

## TYPES OF PRAYER WITH CHILDREN:

### *ALONE WITH GOD*

- Even in class help them find quiet, uncluttered space for personal prayer with God. **Personal, one on one with God time.** Quiet prayer can focus on present; allow space in busy life for Jesus to enter and touch them
- Help them **develop comfort and peace** found in being with God in silence
- Time for **reflection**, personal questioning, journals
- Help them respect quiet time, **be quiet yourself** in this prayer time.
- **Adjust length of time to reflect group** – increase as more comfortable. Vary time to suit occasion.

### *VOCAL PRAYER*

- **Expression of our prayer in words.** Uses words spoken aloud which focus on conversation with God which grows over time. Memorized prayers are first way most people learn to pray vocally. As we grow in prayer, we can express ourselves more in our own words
- **Ways to do this:** Let whole class pray aloud; divide class into sides to alternate parts of prayer; divide into groups and have them pray part of prayer; pray prayer and have them pray silently in heart; pray one phrase at time and have them echo it; prepare student or two to pray prayer aloud; play soft background music during vocal prayer; set up as choral reading (Te Deum works well)

### *CONTEMPLATION/ CENTERING PRAYER*

- **Simply resting in God, peacefully placing your attention on God.** Awareness of oneness with God – to experience the profound union we have with God. Think of it as climbing into God's lap, like a child resting in her mother's arms. It is simply dwelling in God's love. To contemplate is to be with God in the sacred space of our own being. "Contemplative prayer is the simple expression of the mystery of prayer. It is gaze of faith fixed on Jesus, an attentiveness to the Word of God, a silent love. It achieves real union with the prayer of Christ to the extent that it makes us share in his mystery. CCC # 2724
- With children **explain that they are going to learn a new form of prayer** and that it will take a while for the habit to take form. Explain they are to sit still in the presence of God. Sit in front of the children and stay with them throughout prayer. Choose same time each day or week. Begin with short periods – 15 seconds, then increase to minute, then two and over time gradually bring it up to ten. Older children with some experience can pray for longer periods.
- **METHOD:**
  - **Quiet down.** Sit upright so head is well supported by spine. Be comfortable. Keep eyes gently closed so energy is not wasted seeing. Relax, breathe slowly three times: exhale, take in fresh air, hold it, exhale. Breathe in God's presence and breathe out anything that is troubling or distracting. Do this over and over until you feel calm and relaxed.
  - **Move toward God within you.** Think only of God who is living deep inside you and ponder God's love for you. Be present to God. Let the overwhelming love and goodness attract you. Rest in God's presence.
  - **Respond with a word or phrase.** Some suggestions – I love you, My Lord and my God, Jesus/. Come, Holy Spirit; Come, Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world; God, have mercy on me; Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus. Repeat the prayer word slowly in your mind. When other thoughts come, ever so gently return to word or phrase.
  - **Attend to God and enjoy God's presence.** Take some time to dwell in the silence of the prayer and to experience the sense of opening to God. After a few minutes of silent contemplation, thank God for the experience of prayer. When you know you are aware of things other than God, use your prayer word to bring you back. Don't stop to think about

how you're doing. Focus on giving God your loving attention. The point is not to be speaking with God but to be absorbed in God, to rest in God.

- **Pray a prayer.** Use the Our Father or another prayer to make the transition out of centering prayer.
- **After this experience,** encourage students to share their feelings and reactions. Students could journal a few moments about what they experienced and felt.

### **SHARED PRAYER & SPONTANEOUS PRAYER**

- **Shared prayer** gives students opportunities to plan a prayer celebration together and to facilitate part of the prayer.
- **Spontaneous prayer springs up from the students.** These prayers come from the hearts of the children. A group will need to have been together and the children feel trust for one another before this prayer can happen. Requires a comfort level in group; need to know what is expected; make sure they have time to prepare. So begin small with petitions, then move on to short sum up prayer and then to more complex and personal prayers.
- **Allow enough time for students to think, reflect, compose prayers before asking them to share.** Help give them confidence by letting them write down their petitions or simple personal prayers first. Invite to share with the group. Never pressure a student to share prayer. Keep directions simple, don't ask too much. Let them know ahead of time if they will be asked to share aloud what they are writing. Never force to share out loud – always provide an easy way to pass. Use peer pressure in positive way. Do not be discouraged if first attempts meet with silence. Offer invitations, wait, try again. They will join in when ready.
- **How:** Can be part of a more structured prayer form such as a prayer service, or it can be free of structure and used by itself. Can be used whenever children gather to give praise, thanks, repentance, or petition. Helpful with younger if you initiate, by example, the type of prayer expected.
- **Vary approach**– teens will get bored with same one.
- **Written prayer part of this** – concrete poems, cinquains, diamantes; written prayers to be placed on prayer table, said in group or placed on board; prayer gifts (spiritual bouquets)
- **Spontaneous prayer** – have them write anonymous prayers on slips of paper. Put papers in bag and pass it around. Have students pick a paper and read prayer on it.

### **THE ROSARY:**

- **The rosary is perhaps the most popular devotion to Mary, the Mother of God.** The central part of the rosary consists of the recitation of five sets of ten Hail Marys (each set is called a decade) each new decade begins by saying an Our Father, and each decade concludes with a Glory Be. The prayer keeps track of the prayers said by moving one bead to the next in order.
- **The recitation of the rosary begins with a series of prayers,** said in the following order while using as guide a small chain of beads and a crucifix: the sign of the cross, the Apostles' creed, one Our Father, three Hail Marys, one Glory Be. After these introductory prayers, the recitation of the decades, as described above, begins. The order: The first mystery is called to mind, the Our Father, ten Hail Marys, one Glory Be recited. The second mystery is recalled and same throughout all mysteries.
- **The saying of a five-decade rosary is connected with meditation on what are called the mysteries of the life of Jesus.** These mysteries too are collected into series of fives – five joyful, five sorrowful, five glorious and five mysteries of light (recently added by Pope John Paul II) The prayer devotes one recitation of the rosary to each set of mysteries. She/he chooses which set of mysteries to meditate on while saying the decades of Hail Marys. The complete rosary is fifteen decades.

- **Joyful Mysteries:** the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Birth of Our Lord, the Presentation of Jesus in the temple, the finding of Jesus in the temple Monday & Thursday. These tell of events during early life of Jesus
- **Sorrowful Mysteries:** the Agony of Jesus in the garden, the Scourging at the Pillar, the Crowning with Thorns, the carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion Tuesday, Friday. These tell of the passion and death of Jesus
- **Glorious Mysteries:** The Resurrection of Jesus, the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven, the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles (Pentecost), the Assumption of Mary into heaven, the Crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven. Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday These tell of events that followed Jesus resurrection.
- **Mysteries of Light:** The Baptism of Jesus, Jesus Reveals Himself in the Miracle of Cana, Jesus Proclaims the Good News of the Kingdom of God, The Transfiguration of Jesus, the Institution of the Eucharist.
- This prayer enables us to reflect on God's love for us, revealed in the mysteries of Christ's life.

### **MEDITATION**

- **Prayer of meditation goes beyond the use of words and engages our thought, imagination, emotion and desire.** In meditation Spirit leads us to reflect, in the quiet of our lives, on the mystery of God present with us so that we can respond to God's voice. We ponder God's presence and activity in our lives and in the world and discover movements that stir our heart and cause us to say "God, I want you to be the focus of my life." It is a quest, a searching, the expression of our desire to do God's will. We reflect on the mysteries of Christ. We come to know God's love for us and respond, as Jesus did, by making that love known to others in what we say and do. Liturgical texts of the day. Scripture, rosary, icons, spiritual reading, sacred images, other sacred objects, creation are all doors through which you can enter into meditation.

#### **Example one**

- **Choose a gospel passage.** Slowly and prayerfully read it. Which person or people in the story do you identify with?
- **Imagine you are that person.** Pause often and take time to become one with the person in the story.
- **Think about what in the story speaks to you most? Why is that? What feelings or emotions does it evoke?**
- **Express your feelings and thoughts to God.**
- **Open your mind and heart.** Remember you are in God's presence. Listen for God's response.
- **Make God's response part of your life.**

#### **Example two:**

- **Close eyes, take a deep breath and be silent.** Let it out slowly. Do this three times. Each time you breathe in, imagine you are breathing in God's breath; as you breathe out, let go of worries, concerns, fears, problems. Let go of everything except sitting here with God. Feel yourself relaxing, just being with God. Imagine that you are in a special place – it's warm and sunny. See yourself walking along without any cares in the world, feeling happy and peaceful. Slowly breathe in and out five times. Listen to your heart beat. Let your mind focus on it and on it alone. Put all your thoughts and feelings aside.
- **Imagine now that you see someone coming toward you.** As the person gets closer, you know in your heart that it is Jesus. He greets you warmly, the way a good friend greets you, and he begins to walk along with you. He asks how you are and how you feel about your life. Talk to Jesus now about whatever is on your mind. If you are worried about something or someone, tell him. If you have problems at home or at school, tell him. Say whatever is on your mind...
- **Now let Jesus speak to you.** What might he want to say. Listen to him... *(Allow two minutes)*
- **Now Jesus tells you that he has to move on.** Before he goes, he invites you to talk to him anytime. He tells you that he loves you very much and treasures your friendship. He says goodbye.

- **Again breathe deeply three times**, breathing in God's spirit and breathing out your cares and concerns.
- **Allow children to talk** about this experience if they want to.

**Example three:**

- **Settle little children down** by having them make sign of cross lightly on foreheads over and over until Jesus is in their minds.
- **Imagine Jesus is sitting next to them in an empty chair.** Tell them to speak to him and imagine what he says in reply. Invite smaller children to imagine Jesus is holding their hand and they are tiptoeing with him to a special place. Then have them think of themselves with him. They could imagine sitting in his lap, walking down road with him.

**Example four: Guided meditations:**

- **Do the initial bullet for example two.** When you come to the imagine: imagine all your worries, troubles, problems flowing away from your body. Try to picture them leaving. If a problem or worry comes to mind, let go of it. Let it flow away. Imagine God's peace and love flowing through you. All your worries and concerns have left your body. Try to feel God's peace and love flowing in calming you. Focus on the peace and love of God.
- **Before doing a guided meditation** with students: always read the guided meditation through completely before you use it in class so that you are well aware of its direction. Practice reading it slowly and reflectively. Read it aloud several times. Read it dramatically but prayerfully. Practice until you feel comfortable.
- **Teacher leads students in a meditation from a prepared script.** Allow sufficient pauses. If you sense the group needs less pausing, adapt according. If they need more time, adapt.
- Allow **at least 20 seconds** at the end of each meditation for students to bring it to a close in their own minds and hearts.
- **After a guided meditation invite comments**, but do not force. This is an experience of personal prayer and should be shared willingly, if at all.

**Example five: Meditating on scripture**

- **Still the body.** Have the students still their mouths, hands and feet. Close eyes. Enter into the meditation with the class, but don't you close eyes. Easier from the back of the class.
- **Quiet the mind.** Tell them to focus on God, present here, loving them, waiting to speak to them
- **Read the scripture passage.**
- **Recreate the story in the imagination.** Guide them through it again, suggesting insights, description
- **Reflect on story** – make it personal. Be a facilitator, ask questions.
- **Respond to scripture.** Lead students to respond in the form of a prayer or resolution or both.
- **These scriptural stories are good for meditation:** The boy Jesus in the Temple Luke 2:41 – 50; Temptation in desert Matt 4:1 – 11; calling first disciples Luke 5: 1 – 11; calming the storm Luke 8:22 – 25; Healing of leper Luke 5: 12 – 16; healing of paralysed man Luke 5:17 – 26; Jesus and the sinful woman Luke 7:36 – 50; Miracles of loaves John 6: 1 – 13; Jesus and Zacchaeus Luke 19: 1 – 10; Washing of disciples' feet John 13:1 – 11; road to Emmaus Luke 24:13 – 35

**SPIRITUAL READING:**

- **Give students a passage from scripture.** Direct them to read until they find an idea that appeals to them.
- **Have them pause and mull over the striking idea**, repeating it over and over and letting it sink into their minds and hearts, delving into the meaning of the words and savouring them
- **Invite them to speak with God about the passage.** Tell them that when they are finished, they should return to the reading and repeat the process.

### **TRADITIONAL PRAYERS:**

- **Traditional prayers can connect them with the tradition and Catholic roots.** Helps bridge gap between generations. Provide source of strength and comfort in tough times and when difficult to pray from the heart, when you don't know what to say. Provides starting point for creative and personal prayer by offering models, structures and means of addressing God. Provides an identity with a community, a religious tradition, a church.
- **What:** Sign of the cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostles Creed, Act of Contrition, Prayer to the Holy Spirit; Act of Hope, Act of Love, Angelus,
- **How to teach:** Divide prayers into parts and have children read them in chorus; slow down when praying prayers and think about what saying. Provide copies of prayers for those who need to refer to them – teach prayers. Help them to create own prayer books. Vary way to use traditional prayers – add music, slides, responses Encourage them to keep a journal of favourite traditional prayers and add new ones as learned. Occasionally paraphrase a formal prayer so they don't take meaning for granted

### **LITANIES OF PRAISE, PETITION AND THANKSGIVING:**

- **Litanies are prayers that follow a pattern and have a repeated response.** Asking and giving thanks are most common form of litany – can also express sorrow, offer praise.
- Children will not automatically pray about their needs and concerns. **Need to introduce petitions:** use a class prayer box where children can anonymously place prayer request; invite each to say a prayer of praise or petition – if they don't have personal one, give them a generic response to use – I thank you, Jesus; I praise you, God; I need you, Holy Spirit; have two or three children write prayers for the whole group, use different children each time; suggest a response to be used, after time they will create own Discuss with the children some of the people who need our prayers. Write down suggestions. Then use as a basis for litany. Prayer cards: child fills out prayer intention card, place in a basket or box and brought forward at prayer time and placed on prayer table.
- **Can include a petition for the prayers in our hearts** for those children who are too shy to speak.
- **Begin with** a short introduction, state petition, say response, conclude with a short prayer asking God to hear our prayer.
- **General intercessions:** have the students model their petitions on the format of those we pray together at Mass: prayers for the needs of the church'; prayers for public authorities and the salvation of the world; prayers for those oppressed by any need; prayers for the local community
- **Among the church's traditional prayers are many beautiful litanies:** the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, Litany of St. Joseph, the Litany of the Saints. These can be found in prayer books.

### **BLESSINGS:**

- **Blessing is a sacramental action.** When we bless, we praise God for God's faithful love and goodness and we ask God to continue God's loving care for us. Every baptized person is called to bless. CCC#1699. Every blessing praises God and prays for God's gifts. CCC#1671. Blessing is marking something as God's.
- **You can bless** the bible, water, oil, other symbols and people. Extend both hands or the right hand over the person or persons to be blessed and say a simple blessing. The children can also bless one another.
- **Types of blessings:** greeting, dismissal, prayer time blessings, birthday, feast day, special occasion, within prayer etc.
- **Teacher can bless children:** Loving God, we praise you for giving us Jesus as our Saviour. Jesus blessed all who came to him, and welcomed those who come to him now. Look with love on these students and protect them with your love. May they grow in wisdom and age and strength in your presence and in the sight of all. We ask this blessing, Father, through your beloved Son, Christ our Lord. All answer Amen. Teacher could lay their hands on the head of each student, or make the sign of the cross on each student's forehead. Could then say the Our father and offer a gesture of peace to one another.

- **Greeting blessings:** Extend right hand toward students as you pray: May God be with us today as we gather to learn. Or May you hear the voice of Jesus today in class.
- **Dismissal blessings:** Stand at door and offer one of these blessings as each student leaves: May God go with you until we meet again. Or May Jesus walk with you all week long. or Class is ended. Go in peace . They reply. Thanks be to God.
- **Prayer time blessing:** May God speak to you now as you listen in silence. Say this as right hand is extended over the students.

#### **CREATIVE PRAYERS:**

- **Storytelling** from scripture, own lives, lives of the saints, story collections, in literature or in films.
- **Poetry usage:** prepare for poem, experience it, respond reflectively to poem internally or out loud. Create own poems. Write a poem prayer
- **Creative** – posters, banners, mime, hand puppets, clay, collages, mobiles, paints
- **Prayer through movement** – ask how scripture passage, song, poem might be expressed through gestures. Develop together a sequence of gestures and practice in small groups. When groups familiar with sequence, use it in prayer.
- **Prayer through music** – lyrics for songs should always be given to students. Select song that reflects theme, scripture passage, image of God and is age appropriate. Play song, learn song and then sing together.
- **Prayer with contemporary music:** choose a contemporary song. Settle students in comfortable, quiet manner. Ask them to breathe in and out slowly, to quiet themselves. As they slowly inhale and exhale, tell them to ask holy spirit to help them pray and to hear what God is saying to them. Play a contemporary song, listen to words and pay attention to feelings and images the song stirs up in them. Reflect on this and record in journal or on paper. What is main point of song? What is it saying to you? How does it speak to your life right now? What is God (Jesus) saying to you through this song? How can it apply meaning to your life. Suggest that they resolve to do something about the insights they have gained from praying the music. Ask them to thank God for the moments God has spent with them and for any insights they have received. Invite them to add their resolution to journal or paper. Invite them to share their feelings and reflections in the group.
- **Use imagination** – experiment. Seize moment – be open to what happens. Be alert for creative prayer possibilities

#### **ARTS & CRAFTS PRAYER OPTIONS:**

- **Doodle your feelings prayer:** provide students with paints, magic markers, coloured chalk, or crayons to interpret for themselves the words as you lead them in prayer. This type of prayer can be used to express feelings about a variety of themes.
- **Arts and crafts** give substance to abstract concepts. Children enjoy creativity in using a variety of materials **Be aware of skills** needed to complete craft and that they match the age of those involved. Young children may need pre – cut material
- **Make sure you have enough supplies for all.** Prepare a complete pack of materials for each child rather than handing out one piece at a time
- **Provide each table with a sample** so they know what they are working on
- **Be as specific as possible when giving directions.** With younger, give one direction at time, continuing after completed that task
- **POSTERS:** Select pictures of people who need prayers. Print word prayer in centre. Cut brightly coloured pieces of construction paper slightly larger than the pictures. Glue onto back of picture and place around word. Can use as meditation focus or primer
- **PRAYER ROCKS:** Collect small rocks. Invite children to choose a rock, bless them. Have children write name of person they are to pray for. Keep rock with them as reminder.

- **COLLAGES** – picture making by applying paper, magazine cuttings, cloth, paint and other materials to a sheet of paper, poster board or canvas. Collage pictures can be figurative, where core of picture is drawn or painted and other materials are stuck around. For themes, children can bring in items which they feel are relevant to topic. Footprints cut from poster board can be used directly on floor to depict journey or way of travel – example, way of cross.
- **BANNERS** – fabric banners can be good focal point for prayer theme. Appliquéd style best – like collage. Keep shapes and letters simple, colourful and clear. Remnants from fabric store can work for this. When using words, cut around words on another colour and cut out
- **PAINTING & DRAWING** – draw pictures flowing from scripture or prayer. Draw picture of how you imagine God or what is prayer; draw interpretation of phrases of scripture; pictures of gospel stories; simple drawing expressing praise, thanks, love, sorrow, hope.
- **ART & PHOTOS** – use paintings or pictures to inspire and draw students to prayer. Use sacred art, especially of biblical themes, events, persons. Photos can help connect gospels and everyday life. Good for evoking responses; focus children for meditation or contemplation. Use good art and photos.

### ***PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE***

- Sometimes called Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading) – there are a variety of methods, this is one.
- **Relax.** Settle in. Be aware that God is here, now, loving you.
- **Read a short passage of scripture** as though God were speaking directly to you in it.
- **Choose a phrase** from the passage that strikes you and repeat it slowly, prayerfully, non – analytically.
- When your heart is full, **express to God** the needs and sentiments awakened by your meditation.
- **If at any time**, you feel moved to simply be present to God in loving silence, put the scripture aside and rest in God. Might ask students to write a short prayer or petition from their prayer, write in their journals, or draw something in journal from the reflection.

### ***PRAYER OF IMAGINATION WITH SCRIPTURE:***

- **Choose a scripture text.** Could be Sunday's gospel, reading to be used in prayer or one that you give to students. Take time to read the text slowly and reflectively, at least twice.
- **Note the setting for the story** – where does the story or passage take place? Who are the people involved? What are the circumstances?
- **Place yourself in the setting.** Picture the people in it. Imagine what the circumstances might have been and try to feel them. Close your eyes and spend three minutes silently reflecting on what is happening to you. How does what you are seeing and feeling influence your love of God.
- **Spend time praying over the scripture passage.** Now you are ready to listen to what God is saying to you through it. Remain quiet, open and prayerful so that God may speak to your heart and mind.

### ***JOURNALLING***

- **Journal writing** can provide students with a tool for learning about personal values, faith and commitment. Journals are daily or periodic private records. Journaling is a process by which we come to know ourselves, our deeper selves, the secret of who we are and what is possible for us. A journal is a place where you can be yourself, a place of growth, freedom and where God can speak to your heart. It can challenge us to think about faith, religion, personal values and life events.
- **A journal is a help to identify and communicate our needs and desires;** a place to go when things go wrong; a record of life a life script; helps work through a confusing situation or bewildering feelings; a place to be oneself; a source of freedom; a gateway to growth.
- **A journal is a place where one can enter a new way of prayer.** If this is used as a prayer form, it is best to do so at the end of the lesson (last 5 – 7 minutes). Take a moment to help them focus their thoughts
- **Journals lead you to reflect on what you really believe, think, do.** They challenge you to grow in faith. Heal wounds by letting you talk out hurtful situations. They inspire you in prayer.

- **Journal starters:**
  - **complete sentence** – when I was little I believed; I feel like a success when; I am proud/ashamed of; The best thing about me is.
  - **Write a letter to God.** Then have them write a letter to them from God. They might prefer to write to Jesus. Write a conversation with God
  - Direct students to **write their answer to a question that Jesus poses in Gospels:** What are you looking for? John 1:38; Do you want to be well? John 5:6; Who do you say that I am? Matt 16:15; Why are you so terrified, O you of little faith? Matt 8:26; What do you want me to do for you? Luke 18:41; Do you believe now? John 16:31
  - **Write gospel meditations.** Choose an event in which Jesus is present. Read the story and then write out a meditation following these steps: Retell story in own words as if you were one of the people present during the incident described. Conclude story so that you and Jesus are alone together. Write a conversation between you and Jesus about what occurred, leading into thoughts and feelings about yourself and what is happening in your life.
  - **Write out words to favourite song in journal,** then play tape or CD of song as you read words. What does song say to you? Highlight a few lines and make connection with where you are in life now. What might God be saying to you through your attraction to this song.
  - **What is growing in the garden of your life** – flowers, vegetables, trees & bushes? What seeds do you want to plant? What weeds do you have to pull out?
  - **Interview Jesus Christ.** You are allowed to ask five questions. Write your five questions in the journal along with how you think Jesus would answer them.
  - **Read psalm 103:1 – 4, 9 – 12** and then respond to these questions: What does this psalm tell you about the mercy of God? What do you need God's forgiveness for right now?
  - **Read Matthew 5:7 and respond to these questions:** What does Jesus tell you about those who are merciful? Who do you need to forgive right now?

#### **LITURGY OF THE HOURS:**

- **"The liturgy of the Hours is intended to become the prayer of the whole people of God. In it Christ himself continues his priestly work through the church. CCC # 1175**
- **This is the public prayer of the church community.** It is a structured pattern of prayers that include hymns, psalms, antiphons, Scripture meditation, the Lord's Prayer and other readings and responses. The Liturgy follows a four week cycle, with adjustments for feasts and seasons of the liturgical year. It can be prayed seven times a day, though the primary hours are morning and evening prayer.
- This **prayer contains prayers, hymns and scripture readings to be offered each day.** This is a shared prayer of the church that invites the participation and response of the faithful.
- There is a formal outline to be followed.
  - **LITURGY OF THE HOURS – MORNING PRAYER**
  - **INVITATION TO PRAY**( L Lord, open my lips R. and we shall proclaim your praise. L. Glory to God in the highest, R. and peace to God's people on earth.)
  - **MORNING HYMN.** Song is to that of full, joyous praise of God in thanksgiving FOR CREATION. Choose a song that is energizing and which students will sing with enthusiasm.
  - **MORNING PSALM:** traditional one is Psalm 63. Could read responsorially, with one student reading verses or several students each reading a verse. Ideal to sing psalm if you can. The response to the psalm is: "In the shadow of your wings I sing for joy." A musical setting of this refrain could be used as the morning song on occasion. Morning song and psalm could be combined into one sung moment, simplifying the format even further.
  - **PSALM PRAYER:** Student leader could be asked in advance to write a prayer of praise using an image from the morning psalm, or she/he could be asked to pray spontaneously on the themes of thanksgiving for creation and / or of consecration of day to God.

- **THE WORD OF GOD:** One or two sentences from one of the readings of the day could be proclaimed by one of the students, or successive brief excerpts from the coming Sunday readings could be proclaimed each morning. Morning prayer is not liturgy of the word and so the reading should always be brief.
- **SILENT TIME:** time for silent reflection – a few moments
- **GENERAL INTERCESSIONS:** two or three brief prayers could be written by one of the students, perhaps using same set of prayers for each day of a given week. Or time for spontaneous prayer, allowing anyone present to join in. The character of this prayer continues to focus on praise for creation, consecrating the day to God, and remembering God in all that we do.
- **THE LORD'S PRAYER:** communal praying the Our Father
- **BLESSING:** Student leader offers a blessing. To bless one another simply means to ask for God's remembrance, love and fullness of life on behalf of another. Hand raised over heads of all present, palms down as blessing is recited.
- **SIGN OF PEACE:** Morning prayer concludes with offering of sign of peace to each other. Bodily gesture that shows our commitment to be like Christ in all we do. Instead of this a concluding prayer could be led by the student leader which he/she would have written in advance.

#### **OTHER WAYS TO PRAY:**

- **Invocations:** Using refrains as short prayers in day:
  - Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Thanks be to God
  - I rejoiced when I heard them say let us go to the house of the Lord
  - Keep me safe, O God, you are my hope
  - Glory to God in the highest
  - Lord, how great you are.
  - Praise the Lord
  - Heart of Jesus, I trust in you.
  - Heart of Jesus, burning with love for us, inflame our hearts with love for you.
  - Lord, increase our faith
  - God is love and whoever lives in God lives in love
  - Holy Mary, pray for us.
  - Lord, I do have faith. Help me have more.
  - You are my God, teach me to do your will.
  - We adore you O Christ and we bless you. By your cross you have saved the world.
  - The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want
  - O light of Christ shine in my heart
  - Jesus is my shepherd and he calls me by my name.
  - With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption
  - O come, o come, Emmanuel
  - All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God
  - You are the light in the darkness. Come O Lord and save us.
  - Awake for the Lord is near
- **Prayer Partners:** Invite students to draw names, to keep them secret, and to pray for that person every day. At end of week, reveal prayer partners to each other.
- **Sing responsorial psalm from Sunday's Mass:** sing the refrain from Sunday's mass as a mantra for your class throughout the week. Sing it often.
- **Signing of the senses:** this blessing prayer can be found in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It is an ideal prayer for an opening or closing of school year in the classroom.

- **Gospel reflection:** after a gospel story is proclaimed, take time for each student to reflect and then share their reflections with others. Ask: What did Jesus want me to hear today from this reading?
- **Prayer Bag:** Make a prayer bag by filling a bag with pictures, words, and small objects that are likely to help children think of ideas and things they might want to pray about. Invite each student to pull three items from the bag. Encourage them to write a prayer using all three objects.
- **Rite of forgiveness:** Celebrate the gift of God's forgiveness frequently in prayer together. See especially Rite IV (communal celebrations) of the revised rite of penance, a non-sacramental celebration of reconciliation.
- **Newspaper prayers:** Bring in articles from the newspaper about people and events who need prayer. Includes these needs in your daily prayer.
- **Picture prayer:** Bring in photos of someone for whom they want to pray. (Could be friend, family member, someone in paper, for example people affected by Hurricane Katrina). As they hold the picture in their hands, invite them to feel Christ's strength, peace and love surrounding that person. Have them spend a few moments speaking to God about the person.
- **Picture prayer 2:** Show students a picture from a magazine, an art piece, a newspaper. Invite them to reflect on it with questions such as these – What is happening? What might the people be feeling? What does it remind you of in your own life? What does it tell you about God? Invite students to write a prayer using the thoughts and feelings that were evoked by the picture.
- **Prayer with gestures:** Teach the students gestures for the traditional prayers you pray together – Our Father, Glory Be, Hail Mary. Invite them to make up own prayer and gestures to go with it.
- **Prayers from the sacramentary:** Gather prayers from the sacramentary( the book of liturgical prayers used by the priest at mass). Type the prayers you choose on cards, one prayer for each person, putting their name into the prayer. Put the cards in a basket. Have each student pull a card from the basket. He/she is to pray the prayer on the card for the person whose name is included in the prayer for the following week. Example: "God, our Creator, may the work and studies of (Sarah) bring her growth in this life and help her extend the kingdom of Christ in our world. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen"
- **Alphabet Prayer:** Invite class to work on a thanksgiving prayer which names something for each letter of the alphabet. To enhance it, they could also use an adjective beginning with the same letter. Example: God, we thank you for adventurous aardvarks, boisterous boys,...
- **Add – on prayer:** Teacher begins the prayer and each student adds a line, such as "Loving God, we know you care for us and watch over us. We want to tell you our worries, because we know you always help us. My worry is that my grandpa will die." Each child adds on a prayer. The theme for the prayer might come from something your students have been studying so that it will be something they have been thinking about.
- **Re-write prayers:** Use some of the scriptural prayers or formal prayers and invite students to rewrite them in their own words. Psalm 23, Our father, Creed, Hail Mary.
- **Prayer Rocks:** Collect small rocks. Cut a length of durable inexpensive fabric into squares, one for each child. Duplicate the following for each child: I'm your little prayer rock, to remind you to pray; put me on your pillow all through the day. Then when night has come and you want to climb into bed, you will see your prayer rock and say your prayers instead. Invite each student to gather a rock and to tie their squares with a ribbon to keep rock inside. Have them punch a hole in the corner of the rhyme and put the ribbon through it. During prayer time, bless rocks and remind them that they are called to be people of prayer. At the end of class they should take their prayers home and keep them near their beds.
- **Novenas:** refers to nine days of prayer. Tradition to pray to certain saints or Mary or Jesus for a special intention for nine consecutive days, repeating the same prayer nine times.
- **The Way of the Cross (The Stations of the Cross):** This prayer follows Jesus on his way to Calvary. There are fourteen stations, or stops along the route. They can be depicted by pictures or closes on walls in churches. The person praying the stations goes from one to another, remembering at each the passion and death of Jesus and reflecting on some particular aspect of his suffering. Have students write / draw own prayers and meditations for the stations of the cross. Invite them to write a modern day version.

Where are people experiencing suffering today? There are many booklets available for praying the stations in the classroom. Stations:

**First Station:** Jesus is condemned to death

**Second station:** Jesus receives his cross

**Third station:** Jesus falls for the first time

**Fourth station:** Jesus meets his mother

**Fifth station:** Simon the Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his cross.

**Sixth station:** Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

**Seventh station:** Jesus falls for the second time

**Eighth station:** The women of Jerusalem weep over Jesus

**Ninth station:** Jesus falls for the third time

**Tenth station:** Jesus is stripped of his garments

**Eleventh station:** Jesus is nailed to the cross

**Twelfth station:** Jesus dies on the cross

**Thirteenth station:** Jesus is taken down from the cross

**Fourteenth station:** Jesus is laid in the tomb

- **Prayers from around the world:** Invite children to learn about and borrow some prayers from other cultures and religions.
- **Write a letter to and receive letter from God:** Get a copy of the letter from God. You can adapt to your student group. Give them a copy of the letter to read. Have them use the same paper to write a return letter to God where they can open their hearts and express their innermost thoughts. Have them write spontaneously about whatever they want to share with God. Some may share letters if they want – not a requirement.
- **Filmstrip Prayer:** Tell the students a familiar story from scripture. Give them an empty outline of a filmstrip and have them fill in the story in the strip with drawings that tell the story.
- **Praying with an icon:** Select an icon that you want to use. Bless the icon. Have the students gaze at the icon for a period of time. Remain open to the experience of God. What is entering your heart as you gaze on the icon. What insights are given/
- **PRAYER VALENTINES** In classroom corner place a red valentine cut out cardboard heart for every child. Punch a hole in the top of each heart and pull white yarn through the hole. Tie the yarn and hang the hearts from the ceiling of the class. Place child's name on the front of the heart and a scripture verse on the back in which we are told how much God loves us. For prayer, have child find their heart and invite them to spend several minutes with this love message from God. Invite them to write a love message back to God on the heart. Re – place the hearts in the ceiling and leave them there for the day. At the end of the day, give each child their own valentine to take home with them.
- **MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE VERSES** To enable children to have prayers available to them when needed, have them memorize scripture verses such as "God works all things for good", "Don't worry about tomorrow, it will have enough cares of its own." They learn scripture phrases that are affirmations of the beliefs they want to hold and do hold. You could post a scripture verse on board along with pictures and stories from the children showing how this reading relates to their world. You could use the scripture verse for an art project. Use the verse and have the students set it to music, a song or rap that includes the verse