PRAYING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE
Time to Reflect....

1. What did prayer look like, sound like, feel like in your homeroom last year?

2. Questions to consider: Do I feel comfortable praying? ........Do I feel confident and comfortable with leading students and praying with them? ........ Is prayer something I am enthusiastic about and value? ........Is prayer something I “DO” to students or is it a time when I facilitate and lead and model and empower them to nurture their prayer life?

3. What would you like to change?

4. What are challenges specific to prayer in homeroom?

5. What would you like the College to change about the policy and practice of prayer?

6. What are the possibilities for 2010?

7. What changes will I make? What actions will I take? What will I have a go at?
For Our Catholic and ecumenical schools, Prayer and Worship provide an opportunity for students, staff and parents to celebrate their life and identity as members of the Church. Prayer and worship helps create a sense of purpose and identity and draw the school community into an understanding of our shared humanity, link us with the Church throughout the world, and invites us to share the Good News.

Prayer, as the raising of the mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God, contributes to the faith growth of individuals and the building of Christian community.

Schools draw on the richness of the Catholic tradition, the wider Christian tradition and their own particular charism to nurture the prayer life of the school.

The Church invites the faithful to regular prayer: daily prayers; the Liturgy of the Hours; Sunday Eucharist; and the feasts of the Liturgical Year. Staff and students within a Catholic school should have opportunities to engage in prayer on a daily basis. In the course of their years in Catholic schools, students will experience a variety of formal and informal expressions of prayer, appropriate to their age and development.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church identifies three expressions of prayer, namely: vocal prayer; meditation; and contemplative prayer. In vocal prayer a person, or a group, gives voice in an external way to the interior prayer of the heart following Jesus’ example of prayer to God. Meditation is a prayerful quest engaging thought, imagination, emotion and desire. This may include readings, reflection, journalling, silence and stillness. At the heart of contemplative prayer is the simple act of being with God, recognising in stillness and silence, God’s indwelling presence.

The essential forms of prayer in the Christian tradition are: blessing and adoration; petition and intercession; thanksgiving and praise. All of these forms are present in the Mass.

Sources of Christian prayer include Scriptures, Liturgy of the Church, the theological virtues of faith, hope and love, the created world, our relationships and life experiences.

There are various environments and resources for prayer. Prayer may take place in many different contexts and settings. In celebrating a significant feast day or liturgical season in the life of the Church, it may be appropriate to gather for a prayerful school assembly. Meditation and contemplative prayer might be best experienced in a school prayer room or Chapel. Reflective walks or journaling may be more appropriate in outdoor settings or retreat venues. Members of the school community are assisted to recognise the religious dimension in the everyday moments of life through the practice of daily classroom prayer.

When the school community gathers in prayer, it draws on the breadth of the Christian tradition to build an understanding that its prayer is joined with the prayer of the whole Christian community – the people of God. Schools draw on their charism as additional resources for prayer.
Planning for Prayer in the Classroom/Homeroom – Term Overview

This template can be a way of recording prayer experiences and can be easily adapted to suit the local context. Information about these forms of prayer is on the RE Portal.

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<th>Prayers/ Prayer Experiences:</th>
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Simple Structure for a Prayer time/experience...

Gather

We Prepare and Gather. *(Leaving the Ordinary)*

This is about moving to a psychological space where we can enter into prayer. It is about creating a space and place both externally and on the inside. It is important to inform students about this and why it is expected and how it can help one to focus and be present or mindful.

**THE SPACE:**

- What will this sacred space look like?
- Will it change?
- Will the students help to plan for it and create it?
- How will it be kept simple?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liturgical colour.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayer mat or cloth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross or crucifix</td>
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</table>

Preparing the mind and body to enter into prayer:

A signal for gathering or calling to prayer e.g.

- Sound of a prayer chime or bell
- Rainstick
- The lighting of a candle followed by 30 seconds of silence
- The Sign of the Cross
- Reflective Music
- Holding high a religious icon e.g. cross or bible and waiting for silence
- A greeting and response- e.g. *Peace be with you/And also with you.*
- An invitation to silent reflection on what we are about to do/placing ourselves in the presence of God e.g. *Let us remember that God is with us..... Let us place ourselves in the presence of God....*
- Silence and stillness
- Breathing
- Stilling of body e.g. body relaxation exercise
- An opening prayer
### Listen

The preferred source of our listening is the Word of God. There are many translations available to suit different occasions e.g. at www.biblegateway.com/versions/. The passage/s need not be long: in a simple prayer service, a short reading with one focus can be powerful.

The ritual of taking up and opening, proclaiming, closing and replacing the text is an important part of the Listening process.

- A short reading or verse from Scripture
- A mantra e.g. I am with you
- Music
- Song or sacred hymn
- Prayer from the School prayer Book
- Silence and Stillness – Listen to the quiet of your heart
- Images e.g. Images of Earthquake victims; religious art or icons, PowerPoint
- Reflection or excerpt from a story or poem
- A quote from one of the saints e.g. Mary MacKillop - “Never see a need without doing something about it”

### Respond or Do

Following the listening, there are a number of possible ways to respond. They can be simple or complex and include:

- Silent reflection/prayer on what has been heard.
- Reading a reflection on the text heard
- Naming words/ideas heard from the text- with others or visually
- Use a word or phrase as a mantra
- Journalling
- The sharing of spontaneous prayers of thanks and petition
- sharing a sign of peace
Go

We Go
Returning to the ordinary can be a reverse of the “leaving” the ordinary ritual at the start of the prayer service:

- Blessing
- Extinguishing the “Christ” candle
- The Sign of the Cross
- Sound of a gong or chimes or water stick or bell
- Use of music (“Recessional” music)

Examples of Greetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peace be in this place and with all who work here. And also with you.</th>
<th>The Lord be with you! And also with you.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May the peace of God be with you! And also with you.</td>
<td>The grace and peace of the Spirit be with you! And also with you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and peace to you And also to you</td>
<td>May God be with you in all you do and say today And also with you</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Writing Morning Class/Homeroom Prayers

You: Ever-present and companion God,

Who: out of love for your people, you sent us Jesus to be our strength and guide.

Do: attune our minds to the sound of his voice, lead our steps in the path he has shown, that we may know the strength of his outstretched arm.

Through: We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

Amen.

Simple structure for Composing Prayers

An easy way to compose a prayer for use as an opening or concluding prayer, or ‘collect’, is to follow the YOU-WHO-THROUGH pattern.

YOU- begin by addressing God or naming God. “Loving God”, “God of Mercy”, “God who heals”, “Father in Heaven”.

WHO- name ‘WHO’ God is for us, for example: “Giver of all good gifts”, “You are always ready to forgive”, “Our strength and hope”.

DO- we ask God to act, to ‘DO’ something: “Be with us as we gather in your name”, “Grant peace to our world”.

THROUGH- We pray to God in and THROUGH Christ, so our prayer concludes with a simple “Through Christ our Lord Amen”, or “In the name of Jesus your Son, Amen.

This pattern or structure can be used to compose a prayer for any occasion; grace, opening prayer, closing prayer, blessing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOU</th>
<th>WHO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God of new beginnings</td>
<td>You fill us with love and kindness</td>
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<tr>
<td>God, ever patient and loving</td>
<td>You fill our hearts with faith</td>
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<td>God our creator</td>
<td>You lead us in your ways</td>
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<td>Faithful God</td>
<td>You help us to love others</td>
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<td>Ever generous God</td>
<td>You give us your word</td>
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<tr>
<td>God, source of strength</td>
<td>You guide us in this time of ______</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loving God</td>
<td>You give us your Spirit</td>
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<td>God of abundance</td>
<td>You bless us with gifts of creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merciful God</td>
<td>You created us to live and love</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loving God</td>
<td>You know us and love us</td>
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<td>DO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send us your Spirit to make us strong in faith and active in good works</td>
<td>We make this prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspire us to care for all creation as you do</td>
<td>We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teach us courage to believe in you</td>
<td>We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give your Church the gifts of unity and diversity in every land and culture</td>
<td>Through Christ our Lord. Amen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead all people to a future of dignity and peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bless our country and open our eyes to those who need our care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help us to bring peace and joy to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>May we follow the courage of Mary and say “yes” to your will</td>
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<td>May we act fairly to all people and treat them with respect</td>
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So then, let us always seek the ways which lead to peace and the ways in which we can support one another (Romans 14:19)

If one part is hurt, all the parts share its pain (1 Corinthians 12:26a)

If one part is honoured, all the parts share its joy (1 Corinthians 12:26b)

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:32)

Therefore encourage one another, and build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

1. Read the passage slowly introducing it with e.g. a short reading from.... You could have this quote written on a card or on the board.

2. Invite students to listen and choose a word or phrase from the reading e.g. peace

3. Breathe in the word peace and breathe out the word peace.

4. Teach about a mantra and ask them to take the word or phrase into their mind and repeat the word/phrase over and over.

5. Let the word rest in your heart.
Prayers of Intercession

Invitation, Petition, Response.

Invitation: Trusting that our God is near, let us pray for the needs of the world.

Let us pray for...
We remember....
We put before God...
We thank God for...
Let us thank God for

Prayer Starters: That....
For .....

Petition: Lord hear us; Hear us, Our God.

Response: Lord hear our prayer; Hear and answer us, O God

Invitation to prayer: Trusting that our God is near, let us pray for the needs of the world.

Prayers of intercession:
  For all members of the church throughout the world .....PAUSE   Lord hear us
  Response: Lord hear our prayer

  For all people in our school and families ..... PAUSE... Lord hear us
  Response: Lord hear our prayer

  For the care and protection of God’s world....PAUSE ....Lord hear us
  Response: Lord hear our prayer

  For peace in our world....PAUSE..... Lord hear us
  Response: Lord hear our prayer

  For the prayers in our hearts today.....PAUSE....Lord hear usResponse: Lord hear our prayer

Concluding Prayer: We make this prayer through Christ our Lord Amen
Blessings

A blessing prayer is one that calls on God’s power to care for a person, place, thing or undertaking.

In praying a prayer of blessing, we ask for God’s presence, goodness and protection to be evident in the lives of those the prayer is intended for or those who will enter the place that is being blessed e.g. a school, church, classrooms, library.

There are many opportunities to use blessing prayers. It is a matter of recognising opportunities to use them. It is also important to teach about them so that students are familiar with the process and come to a sense of feeling comfortable in blessing situations.

Blessing prayers can be prayed:

- at the start of a new school year
- at the end of the day
- before a trip or pilgrimage or service learning activity
- on a birthday or anniversary
- before a retreat or camp
- for school student leaders
- to welcome new students
- to farewell teachers and/or students
- for the school holidays
- for a sports event
- for students preparing to celebrate a sacrament
- for fathers, mothers, grandparents, families

A blessing prayer is always included at the end of a mass and may also be included in other liturgical celebrations. They can also be used in the context of prayer assemblies and in the classroom.

How to teach about blessings:

- Explore the greeting used in the school e.g. May God bless you; Peace be with you. What does this mean? Why do we say it? What should we be thinking and feeling when we use this greeting?
- Invite students to name times that they may have experienced a blessing from someone else e.g. at baptism, confirmation, mass, liturgical celebration, class or school ritual.
- Discuss with students about times that they bless themselves e.g. making the sign of the Cross, using holy water, tracing the cross on their foreheads, lips and hearts before listening to the gospel.
• Encourage students to name when they have been involved in giving someone a blessing e.g. a farewell ritual, a birthday blessing, a blessing for a new student, blessing of student leaders, blessing of people going on a pilgrimage e.g. WYD
• Explore plaques or foundation stones in the school environment.
• Discuss the concepts in blessing prayers at the end of a mass.
• Explore blessings from Scripture: leaders often blessed people, especially when getting ready to leave them e.g. Moses (Deut 33; Joshua (23:6-7)); and Jesus (Luke:24:50). The First Letter from Peter 1:3-9 has several elements of a blessing prayer beginning with giving thanks and praise to God.
• Learn Blessing songs which can be used at school and liturgical celebrations.
• Involve the students in writing blessing prayers for specific occasions. Use the structure of You, Who, Do, Through.

How to pray a blessing

There are many ways to pray a blessing, including having all those doing the blessing raise their hand over the person or group to be blessed. A blessing might also involve placing a hand on the person’s shoulder or head.

How to write a blessing:

Using the You Who Do Through structure
YOU- begin by addressing God or naming God. e.g. God of new beginnings.

WHO- name ‘WHO’ God is for us, e.g. You are our strength and hope

DO- we ask God to bless, to ‘DO’ something e.g. Be with us as we journey together this year.

THROUGH - We pray to God in and THROUGH Christ, so our prayer concludes with a simple Through Christ our Lord Amen
### Examples of Blessings

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<tr>
<th>Blessing for a Birthday</th>
<th>Blessing for Mother’s/Father’s Day</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Loving God, you are with us in all we do.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Bless ______ as he/she celebrates his/her birthday.&lt;br&gt;May he/she be blessed with blessed with peace &amp; joy.&lt;br&gt;May he/she continue to grow in your love.&lt;br&gt;We make this prayer through Jesus, our loving friend.&lt;br&gt;Amen.</td>
<td><strong>God of gentleness, you look after us and never stop loving us.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Bless our mum/dad.&lt;br&gt;May she/he know that I/we love her and that I/we appreciate all she does for me/us.&lt;br&gt;May she/he know she/he is precious in the eyes of our God.&lt;br&gt;Amen.</td>
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<td><strong>Blessing for School Student Leaders</strong></td>
<td><strong>Blessing for a school camp/retreat</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spirit of God, you guide us and light our way.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Bless our Year six/eleven students as they take on the role as leaders of our school/campus/college.&lt;br&gt;Bless our community as we encourage and support them in their leadership role.&lt;br&gt;We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.</td>
<td><strong>God our guiding light, you are protector of us all</strong>&lt;br&gt;Bless us as we experience new things on camp.&lt;br&gt;Bless us all as we enjoy our time together and keep us safe.&lt;br&gt;We make this prayer through Jesus, our loving friend. Amen</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Blessing to welcome a new student</strong></td>
<td><strong>Blessing for a Sports Event</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Loving God, you love and care for us all.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Bless (name) as he/she begins his/her journey with us.&lt;br&gt;Bless us all as we welcome him/her to our class community.&lt;br&gt;We make this prayer through Jesus your Son. Amen</td>
<td><strong>God of creation, you inspire us and protect us.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Bless our class/school and help us to have fun at the athletics/swimming/sport carnival.&lt;br&gt;We make this prayer through Jesus our brother. Amen</td>
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Simple and short blessings to end homeroom prayer, a prayer ritual, liturgy or the day:

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<th>Blessing 1</th>
<th>Blessing 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May our God of Hope fill us with joy as we spend time with others. Amen</td>
<td>May the peace of Christ guide us as we journey through the day. Amen</td>
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<tr>
<td>May the Spirit of wisdom inform our thoughts. Amen</td>
<td>May God’s word live in our hearts. Amen</td>
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<tr>
<td>May God keep us safe and from all harm. Amen</td>
<td>May God's wisdom guide us. Amen</td>
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<tr>
<td>May God’s tender hand support us. Amen</td>
<td>May God’s love surround us. Amen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May almighty God bless us in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen</td>
<td>Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Let us go into this day in peace and friendship</td>
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Praying with Litanies

A litany is the name given to a repetitive form of communal prayer in which the assembly sings or recites a common response to a series of petitions or acclamations sung by a cantor or proclaimed by a reader. It comes from the Greek word litaneia which means petition or supplication.

Litanies were developed in Christendom for use in processions. In the West there were traditionally four days for these processional litanies, the Rogation Days. The Eastern liturgies make frequent use of litanies, recited by the deacon; the response is usually “Lord, have mercy.” The Kyrie eleison or Lord have mercy is a relic of such a litany.

A good example of a litany is the Litany of the Saints that is prayed during the celebration of Baptism.

All present are invited to invoke the saints:

_Holy Mary, Mother of God_

*Pray for us*

_Saint John the Baptist_

*Pray for us*

_Saint Joseph_

*Pray for us*

_Saint Peter and Saint Paul_

*Pray for us*

_All holy men and women_

*Pray for us*

This Litany of the Saints, dates from the 5th century and can be used on the feast of All Saints. Modelled on it are a number of nonliturgical (i.e., nonprescribed) litanies: Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus (15th cent.), Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (or of Loreto; 16th cent.), Litany of the Sacred Heart, and Litany of St. Joseph.
A litany is a devotional prayer for two or more people gathered together. The principal phrase (versicle = v.) is said or prayed by one person, and the responses (r.) by the others in unison.

The Litany of Mary

Mother of God  We honour and praise you
Mother of the Church  We honour and praise you
Mother of Jesus  We honour and praise you
Mother of all  We honour and praise you
Mary most faithful  Teach us to be like you
Mary most loving  Teach us to be like you
Mary most gentle  Teach us to be like you
Mary most kind  Teach us to be like you
Woman of strength  Show us the way
Woman of goodness  Show us the way
Woman of justice  Show us the way
Woman of compassion  Show us the way
Woman who listened  Remember us to God
Woman who suffered  Remember us to God
Woman who wondered  Remember us to God
Woman who loved  Remember us to God
Hail Mary Litany

Hail Mary,

Source of peace...
Model of strength...
Model of gentleness...
Model of patience...
Woman of mercy...
Widowed mother...
Political refugee...
Woman, centered in God...
Woman of wisdom and understanding...

Response:

Pray for us
Be our guide
Transform us
Empower us
Pray to God for us

Holy Mary,

Source of peace...
Model of strength...
Model of gentleness...
Model of patience...
Woman of mercy...
Widowed mother...
Political refugee...
Woman, centered in God...
Woman of wisdom and understanding...

Response:

Pray for us
Be our guide
Transform us
Empower us
Pray to God for us
Gracious God
You have called us to life and gifted us in many ways.
Through Baptism You have sent us to continue the mission of Jesus
by sharing our love with others.
Strengthen us to respond to Your call each day.
Help us to become all You desire of us.
Inspire us to make a difference in others' lives.
Lead us to choose the way of life You have planned for us.
Open the hearts of all to listen to Your call.
Fill all with Your Holy Spirit that we may have listening hearts
and the courage to respond to You.
Enkindle in our hearts the desire to make the world a better place.
Amen.

BLESSING

May God the Father, Source of All Life,
lead us in the way of truth. Amen.

May God the Son, our Brother and Teacher,
show us how to live a committed life. Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit, the Gift of God,
grace us with the wisdom to choose life. Amen