

# BEaware

## Contents:

- Introductory note to the Prayer Leader.
- Full running sheet of the prayer with notes and directions (copy as needed for those reading or doing some other action).
- Prayer handout sheet to be copied for all participants.

# Introduction - for the Prayer Leader

Dear Prayer Leader,

Thanks for leading this prayer based on the concept of **Be Aware**.

This prayer forms part of a series of prayers inspired by the words of St Oscar Romero "**Aspire not to have more but to be more**" and they draw on resources from [Caritas Australia](#). All of the prayers in the series carry an underlying theme of 'Mission' – the challenge to all Christian people to engage in the mission of Jesus in the world.

The prayer is intended for use with staff groups in a Catholic school community but can be easily adapted to other contexts.

Each of the prayers in the series follows a common structure of:

Gather - Listen - Respond - Go Forth

## **Be Aware:**

### Creating the space:

Where possible, arrange chairs in a circle or semi-circle around a prayer focus point. Try to create different heights in your prayer focus – even if you conceal a book or box under your cloth to create a different height. Items to incorporate in your prayer focus:

- ✓ Red, green and yellow cloths
- ✓ Three candles (+ matches to light the candles)
- ✓ Bible – open at Exodus chapter 4 (a book stand or small easel is ideal to display the Bible)
- ✓ Cross or crucifix
- ✓ Symbol for this week: a megaphone or microphone

You will also need:

- ✓ A copy of the song, *Stand Up, Be More!* from the CD *Alive in the Spirit!* By Musicfire
- ✓ Copies of the prayer outline for readers.
- ✓ Copies of the prayer handout for the group.
- ✓ Copies of the [Be More Bio](#) of Helder Camara (p. 2) – download from Caritas.org.au.

### Gather

- Welcome, introduction & preparation to pray
- Lighting of candles 3 candle lighters
- Opening Prayer

### Listen

- Introduction
- Gospel reading 1 reader
- Gospel reflection Leader or another reader
- Gospel repeat 1 reader

### Respond

- *Be More* bio
- Stone reflection

### Go Forth

- Prayer
- Blessing

NB: Sections identified as 'Leader' may be divided amongst different people but it is helpful to have a recognisable leader of the prayer.

The structure and ideas included are just suggestions. Please feel free to modify or add to the wording to make the experience more personal and relevant for your staff. Adding your own touches will not only make the experience more enriching for you personally, but also for the rest of your group.

Approximate time required: 20 mins

# BEaware

## We Gather

The leader welcomes those present and acknowledges the gift of coming together in prayer.

Leader: Our prayer today continues (or begins) our focus on ways in which we might engage in the mission of Jesus, calling us to *Be More*. In today's prayer we are called to *Be Aware* – to pay attention to what is occurring in our midst; to recognise Jesus in every single person we encounter; and to be alert to God's call in our lives.

Let's start by being aware of our purpose in gathering ... that we come together in prayer ... let's take a moment to simply *be aware* of our breathing and *be aware* of consciously slowing down and preparing ourselves to pray.

*(Ring a chime or bell then pause for two minutes of silence. Ring the chime again to end the silence)*

And so, let's *be aware* as we make this sign of the Cross and *be aware* that we gather ...

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

Candle lighter 1: As we gather here in your name,  
Open our minds to know your voice. *(light 'head' candle)*

Candle lighter 2: Open our hands to do your work. *(light 'hands' candle)*

Candle lighter 3: And open our hearts to hold your Spirit. *(light 'heart' candle)*

Leader: Let us pray.

All: God of insight and awareness,  
You know your people's needs even before we can voice them.  
Help us to be more like you as we seek to be aware of those around us.  
Give us your wisdom to see to the heart of a matter.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, the compassionate one. Amen

## We Listen

Leader: Jesus himself gives us an extraordinary example of being aware of those around us. Several times in the gospels, Jesus picks a lone person from the crowd because he is aware of the needs of the individual. Recall his encounter with Zacchaeus, calling him down from the tree; recall his reaction to the woman with a haemorrhage, sensing her need when a throng of people pressed around him.

Let's listen now to the story of Jesus raising from the dead the son of the widow of Nain.

*(Luke 7:11-17)*

Reader 1: A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

He went to a town called Nain,  
accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people.

Now, when he was near the gate of the town  
there was a man who had died being carried out.  
He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow.  
A considerable number of the townspeople was with her.  
When the Lord saw her he had compassion for her  
and said to her, 'Don't cry.'  
Then he went up and touched the bier and the bearers stood still,  
and he said, 'Young man, I tell you: get up.'  
And the dead man sat up and began to talk,  
and Jesus gave him to his mother.  
Everyone was filled with awe and glorified God, saying,  
'A great prophet has risen up among us; God has visited his people.'  
And this view of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside.

(pause...)

This is the gospel, the good news of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

Leader: When we hear this gospel story, we might immediately think that Jesus was being aware of the widow's grief and, taking pity on her, decided to give her son back to her. But, like all gospel stories, there's more going on beneath the surface.

We must remember that widows and orphans held a very special place in God's heart. God had commanded that the whole community was responsible for the well-being of widows, orphans and strangers in the land.

In the gospel story, when we see that there is a large crowd of townspeople with the widow, we might assume they were there to mourn with her.

But, another interpretation is that they were there to drive her from the town.

As a widow, whose only son had died, the woman had no means of support and was a liability on the community. It was not uncommon for such people to be cast outside the town walls.

It's not coincidence that the encounter takes place at the town's gate. In scripture the image of a gate is frequently used to indicate who's 'in' and who's 'out'.

When Jesus sees this scene, he sees not only the woman's grief; he sees the status of outcast that is inevitably being forced upon her.

When he returns the woman's son to his mother, he also returns to her dignity, respect and even her own life.

Now that's really being aware!

Let's listen to the passage a second time, but this time perhaps we might hear it with a different awareness.

Reader 2: A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

He went to a town called Nain,  
accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people.  
Now, when he was near the gate of the town  
there was a man who had died being carried out.  
He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow.  
A considerable number of the townspeople was with her.  
When the Lord saw her he had compassion for her  
and said to her, 'Don't cry.'  
Then he went up and touched the bier and the bearers stood still,  
and he said, 'Young man, I tell you: get up.'  
And the dead man sat up and began to talk,  
and Jesus gave him to his mother.  
Everyone was filled with awe and glorified God, saying,  
'A great prophet has risen up among us; God has visited his people.'  
And this view of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside.

(pause...)

This is the gospel, the good news of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

### We Respond

Leader: You each have a copy of the Be More Bio for Dom Helder Camara – a man who was acutely aware of injustice that flows from structures in society and political structures. Take a few moments to read the bio and reflect on the suggestions of ways in which you can 'Be More'.

*(Play some quiet music and allow time for group to read and reflect.)*

Leader: The widow of Nain was trapped in a social structure of injustice. The intervention of Jesus cut through that injustice and restored her dignity.

I invite you to take a stone from our prayer space and spend a moment in quiet, thinking of someone you know who is caught in a situation of injustice – experiencing unfairness weekly or daily.

*(Play some quiet music as people come forward to take a stone and then sit in reflection.)*

During this week, I ask you to either carry that stone with you or position it in a place that will make you think about it frequently throughout the week. The stone is to be a reminder to you throughout the week of the injustice people live with on a daily basis; injustice that goes beyond irritation; injustice that saps their life. The stone is to be a reminder of God's call to each of us to *be aware* of what is happening around us and to even *be aware* of the injustice that we at times perpetrate.

We will bring our stones - and perhaps their stories - back to our prayer time next week.

## We Go Forth

Leader: Let's bring all our thoughts together now and place them before God in prayer.

All: God of the widows, the orphans and the strangers in the land,  
You hold a special place in your love  
for those who are bound by injustice.  
Open our eyes;  
Open our ears;  
And open our hearts to the plight of those you love.  
Call us forward to be aware of those we hurt through thoughtless action.  
We place this prayer before you through Jesus,  
the one who is always aware.  
Amen.

Leader: And let's turn to the person beside us and pray our blessing prayer over one another.

All: As we go about our day, O God;  
As we strive to walk with Jesus as people of insight.  
Remind us that we are the awareness of Christ,  
Who is with us always.

May your grace, mercy and peace,  
Bless us, keep us and transform us all this day,  
Now and forever. Amen.

## We Gather

**All:** In the name of the Father, + and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

The *Head, Heart* and *Hands* candles are lit.

Leader: Let us pray.

**All:** God of insight and awareness,  
You know your people's needs even before we can  
voice them.  
Help us to be more like you as we seek to be aware of  
those around us.  
Give us your wisdom to see to the heart of a matter.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, the compassionate  
one. Amen

## We Listen (Luke 7:11-17)

He went to a town called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people. Now, when he was near the gate of the town there was a man who had died being carried out.

He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow.

A considerable number of the townspeople was with her.

When the Lord saw her he had compassion for her and said to her, 'Don't cry.' Then he went up and touched the bier and the bearers stood still, and he said, 'Young man, I tell you: get up.'

And the dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

Everyone was filled with awe and glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet has risen up among us; God has visited his people.' And this view of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside.

**All:** Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

## We Respond

Be More Bio for Dom Helder Camara.

Take a few moments to read the bio and reflect on the suggestions of ways in which you can 'Be More'.

### **Ritual:**

Take a stone from the prayer space and spend a moment in quiet, thinking of someone you know who is caught in a situation of injustice – experiencing unfairness weekly or daily.



## We Go Forth

**All:** God of the widows, the orphans  
and the strangers in the land,  
You hold a special place in your love  
for those who are bound by injustice.  
Open our eyes;  
Open our ears;  
And open our hearts to the plight of those you love.  
Call us forward to be aware of those we hurt through  
thoughtless action.  
We place this prayer before you through Jesus,  
the one who is always aware.  
Amen.

## **Blessing:**

**All:** As we go about our day, O God;  
As we strive to walk with Jesus as people of insight.  
Remind us that we are the awareness of Christ,  
Who is with us always.

May your grace, mercy and peace,  
Bless us, keep us and transform us all this day,  
Now and forever. Amen.

# BE aware

“In the end, I think my greatest concerns will be: how much love did I have in my life? How did I share my love? Who loved me? Whom did I treasure? Whose lives did I impact? Did my life make a difference to someone else?”

Richard Carlson