

Further Resources

These and plenty more resources are readily available:

<https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2012/01/play-dough-prayers.html#>

<https://www.wildchurchnetwork.com/Wild-Resources>

<https://www.anglicanyouth.org.nz/category/resources/worship/prayers>

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/prayer/creative-prayer/>

https://www.taize.fr/en_article5806.html

<https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Prayer-resources>

There are also a wide range of books on prayer, including a range of resources.

Speak to a minister, local preacher, worship leader or one of your lay workers for more ideas!

Holy Habits



Prayer Resources

Contents:

Prayer Walking p.3

Prayer Labyrinth p.5

Finger Labyrinth p.8

Prayer Stations p.10

Prayer Beads p.14

Emoji Prayers p.15

Imaginative Contemplation p.16

Reflective Silence p.18

Creative Prayer Ideas p.20

Outdoor Prayer Ideas p.22

Further Resources p.24

Ask Permission. Wait for an answer...a sense of Yes in your body. Don't overthink.

Wonder. Fully attentive, listen closely. Use all your senses. Notice little things. Smell. Listen. Observe. Enter tenderly into this new relationship.

Ask. Tell me about your despair (or whatever question arises in you...allow your curiosity to be genuine.) And then listen.

Share. Engage in a conversation. This is a new language for you, so words sometimes don't work. Journal maybe, or sketch or still meditation, listening deeply, allowing images and emotions to arise. Tell this "more-than-human-other" what you know of your own despair and disconnection. What barriers block you from fully connecting with your own calling, with resurrected life, with "your place in the family of things." Write a poem perhaps, sing a song.- What insight comes up from this encounter that speaks to your own despair and invites you into a larger story?

Gratitude. A song, a poem, a bowing in reverence. Some acknowledgement of honor and gratitude. Your full attention is a gift of gratitude. You may be the only human who paid full attention to that lizard. Like a dog or a child who brightens up with your full attention, so it is true with all living beings. -

Return: Cross over the threshold again and offer gratitude. A gift perhaps? Ask if you can bring back a symbol of your connection to build an ephemeral altar with your Clan. Share your experience.

Outdoor Prayers

There are many ways to use the outdoors to pray. These include:

1. Outdoor prayer stations that focus on creation
2. A prayer walk
3. Prayer Labyrinths
4. Using all your senses to pray—sight, sound, smell, taste and touch
5. Setting up a prayer garden
6. Planting seeds/plants and asking God to help plant something new in you/your church
7. Weeding and asking God to remove the things that get in the way of your relationships
8. Terra Divina

Terra Divina: Wild Contemplation

Separate: Cross a threshold of your own choosing to enter into a different kind of seeing. Stop and intentionally step over a stick or a bridge into a more enchanted alive relationship with the creation, with God, with your soul.

Wander. Allow yourself to be drawn to something (the river, the sun, shadows, the breeze?) or someone (a jay, a hawk, a bug, a tree?) that seems to be calling you. Don't question or second guess. Just respond by opening your imagination and offering your full presence. Release agenda and expectations.

Prayer Walking

Made easy

In order to prayer walk all you really need is to walk and pray. It's that simple. Walk and pray for the things you notice. You might find yourself praying for:

- Schools:
- Residential homes, doctor's surgeries, dentists
- Shops and businesses
- Transport: buses, taxi ranks, train stations, trams
- Workers you might see: delivery drivers, refuse collectors, police, road repair crews, heating engineers, postal delivery workers, etc.
- People you know whose homes you pass on your walk.

There are some helpful hints and tips overleaf but if you want to just give it a try then why not write a list of the things that cause you to pray below.

Record your prompts to pray here:

Barnsley  Methodist Circuit

Before you start. Think about your route and at what time you might go. You will encounter different things at different times. It's good to pray: to ask God to help you see what He wants you to see and to be attentive to the Holy Spirit. Read an encouraging Scripture, e.g. Luke 10:1-2 or Genesis 13:14-18, Acts 16:13-15 too to give you a sense of expectation as you go out.

On the walk. Take your time, don't rush. I know this can sound a bit odd but try to really 'inhabit the moment', observe your surroundings, take notice of people — and, at the same time, try to be conscious of God's presence, as you pray. This is not activity to rush through like a commuter but to pray through like a pilgrim, a person on a journey of discovery.

When you finish. Try not to rush straight into the next task at home. Give yourself 5 minutes. Reflect on your prayer walk. Have you come back with any impressions? Any people or places that stick in your mind? Record your thoughts below:

Post Walk reflections:



Play Dough Prayers

Make the dough into something you want to thank God for today

Pray saying thank you. Thank God for whatever you want to say thank you for today.

Make the play dough into a ball.

Pray for the World. Thank God for creation. Pray for places where there is war and famine. Pray for people who care for the world.

Make the play dough into a cross

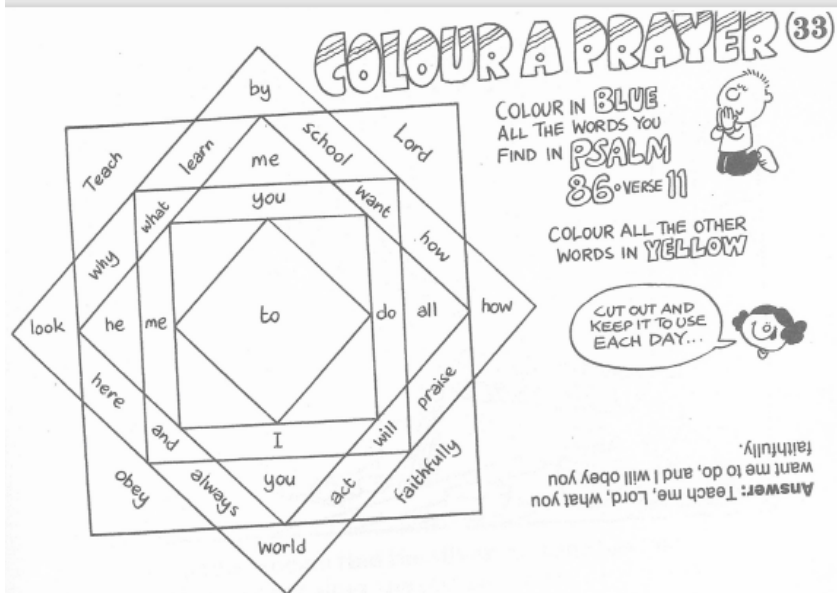
Pray for the church. Pray for Christians who are persecuted. Pray for people who lead the church. Pray for your own church. Pray that people who don't know who Jesus is will come to know Him.

Make the Play dough into a heart.

Pray for people. Pray for families and friends. Pray for people who are ill and lonely. Pray that God will help you to bless people.

Make the play dough into your name's initial letter

Pray for yourself. Ask God to bless you and to help you with the hard things. Thank God for the good things he has given you.



Prayer Labyrinths

Labyrinths developed in churches during the Middle Ages when Christians were encouraged to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but the crusades made it too dangerous, so the church began to lay its own walking paths on the floors of cathedrals for pilgrims to walk in safety.

Walking a labyrinth is an act of prayer that can often result in transformation. For many of us, the ability to quiet the mind has eluded us. Our lives are too busy for us to sit quietly. This is why the labyrinth has begun to attract people's attention. It has only one path, so there are not ricks to it and no dead ends. The path winds throughout and becomes a mirror for where we are in our lives; it touches our sorrows and releases our joys.

To enter a labyrinth is to walk with purpose and intentionality. It is slowing down: an experience of being in the moment, in the act of opening up one's heart and mind by surrendering to the journey, and it is often this letting go that brings transformational peace.

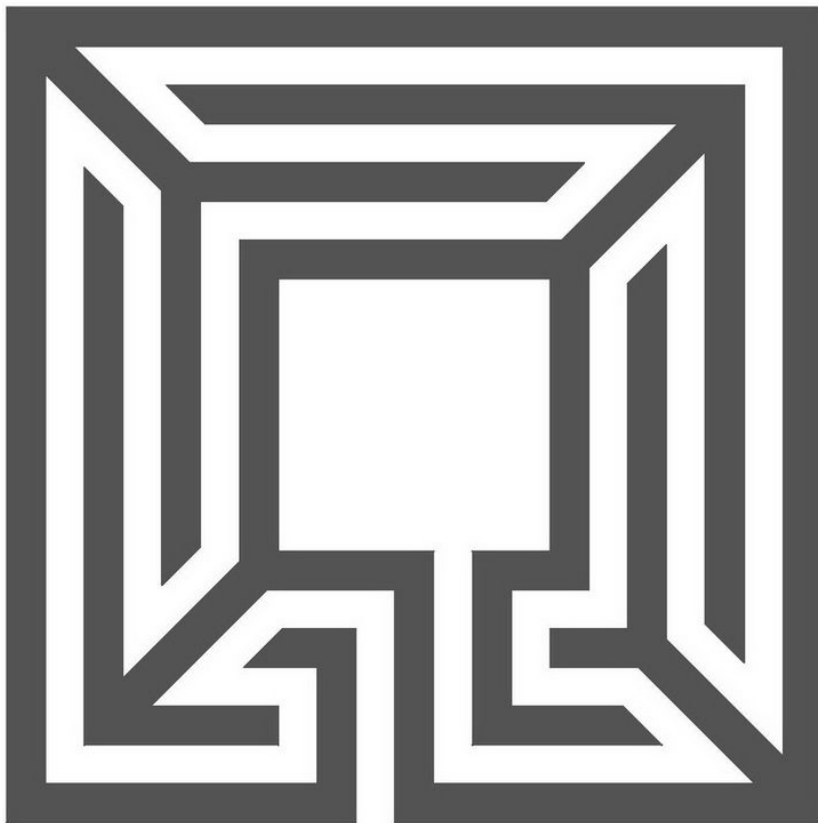


There are Three stages to walking a labyrinth:

Releasing (walking in) – Let go of the current thoughts on your mind: worries, anxieties, to-do list... This is an act of shedding thoughts and emotions. It quiets and empties the mind.

Receiving (Centre) – Be still. Sit or stand and stay there for as long as you wish. It is a place of Prayer – a place of listening and waiting.

Returning (walking out) – As you walk back out, reflect on any insights. How do they speak to your present situation? Walk back out, joining God at work in the world.



3. Light a candle and focus on it, or use some other object, such as a Bible, a cross, flowers—something that you can look at or hold to help keep your mind on God.
4. Sit in a quiet place outside and focus on the sounds, sights and smells to help you focus
5. Focus on a rosary or other home made prayer beads to hold your attention to what you want to pray for
6. Listen to quiet, reflective music, or a Taize chant, that can help keep you focused on God
7. Use your hands:



Reflective Silence

Many people find silence or a reflective space very helpful when they pray. Yet sometimes quieting our minds can be a real challenge. Here are some suggestions to help if you prefer your prayers to be reflective or silent:

1. Use a short “breath prayer.” This is a way of praying that is used by many Christians to quiet minds and help to hear God’s still, small voice. Examples include the Jesus Prayer : “*Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.*” Pray “*Lord Jesus Christ*” as you breathe in, and “*Have mercy on me*” as you breathe out.
Another breath prayer is from Psalm 23: “*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.*” And in times of distress from Psalm 46: “*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*”
2. Centering Prayer. It is a very simple practice. Here are the guidelines for Centering Prayer:
 - Choose a sacred word (or phrase) that symbolises your desire to spend this time of silence with God.
 - Sit comfortably, with our eyes closed, and silently invite God to be with you during this time. Then begin to silently repeat our sacred word or phrase.
 - When your thoughts begin to drift, gently return to your word or phrase.
 - At the end of the prayer period, silently pray the Lord’s Prayer or some other prayer.

A Labyrinth Reflection

As you enter the labyrinth:

Reflect on the words of Jesus from Matthew 11: 28 – 30

²⁸ ‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke up-on you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

As you trace the labyrinth inwards, imagine you are carrying a rock. What burdens do you want God to lift from your shoulders? Share your worries, anxieties, and stresses with Jesus who walks with you.

In the centre of the labyrinth:

Lay your imaginary rock down, feel the release in your arms, shoulders and back. God has received your burdens and taken them from you. Rest and enjoy the presence of God. Eat the chocolate and read these words from Psalm 34: 8

*“O taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.”*

As you leave the labyrinth:

Leave your imaginary rock behind, God has your burdens now. Has your time in the centre, enjoying God’s presence triggered any loving thoughts, words or actions within you?

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’

– Galatians 5: 13 - 14

Praying with a Finger Labyrinth



- ♦ Sit comfortably, be still and gently pray: *I place myself in your presence O Lord, my God.*
- ♦ When you are ready... slowly trace the labyrinth path with a finger, use a finger on the hand that you do not write with, just let your thoughts come to the surface and let them flow... Jesus is with you every step of the way, you are never alone. You are always loved by God.
- ♦ When you reach the centre...consider your thoughts...
- ♦ ...stay in the centre for a while and spend some time in prayer and reflection receiving God's love and blessing.
- ♦ When you are ready... return along the same path... return gratefully, prayerfully ... you might like to sing or say aloud a line from the psalms or a favourite hymn.
- ♦ As you exit the labyrinth give thanks and praise to God: *Glory 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.*

It's a long night, and near dawn you see something out on the water. It's coming toward you. This is strange and up setting. As it draws closer, it starts to look like a person walking on the water. And closer still, the person calls out, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." It can only be Jesus.

What does this realization mean for you? How does it affect you?

Peter asks Jesus to call him to himself, and Jesus does. Watch as Peter gets out of the boat and goes to him, but falters. And Jesus asks, "Why did you doubt?"

What is happening with you right now – do you too wish Jesus to call you to him? Or do you wish to reflect on what has happened with Peter? Or something else? Let the moment develop as you feel led.

As Jesus returns to the boat, the disciples do him homage as the Son of God. They have finally really recognized him. And you? Do you see anything new in Jesus?

Take some time to talk with Jesus about what you have felt and experienced. Talk with him as with a friend, sharing and listening. And when you are ready, close with a favourite prayer.

Prefer to hear them read aloud?

[Pray as you go - Imaginative Contemplation Exercises \(pray-as-you-go.org\)](http://pray-as-you-go.org)

Imaginative Contemplation

Imaginative contemplation is all about getting to know Jesus. It is a method of prayer in which you imagine yourself as present in a Gospel scene, stepping into the story and encountering Jesus there. It was St Ignatius' firm belief that God can speak to you just as clearly in your imagination as through your thoughts. This way of praying will help you to see more clearly, love more dearly, and follow more nearly the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus walks on water (based on Matthew 14:22-33)

Imagine the water, the shoreline. Hear the crowd that is still present, the birds circling overhead. Feel the breeze off the water. It is late in the day. See and feel yourself there, among the disciples.

The disciples have finished feeding the multitude with the loaves and fishes that Jesus blessed. You can see that he is tired -- and grieving for his cousin John who has been executed. He insists that you all get in the boat to cross to the other side, while he finally send the crowd home and takes some time to pray alone.

And so you go. Do you look back at Jesus as he walks off alone? What do you wonder about him?

Crossing in the boat, the wind is against you and the waves are choppy. What is it like for you in the boat?

*... you will reveal the path of life to me,
give me unbounded joy in
Your presence...*

Psalm 16:1

Your labyrinth prayer time can be as open

or as focused as you would like it to be.

You might want to simply enter the labyrinth and be with the Lord...

or, before your enter the labyrinth, you might like to take time to:

- ◇ Read and reflect on a line or two from Scripture and ponder those words in the labyrinth
- ◇ Hold a memory or a photo of a loved one you wish to remember or pray for while you are in the labyrinth
- ◇ Consider an experience in your life where you are seeking healing or forgiveness and talk to God in the labyrinth
- ◇ Think about a key celebration in your life and walk a prayer of thanksgiving in the labyrinth.

© 2015 Pilgrim Paths Ltd

www.pilgrimpaths.co.uk

Finger Labyrinth

and

Prayer Guide



Labyrinths are ancient pathways found across the world.

The winding path helps us to 'unwind', to let go and rest in God. Members of the early church as well as Medieval pilgrims have used them as a support for prayer.

Today, labyrinths are being created in churches, retreat centres, schools, hospices and cathedrals to offer a spiritual space for prayer and reflection providing a stilling space in a busy world.

A labyrinth is different from a maze. A maze is full of dead-ends and designed to get you lost. A labyrinth has only one path that always leads to the centre... if you stay on the path you cannot get lost.

There is no right or wrong way to a labyrinth... no set pace... just follow the path in your own time...

Finger labyrinths can be used for prayerful reflection when it is not possible to walk a full-sized labyrinth.

*...did not our hearts burn within us as he
talked to us on the road...*

Luke 24:32

Prayer Stations

Creating prayer stations is a way to help and allow people to 'be'. This might sound vague, but prayer stations can help people to connect with God as holistic beings in a two-way communication process.

Stations can provide the opportunity to engage all the senses – hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch – and these connect in often surprising ways to the mind, body and spirit.

Traditional models of worship and prayer work for some people. However, they can be difficult if you don't have a Christian heritage or background.

All of us may have had the experience of being asked to sit quietly and pray, but instead find our mind 'wandering' and writing a mental to-do list. Prayer stations may provide an alternative to this situation.

This model isn't new – the Stations of the Cross, for example, have been used in a variety of contexts and cultures, possibly since the fifth century.

Where to start

Many people start with a theme. This could be a topical subject, an exploration of the Scriptures or a Christian festival. For others, the theme might be as simple as providing a place and resources for people to pray; in this case the resources will be broad and varied.

Here are some examples from CAFOD...

Emoji Prayer cards

Here are some emoji cards you could print off and cut out. Have them somewhere you'll remember to pick them up and use them, maybe on the kitchen table or your bedside stand. Each one will help you to pray for something different.

Pray for someone you know who is sad or hurting, ask God to comfort them. 	Pray for your family and the people that love you. 
Pray for someone who is hurt, ask God to make them feel better. 	Thank God for the friends and people in your life that make you smile and laugh. 
Ask God to help you forgive someone who has made you angry. 	Praise God for his wonderful and all the beautiful things he has put around you. 
Pray for someone who is sick or poorly. Ask God to make them feel better. 	Thank God for the clothes you wear and the house you live in. 

The Lord's prayer necklaces or bracelets

For this activity you will need string, scissors, coloured beads or dried pasta tubes. If you are using pasta you will also need a paint brush, paints and water.

This activity will include making a bracelet or necklace using specific coloured beads to represent different parts of the Lord's prayer. If you use pasta not beads you will need to paint them the correct colours BEFORE you thread them on the string. Please ask an adult to measure your piece of string and if you are little, they may need to help you with the scissors and tying knots.

As you make your bracelet try and pay attention to what each bead means. Use it everyday to help you say the Lord's prayer.

Blue- The colour of fathers.

Our father who aren't in heaven.

White- The colour of holiness.

Hallowed be your name.

Purple- A majestic colour.

Thy kingdom come; your will be done.

Green- The colour of Earth

On Earth as it is in Heaven.

Yellow- Reminds of wheat and flour.

Give us today our daily bread.

Red- Reminds us of Jesus' sacrifice.

And forgive us of our sins.

Black/Brown- Dark colours that could represent temptation.

As we forgive those who sin against us.

Gold- To remind us of God's heavenly kingdom.

The kingdom, the power and the glory are yours. Now and forever, AMEN!



SOLIDARITY PRAYER WALL

You will need

A wall, noticeboard, free-standing board, flipchart stand, etc;
Variety of paper (think textured, patterned, coloured);
Range of coloured pens (fibre-tipped, but not too large – but do think about whether they'll go through the paper and mark the wall)
Way to attach the paper to the wall
Starts of prayers (see below for ideas)

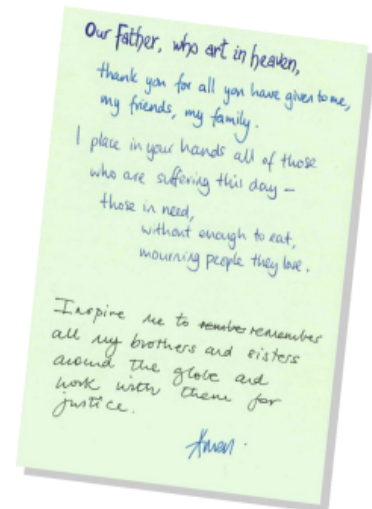
Concept

People are encouraged to come up to the wall in their own time, to read over some of the starts of prayers on the wall, and continue the prayer with their own words. They can either complete the prayer, or write a line or two in continuation. The next person who comes to the prayer can then either add to someone else's, or continue a different prayer. By the end of the session, people will have read one another's prayers, reflecting and praying through them.

Note

Bear in mind the literacy levels of participants and provide starter prayers at an appropriate level.

Encourage people to pray through the prayers as they read and add to them.



Resources

These might be good starters to your prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

Here and now, Lord, we place before you simply some of the six billion people with whom we share this world...

Compassionate and loving God, you created the world for us all to share...

God of peace and justice, you give us the capacity to change...

***Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord...
Sun and moon, O bless the Lord, to him be highest glory and praise forever...***

NEWSPAPER PRAYER

You will need

Newspapers – preferably a variety of types, and national & local ones (you may need to do some filtering to check on appropriateness of paper/articles!)

Felt tip pens/something to draw and write on the papers

A focal point (eg globe with candle lit by it)

Music for background (optional)

Concept

People are encouraged to take a newspaper/magazine and look through it for people, situations, countries, etc., which they want to hold before God in prayer.

They are invited to rip out the stories/pictures, and/or to write over the article/picture a prayer for that person/country/situation.

As a symbol of placing the prayer before God, people are invited to place the ripped out page around the prayer focal point.



GLOBE PRAYER



You will need

An inflatable globe

Some way to mark the globe – finger paints, stickers, post-it notes and pens

If using finger paints, think about how people will clean their finger afterwards (eg wet wipes)

Background music (optional)

Concept

Invite people to come forward and as a sign of their prayer for a particular person, community or country, invite them to make a mark on the globe where they are praying for.

Note

Think about how many people you are doing this with, and how big the globe is: is there enough room for everyone to make their mark?

Is it big enough for more than one person to do it at the same time so people aren't waiting too long to have their chance to make their mark?

Can you use washable paint so as to use the globe again?

WE ARE ONE BODY

You will need

Masking tape and a floor you can stick it to without leaving a mark

Images of people from around the world printed out (ask your CAFOD Diocesan Office or use images from newspapers or web)

Mirrored card (available from stationers) cut into A5ish size
Marker pens for the mirrored card (probably need to be permanent)
Prayer cards (optional)



Concept

This needs some preparation. Mark out on the floor an outline of a body (a bit like a crime scene from a detective show!). It doesn't have to be beautiful or to scale, just obvious enough that it is a body.

Lay out inside the body the different images of people.

Read out, or have printed out around the body, 1 Corinthians 12.12-13.

Encourage people to step into the body and look at some of the images of other members of the

Body of Christ from around the world.

Invite them to hold the person they see in prayer before God.

Next, invite them to pick up a piece of mirrored card and to look at

themselves in it. Remind them that they, too, are a special, unique part of the Body of Christ, loved and cherished by God. Using a marker pen, encourage them to sign their name on the mirrored card and place it inside the body as a symbol of their part in it.

As they leave the body they can take a prayer card, or it could be read together.

Resource

The prayer card could use this prayer:

Here and now, Lord, we place before you simply some of the six billion people with whom we share this world.

Although we may never meet them, nor even know their names, we place them in your loving care.

Guide them. Support them. Be with them.

May they be full of your love, and share it with those they meet, as we, once more, commit ourselves to do the same.

Amen.

© Stephen Davies/CAFOD