

Compassion

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**Strong
Catholic
Identity**



Dear Prayer Leader,

Thank-you for leading this prayer on the charism of *Compassion*. A charism is like a living gift. It is a way of living or doing, inspired by Jesus, which links us to God. As you pray with your staff, we hope that you will develop a clearer appreciation of how each charism can impact on your life and the lives of those around you.

In this prayer module, your charism is linked to the spirituality of the de La Salle Brothers and the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and to the prayer style of walking prayer.

Gathering

Each prayer starts with a brief ritual that serves to engage and focus everyone to the spirit of the prayer. As well as being a means of focusing your staff it is also a way to add another level of meaning and understanding to the charism.

The ritual for your prayer involves having a small stone for each person to carry. Compassion encourages us to have "warm" not "cold" hearts. When you first take your stone it is cold (maybe putting them in the fridge will emphasise this), as you walk through the prayer, the stone - like our hearts - should warm up in your hand.

Reading and Reflection

The reading is Luke 10:25-37. The reflection material invites us to consider what it means to be people compassionate towards the needs of others.

There are no handouts accompanying this prayer.

Prayer

This prayer is similar to the process for praying the "Stations of the Cross". Instead of sitting down to pray you will need to set up the stations included in your material. The prayer starts with everyone together and then all are invited to move among the stations. To conclude the prayer everyone comes back together. You may wish to copy each station onto coloured paper or mount them on card leaving them on display for a few days.

Surprises

Add to the experience of the prayer by continuing to bring your prayer's charism to people's attention during the week. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- *Make a sign: "Compassion - Whom have you stopped to help today?"*
- *Make a Seed cut-out write on it - "Have you planted the seed of compassion today?"*
- *Place a Rock & Rose on the staff table - Put a sign with it: "Heart of stone? Heart of love?"*

The structure and ideas we have 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 you own touches will not only make the experience more enriching for you personally, but also for the rest of your staff.

Best of luck.

Compassion

Using the notes:

Sections to be read by the leader are marked with Leader: at the beginning.

Texts in bold type are notes and guiding information for leaders and provide a guide for what to do or say.

Resources:

Stones

Copies of 'stations'

Head, Heart, Hands candles

Staff candle

Matches

Prayer intentions book

Setting up for prayer:

- *Prepare a prayerful space suitable for your staff to gather around. Have ready...*
 - *The 'Head', 'Hands' & 'Heart' candles to light in the opening prayer.*
 - *Your staff candles.*
 - *The prayer intentions book.*
- *Have the 'Quickfire Prayer Cards' ready to distribute at the end of the prayer time.*
- *Along a wall or around the room (or laid out on tables), put up/out each of the 10 elements of the prayer.*
- *Make sure your stones are available in a basket or bowl which can be passed around.*
- *Don't worry how far people have to move to get to each station – moving time is thinking time.*
- *Encourage people to respect the prayerfulness of this time and to refrain from talking unnecessarily.*
- *Consider having no chairs set out near your prayer space- the prayer could start with all standing up.*

We Gather

Introduction

Explanation of the Prayer Stations

Leader:

Before we begin we would like to let you know that today's Staff Prayer involves moving through a series of Prayer Stations.

Many of us would be familiar with the ritual of praying the Stations of the Cross in which we move to each station to reflect and pray. During our prayer, we will be moving amongst the prayer stations in a similar way.

There are 10 prayer stations in total.

These are grouped into 5 pairs—you can move to any station in any sequence.

As you come to each station, don't rush. Spend as much time at each station as you wish. Take your time and enjoy the opportunity for some quiet moments with God.

It is not necessary to visit every station if you are unable to in the time set aside.

Before we begin our prayer let me outline the activities at each station.

Group One - The Gospel World

Station 1 - Reading the scriptures

At this station there is a reading from Luke's gospel.

Take some time to read and reflect on it. Listen for the message that is there for you.

Station 2 - Post It

Think about the key words you took from the scripture reading.

Take one of the blank post-it notes.

Write these key words or message you took from the scripture onto it and post it beside the image of the Good Samaritan.

Take the time to read the thoughts of others.

Group Two - The Real World

Station 3 - Reading the news report

This station has a transcript of an ABC radio report from March of last year.

As you read it look for the links to the charism of Compassion.

Station 4 - 'Compassion card'

Take a piece of card/ paper.

Think about the images, thoughts and words that have come to your mind about compassion during this prayer time

Use the pens to then create a *compassion card*.

Something with symbols, images or words on it that you can take with you as your own reminder of the place of compassion in your life

Group Three - My Inner World

Station 5 - Reading the reflection

This station has a reflection for you to read and reflect upon.

Station 6 - Completing the reflective questions

This station is an opportunity to take a reflecting sheet and consider the questions on it in relation to your own life.

You may wish to write on the sheet with the pencils provided.

Group Four - The Educators World

Station 7 - Reading the reflection

This station has a reflection with a focus on how compassion translates in one way for us as educators. Read it thoughtfully and reflect on the questions it presents.

Station 8 - 'Message bowls'

This station has two bowls and a pile of paper. There are two steps...

Step 1. Take a piece of paper and write a message for your colleagues about compassion – (something you would like them to remember in their work – a phrase that has spoken to you – (a “Compassion is” statement) and place it into a bowl.

Step 2 is to take a message already in the bowl and read it. Think about it. Look for its meaning in your life. When ready replace it in its bowl.

Group Five - Our Prayer World

Station 9 - Silent prayer time

Use this station to sit in prayer for people on your staff. Think of them 1 by 1.

Hold them in compassionate prayer.

Pray for the challenges they may have that you are aware of and those only they know.

Station 10 - Intentions prayer

In the spirit of compassion, think about the people in your life in need of support and prayer.

Add their name to the staff intentions book.

Leader:

Our prayer this week invites us to walk with Jesus in compassion.

To have compassion means to be literally moved at the centre of your being by what you witness and to respond out of that.

Jesus' entire ministry was marked by this capacity for compassion and it remains central to our ministry too.

As we begin this prayer on compassion I invite you to take a stone.

(Pass stones around the group)

Hold it in your hand.

Feel its coolness.

In the book of Ezekiel God says

"I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 11:19)

Walking with this stone reminds us that like the stone, our hearts - for all kinds of reasons - can become cold, hardened and lacking warmth.

But we are called to be stronger and gentler than this.

Keep the stone in your hand throughout our prayer today

Opening Prayer

Leader:

God of compassion,
You lead us on life's journey

As we gather here in Your name,
Open our minds to know Your voice. ***(Light 'head' candle)***
Open our hands to do Your work. ***(Light 'hands' candle)***
And open our hearts to hold Your Spirit. ***(Light 'heart' candle)***

Amen

At this point of the prayer –

Remind staff that at the conclusion of the prayer time you will call them back to the prayer space for a final prayer.

Encourage respect for the prayerfulness of this time and refrain from unnecessary noise.

Invite staff to take their stones and view the prayer stations.

After a suitable time call staff back to the candles

Shared Prayer

Leader:

As we pause now before our prayer time ends,
we stop to light our staff/school candle.

(Light the staff/school candle)

We pause in silence to pray for the intentions we have added to our staff intentions book.... ***(Place it into the prayer space)*** and those who are already on its pages.

We add to these the prayers that are known only in our hearts...

As our candle burns throughout today, may the One who hears the cries of the poor listen to our prayers and may our hearts be opened to hear the response.

(Allow for silent prayer)

The Stone

Leader:

Take a moment to again look at your stone.

Hold it to your cheek.

It is no longer cold.

Held close to you it has grown warm.

This week, may your heart be further changed 'from stone to flesh', from coolness to warmth.

May your eyes be open to the need around you; may your heart be opened to respond. That is the gift of compassion.

Keep your stone – hold it as you pray this week as a reminder of this gift in which God calls you to grow....

We Go Forth

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us pray together...

As we go about our day O God,
As we strive to walk with Jesus in compassion,
Let us remember that we are the face 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.

All: Amen

The following pages contain the station resources for this prayer.

The Gospel World

Station 1 - Reading the scripture.

You need to organise

- *Display of "The Gospel World" Sign*
- *Display of instructions*
- *Copy of the reading enlarged and displayed*
OR
- *Individual copies of the reading*

Station 2 - 'Post it'

You need to organise

- *Display of instructions*
- *Display of Good Samaritan pictures*
- *Pads of post-it notes **(not provided)***
- *Pens / pencils / markers*

Instructions

Station 1 - Reading the scriptures

At this station there is a reading from Luke's gospel.

Take some time to read and reflect on it.

Listen for the message that is there for you.

Station 2 - Post It

Think about the key words you took from the scripture reading.

Take one of the blank post-it notes.

Write these key words or message you took from the scripture onto it and post it beside the image of the Good Samaritan.

Take the time to read the thoughts of others.

The Gospel World Stations

The Gospel Prayer Station

A reading from Luke 10:25- 37 (NRSV)

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?'

He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.'

And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?'

Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan while travelling came near him and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend."

Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?'

He said, 'The one who showed him compassion.'

Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

The Real World

Station 3- Reading the news report

You need to organise

- *Display of "The Real World" Sign*
- *Display of instructions*
- *Copy of the reading enlarged and displayed from*

[The World Today – ABC Radio](#)

No help for Aboriginal woman suffering stroke at crowded bus stop

Tuesday, 7 March, 2006 12:38:00

Station 4 - Compassion card'

You need to organise

- *Display of instructions*
- *Cut-out pieces of card or paper*
- *Pens, pencils, markers*
- *Somewhere to sit and something to lean on to draw*

The Real World Stations

Instructions

Station 3 - Reading the news report

This station has a transcript of an ABC radio report from March 2006. As you read it look for the links to the charism of Compassion.

[The World Today - ABC Radio](#)

*No help for Aboriginal woman suffering stroke at crowded bus stop
Tuesday, 7 March, 2006 12:38:00*

Station 4 - 'Compassion Card'

**Take a piece of card/ paper.
Think about the images, thoughts and words that
have come to your mind about compassion during
this prayer time**

**Use the pens to then create a *compassion card*.
Something with symbols, images or words on it
that you can take with you as your own reminder
of the place of compassion in your life**



**sample
compassion card**

*Compassion -
Holding the hearts of others*

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My Inner World

Station 5 - Reading the reflection

You need to organise

- *Display of "My Inner World" Sign*
- *Display of instructions*
- *Copy of the reflection enlarged and displayed*
OR
- *Copies of the reflection for each staff member*

Station 6- Completing the reflection questions

You need to organise

- *Display of instructions*
- *Copies of the reflection questions for each staff member*
- *Pens, pencils to write with.*
- *Somewhere to sit and something to lean on to write*

My Inner World Stations

Instructions

Station 5 - Reading the reflection

**This station has a reflection
for you to read and reflect upon.**

Station 6 - Completing the reflective questions

**This station is an opportunity to take a reflecting
sheet and consider the questions on it in relation
to your own life.**

**You may wish to write on the sheet with the
pencils provided.**

My Inner World Prayer Station

Jesus calls us to walk with Compassion

It's not hard to see in the story of Delmae Barton, who was left collapsed from a stroke at the bus stop, as commuters walked past around this time last year, a similarity to the great parable of the Good Samaritan.

In hearing this story Jesus may well have asked us –
"Who was 'neighbour' to Delmae Barton?"
"Who was it that was compassionate?"

Both Mark and John write explicitly of Jesus' compassion. Mark tells us:

"Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured. (Mark 1:41-42)

And John, writing of the resurrection of Lazarus:

"When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept. (John 11:33-35)

As we read the Gospels, we can see many other examples in which Jesus was both a person of compassion and also of action.

The two, action and compassion, go together for compassion is mute without action.

Empathising with someone's situation is good in itself, but true compassion is more than this – true compassion is to be so moved at the centre of our being as to do something in response to someone who is in need. In the adult life, the balance between maintaining healthy boundaries and living out of a compassionate heart is a lifelong journey.

In this, we follow the lead of Jesus who had the extraordinary capacity to hold his centre, at the same time living every day out of a compassionate heart.

Love, it is said, is shown through our deeds, not through our words. When we act with compassion we are linking our lives directly to the very essence of God –which is love!

A Moment to Reflect

Is there one thing you do that keeps your heart open to the need of others?
What is it?

Who are the students in my classes that I know would benefit from my compassionate heart? What can be my 'next step' with them?

Where is a challenge in my life at the moment that is calling for a compassionate response from me?
How can I respond to this, at the same time respectfully 'holding my own centre'?

A Moment to Reflect

Is there one thing you do that keeps your heart open to the need of others?
What is it?

Who are the students in my classes that I know would benefit from my compassionate heart? What can be my 'next step' with them?

Where is a challenge in my life at the moment that is calling for a compassionate response from me?
How can I respond to this, at the same time respectfully 'holding my own centre'?

The Educators World

Station 7 - Reading the reflection

You need to organise

- *Display of "The Educator's World" sign*
- *Display of instructions*
- *Display a copy of the painting by L.S.Lowry [Waiting for the shops to open:](#)*
- *Copies of the reflection enlarged and displayed*

Station 8 - 'Message bowls'

You need to organise

- *Display of instructions*
- *2 bowls or plates to place messages into.*
- *Pens, pencils to write with.*
- *Somewhere to sit and something to lean on to write*

The Educator's World Stations

Instructions

Station 7 - Reading the reflection

This station has a reflection with a focus on how compassion translates in one way for us as educators.

Read it thoughtfully and reflect on the questions it presents.

Station 8 - 'Message bowls'

**This station has two bowls and a pile of paper.
There are two steps...**

Step 1. Take a piece of paper and write a message for your colleagues about compassion – (something you would like them to remember in their work – a phrase that has spoken to you – a “Compassion is” statement) and place it into a bowl.

Step 2 is to take a message already in the bowl and read it. Think about it. Look for its meaning in your life. When ready replace it in its bowl.

The Educator's Prayer Station

“Waiting for the Shop to Open”

Lowry's painting shows a crowd of people from Salford in the years of the Depression.

They are very ordinary people. They are hungry people.

They are patient and trusting.

They are waiting in hope and faith for the door to open and for food to become available.

It was compassion that led Jesus to heal a woman's haemorrhage, to restore a man's sight and to feed the hungry.

At the miracle of the loaves and fishes, Jesus gave his disciples the task of actually going out among the crowd and distributing the bread.

A great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat. Jesus called his disciples and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat, and if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way, and some of them have come a long way." And his disciples answered him, "How one can feed these people with bread here in the desert?" Mark 8.1-4:

Through the disciples, Jesus fed the people with *"bread here in the desert"*, and in this we can see a reflection of the role of the Christian educator as a disciple of Jesus.

Bread here can symbolise the enlivening word and sustaining love of God.

As disciples and as educators, we are called to go out and feed *"the hungry."*

If the love and Word of God is what bread may stand for -

What may the desert symbolise for you today?

As Christian Educators, our mission is to ordinary people: to those we meet on the road and in the street; to young people who are hungry for the nourishment of an education; to those who have been metaphorically mugged along the road of life; to those who have become lost; to those who are in danger of spiritual death.

Compassion will make us take that step towards young people who are in such great need today.

Our Prayer World

Station 9 - Silent prayer time

You need to organise

- *Display of instructions*
- *A quiet location with space to sit (perhaps a small circle of chairs)*

Station 10 - Intentions prayer

You need to organise

- *Display of instructions*
- *A quiet location with space to sit*
- *Your staff prayer intentions book.*
- *Pens/ pencils with which to write.*

Instructions

Station 9 - Silent prayer time

Use this station to sit in prayer for people on your staff.

**Think of them 1 by 1.
Hold them in compassionate prayer.**

Pray for the challenges they may have that you are aware of and those only they know.

Station 10 - Intentions prayer

In the spirit of compassion think about the people in your life and those in need of support and prayer.

Add their name to the staff intentions book.

The Prayer World Stations

