

MULTI-SENSORY PRAYER

PRAYER USING YOUR OWN CREATIVITY

Resources:

1. The leaflet Multi-sensory prayer: Prayer using your own creativity
2. Review of Prayer leaflet (A3)
3. Different colours of blank paper (not too thin), felt-tip pens, lead and colour pencils, crayons, water colour paint, clay, play dough, old magazines, glue sticks/glue, scissors etc.

Timings:

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| Refreshments | 15-20 mins |
| Input | 30 mins |
| Prayer exercise | 30 mins |
| Sharing (optional) | 20 mins in small groups (2-5 people) and 10 mins for whole group |

The timescale needs to be adapted to the size of the group, context and people.

The timing is flexible but the session needs to finish after 1 ½ hours, or 1 hour if the group has decided not to opt for the sharing.

The material in this leaflet has been adapted from the 'Prayer Pack' developed by the Anglican Diocese of Rochester. Permission has kindly been given for use within the Archdiocese of Southwark.
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1] INPUT

Praying with our creativity can feel quite daunting: "I am not creative, I can't paint or draw. This is not my way of praying..." On the other hand I might be excited about it: "It really is my way of praying." Mentioning creativity and prayer can frequently stir up all sorts of emotions! (*Allow participants to respond for a few moments*)

Let's look at this from a different perspective. In the Bible God is the one who creates:

God created the great sea monsters, all kinds of creatures that live in the water, and all kinds of birds. And God was pleased with what he saw. [Genesis 1:21]

God created them male and female, blessed them, and named them "Human Beings." [Genesis 5:2]

...put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness... [Ephesians 4:23]

From the beginning of time God has not ceased to create. There are a lot of passages in the Bible about how God creates the world and human beings. In the New Testament God created a new being in His likeness through Christ. God creates and continues to create in the world through us.

We are part of his creativity! As created beings, we can create and be part of God's ongoing creativity in the world.

If we look at it in this way, creativity has got a lot to do with God and prayer. There are, however, many different ways of being creative.

Ponder the question: How do you express your creativity?

(Ask participants to ponder this then share in twos and then with the larger group. By doing this exercise we will recognise that there are many ways of being creative.)

Explain:

What we are doing in this session might not be your particular way of being creative, but I would invite you to have a go.

2] PRAYER EXERCISE

Give out the leaflet: Praying using your own creativity.

Explain:

First, ignore the critical voice saying you're no good at this sort of thing.

Relax into the activity, take time to be still and ask God to guide your heart and hands as you create.

Allow your creativity to express what you may have found hard to express in words.

Use the pencils, colouring pens, playdough or magazines to draw, colour in, cut, paste or sculpt whatever comes to mind.

Don't worry about the end result: it is the process that matters!

Lead them through the following prayer exercise:

- Start with a stillness exercise (use your own or refer to the Silence & Stillness leaflet)
- Follow with a short prayer to ask the Spirit to guide this time of prayer.
- Explain the options (see leaflet):
 - Write your name – or your signature – and look at it from all angles, colouring it and adding symbols if you like.
You might want to use the hand you don't normally write with to make it even more interesting.
Or let the pencil or colouring pens wander freely across the page without any preconceived idea as to what the picture might turn into.
 - Look through the magazines and cut out pictures that speak to you. Use the pictures, glue and paper to make a collage.
 - Use play dough or clay. Enjoy the feel of it, the process of creating something regardless of the end result.
 - Colour in a picture, or, using colour, freely express yourself on a piece of paper.
- When you have finished creating your picture, collage or sculpture, look at it carefully ... What can you see? What is it saying to you? How does it make you feel? You may find there are things you want to say to God, or sense that God is in some way speaking to you.
- When you are ready, bring your prayer to a close, gently bring your focus and attention to where you are in the room and end your prayer by thanking God or using words that are familiar such as the Lord's Prayer – whatever feels right and comfortable.

(Allow 30 mins)

3] REVIEW OF PRAYER

After the prayer time, take five minutes or so to reflect on the experience jotting down some reminders under the following headings, or use the 'Review of Prayer':

1. The 'warm spots' – feelings, thoughts bringing some sense of God's closeness – e.g. peace, trust, hope, love...
2. Any feelings or thoughts that felt negative, disturbing, etc. and may have brought a sense of distance from God. These are often springboards for growth if you can own them and pray with them.

Or use the Ways Into Prayer 'Review of Prayer' leaflet (A3).

4] SHARING GROUPS

Let them get into groups of 2-5 people.

Depending on timings, share for 10 mins in the small groups.

Instructions for participants

- You share only what you wish to share.
- What is said in the group remains confidential and is not taken outside the group.
- It is important that each member of the group has the opportunity to share.

5] GATHERING TIME

End the session with a short time (10 mins) of sharing and questions in plenary.

Encourage people to use this way of praying in their own prayer time over the coming week(s).