

A photograph of two children, a girl and a boy, in school uniforms. The girl is in the foreground, holding a lit candle in a glass holder. The boy is behind her, holding an open book. They are both looking down at the book. The background is a solid blue color.

PRAYING as ONE

**A Prayer Guide
for Catholic Educators Today**
Catholic Education Sandhurst



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Cover Photo: Students from St Francis of the Fields Primary School Strathfieldsaye

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Praying as One



Christ is at the centre of the Catholic Education enterprise. We grow in our relationship with him and in our discipleship of him through prayer (both individual and private forms, as well as communal and liturgical forms) and through service in the community. Our aim in all we do in Catholic Education is to make Christ known and loved. We meet him in the Catholic school community.

As prayer is an essential part of our relationship with Christ, resources can assist each of us in developing that prayer life. Such resources are presented here for students and teachers in our school communities, particularly for school-based prayer, on a daily basis. We have here traditional Catholic prayers, the Psalms, school liturgies, as well as other forms of prayer.

Suggestions are made in this booklet about the construction and lay-out of sacred space in a school classroom; explanations are given about the Church's liturgical year; the importance of silence in prayer, creating space in our busy lives, is emphasised.

I warmly commend this prayer guide for Catholic educators as a practical and inspiring resource for teachers and students. I thank those responsible for putting this material together. May prayer continue to be at the heart of all we do in our schools.

Very Rev Dr Brian Boyle EV
Episcopal Vicar for Education
Diocese of Sandhurst

Introduction

God reveals Godself to the whole of creation as grace and boundless love. This transcendental reality is offered to all. Individuals are called to respond to this spiritual gift which can lead to encounter, transformation of oneself and the world in which we live. God's offer is experienced in and through our human experience. God is at the heart of what it means to be human. It is within this lived context that individuals can seek meaning and come to a new awareness of their own identity.

For Christians, Jesus is central to our experience of God. As the ultimate source of God's revelation, Jesus calls us to be in a personal relationship with him. The practice of prayer enables individuals and communities to come to know Jesus, deepen their love for him and allow Jesus to become the window through which they live their lives as 21st century disciples.

Current culture provides significant challenges for our emerging Catholic identity in schools today. Within this context, Catholic educators are called to respond from a foundation of faith. Central to this foundation is the practice of prayer. As educators, we are responsible for creating relevant, meaningful and reverent prayer experiences for the whole school community. Throughout history, prayer has formed the cornerstone of our faith.

Prayer is an experience through which we encounter God as individuals and community. In the Gospels, we read about the importance of prayer in Jesus' life. His experience of prayer speaks resoundingly of: his desire to be in relationship with God, his love for justice, compassion and for all of creation.

Prayer can take place in various settings and it can be expressed in various forms. Prayer involves silence (apophatic), word (kata phatic), movement and song. It is an expectation that we pray each day in our Sandhurst Catholic schools. This ensures that we offer our students opportunities to celebrate their faith, contemplate life, grow in relationship/discipleship with Christ and deepen their awareness of God's loving presence. Prayer is always invitational. Prayer is our response to God's love that is found at the heart of our Creator's cosmic reality.

Sacred Space and the Liturgical Year

A Sacred Space is any interior or exterior area of a Catholic School that represents the symbolic essence of our Catholic identity. It is a visual reflection of the Christian story. Sacred Space is deeply connected to the liturgical year through the use of symbols and colour. The liturgical year is made up of a cycle of seasons that signify various moments in the life of the Catholic faith. In a symbolic manner, Sacred Space makes a significant statement about our commitment to Christ and God's ongoing love for us and our world.

Some Points for Consideration

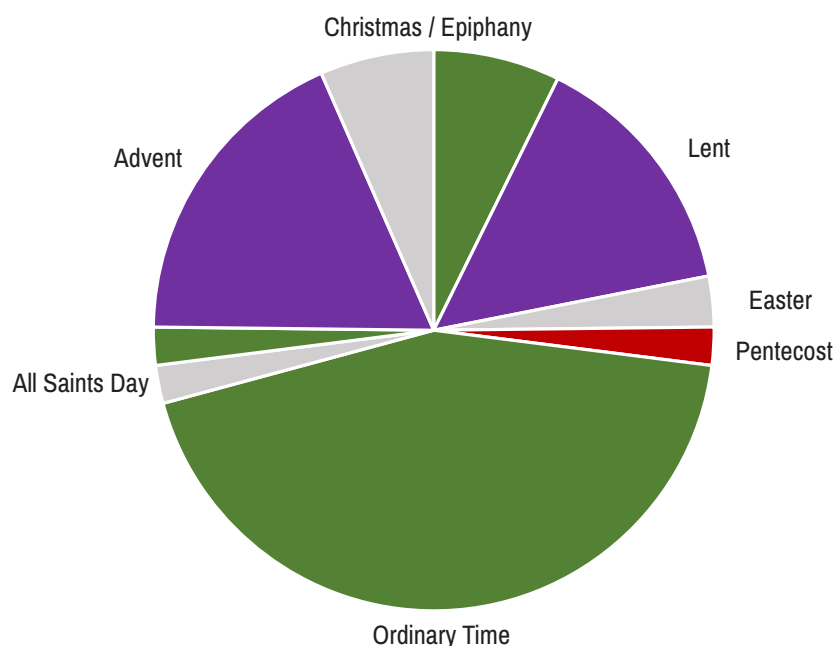
Sacred Space

- Reflects the changing cycle of the liturgical year
- Reflects beauty, simplicity and honours the Sacred
- Is meaningful and relevant to the 21st century
- Contains elements of recontextualisation
- Is kept free from clutter and redundant items such as old candles and out of date Caritas boxes
- Takes pride of place in our foyers, learning spaces and school grounds
- Becomes an interactive space that students and staff connect with every day
- Contains Catholic imagery that is contemporary and student friendly
- Contains Catholic imagery and symbolism to which students can relate. This includes symbols related to learning in Religious Education.
- Reflects the founding religious order and charism of the school
- Contains explicit Indigenous religious symbolism (Message Stick, fire carrier flame, Indigenous cross)

Essential Symbols for Sacred Space

- Correct liturgical cloth (see appendix)
- Open Bible (age appropriate)
- Candle (to be lit for prayer every day)
- Hand held cross
- Other symbols to match the season of the liturgical year

Liturgical Season	Liturgical Colour	Liturgical Symbol
Advent (4 weeks)	Purple (pink - <i>Gaudate Sunday</i>)	Advent Wreath with 4 candles (3 purple and 1 pink) Light (candles) Nativity scene with an empty crib
Christmas	White	The star The wisemen The shepherds
Ordinary Time (ordinance - counted weeks)	Green	
Lent (40 days beginning with Ash Wednesday)	Purple	Ashes Rocks Linen Cloth
Easter (6 weeks)	White or Gold	'Alleluia' Light - <i>Paschal Candle and the Easter Fire</i>
Ordinary Time (ordinance - counted weeks)	Green	



*One example of the Catholic liturgical year.
The exact dates of some special days change each year.*

Protocols for using the Message Stick

Before You Begin

When your Liturgy Planning group meets for the first time it is important for the group to take a moment to reflect on the great privilege of being entrusted with this sacred symbol of the Aboriginal people, the Message Stick, before embarking on the practicalities of liturgy planning.

As the Message Stick is a sacred symbol of the Aboriginal people, it must be treated with reverence and respect. Developing rituals and actions that are in harmony with the meaning of the Message Stick is vital as the Message Stick itself is a powerful symbol of reconciliation (beyond the Sacramental use of the word), forgiveness, love, hope and peace and is only used when the Proclamation of The Word is made.

Ceremonial Lore

The Message Stick is **only** to be used when associated with the Gospel, carried in an upright position during the opening and closing processions and at the Reading of the Word at Mass or in prayer.

Appropriate Situations for use of Message Stick

- The reading of the Word at Mass and when praying
- Acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which you are standing
- Major Feasts of the Church Year and Community
- Special celebrations:
 - The Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist
 - Inauguration and Induction ceremonies
 - Social Justice occasions
 - Ecumenical celebrations are especially appropriate as they embrace our unity in Christ
 - School Assemblies

Examples of Recontextualising Sacred Space



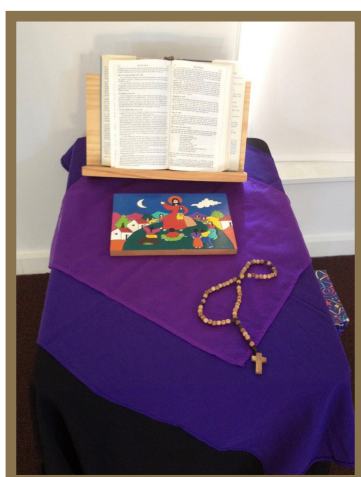
St Joseph's Primary
Nagambie



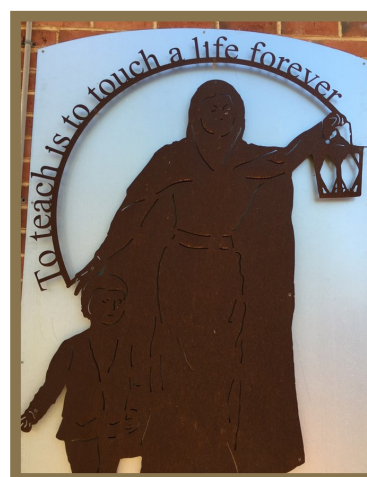
St Joseph's Primary
Kerang



St Monica's Primary
Kangaroo Flat



Sacred Heart Primary
Tatura



St Mary's Primary
Inglewood



St Joseph's Primary
Quarry Hill

Leading Staff Prayer

The following structure is a suggested process to lead staff prayer. It includes some essential elements of prayer in the Catholic tradition. The parts in italics reflect the correct wording that accompanies each section.

Some Points for Consideration:

- Begin all staff prayer with an Acknowledgement of Country.
- Set the Sacred Space with a cloth that reflects the current season of the liturgical year, a lit candle and an open Bible. Additional symbols may be added depending on the focus of the prayer experience.

Sign of the cross: *In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen*

Centering: *Let's take a moment to still ourselves for prayer (pause)*
Becoming aware of our bodies, minds and hearts (pause)
Breathing in God's loving presence (pause)
Breathing out all that takes us away from God (pause)
Savouring the gifts God gives us today (pause)

Scripture Reading: *(to be accompanied by the Message Stick)*

It is highly recommended to read from the actual Bible. Scripture is the foundation of our Catholic tradition. We use the readings of the day or the Sunday readings as they reflect the liturgical year. Check these first to see if they are appropriate and if not, choose another reading that suits. These can be found in the *Ordo*.

The *Ordo* is a reference book that follows the General Roman Calendar found in the *Roman Missal* or *Universalis* (<http://universalis.com/>). An *Ordo* is essentially a guide for clergy to aid in preparation of the liturgy. It contains a calendar of the Liturgical year (Advent to the final day before the next Advent) and contains directions concerning the Office and Mass to be said for each day. It includes some indication of fast days, special feasts, special devotions, and devotions and feasts of particular importance to certain dioceses.

Gospel Reading:

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John:

(insert reading)

The Gospel of the Lord
(response by the reader after the reading)

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ
(response by all after the reading)

Reflection Time:

Let us take a few moments to quietly ponder the Word we have just heard.

You may like to add a question or a wondering for people to sit with individually or share in pairs after the reading has been read - eg:

- What strikes you or stays with you from this reading today?
- How are you challenged by this reading today?
- What can we learn from Jesus' encounter with others in this reading?
- How does this reading challenge our current global reality?
- I wonder how you are called to live this Gospel message today.

You can ask more specific questions based on the theme of the reading or on the current theme of the liturgical season.

Reflection time may be accompanied by quiet music or use of a singing bowl.

Prayers of the Faithful:

We will now take a moment to pray for those in need.

(If it is a significant time of the liturgical year you could include some prayers of the faithful around this time such as Advent, Lent or Easter.)

Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Leading Student Prayer ---

Some Points for Consideration:

- Encourage students to be reverent (*respecting the sacred moment*). Learning to be still is a skill that is developed over time.
- Begin all student prayer experiences with Acknowledgement of Country
- Ensure that you still students' heart, minds and bodies to begin a prayer experience
- Pray every day with the students
- Provide a Catholic Sacred Space that is central to the prayer experience (*liturgical cloth, candle, cross, open Bible and other relevant symbols*)
- Encourage students to 'dress' the Sacred Space for prayer
- Ensure that the candle is lit during every prayer experience
- Provide a variety of prayer experiences (*praise and petition, silence and spoken prayers*)
- Provide various stimuli for prayer including life experience, scripture, creation, relationships and world events
- Establish a familiar expectation and pattern of prayer that becomes a normal part of school life
- Ensure that Scripture is central to prayer. Scripture readings of the day are set out in the Liturgical Year of the Church. It is appropriate to use the readings of the day, in particular, during Lent, Easter and Advent. These can be found in ***The Ordo*** or ***Universalis*** (an app)
- Include formal prayers of the Catholic church (*Our Father, The Hail Mary and The Glory Be*)
- Use inclusive language during prayer (*do not always refer to God as he/him*)
- Begin and conclude prayer with the Sign of the Cross

Creating a Prayer Circle ---

The following experiences can take place in a prayer circle:

Centering to begin prayer: *Let's take a moment to still ourselves for prayer (pause),
Becoming aware of our bodies, minds and hearts (pause),
Breathing in God's loving presence (pause),
Breathing out all that takes us away from God (pause),
Savouring the gift that God gives us today (pause)
Let us give thanks (pause)*

Morning Prayer:

- Set the Sacred Space
- Begin with the Sign of the Cross
- Call the students to prayer by using the centering text (provided above)
- Read a Scripture text after its theme or story is briefly introduced
- Allow the students reflection time to sit with the Scripture reading
- Provide them with an open ended question or wondering at this point. You may unpack this text briefly by using the following cues:

In this reading.... (outline the actual story briefly)

The message we hear from this reading today is.....

(relate the story via its main theme to students' lives today - **this is very important**)

- Invite students to pray for special intentions
- Include a hymn or a formal prayer such as the Our Father or the Hail Mary.
- Complete morning prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

Sharing The Symbol

Once students are gathered in a circle a symbol can be passed around for prayer. This symbol could be from your current unit of work in Religious Education or a relevant Scripture passage (boat, seeds, water, sand, soil, small plant, coins, bread, wine or a cloth). Invite students to slowly pass the symbol in silence, hold it with reverence and ponder a word that comes to mind for them and share.

Sharing Symbols from our Catholic Tradition:

Once students are gathered in a circle a Catholic symbol can be passed around. This may include: a crucifix, a cross, the Bible, a current liturgical cloth or oil. The following mantras could be spoken by each student as the symbol is passed around the circle. As an introduction to the prayer, the teacher shares a short reflection on the symbol being shared.

Crucifix: *This crucifix is a very important symbol of our Catholic tradition. Many years ago Jesus died on the cross. After his death he was buried and rose from the dead. Jesus gave his life for us today. Jesus never stopped loving others. The cross represents his life, death and resurrection.*

Mantra: *‘I journey with Jesus’*

Bible: *This Bible is the official collection of Sacred books for our Catholic faith. The Old Testament tells the story of the Israelites and their covenant relationship with God. The New Testament tells Jesus’ story and the story of the early church. Jesus’ story is found in the four Gospels. The story of the early church is found in St Paul’s Letters.*

Mantra: *‘Sacred story, nourish me’*

Liturgical cloth: *The Liturgical Year is made up of the Seasons of the Church. It consists of a specific colour for Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent and Easter. Each colour carries a significant meaning for our Catholic faith.*

Mantra: *‘Colourful cloth, Colour of God, Colour my life’*

Oil: *Oil is an important symbol of the Catholic tradition. It symbolizes blessing, renewal and being healed. In ancient times, kings were anointed with oil to ensure they led their people with care and kindness. Today it plays a special role in the sacramental life of the Catholic faith.*

Mantra: *‘Blessed oil, rich and special’*

Whole Class Prayer:

One student leads this whole class prayer and the rest of the students follow. Here are some simple examples that could be accompanied with hand gestures. Each line could be repeated 3 times with a pause in between. Try reading one at a time to provide variety.

<i>Increase our love for you God</i>	<i>Increase our love for you God</i>
<i>Jesus, we journey with you</i>	<i>Jesus, we journey with you</i>
<i>Jesus, fill us with your love</i>	<i>Jesus, fill us with your love</i>
<i>Holy Spirit, guide us always</i>	<i>Holy Spirit, guide us always</i>
<i>Mary, you are our guide</i>	<i>Mary, you are our guide</i>
<i>Open our hearts to life today</i>	<i>Open our hearts to life today</i>
<i>We give thanks We give thanks</i>	<i>We give thanks We give thanks</i>
<i>Fill me with joy</i>	<i>Fill me with joy</i>
<i>Open my eyes to the other</i>	<i>Open my eyes to the other</i>

An alternative strategy may be to emphasise a different word each time:

Reader 1: **Increase** our love for you oh God
Reader 2: Increase our **love** for you oh God
Reader 3: Increase our love for **you** oh God
Reader 4: **Increase our love for you oh God**

Praying With Scripture

Wondering with Scripture:

- Lead students into a Sacred Space where they can wonder and think critically in response to Scripture. This way of being is central to 21st century learning (see The Victorian Curriculum/Critical Thinking).
- Read a chosen scripture text and allow a few wonderings to come to mind for students
- Students write a wondering and share it with others.
- Allow significant silence in between each wondering that is shared. Allow each wondering to enter the heart of students.
- Invite students to enter a reflective dialogue around a key wondering

Here are some examples of wonderings that arise from various Scripture passages. You will notice that the first wondering is about the text and the second wondering is about students' lives. The spiritual movement between these two domains of faith is essential for prayer to be relevant and meaningful for students today.

I wonder why Jesus asked the disciples to follow him.

I wonder who you look up to and follow today.

I wonder how Mary felt as she stood at the foot of the cross.

I wonder if you have ever experienced loss and inner pain.

I wonder if the disciples could have reacted any other way on the boat with Jesus.

I wonder where you are called to trust at the moment.

I wonder why the Good Samaritan was called good.

I wonder what aspect of this story reminds you of your own life.

I wonder what Zaccheus saw from the tree.

I wonder if you have been challenged to reach out to another like Jesus did that day.

I wonder what the Kingdom of God looks like and feels like.

I wonder when you have experienced God's presence this week.

I wonder how the blind man was changed by his encounter with Jesus

I wonder what new insights you need at the moment.

I wonder why Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane.

I wonder why prayer is important in your life.

Visual Imagination:

1. Centre the students (as above).
2. Invite students to imagine a scripture story that you are about to read.
3. Slowly read the story to the students. Allow a pause at the end of the story.
4. Invite students to express their experience through art or other mediums.
Provide quiet music as this is taking place.
5. Invite students to share their experience in dialogue with others.

One Line Mantras from Scripture:

Take a line from a scripture text and repeat it a few times slowly, inviting the students to sit with it and allow it to enter their heart, mind and body.

<i>'Who do you say that I am?'</i>	repeat x 3
<i>'Do not be afraid'</i>	repeat x 3
<i>'Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem.'</i>	repeat x 3
<i>'I am the Good Shepherd.'</i>	repeat x 3
<i>'I have come so that you may have life and have it to the full.'</i>	repeat x 3
<i>'Prepare a way for the Lord.'</i>	repeat x 3
<i>'Follow me and I will make you fishers of people.'</i>	repeat x 3
<i>'Would you bring in a lamp to put it under a tub or a bed?'</i>	repeat x 3
<i>'They crucified him and shared out his clothing.'</i>	repeat x 3

Lectio Divina – Divine Reading:

This prayer has a extensive history in our Catholic tradition. Lectio Divina means '*divine reading*' in Latin. It is a diligent reading of Scripture where the text is read slowly, repetitively and contemplatively. These are the steps of this prayer practice:

Choose a scripture text

1. *Lectio* The text is read for the first time, with the intent of reverent listening
Pause
2. *Meditatio* The text is read for a second time, with the intent of focusing on a word or a phrase from the text. This time we are going more deeply into our prayer experience.
Pause
3. *Oratio* The text is read for a third time giving us an opportunity to share a word, phrase or prayer that resonates from Scripture. Dialogue may be with the whole group or a partner
Pause

4. *Contemplatio* The text is read for a fourth time, with the intent of allowing the text and its message to rest within our heart, in that sacred space of ultimate silence.

Pause

Praying with The Psalms

The Psalms are ancient prayers and songs of praise found in the Old Testament and used by Jews and Christians alike.

They are generally attributed to King David as their author. David reigned in Israel about a thousand years before the birth of Jesus.

The Psalms describe general situations (lament, praise etc) with which an individual can easily identify in their own situation.

The most well known Psalm is Psalm 23: The Lord is My Shepherd.

There are various types of Psalms: thanksgiving, praise, lament, royal and wisdom.

The book of Psalms in the Bible is known as the Psalter. It is a songbook, intended for liturgical and private prayer, and arranged in five smaller books.

The consistent theme of all the Psalms is God's steadfast and unfailing love.

The best way of praying the Psalms is to alternate the verses between two people/groups. You will find an example of this method below. You can create a similar pattern of prayer from other Psalms.

Psalm 139

- A You have searched me, Lord and you know me.
B You know when I sit and when I rise, you perceive my thoughts from afar.
A You discern my going out and my lying down, you are familiar with all my ways.
B Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.
A You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.
B Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.
A Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?
B If I go up to the heavens, you are there if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
A If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,
 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

B If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"
A Even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

B For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
A I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made, your works are
wonderful, I know that full well.

B My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

A Your eyes saw my unformed body, all the days ordained for me were written in
your book before one of them came to be.

B How precious to me are your thoughts God! How vast is the sum of them!
A Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand when I awake, I
am still with you.

B If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
A They speak of you with evil intent, your adversaries misuse your name.

B Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord, and abhor those who are in rebellion
against you?

A I have nothing but hatred for them, I count them my enemies.

B Search me, God, and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts.
A See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

Praying with The Rosary

Praying The Rosary is a significant practice in our Catholic tradition. The Rosary, from Latin *rosarium*, means “crown of roses” or “garland of roses”. This form of prayer uses a string of prayer beads used to count the component prayers.

The prayers that compose The Rosary are arranged in sets of ten Hail Marys preceded by one Lord’s Prayer and followed by one Glory Be to the Father. During recitation of each set, known as a decade, thought is given to one of the Mysteries of the Rosary, which recall events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. Normally, five decades are recited in a session.

A standard fifteen Mysteries of The Rosary, based on the long-standing custom, was established by Pope Pius V in the 16th century, grouping the mysteries in three sets: the Joyful Mysteries, the Sorrowful Mysteries and the Glorious Mysteries. In 2002, Pope John Paul II suggested a new optional set of five, called the Luminous Mysteries, bringing the total number of mysteries to twenty.

This form of prayer can be used in various settings to serve various spiritual needs of a school community. Praying the Rosary can be particularly useful during times of grief and loss in a parish community. The format of The Rosary can be found online.

How to pray The Rosary:

<http://www.cam.org.au/Catholic-Faith/Prayers/How-do-I-Pray-The-Rosary>

The mysteries of The Rosary:

<http://www.cam.org.au/Catholic-Faith/Prayers/The-Mysteries-of-the-Rosary>

Praying The Rosary Aboriginal way:

<https://www.cam.org.au/acmv/Article/Article/13139/Dreaming-in-the-City>

The Rosary is a form of meditation. As we say the prayers we meditate on a story from scripture as described in the website above.

Christian Meditation

1. Ring the Singing Bowl or bell and call students to meditation.
2. Invite students to be conscious of their breathing and inner stillness.
Invite students to sit for a few moments in silence to be in God’s presence or to pray for someone or something in particular. Students can repeat the phrase, ‘Maranatha’ or another phrase, during meditation
3. Ring the Singing Bowl or bell to conclude the time of meditation.

Praying with The Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross form an important expression of Holy Week. They represent the final stages in Jesus' life journey. The following mantra can be recited by a leader and a group or two groups who take it in turns to read.

Jesus is condemned to death	We are with you Jesus
Jesus is forced to carry his own cross	We are with you Jesus
Jesus falls for the first time.	We are with you Jesus
Jesus meets his mother.	We are with you Jesus
Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross.	We are with you Jesus
Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.	We are with you Jesus
Jesus falls for the second time.	We are with you Jesus
Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem.	We are with you Jesus
Jesus falls for the third time.	We are with you Jesus
Jesus is stripped naked.	We are with you Jesus
Jesus is nailed to the cross.	We are with you Jesus
Jesus is taken down from the cross.	We are with you Jesus
Jesus is laid in the tomb.	We are with you Jesus
Jesus Christ rises from the dead.	We are with you Jesus

Praying with Music

Play some quiet music, inviting the students to be with God or Jesus in their own time and their own way. Invite students to let the music enter their bodies, minds and hearts. Students can give thanks or participate in some journal writing around the chosen theme of the prayer.

Play some music that reflects the theme of the current Religious Education unit, the enduring questions or scripture text. Invite the students to respond to the music by drawing what comes to mind or heart for them. Invite students to reverently dialogue with others about their prayer response.

Praying with Imagery

Place a collection of images on the learning space floor and ask students to choose one that stands out for them. Invite students to discuss their reflections in small groups or sit with their image on their own. Scaffold this experience with 2-3 leading questions of prayerful inquiry. The theme of the reflection may stem from your current Religious Education unit or scripture passage from that unit.

Praying with Art

Find an artistic image of a scripture text you are using in your current Religious Education unit. Discuss with the students, the story this image represents. Invite the students to pray with this image by sitting before it in contemplation. Slowly read out some of the following prayer prompts (age appropriate) or make up your own. Students can respond accordingly.

‘What do you notice in this image?’

‘How does it make you feel today?’

‘How do you see Jesus in this image?’

‘What parts of this image comfort you, what parts of this image confront you?’

‘How does Jesus relate to others in this image?’

‘What can we learn about Jesus from this image?’

‘What does this image teach you today?’

‘How are you transformed by this image today?’

‘Can you think of a word or a phrase that you could take from this image today?’

‘What gift is God offering you from this image today?’

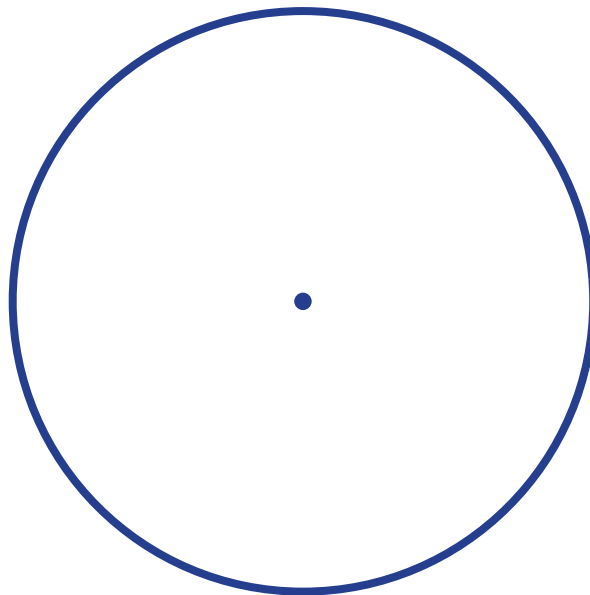
Praying with Mandalas

Mandalas are a contemplative tool that can be used as a prayer experience. Mandalas have formed a significant spiritual part of several cultures throughout history. When you look at or make a mandala, you resonate with the essence of your deepest self and the collective spirit. Mandalas help to restore a feeling of peace and calm, while imparting an innate understanding of the mystery of the universe.

Mandalas are typically circular, and are frequently associated with Celtic and Tibetan culture. Over the centuries, they have attained great symbolic value combining the properties of science, art and nature. Their powerful symbolism is found everywhere in modern life.

When using Mandalas for prayer you can invite the students to begin in the centre and work outwards. The focus of the Mandala may come from the central theme in your current unit of work and/or Scripture passage and/or the liturgical season.

Examples of Mandalas



Praying Outdoors

It is important to encourage students to pray in various settings. Going outdoors can be a great place to pray.

Invite students to lie on the grass and watch the clouds move across the sky, giving thanks to God in their heart.

Invite students to lie on the grass and listen intently for surrounding sounds, giving thanks to God in their heart.

Invite students to form pairs and participate in a nature walk, discussing where they find God in the natural world, giving thanks to God in their heart.

Invite students to find a favorite place, stop there and rest in God's presence, speaking to God in their own personal way.

Invite students to form a prayer circle outside and pray as a Catholic community. The following mantra prayer could be used in this context. Students could take it in turns.

Circle me God
Keep hope within
Despair without
Circle me God
Keep peace within
Keep turmoil out
Circle me God
Keep calm within
Keep storms out
Circle me God
Keep strength within
Keep weakness out

Praying with The Saints

The Litany of the Saints is the oldest litany we possess and is the model for all other Litanies. Its first recorded use was in 590 when Pope St. Gregory prescribed its usage for a public procession of thanksgiving. The Litany is a call to remember those who have gone before us and to ask for their intercession.

The **Litany of the Saints** (Latin: *Litaniæ Sanctorum*) is a formal prayer of the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, some Anglican Churches, and Western Rite Orthodox communities. It is a prayer to the Triune God, which also includes invocations for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Angels and all the martyrs and saints upon whom Christianity was founded, and those recognised as saints through the subsequent history of the church.

It is most prominently sung during the Easter Vigil, All Saints' Day, and in the liturgy for conferring Holy Orders.

Holy Mary,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
Holy Mother of God,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
Holy Virgin of Virgins,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Michael,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Gabriel,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Raphael,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
All you Holy Angels and Archangels,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. John the Baptist,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Joseph,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
All you Holy Patriarchs and Prophets,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Peter,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Paul,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Andrew,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. James,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. John,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Thomas,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. James,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Philip,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Bartholomew,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Matthew,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Simon,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Jude,	<i>Pray for us.</i>
St. Matthias	<i>Pray for us.</i>

(Usually the school's patron saint is included)

Formal Prayer

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen

Our Father

Our Father, Who art 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

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us

and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

Aboriginal Our Father

You are our Father, You live in heaven, we talk to you Father you are good.

You are our Father You live in heaven, we talk to you Father you are good.

We believe Your word Father, we your children give us bread today.

We believe Your word Father, we your children give us bread today.

Stop us from doing wrong Father, save us all from the evil one.

Stop us from doing wrong Father, save us all from the evil one.

Others have done wrong to us, and we are sorry for them Father today.

Others have done wrong to us, and we are sorry for them Father today.

You are our Father You live in heaven, we talk to you Father you are good.

You are our Father You live in heaven, we talk to you Father you are good.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women

and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus.

Holy Mary Mother of God,

pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

The Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Ignatian Examen

This is an ideal prayer for the end of each school day. It invites students and staff to deepen their awareness of God's loving presence in their day. The Ignatian Examen was created by Ignatius of Loyola during the 16th century. He founded The Society of Jesus (The Jesuits). He is known and loved today as St Ignatius of Loyola. It focuses on the following:

Become aware of God's presence

Review the day with gratitude

Pay attention to your emotions

Choose one feature of the day

and pray from it

Look toward tomorrow in trust

Leader: Let's take a moment now, stilling ourselves
for prayer –our bodies and hearts
Breathing in God's love
Breathing out any of our worries,
thinking back over today
How has it been for you?
Where did you experience
God's love today?
What feelings emerged for you today?
What did you give and receive today?
What do you feel grateful for
from today – spend a moment
thanking God for this gift.
Take a moment to sit before God with any challenges
or confusions from today-asking for an increase
in God's presence for tomorrow and beyond.
Knowing that God is with us
in every moment of every day.

Aboriginal Prayer

Covenant Prayer with the Land

Today, we make a covenant with this land.
As a branch is grafted onto a mature stock,
So we want to be grafted onto the ancient heritage of this land,
So that its life may flow through us.
We commit ourselves to the land we live in and to all who belong to it,
Most particularly our Indigenous people
And also the newcomers to this country,
Who have bound themselves to this land.
We will care for it with gentleness, patience, simplicity and compassion,
Rather than merely something to be bought and sold.
We will see the land as a gift for which we are truly thankful,
And undertake the privileged duty of respecting and looking after it.
We thank God, the Great Creator Spirit, for all the earth provides:
Water, food, and all the riches above and below the ground.
We undertake to use them sparingly and thoughtfully.
As we enter more deeply into the Spirit of the land,
We see the land as a Sacrament and Icon of our mothering Creator Spirit.
Be still.
Listen to the breath of the Spirit which has blown through it for ages past,
Today, and always;
For this is: The Spirit of the Dreaming.

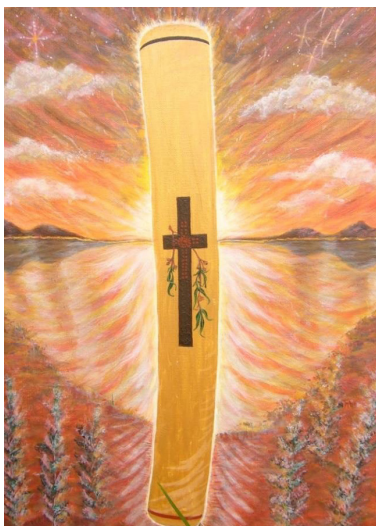
Aunty Betty Pike

The 4 Directions Prayer

We gather this day on the traditional lands of the..... clans. We respectfully acknowledge them as the traditional owners. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today. The following reflection is an expression of how Aboriginal beliefs and culture have been so welcoming and inclusive of Christian beliefs. When they meet they place themselves in country by identifying their neighbours and their boundaries. The purpose of this is to express gratitude to the Creator Spirit for their connections to country, to people and all living things. Let us place ourselves in country with our brothers and sisters. We welcome the Message Stick among us, which has been gifted to us by our sisters and brothers at

the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry. We acknowledge the privilege we have been given of using the Message Stick as a living symbol of our unity with people who are created by the Creator Spirit in unity with Christ the Redeemer. In the land there are four directions, in Aboriginal way we orient to the movement of the Sun.

- 1. Let us face the East.** The symbol of the East is the Magpie, which announces the coming of the sun at dawn. It symbolizes the Good News and is our symbol here of a new day dawning for us and for the Church. Aboriginal people get their bearings from the east rather than the north. Christ is our morning star leading us to hope. We give thanks for the gifts of the East.
- 2. Let us face the South.** The symbol of the south is the Emu. A bird that tracks the land and who searches with intense curiosity. The South represents truth from within, insights from Aboriginal culture. These truths can be discovered in the land, the stories, the teachings, the history and the ceremonies. It is in searching one's experience and culture that one discovers the tracks of God in our past and present. We give thanks for the gifts of the South.
- 3. Let us face the North.** The symbol of the North is the Kangaroo. It is a national symbol of uniqueness, strength, endurance and abundance. The North represents the wisdom of the ancient sources from the past. The land is like the scriptures in that it speaks to us through sacred stories and signs that are inscribed in the landscape. We give thanks for the gifts of the North.
- 4. Let us face the West.** The Kookaburra, the first of the birds, sings the sun to rest. It flies true and straight, sure of its purpose and its goal. The West represents hope for the future and strength and energy for the people. We give thanks for the gifts of the West.



Final Blessing:

May we always stand as tall as a tree,
Be as strong as the rock Uluru,
Be as gentle as the morning mist,
Hold the warmth of the sacred campfire within us,
And may the spirits of our ancestors
always watch over us.
Amen.

Prayer of the Aboriginal People

Father of all,
You gave us the Dreaming
You have spoken to us through our beliefs.
You then made your love clear to us in the person of Jesus.
We thank you for your care
You own us, you are our hope.
Make us strong as we face the problems of change.
We ask you to help the people of Australia
To listen to us and respect our culture.
Make the knowledge of you grow strong in all people,
So that you can be at home in us and we can make a home
For everyone in our land.
Amen.

Other Liturgies and Prayers can be found on the links below:

The Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria.

<https://www.cam.org.au/acmv/Liturgies>

NATSICC resources link

<http://www.natsicc.org.au/natsicc-resources.html>

Diocese of Lismore - Aboriginal Catholic Ministry

<http://acmlismore.org.au/pray/prayers/prayer-aboriginal-people/>

Aboriginal Spirituality - Creative Spirits website

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/what-is-aboriginal-spirituality#toc0>



St Brendan's Primary School Shepparton

*“The reality we call God has first to be discovered in the human heart;
moreover I cannot come to know God unless I know myself.”*

Meister Eckhart

Prepared by Kylie Smith, the Catholic Identity Team and
the Catholic Identity Spirituality and Faith Formation Committee
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