

YEAR LEVEL	9 & 10
TITLE	The World of Prayer
STRAND	PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT
SUGGESTED DURATION	10 weeks (25 hours)
ENDURING QUESTIONS	<p>What is prayer?</p> <p>How can I nurture my spirituality?</p>



Unit Focus

Students will focus on the concept of prayer as communication with God, expressing our relationship with God, both individually and communally. Such communication and expression assists in making meaning of life experiences. In investigating prayer, students will consider a range of formal and informal prayer forms.

Achievement Standards

By the end of Year 10:

Students recognise prayer as central to growing in faithful relationship to the living God.

Unit Outcomes

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

1. Recognise that experiences of joy, hope, grief and gratitude are springboards to different forms of prayer.
2. Recognise the ways that prayer invites a response to God by drawing on examples from Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.
3. Analyse and experience a variety of prayers in the Catholic tradition, including meditation, liturgy, reflection, litanies, Marian prayer.
4. Identify elements of prayer including ritual, symbol, sacred space, music and movement.

Key Understandings for Students

- Prayer is communication with God and expresses our relationship with God, through talking and listening to God.
- The Holy Spirit is present in prayer.
- There are many forms of prayer in the Catholic Tradition, both formal and informal.
- When people pray alone, it is personal prayer. When prayer is prayed with others it is communal.
- All liturgies, especially the Mass, are both formal and communal prayers.
- Prayer may express praise to God out of feelings of joy (e.g. at creation); it may express thanksgiving for gifts received, sorrow for sin or petition for things needed.
- Jesus taught about prayer and gave a model for prayer.

- Scripture is a rich source of prayer. Prayerful reading of Scripture leads us to discover and know ourselves more deeply and strengthens our relationship with God.
- Meditation allows us to focus on God and the mystery of God's love given to us in all of creation.
- Mary's Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55) provides a clear example of personal and public prayer. Aware of her own gifts, Mary is able to respond to God's initiative.

Student Context

While individual students differ considerably, a growing idealism and a quickness to challenge, with some emotion, any perceived shallowness or inconsistency in the adult world is a noted characteristic of the year 9 and 10 student. This characteristic leads year 9 and 10 students to question the relevance of the Church in their lives and to question their own relationship with God. At the same time year 9 and 10 students have a capacity for introspection and insight which makes the adolescent more aware of his or her own understandings and values and this inclination to introspection can be channelled to practices of contemplation and reflection.

Year 9 and 10 students have had differing experiences with prayer and liturgy and some will have been positive. The challenge for teachers is to allow the students the validity of their own experience while at the same time inviting them to experience and understand more of the richness of the Catholic tradition in prayer and liturgy. The students' attraction to novel, multi-sensory experiences, and their challenging of more traditional forms of prayer and liturgy, offers great opportunities to introduce them to creative forms of prayer and liturgy which include dance, mime, music, art, meditation, etc.

Theological Background for Teachers

- Prayer is communication with God and an awareness of the Creator's powerful and loving presence. (Ekstrom, 1995, *The New Concise Catholic Dictionary*, p.206)
- Prayer is a human response. It is about life. It is a human response to God's initiative in relationship. In prayer the person attempts to gain a greater sense of wholeness in life. (Archdiocese of Sydney, *Faithful to God: Faithful to People, Stage 6*, p.160)
- In the act of creation, God calls every being from nothingness into existence (CCC, 2566). "Prayer is lived in the first place, beginning with the realities of *creation*." (CCC, 2569)
- Prayer is God's gift implanted into human hearts, an expression of a covenant between the divine and humanity. In this covenant with every living creature, God is calling people to prayer.
- Prayerful reading of Scriptures leads the individual to discover and know thyself more deeply and to develop a relationship with God. (Archdiocese of Sydney, *Faithful to God: Faithful to People, Stage 6*, p.160)
- 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)
- "By a living transmission – Tradition – the Holy Spirit in the Church teaches the children of God to pray." (CCC, 2661). In the Catholic tradition there are many possible ways to pray, especially participation in the worship of the church community (e.g. the Eucharistic liturgy) and use of church practices such as meditation, reflection, litanies and Marian prayer.
 - The entire liturgy of the Church – its sacraments and rituals, including the Mass and the church's official prayer for each day called the Liturgy of the Hours – is formal prayer. (Zanzig & Allaire, 1996, *Understanding Catholic Christianity*, p.290)
 - The Liturgy of the Hours
 - Meditation is an inner quieting so that a person can centre within him/herself and focus attention

on something. Christian meditation focuses on God and the mystery of God's love given to us in all of creation using thought, feelings and imagination. "Be still and know that I am God." (Ps 46:10) (Zanzig & Allaire, 1996, *Understanding Catholic Christianity*, p.286)

- Reflective prayers are similar to meditation in creating a reflective space. They are different in that they typically use relaxing music quietly playing in the background and have a focus on a particular symbol, object or scripture text. Useful prayer apps include Pray as you go, Pause and Hallow.
- A litany is a Christian form of prayer centering on a series of invocations and responses (for example: 'St John: Pray for us'. 'St Joseph: Pray for us'.) During the Middle Ages, litanies were used to venerate and pray to Christian saints. Litanies are both prayer devotions and rituals in the Catholic community. They are used today in communal church worship, at the Easter Vigil liturgy, at ordinations, and by assemblies at church devotions. (Ekstrom, 1995, *The New Concise Catholic Dictionary*, pp.156-157)
- Because of Mary's cooperation with the action of the Holy Spirit, the Church loves to pray in communion with Mary, to magnify with her the great things the Lord has done and to entrust our petitions and praises to her (CCC 2682). Common prayers to Mary include the Hail Mary, the Hail Holy Queen, the Memorare and the Angelus.
- There are times when the response to God's presence is one of song or movement or word or art or poetry or silence.

Scripture

Ps 148

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
 praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his angels;
 praise him, all his host!

Praise him, sun and moon;
 praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens,
 and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
 for he commanded and they were created.
He established them for ever and ever;
 he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Praise the Lord from the earth,
 you sea monsters and all deeps,
fire and hail, snow and frost,
 stormy wind fulfilling his command!

Mountains and all hills,
 fruit trees and all cedars!
Wild animals and all cattle,
 creeping things and flying birds!

Kings of the earth and all peoples,
 princes and all rulers of the earth!
Young men and women alike,

old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the Lord!

Lk 1:46-55 *Mary's Song of Praise (The Magnificat)*

And Mary said,
'My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

Phil 1:2-11 (Paul's Prayer for his Believers)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Major Assessment Task and Rubric

(Part 1 - Definition and Symbol)

- Research what others have said about prayer – your teacher will present some information, and the Internet can also be utilised. Write your own 200 word definition of prayer.
- A famous expression of the meaning and purpose of prayer is Michael Leunig's picture of a man kneeling before a duck (cover of *A Common Prayer* (1990)) which he explains in the book's Introduction. Think about the meaning and purpose of prayer and then create your own symbol for prayer.

(Part 2 – Scripture, Prayer and the Contemporary World)

- Use a piece of Scripture from the suggested list and create a presentation that utilises images and expresses the meaning of the reading in our contemporary world.
- Give the context of the piece of Scripture (for example, the intended audience, the historical context, the setting in life, what has happened before the passage). This will require research.
- Select a song or suitable music that amplifies the meaning of the presentation. Justify your choice.

It is expected that students and teachers will co-construct an assessment rubric for this task beginning with the below. Teachers are encouraged to assess skills and knowledge from other learning areas that may be included in this task.

	Above Expected Level	Expected Level	Working Towards Expected Level
Knowledge and Understanding	Meets or exceeds the word limit. Shows analysis of more than two sources on prayer.	Meets or exceeds the word limit. Considers carefully more than two sources on prayer.	The definition meets the word limit and shows evidence of some consideration of two sources on prayer.
	The presentation is very detailed with insightfully selected images and music that communicates the meaning of the Scripture in a powerful way. The context is accurate and amplified.	The presentation contains images and music that supports the meaning of the Scripture. The context is clear	The presentation contains an image or statement that makes limited connected with the Scripture. A piece of music has been selected but there is limited explanation as to why.
	Communication: High level of expertise & fluency in the religious language of prayer. Skilful use of symbols to communicate understandings of prayer.	Communication: some experimentation with communication of the complexities of prayer. An ability to use symbols to depth understandings of prayer.	Communication: some use of the specialised language and symbols used to write about prayer.
Reasoning	Has insightfully considered the purpose of prayer for individuals and/or communities.	Has considered the purpose of prayer for individuals and/or communities .	Is beginning to consider the purpose of prayer for individuals and/or communities.

Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

Focusing Activity:

- As a class, consider why people pray? When do people pray? Where do people pray? How do people pray? Students could organise ideas into a digital sticky note program such as a Jamboard.

Outcome 1 Recognise that experiences of joy, hope, grief and gratitude are springboards to different forms of prayer,

- Use quotations from the YouCat (see **Appendix 1**) and ask students to choose one of the quotes which relates most to their own understanding of prayer. Students articulate their response in writing. Present individually or in pairs. Discuss responses in a small group and develop a class definition of prayer.
- Students read formal prayers (see **Appendix 2**) together. Teacher explains archaic or unknown words as needed. Ask individuals to select particular words, lines or phrases to which they most relate. While still keeping the meaning, students rewrite one of these traditional prayers of the Church in their own words.
Note: The YOUCAT Youth Prayer Book contains an excellent collection of traditional Catholic prayers
- Review, why do people pray? Create 4 groups (e.g. divide the whiteboard into 4) and categorise these reasons into experiences of joy, hope, grief or gratitude.
- Link these experiences to the 4 main types of prayer being petition (hope), praise (joy), thanksgiving (gratitude) and sorrow (grief). Provide the students an example of each form. Have the students research and identify other examples.
- Have the students find or create visual images that reflect the different forms of prayer. Display these.
- Ask students to reflect on their own experiences of joy, hope, grief and gratitude and write prayers in response to all four types.
- Create a book of prayers for younger children. Include the traditional prayers and a few sentences about the meaning of each. This could be taken home to younger siblings, used in junior classes (if available) or donated to the children's groups in the parish.

Outcome 2 Recognise the ways that prayer invites a response to God by drawing on examples from Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

- Students spend some time on their own outside in a space suitable for contemplation on creation. Ask students just to sit and enjoy their surroundings. Individually, students make an artistic or written response to their feelings. How do they respond to creation?
- Students contemplate images that demonstrate the majesty of the earth and creation in all its diversity. Students collate photos (students may use photos they have taken or found online) to include in a digital presentation.
- Students read and illustrate Psalm 148 ; for example insert photos they have taken themselves or other images or symbols to accompany the text on a poster or in a powerpoint or collage.
- Broadly speaking the psalms can be divided into three main types: psalms of lament; psalms of thanksgiving; and psalms of praise (hymns). Examples of these are Psalm 6 (lament); Psalm 138 (thanksgiving); Psalm 8 (hymn). Students examine these psalms and record the different emotions expressed.
- Jesus prayed at particular times and in particular ways. Students read selected scripture references below then reflect upon and record what each suggests about prayer and praying.
 - *Luke 5:15-16*
 - *Luke 6:12-13*
 - *Luke 9:28-29 The Transfiguration*
 - *Luke 11: 1-10 How to Pray*

○ *Luke 22: 39-46 Jesus Prays Before His Death*

- Study Phil 1:2-11 (Paul's Prayer for his Believers). Research the situation of St Paul at the time of writing this letter (see Introduction to the letter in the Catholic Youth Bible). What is Paul's prayer for the Philippians? What type of prayer (petition, praise, thanksgiving, sorrow) is this?

Outcome 3 Analyse and experience a variety of prayers in the Catholic tradition, including meditation, liturgy, reflection, litanies, Marian prayer.

- Teacher leads the class in meditation (Christian), a reflection, a litany or a prayer to Mary.
- Develop the regular (i.e. daily or weekly) practice of Christian meditation with your class.
- Develop a guided meditation based on a piece of Scripture, e.g. Psalm 23.
- Research the practice of the Liturgy of the Hours (the Universalis app is a useful resource). When do Lauds, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline each occur? How do these times compare to the Islamic practice of Salah? What are the elements of any of the Liturgies? How do the Liturgies support a person in their faith?
- Lead the class in reflective prayer. Consider: the prayer space, the prayer focus, reflective music, use of scripture. Have the students journal about their thoughts and experiences afterwards.
- Explore a range of reflective prayer apps e.g. Pray as you go, Pause or Hallow. Give students opportunities to engage with at least one of these.
- A litany is a list used to pray to God invoking Mary, the angels and the Christian saints, e.g. as part of the Easter Saturday Vigil Mass (see **Appendix 3**). Research one of the saints. Why are they significant enough to be included in the litany?
- As a class, read the Magnificat (Luke 1: 46-55). Divide the Scripture into sections, and ask small groups to re-write one section and explain, in today's language, what Mary is saying. Consider using the students' transcriptions in a class prayer service.
- Research the history and the use of common prayers to Mary including the Hail Mary, the Hail Holy Queen, the Memorare and the Angelus.
- Design and conduct interviews with people who are willing to speak about their prayer lives.
- Examine prayers written by a variety of people and discuss the image of God that is reflected in each of them. For example, go to Michael Leunig's website <https://www.leunig.com.au/works/prayers> and read some of his prayers. Present a response to the image of God in poster form for display.
- View video "The Man who Planted Trees" and comment on how this example reflects our call to be co-creators https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aY_zuNtf3_g

Outcome 4 Recognise elements of prayer including ritual, symbol, sacred space, music and movement.

- Explore the use of ritual, symbol, sacred space, music and movement at a significant family or community event, e.g. family Christmas celebrations; Anzac Day
- Explore the use of ritual, symbol, sacred space, music and movement used in prayer in other religions, e.g. the Jewish Seder meal, Salah or the Hajj in Islam.
- Use the categories of voice, listening, movement, music and symbol to explore ways of participating in prayer and ritual in Christian and other world religions. List examples appropriate to each category.
- Students create and decorate a sacred space in preparation for a class liturgy. This could include the preparation of a prayer focus within the classroom.
- Students prepare a liturgy that involves the preparation of space and the use of symbolism, music and movement.
- Allow students to experience silence within the context of a prayer service. Debrief the experience.
- Students visit the school chapel, parish church or a sacred space and identify the symbols used there and what they may mean.

Liturgical celebrations provide opportunities for connection with the prayer life of the Church for reflection and resonance. Such celebrations should be an integral part of every unit, and should be linked to the liturgical year wherever possible.

Use Phil 1:2-11 (Paul's Prayer for his Believers)

Resources

Recommended Resources

Benedict XVI, Pope, Miller, Michael J. (2011). Youcat Youth Catechism. Ignatius Press, San Francisco.

Schromges, Dorte, Lengerke, Georg Von (2013). Youcat Youth Prayer Book. Ignatius Press, San Francisco

Whelan, Michael. (2011) A friendly guide to prayer. John Garratt Publishing, Mulgrave, Vic

Reaburn, Mary (2022) A friendly guide to the Book of Psalms. Garratt Publishing, Mulgrave, Vic

Moran, Stuart. (2013) A friendly guide to Luke's Gospel. Garratt Publishing, Mulgrave, Vic

Archdiocese of Melbourne (2003) *To Know Worship and Love*. 2nd ed. Year 9 James Goold House Publications.

Nolen, Beth. (1999). *Prayer Strategies: A Teacher's Manual*. East Melbourne: Harper Collins.

Leunig, Michael. (1990) A common prayer. Collins Dove, Burwood, Vic

Leunig, Michael. (1991) The prayer tree. Collins Dove, North Blackburn, Vic

Universalis app

The Seder (Passover) Meal

https://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/1751/jewish/What-Is-a-Seder-Passover-Meal.htm

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/seder-Passover-meal>

Salat and Hajj

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/salat>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/hajj>

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/the-muslim-pilgrimage-of-hajj-explained/0hin7umq3>

Kearney, Peter. (Composer). (2000). The Magnificat [Compact disc]. In *As One Voice* (Vol. 1, Disc. 5, No. 7).

Brookvale, N.S.W.: Willow Connection.

Landry, Carey. (Composer). (1995). Hail Mary, Gentle Woman [Music]. In *Gather Australia*. Ashburton, Vic.:

NLMC Publications & GIA Publications.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Prayer Quotes

Appendix 2. List of Formal Prayers

Appendix 3. Litany of the Saints