

national youthsunday

Prayer Session Plan

“You are God’s work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he has meant you to live it.” Ephesians 2:10

This 10-20 minute small group session could be used on its own or alongside the other sessions. It would work well after the National Youth Sunday presentation and discussion as a way of allowing the young people to reflect on what they’ve heard. It will give them time and space to hear God speak to them about their true identity as His beloved children.

Preparation

This session has two possible versions depending on how much time is available, how many young people you will have at the session, and how deep you think they will be able to go with the prayer and reflection. Take some time to read through the plan and decide which of the two options will suit your context and group. Whichever route you take, you will need some small pieces of paper and pens for all the participants.

You will need to set up a prayer focus in the space you will be using. An icon or cross and a candle on a table with a cloth would be enough, although you may choose to lead this session during Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, in which case you will need to set up an altar with candles and a monstrance. You will also need some background music from a computer, CD or iPod.

Materials

Icon or Cross
Candle
Table
Decorative fabric
Small pieces of paper
Pens
Background music

10 or 20 minutes prayer time...

10-minute prayer time

Print off copies of the ‘Words of Truth’ page onto coloured paper, guillotine between the quotes and fold them into a basket or bowl.

20-minute prayer time

Print off copies of the ‘Words of Truth’ page and the picture frame so that you have enough for each person attending the session (one each).

Have quiet music playing as the young people enter the space to help them relax into a prayerful atmosphere. You may need to remind them to keep quiet and ask them to find a space on their own away from their friends if they are going to get easily distracted. Ideally you should have another leader at the door to give each person a small piece of paper and a pen as they enter.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament?

If you are having Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

You will need to explain what you are going to do, invite the young people to kneel, and have a Priest or minister expose the Blessed Sacrament. You may wish to sing a simple song as you do this if you have time.

If you are not having Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Turn the music down, light the candles and invite the young people to start with the Sign of the Cross.

“We bring ourselves into the presence of God and begin our prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...”

Introduction

“There are many filters through which we can look at our lives.

Do we look at and measure our lives by the achievements we have at school or in a sports team? Do we measure our lives by how popular we are? Or by how big our parties are? Is our focus on making money and having nice things, even though the joy they bring might not last? We can also present our lives to others through these filters as well, appearing to be something that we are not. Are we being true to ourselves? Do we show a fake image in some way so that people will like us, or to make others happy?

Sometimes we might look at our lives and feel that we are just doing enough to survive, and we can't see any other way of being. We might be able to look at our lives and see a level of success: we are getting along all right and things are going well.

God wants us to look at our lives and see that we have significance. Each one of us has worth, value, purpose, and mission, and these will help fulfil the deepest desires of our hearts. God wants us to look at our lives and know that we are loved infinitely and completely by Him, the one who created us. He wants us to look at our lives through the filter of His great love for us. But so often we are blind...

... I want to tell you a story about a man who couldn't see. He was blind, but in some ways, he saw the important things more clearly than you or I often do. Make yourselves comfortable, close your eyes and listen. Allow a word or sentence to jump out at you from the story and reflect in the silence about what it means for you.”

Slowly read the story of **Blind Bartimaeus from Mark 10:46-52** and then leave a few moments of silence.*

**Before you do this, you may need to make sure that everyone puts their pen and paper on the floor in front of them, so they aren't distracted and playing with them whilst they're meant to be listening.*

Blind Bartimaeus

(Mark 10:46 - 52)

“The question that Jesus asks Bartimaeus is very important and it’s the same question that he is asking each of us today – What do you want me to do for you?

What do you want Jesus to do for you today? Have you had enough of just surviving and you want to know your significance?

Do you need to know that you are loved and valued, and that your life has purpose?

Maybe you’ve realised that you’re measuring your life in the wrong way and you need to ask Jesus to restore your sight to see His way.

Have you been looking at your life thinking that achievements and awards are what make you good enough; thinking that popularity will make you feel valued; thinking that having all the right stuff will leave you feeling happy and satisfied?

Do you want him to help you to be true to yourself, to give you the courage to strip away anything that is false about the way you portray yourself to others?”



Take a few moments now to write on your piece of paper.

“What do you want Jesus to do for you today?”

“If you’ve finished writing then you can put your pen down and fold your piece of paper up so no one else will see what you’ve written. When you feel ready, I invite you to come forward and place your papers on the altar as a sign of asking Jesus for those things.”

When nearly everyone is ready, invite people forward to offer what they’ve written to God.

Show them exactly where you want them to place their papers by being the first person to place your paper on the altar or prayer focus.

It would be a good idea to have some quiet music playing at this point to help keep them focused.

Prayer Time

10 or 20 minutes...

If you are doing the 10-minute prayer time:

“After you place your paper on the altar, I invite you to take one of the words of truth from the basket. When you go back to your seat, read it and take a few moments in silence to absorb the word of truth that God has for you today. It might not make much sense to you at first but ask yourself what you think it means and how it could make a difference in your life if you truly believed it.”

If you are doing the 20-minute prayer time:

“After you place your paper on the altar, I invite you to take the Words of Truth sheet and a picture frame that are here at the front. In the frame draw a picture of yourself, or symbols that represent you, as God sees you. Take some time to look through the words of truth from God, which ones stick out to you? Which ones do you need to become a firm, rooted truth in your life? There might only be one, or there might be 3 or 4. Write them around the picture frame on the paper.”

When everyone has had enough time to reflect or to write and draw then you can begin to bring things to a close...

“St Clare of Assisi said:

‘We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become.’

If we allow these words of truth from God to take root in our lives then we will be drawn deeper into God’s love and more able to look at our lives through the filter of that love, allowing it to shape what we become, giving us the purpose and significance that God has created us for from the very beginning.

To finish I’m going to share a prayer.

The prayer is in three parts and I invite you to say ‘Amen’ with me at the end of each part as a way of making it your own prayer.

Part 1

Father, we thank You for your great love for us. Help us to always recognise our identity as Your children, loved by You from the very beginning, created to share in Your work of sanctifying and redeeming the world.

Amen

Part 2

Jesus, we thank You for giving your life for us and that through Your cross and resurrection we can be free from needing to look at our lives through filters that portray us as something we are not. Teach us what it means to be true to ourselves with the help of Your mercy and grace.

Amen

Part 3

Holy Spirit, we thank You for your constant presence strengthening us. Help us to see clearly our purpose and mission, give us courage to serve and love those around us and show them the love of God.

Amen

We finish with the Sign of the Cross, marking ourselves out as belonging to God and taking His presence with us.

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



Words of Truth



I am loved

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.

(1 John 3:1)

I am precious, honoured and loved

Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life.

(Isaiah 43:4)

I am a child of God

But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God.

(John 1:12)

I am redeemed and forgiven

He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

(Colossians 1:13-14)

I am complete in Jesus Christ

For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in Him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.

(Colossians 2:9-10)

I am free from condemnation

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

(Romans 8:1-2)

I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

(Colossians 3:12)

I do not have a spirit of fear, but of love, power and a sound mind

For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

(2 Timothy 1:7)

I am chosen to bear fruit

You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.

(John 15:16)

I have been given all I need for life and faith and to know God Himself

His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

(2 Peter 1:3)

I have the peace of God that passes all understanding

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 4:7)

I have never been abandoned by God

Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for He has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.'

(Hebrews 13:5)

I can put out the fiery arrows of the evil one with my shield of faith

With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

(Ephesians 6:16)

I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

(Philippians 4:13)

I am God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life

You are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he has meant you to live it.

(Ephesians 2:10)

I am a believer and the light of God shines in my mind

For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

(2 Corinthians 4:6)

I am an ambassador for Christ

So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

(2 Corinthians 5:20)

I am the light of the world

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden.

(Matthew 5:14)

I am forgiven of all my sins

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

(Ephesians 1:7)

I am called by God to be the voice of His praise.

Bless our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard.

(Psalm 66:8)

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