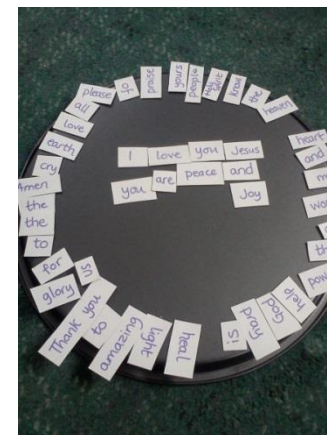
Movement 2: **GUIDANCE** ask for direction, help and guidance

Movement 3: **REVIEW** be aware of the day's happenings and your emotions

Movement 4: **GRACE** select aspects of the day to pray about and ask for God's grace

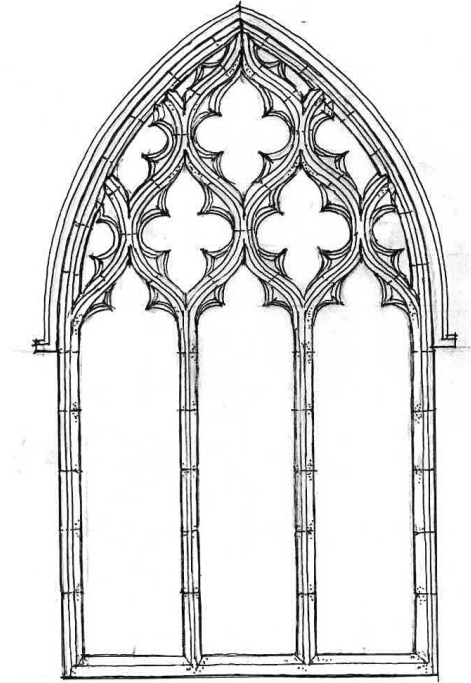
Movement 5: **RESOLUTION** prayerfully declare your hopes for tomorrow

- † **Magnetic 'Prayeretry':** This prayer activity works in the same way as magnetic poetry. Provide a set of words linked with the theme of your prayers. Be sure to include small words such as pronouns and the definite/indefinite article so that prayers can be formed in a coherent structure. Take photographs of these prayers and build up a class prayer book.



- † **Stained Glass Window Prayers:** Provide pupils with a window template such as the one seen here. Invite them to think about the things they would like to pray about ask them to incorporate them into a stained glass window design through prayerful drawing.

- † **Acrostic Name Prayer:** Write one of the names of God/Jesus from the Bible and use this to write an acrostic prayer (in same way as a poem). Or, choose the name of a person they want to pray for. This is a good opportunity for classmates to pray for each other.





Praying - The Bible

- † **Light Under a Bowl:** 'No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead they put it on a stand, so that those who come in may see the light' Luke 11:33
- Using electric tea lights ***[real ones could be used with heatproof bowls but there would need to be considerably more supervision]***, ask pupils to think about their gifts and talents and then turn on the light. As they look at it, they can think about the ways in which they use their talents. Now get them to place a bowl over the light and consider the ways in which they block or hold back on using their gifts and talents. Prayerfully consider why these barriers are there and ask God to help them lift them. As the bowl is removed, say a prayer committing to using specific gifts and talents and asking for God's help and guidance.



- † **'Who Do You Say I Am?':** 'But what about you? Who do you say I am?'
Matthew 16
Set up a tray with objects on that represent different names of Jesus eg crown (Lord/King), dove (Prince of Peace), wooden cross (redeemer), whiteboard (teacher), bandage/plaster (healer), heart (friend), water (water of life), bread (bread of life). Pupils can hold each object to reflect on a different aspect of Jesus' personality and his ministry on earth.

Idea adapted from *80 Reflective Prayer Ideas* by Claire Daniel

- † **'The Lord is my Rock' Psalm 18 Pebble Prayers:** 'The Lord is my rock, and my safe place, and the One Who takes me out of trouble. My God is my rock, in whom I am safe. He is my safe-covering, my saving strength, and my strong tower.'
Gather a selection of decent-sized pebbles and write words of inspiration on them, such as: peace, hope, grace, strength, love, peace, light, wisdom, compassion, kindness, faith. Invite pupils to take a pebble with a word that seems meaningful for them at that time, inviting them to sit holding the stone and saying their own private prayers. They may wish to take the pebble home or keep it in their desk/drawer as a reminder of their prayers.

Idea adapted from *80 Reflective Prayer Ideas* by Claire Daniel

† **Lego Prayers (Build your house upon the rock):** Ensure pupils are well-versed in the story of the wise and foolish builders which Jesus told as a parable as recorded in Matthew 7. Provide a base board with the words 'God is our sure foundation' and some plastic toy bricks, such as Lego or Duplo. Pupils can use whiteboard pens to write on the bricks as they build a wall, thinking about what they need to build on the firm foundation God has given them e.g. faith, trust, peace, etc. As they build they can prayerfully ask for these things.

† **For such a time as this (Esther):** 'For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position ***for such a time as this?***' Esther 4:14



Ensure that pupils are familiar with this Old Testament story before using it as the basis for a prayer activity. Provide wooden or cardboard cut outs of a crown and a selection of crafts jewels and sequins. Invite pupils to prayerfully consider what their passions are, what they feel motivated to take action about, particularly social justice and conservation issues. What do they



Creative Prayer Resources

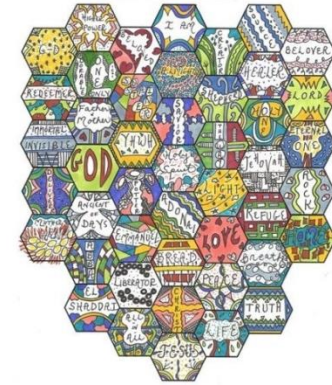
feel called to speak up about and do in the times they live in? As they add jewels and sequins they may ask for courage to follow their calling. Alternatively, a large royal cloak can be used for the whole class to add jewels to.

Idea adapted from *80 Reflective Prayer Ideas* by Claire Daniel

- † **God is our Refuge and Strength (Shawl Prayers):** 'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble' Psalm 46:1
This is a special prayer activity, especially when hard and upsetting things happen. Remind pupils that life can be very challenging sometimes. We need only read the story of Jesus calming the storm to see how terrified the disciples were and how much of a difference Jesus made in that situation. When things get difficult we often forget to come to God as a source of peace and shelter. In this simple prayer activity, pupils can just take a shawl (some blankets or old quilt covers re-purposed for this will be sufficient) and wrap themselves in it to sit quietly and prayerfully and allow a feeling of calm and peace to meet them in their turmoil. As they take off the shawl and fold it away, they can fold up their cares and worries with it and leave them for God.

Idea adapted from *80 Reflective Prayer Ideas* by Claire Daniel

- † **Names of God (Hexagons):** Introduce pupils to the Names of God found in the Bible (a Google search will turn up these). Provide each pupil with a hexagon and ask them to choose a name of God that they feel particularly drawn to. They can write this name of God onto their hexagon and decorate it whilst prayerfully considering what this name tells them about God and how that might be relevant to their life today. Once decorated, pupils can bring their hexagons back together to form a prayer mosaic.



- † **As the Deer Pants for the Water:** 'As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul longs after you oh God' Psalm 42:1
Using props such as an antler and a bowl of water, pupils can reflect on what this verse means. What is the Psalmist trying to say? Pupils can write their own versions of this prayer, expressing the need for God in different ways eg as the seed needs water, so my soul needs you God. As the river needs the sea, so my soul needs you God. As the bee needs the flower, so my soul needs you God.' They could illustrate these short but special prayers.





Creative Prayer Resources

- † **Jesus is the Light of the World:** 'I am the Light of the World' John 8:12
Provide a selection of lights, as well as photographs of natural lights, including the sun and the moon, the stars, fire, glow worms and fireflies, and the man-made lights we now have such as floodlights and traffic lights. Invite pupils to consider the different functions of these lights in our world and how Jesus might have been conveying different things in saying He was the light of the world.
Pupils choose a light and think about its function, writing their own prayer asking to be such a light in the community they live in.

Idea adapted from *Creative Ideas for Quiet Corners* by Lynn Chambers



Praying - The Lord's Prayer

SIAMS Strand 6: the Impact of Collective Worship

Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God and its language.

Teaching pupils in church schools the Lord's Prayer not only fulfils this, but it is also an important part of both our cultural and literary heritage as a Christian nation.

Below are some different ways of exploring this important Christian prayer with children and young people in school:

With actions: Younger pupils especially love to do actions during collective worship songs and will likely enjoy this version of the Lord's Prayer. Follow the actions given or create your own:



Creative Prayer Resources

Our Father in heaven [raise hands upwards]

Hallowed be your name [brings hands around in a circle to prayer position]

Your kingdom come, your will be done [stretch out arms to show Jesus on the cross]

On earth [make globe shape with hands, finishing with hands at the bottom]

As in heaven [raise hands upwards with palms facing up]

Give us today our daily bread [bring hands into bowl shape]

Forgive us our sins [bring hands together wiping right hand over left as if wiping away crumbs]

As we forgive those who sin against us [repeat action with left hand wiping over right]

And lead us not into temptation [place hand over heart and leave it there]

But deliver us from evil [place other hand on opposite side to make an 'x' across the chest]

For the kingdom [hands in a crown shape on either side of head]

The power [muscle pose]

And the glory are yours [point upwards]

Now [point downwards]

And forever [spread hands wide in front of you]

Amen [bring hands to prayer position]

If space is an issue, work with the children to create a Lord's Prayer hand gesture routine, where each line inspires a different movement of just the hands and fingers.



Creative Prayer Resources


- † **Maze:** A Lord's Prayer-themed labyrinth (such as the one available here: <http://www.biblewise.com/kids/images/fun/lords-prayer-maze.pdf>) can be used to help pupils stop and reflect on each part of the Lord's Prayer.

BibleWise

Lord's Prayer Maze

Find your way through the maze by connecting each phrase of the Lord's Prayer.
Then color the picture of Jesus at the end of the maze.

Our Father which art in heaven, Thy kingdom come,
Hallowed be thy name.
Give us this day our daily bread. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.



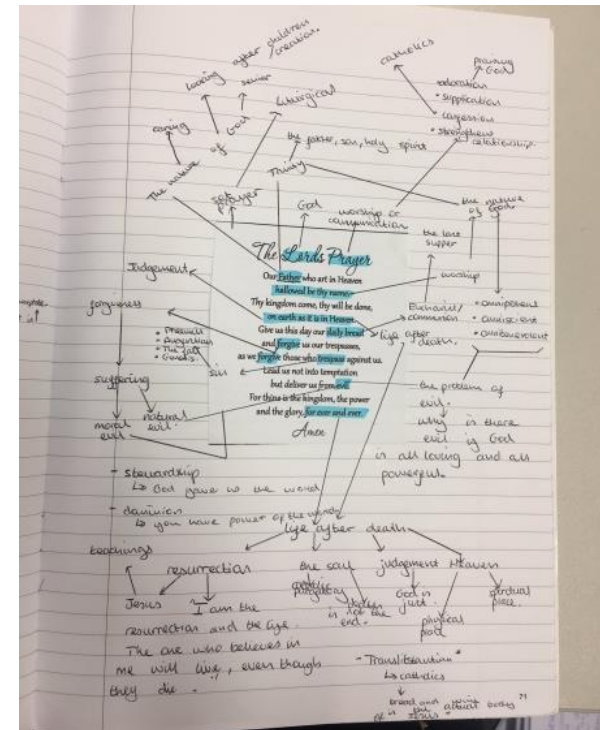
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† **'Your Will be Done':** The purpose of this prayer activity is to allow pupils time to reflect on their own actions. Pupils should draw round their hands onto some cardboard and cut these out. They will then use collage materials to cover their hands, considering their own personal responses to 'thy will be done' as they glue each new piece of paper to their hands. The phrase from the prayer can be glued on to the completed prayer hands as a reminder.

Idea adapted from *80 Reflective Prayer Ideas* by Claire Daniel

† **My Own Lord's Prayer:** Older pupils might benefit from this annotation-style study of the Lord's Prayer, adding comments and questions based on what the prayer means to them within the context of the world they are living in. There is scope here to link to other Bible verses and stories. When pupils then pray this prayer it will be with a much personalised context. Pupils may want to go on to write their own personalised versions of the Lord's Prayer, bringing in all the thoughts and reflections the previous exercise stimulated.





Creative Prayer Resources

- † **Lord's Prayer Book:** This is a lovely idea for younger children. Using a scrap book or ring-binder, set up each blank page so that there is one line from the Lord's Prayer on each page. Providing catalogues, magazines or the fruits of a Google search, ask pupils to find illustrations for each page to create a class visual representation of the prayer.

Idea adapted from *100 Creative Prayer Ideas for Kids* by Karen Holford

- † **Candlelit Lord's Prayer:** To create a truly prayerful atmosphere when exploring this prayer, keep the lights dim and play some quiet, instrumental music and light a candle for each line of the prayer as you say it quietly and slowly. You may want to use different colours to symbolise different things or experiment with different scents. You could try combining symbols and artefacts with the lighting of each candle to linger on meaning between lines.



Further Reading

The following books have some wonderful prayer activities for using/adapting for school use:

- 100 Creative Prayer Ideas for Kids by Karen Holford (Pacific Press Publishing Association)
- 80 Reflective Prayer Ideas by Claire Daniel (BRF)
- Messy Prayer by Jane Leadbetter (BRF)
- Creative Ideas for Quiet Corners by Lynn Chambers (BRF)



A Pinterest search also turns up a wealth of great ideas!