



PRAYER

Land, Fire, Water & Wind Ceremony

Jesus
calls you with
JOY
come see respond

Catholic Education Sandhurst

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Acknowledgement of Country

Reader 1:

Our prayer today, is centred around God's creation and contains four rituals - Land, Fire, Water and Wind/Air. You will be invited to participate in these rituals. We will also reflect on God's Word and consider what God is asking of us.

Aboriginal people never approach sacred places without preparing themselves properly. Not only is the mind prepared by centering themselves and being truly present, and in the moment, they also speak to the spirits and ask for approval from the Great Creator Spirit and the ancestors before beginning the ceremony.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Let us bring forward the Bible.

(The Bible is held aloft and turned to the four winds then placed in the sacred space prepared.)

Reader 1: Let us come together as one in the presence of God

All: *To gather on this sacred land.*

Leader: Let us come together as one in the presence of God

All: *To gather in the light of Christ and the warmth of the sacred fire.*

Leader: Let us come together as one in the presence of God

All: *To gather at the sacred well of God*

Leader: Let us come together as one in the presence of God

All: *To gather and breathe the sacred air of God's creation*

Leader 1: Let us come together as one to listen to this country. The Yorta Yorta nation call this deep listening or preparation for ceremony Gulpa Ngawal.

Let us be still. Let us take time to listen to the Country.

Pause

Reader 2:

The Land

(A coolamon of earth is brought into the centre and held aloft then placed on the sacred space.)

For thousands of years before recorded time Aboriginal people have walked on this land, on their own country.

Their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives.

Our country is their mother: in a sense our country is them.

God chose Aboriginal people to take care of this land for generations. God gave them the laws to sustain and nurture all that had been created.

Scripture presents land in a spiritual perspective.

In the Old Testament land was the fulfillment of God's promises to the Jewish people. In the New Testament, Christian people are called to have a deep sense of care for land and all creation. We look forward to the culmination of all creation and life in the Promised Land.

Reader 2:

Land ritual

During this ritual, you are invited to feel the earth, allow your fingers to push deep into the earth, and as you do this imagine a wonder that the earth represents for you, that you want to celebrate. This celebration might be solar – an outer, physical accomplishment or it might be lunar – an inner, reflective revelation.

(Two coolamons filled with earth are passed around the circle)

Pause

Reader 1:

(The fire bowl is lit.)

FIRE is important to Aboriginal people: they could not live without it.

Fire means:

- the calling of people together
- the gathering in a circle around the fire for cooking and eating and for warmth at night;
- the gathering for ceremonies;
- the gathering for story telling;
- the place for being together –

Fire is at the heart of Aboriginal culture.

As caretakers of the land Aboriginal people used fire as a way of rejuvenating the country, of bringing new life for the animals and the inheritance of a rich fertile land for future generations.

For Christians fire represents the light of Christ.

The Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles at Pentecost as tongues of fire.

We think of the flame of faith burning in people's lives.

We think of the ashes of repentance.

Let us sense the warmth of the fire as a call to each and all of us in our Church and in our country to come together warmly, sharing our different stories and being together as one.

We invite you to feel the warmth of our fire.

Fire Ritual

In this fire ritual, you will be invited to release any **mental and emotional issues** you no longer want to hold on to, and to pray for new things to come into your life.

(Paper and pens to be given out)

Pause

I invite you now to write on the paper what it is you want to let go of. After you have written, fold the paper twice, bring it forward and drop it into the bowl. Return to your place in the circle and pray for the new thing you want in your life.

Reader 2:

Water is also important to Aboriginal people.

In our dry country, water

- is life-giving,
- refreshing,
- cooling
- and cleansing

to our country and to us.

Aboriginal people have danced and sung the creation story of all the river ways to proclaim the sacredness of the gift of water for thousands of years.

Water is the symbol of baptism, which gives us new life and hope and makes us one with Jesus and with each other. The Creator God gives us water without which there is no life. *(Give cups & water)*

Water Ritual

You will be offered a glass of water. Should you accept the offer

you are invited to hold the glass of water for a moment, *don't drink it but contemplate it; reflect on what the waters of God's healing might mean in your life. Reflect also on the ancient stories of this land.*

Pause

If you accepted the offer of water, drink it gratefully, feel the sense of God's life-giving gift of water, and make a commitment to work for a better future for all in Australia and the world.

Reader 1:

Wind/Air

Our experiences of wind, like fire, is varied. On the tropical coast, we experience the fierceness of cyclones that are unpredictable and can come without warning. Our experience of the Holy Spirit can be like this. Also on the coast, sailors and windsurfers work with the wind to make their way through the water and we

can experience the Spirit this way too. Off-shore breezes can bring welcome relief to our hot, summer days and the Spirit can do this in our lives too.

The winds of the inland can create dust storms where we can't see ahead or behind, and the dust and dryness parches our throats and cracks the land. And yet, it is the wind that can bring the procession of clouds that are a sign of hope for rain and better days ahead.

All of this can speak to us of the Spirit in our lives.

Ritual:Wind/Air

I invite you now to breathe in slowly and deeply as you whisper or think: "**Spirit of God...**"

Hold your breath and your consciousness of God's presence...

And then exhale as you whisper or think: "**...I shall not want.**"

Pause

Reader 1: Let us listen to the readings

FIRST READING

Reader:

In the address given by Pope John Paul II to the Aboriginal people of Australia in Alice Springs in 1986 he said...

"At the beginning of time, as God's Spirit moved over the waters, he began to communicate something of his goodness and beauty to all creation. When God created man and woman, he gave them the good things of the earth for their use and benefit; and he put into their hearts abilities and powers, which were his gifts. And to all human beings throughout the ages God has given a desire for himself, a desire which different cultures have tried to express in their own ways.

As the human family spread over the face of the earth, your people settled and lived in this big country that stood apart from all the others. Other people did not even know this land was here; they only knew that somewhere in the southern oceans of the world there was "The Great South Land of the Holy Spirit".

But for thousands of years you have lived in this land and fashioned a culture that endures to this day. And during all this time, the Spirit of God has been with you. Your "Dreaming", which influences your lives so strongly that, no matter what happens, you remain for ever people of your culture, it is your way of touching the mystery of God's Spirit in you and in creation. You must keep your striving for God and hold on to it in your lives."

Reader: A Reading from the Book of Job

Job 12:7-10

⁷ "But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you;

⁸ or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you.

⁹ Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this?

10 In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

The Word of the Lord

All: *Thanks be to God*

Reader 1: Let us reflect ...

Personal Reflection:

- What deep wisdom does creation offer me?

Pause

- How do I show deep respect for God's creation?

Pause

- What is the voice of creation telling me today?

Pause

The Spirit of Place, sung by Archie Roach will be played as we reflect.

Spirit of Place

Sung by Archie Roach

Here I stand - here in this great big country - like the first man - only me

Here in the whole of creation - I'm happy there's a home for me.

I will walk here over the hills and the valleys to the forests and the streams to the desert

Here and down by the ocean following my dream 'cos I am free.

Now I give praise to the Creator for it all, all that's been given to me. And I promise to take care of it all for others to see. There's food and water yeah and there's shelter to hide me

From the raging storms and this land. Yeah it grows inside me, keeping me warm and safe. I will sit - oh yeah sit down by the river and watch the fish swim by and mother earth.

It will protect and keep me, keep me from all harm my spirit of place.

I give praise to the Creator for it all - all that's been given to me, and I promise to take care of it all for others to see.

Song Acknowledgement: Spirit of Place

Artist: Archie Roach / Album: Journey / Released: 2007

Genre: Australian Indigenous singer

Reader 1: Let us place our right hand on the shoulder of the person beside us as we pray this blessing together.

Final Blessing

All: Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the warmth of the fire to you
Deep peace of the running water to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace, of the Son of God to you.
Amen

