



YEAR LEVEL	5 & 6
TITLE	People of Prayer
STRAND	PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT
SUGGESTED DURATION	4 - 5 weeks
ENDURING QUESTIONS	<b>Why is prayer important?</b> <b>How do I pray?</b>

## Unit Focus

This unit builds on the students' understanding of prayer as a relationship and deepens their appreciation of Christian prayer prior to examining prayers from other cultures. In this unit students explore:

- Jesus as a person of prayer in the Jewish tradition.
- The place of prayer in the life of Saint Paul.
- The link between prayer and action in our daily lives.

## Achievement Standards

By the end of Year 6:

**Students identify the many forms and types of prayer. They articulate the link between prayer and daily life. Students explore examples of a formal prayer ( The Lord's Prayer) and explain its relevance to their life.**

## Unit Outcomes

By the end of this unit the students should be able to:

1. Identify various kinds of prayer: thanksgiving, praise, sorrow, petition and adoration.
2. Explore some of Jesus' prayer experiences and the place of prayer in the life of Peter or Paul as Jew, as outlined in Scripture.

## Key Understandings for Students

- The Scriptures show that God's people prayed often and in a variety of ways.
- The people acknowledged their need for God and their belief in a God who cared for them.
- The Scriptures contain examples of many forms of prayer, some of these include: praise, petition, sorrow, and thanksgiving.
- The Scriptures are a guide enabling us to ponder, imagine, question and wonder about Jesus and his experience of prayer.
- Jesus' prayer reflects his intimacy with God.
- Before important events in his life, Jesus withdrew to spend time in prayer.
- In times of prayer we become more conscious of the ways that God's spirit is active in our lives.

## Student Context

By Years 5 and 6, children see themselves as members of a community that extends well beyond their family and immediate surroundings. Many will be looking for adults, other than (and as well as) their parents, with whom they can identify so it is an appropriate stage to offer them people who model a rich prayer life such as Jesus, Paul and Peter.

Students will bring with them to this unit a number of both positive and negative experiences of prayer methods. Their image of God may well be a childhood one which will now be found to be inadequate. In searching for a more personal image of God, children will often be open to different experiences of prayer such as mantras, meditations, music and praying through art and craft.

## Theological Background for Teachers

- Prayer is an expression of our personal relationship with God.
- Times of stillness and silence help us to deepen this relationship and enable reflection to take place.
- Prayer is a means of encountering God as creator, healer, forgiver and lover in our everyday lives.
- Jesus and the early Christian community prayed within the context of the Jewish tradition.
- Jesus invites us to enhance our relationship with him through prayer.
- There are different ways in which people engage in prayer. There are times for personal prayer and prayer with the community.
- There are four basic types of Christian prayer: petition, praise, thanksgiving and sorrow.
  - Prayer of petition; asks something of God; it centres on human needs.
  - Prayer of praise; gives glory to God for God's own sake and acknowledges all that God has created.
  - Prayer of thanksgiving; expresses gratitude, humility, and awareness of God's greatness.
  - Prayer of sorrow; focuses on human failures and expresses contrition, but also focuses on God's ever-present offer of mercy and forgiveness to the sinful human community. (Ekstrom, 1995, *The New Concise Catholic Dictionary*, p. 207)
- There are times when the response to God's presence is one of song, movement, word, art, poetry or silence.

## Scripture

### **Mt 6:9-15 The Lord's Prayer**

"Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial,  
but rescue us from the evil one.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

### **Lk 11:1-4 Jesus' Teaching on Prayer**

When Jesus had finished praying, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord teach us to pray, just as John taught his followers to pray."

So Jesus told them, "Pray in this way:

'Father, help us  
To honour your name.  
Come and set up  
Your kingdom.  
Give us each day  
The food we need. Forgive our sins,  
As we forgive everyone  
Who has done wrong to us.  
And keep us  
From being tempted."

## **Major Assessment Task**

Students produce an individual prayer collection. Students should choose what they would like to put in their collection. (i.e. thanksgiving, praise, sorrow, petition or adoration) which may include prayers for themselves or others. Students may have prayers that they have written themselves or that have significant meaning to them. Students may have songs also.

## **Suggested Learning Experiences**

### **Focusing Activity:**

Create a new or different prayer space in the classroom to draw attention to the visual symbols we use to help us to pray. Include rosary beads, prayer cards, etc. to draw children's attention to the ways in which people have prayed over the church's history.

- Ask students to respond to questions and wonderings about prayer? What is prayer? How do you pray? What words do you say? Where do you pray?

- Research several traditional aspects of Judaism that relate to prayer: skull cap, Tefillin (prayer box), prayer shawl, Torah, Sabbath, synagogue, Wailing Wall, Jewish blessings, etc. (Refer Ryan, M. *Expressions Book 5* Topic 4: Jesus the Jew)
- Brainstorm examples from Jesus' life that showed how he was a Jew steeped in the Jewish Tradition. (e.g. Jesus prayed in the Temple) Investigate Jesus as a man of prayer, creating a graffiti wall of words and images from Scripture that appeal: Mk 1:35, 11:22-26; Mt 5:23-24, 6:5-15, 7:7-11, 18:29-20; Jn 11:41-42; Lk 11:1-13, 18:1-14.
- Reflect on Paul's prayers for different communities:
  - Phil 1:3-11 (thanksgiving)
  - Phil 4:4-8 (petition)
  - Eph 3:14-21 (growth)
  - Eph 3:20-21 (praise)

Using the above provided references students locate these in the bible. They read carefully the reference and then in small groups discuss what they think this prayer is saying. After this discussion students rewrite one of the prayers in contemporary language. Prayer may develop relationships with Faith. There are different purposes of prayer, thanksgiving, petition, asking (growth) and praise. Organise students into small groups and give each group a label of a prayer purpose. Students record all the words that they know that they could use when praying a particular type of prayer. These large vocabulary word banks can be displayed and added to as the learning progresses.

- Using the created word banks students begin to write their personal informal prayers for different purposes. Students begin to collate these prayers into a prayer book. This prayer book can be presented in any way they see it.
- Students bring a personal prayer journal, this journal is for students only to begin the practice of informal prayer daily. Support students to begin this practice by providing students with support prompts such as, time to wonder in creation, quotes from different scriptures or church documents, songs and images.
- Introduce students or revise the Lectio Divina. See pg 14 of Sandhurst Praying with Children.
- Look at The Lord's Prayer, Mt 6:9-15. Discuss the meaning of the prayer for us in our daily lives.
  - Illustrate each stanza in a mural.
  - In the Lord's Prayer locate the petitions for God and the petitions for ourselves.
  - Compare Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer with that of Luke 11:1-4. How do they differ?
  - Does the meaning of the prayer change?

## Prayer Ritual

Create a prayer circle with the children's illustrated stanzas of the Lord's Prayer as the central focus. Using the text Mt. 6: 9-15 pray the Lectio Divina.

Resource Link [Nolen, B. \(2008\). \*Prayer Strategies: A Teacher's Manual\*. \(2<sup>nd</sup> Edn\) N.T.: Farrar House Publishing](#)

