

BEchallenged

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,

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 Challenged:

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 Luke chapter 12 (a book stand or small easel is ideal to display the Bible)
- ✓ Cross or crucifix
- ✓ Symbol for this week: a length of material tied into a prominent knot

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 Saint Oscar Romero King (p. 7) – download from Caritas.org.au.

<u>Gather</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome, introduction & preparation to pray• Lighting of candles• Opening Prayer	3 candle lighters
<u>Listen</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction• Gospel reading• Gospel reflection• Silence	1 reader Leader or another reader
<u>Respond</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Be More</i> bio• Discussion• Song	
<u>Go Forth</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prayer• Blessing	Spontaneous or 9 readers

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

BEchallenged

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 Challenged*; to be uncomfortable; to be unsettled by the injustice that continues in our world.

Most of us live relatively comfortable lives. The poverty; the hunger; the violence of the world doesn't impact directly on most of us. Today's prayer calls on us to step out of those comfortable lives and to be challenged; to be confronted by what millions of people have to deal with.

Before we do so, let's just take a deep breath. Let's put aside the distractions and busy-ness so that we can give our full attention to this challenge.

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

Perhaps the first thing that should challenge us today is that we believe that everything we do ... particularly when we gather in prayer ... is done ...
(Make the sign of the cross very slowly and purposefully.)

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 disquiet and unrest,
To confront the world
and call your people back to your love
you sent your Son into their lives.
Send your Holy Spirit to move in this world again
and confront us with the truth of injustice.
Give us the strength and resilience
to face what we would rather ignore;
to stand up for what we know to be right;
to stand up against what we know to be wrong.
We make this prayer through Jesus, the one who challenged the world. Amen.

We Listen

Leader: In the short gospel passage today, Jesus challenges us to pay attention to the important things that are happening around us and in our midst.

(Luke 12:54-56)

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

He said again to the crowds,
'When you see a cloud looming up in the west
you say at once that rain is coming, and so it does.
And when the wind is from the south
you say it's going to be hot, and it is.
Hypocrites!
You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky;
how is it you do not know how to interpret the present time?

(pause...)

This is the gospel, the challenging Good News of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reflection

Leader: It's relatively easy to identify a wide range of very positive and powerful values that emerge from the gospels: love; peace; acceptance; joy; service; and hope – just to name a few.

But there is also a hard edge to the gospel. There is a challenge that comes from both the words and actions of Jesus. If we really pay attention to the gospel, and not just pick out the bits that suit our purposes, then we should be made to feel uncomfortable by what we read.

The challenge of the gospel is confronting. It tells us that to be a disciple of Jesus carries some pretty heavy costs: we must be prepared to pick up our cross; we must be prepared to alienate our family; we must be prepared to give up everything; we must be prepared to die. It tells us that the reign of God must be fought for and that the structures of the world must be overturned.

But it also tells us that the least in this world will be the greatest in the reign of God. It tells us that God's love and forgiveness is extravagant and without end.

Today, the challenge for us is to hold these things in balance and in tension. How can we spread a message of love and peace but at the same time challenge injustice and actively fight against systems and structures that oppress?

If we rest too easily with the gospel, then we're not reading it properly!

In the city of Frankfurt there is a Jewish memorial that stands on the former site of a synagogue in the Jewish ghetto. It commemorates the Jewish inhabitants who were put to death under the Nazi regime. To view the memorial you must walk on broken and jagged shards of shale. The artist wanted all who stood there to be uncomfortable with what they were viewing.

Similarly, we must be challenged by the gospel and challenged by the harsh realities of life for many people in this world.

Leader: I invite you now to spend a few moments in silence. Let this idea of challenge sit with you. In what ways are you challenged by the call to interpret the signs of the times?

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

We Respond

Leader: You each have a copy of the Be More Bio for Saint Oscar Romero who spoke the powerful challenge of the gospel and was ultimately killed for doing so. Take a few moments to read the bio and reflect on the suggestions of ways in which you can 'Be More'.

(Allow time for group to read and reflect.)

In what ways can we as a staff group respond to the challenges of poverty and injustice? What specific actions can we commit to taking in this school?

(Allow time for people to discuss ideas – perhaps in small groups first and then as a whole group.)

Leader: Let's pray the song, *Stand Up, Be More!*

(Play the song by MusicFire)

Stand Up, Be More!

Music and Lyrics by Mark Beiers and Jill Gowdie

Stand up for the faith within you; stand up for the hope you bear
Listen to the voice that wants more of you; Stand up, be more!
Won't you listen to the truth inside you; listen to the love that calls
Go fulfil my purpose for you; Stand up, be more!

Chorus

***So stand up be brave be more
Shine the way that you're born for
Be the light so bright within you
Stand up! Be true! Be more!***

Can you see the broken world around you? See the difference you can make.
See the face of Jesus 'round you; Stand up! Responsibility!
Find you in the margins with my loved ones; find you in the streets, yes welcoming
Find you in the grieving with my sad ones; Stand up! Solidarity!

Can you give to others just a little? Can you give to them your time and care?
Can you give yourself to something greater? Stand up! Generosity!
Can you be a voice in the throng of this world? Can you be a voice to those with none?
Can you be a voice for the lost and hurting? Stand up! Empathy!

Can you act with justice with each other? Can you act with justice in your life?
Can you act with justice out in this world? Stand up, be challenging!
Can you care enough for the gift of sunrise? Can you care enough for the gift of life?
Can you care enough for the universe? So stand up, for eternity!

We Go Forth

Leader: Let us pray.
(Reader parts may be assigned to individuals or members of the group may be invited to spontaneously read one of the lines.)

Reader: There are people starving today.

All: God of compassion, make us uncomfortable.

Reader: There are victims of torture.

All: God of compassion, make us uncomfortable.

Reader: There is oppression and corruption.

All: God of compassion, make us uncomfortable.

Reader: There are indigenous people whose lives will be shorter than ours.

All: God of compassion, make us uncomfortable.

Reader: There are children who will spend their lives in refugee camps.

All: God of compassion, make us uncomfortable.

Reader: There are people who sleep in our city streets.

All: God of compassion, make us uncomfortable.

Reader: There are growing numbers suffering from AIDS.

All: God of compassion, make us uncomfortable.

Reader: There are women who live with violence every day.

All: God of compassion, make us uncomfortable.

Reader: There are people in our own community who know injustice.

All: God of compassion, make us uncomfortable.

Leader: In our discomfort, let's stand to pray our blessing prayer.

All: As we go about our day, O God;
As we strive to walk with Jesus as people who are challenged.
Remind us that we are the compassion 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 disquiet and unrest,
To confront the world
and call your people back to your love
you sent your Son into their lives.
Send your Holy Spirit to move in this world again
and confront us with the truth of injustice.
Give us the strength and resilience
to face what we would rather ignore;
to stand up for what we know to be right;
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We make this prayer through Jesus,
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We Listen (Luke 12:54-56)

He said again to the crowds, 'When you see a cloud looming up in the west you say at once that rain is coming, and so it does. And when the wind is from the south you say it's going to be hot, and it is. Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; how is it you do not know how to interpret the present time?'

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reflection

We Respond

Be More Bio for Archbishop Oscar Romero

In what ways can we respond to the challenges of poverty and injustice? What specific actions can we commit to taking?

Stand Up, Be More!

Music and Lyrics by Mark Beiers and Jill Gowdie

Chorus

***So stand up be brave be more
Shine the way that you're born for
Be the light so bright within you
Stand up! Be true! Be more!***

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Reader: There are women who live with violence every day.

All: God of compassion, make us uncomfortable.

Reader: There are people in our own community who know injustice.

All: God of compassion, make us uncomfortable.

Blessing:

All: As we go about our day, O God;
As we strive to walk with Jesus as people who are challenged.
Remind us that we are the compassion 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.

"One person with courage makes a majority."
Andrew Jackson

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"Most of the things worth doing in the world
were said to be impossible before they were
done."

Louis D Brandeis

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