

Courage

Contents:

- Prayer leader introduction note.
- Prayer handout sheet.
- Prayer outline.
- Prayer station resources

Dear Prayer Leader,

Thank-you for leading this prayer on the charism of Courage.

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 Franciscan Orders and to the prayer style of Creative 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 this prayer involves accepting the gift of a piece of modelling clay. As we accept it we are reminded that if we are open to being shaped by God we are opening ourselves to being capable of things beyond what we would feel we are capable of.

Reading and Reflection

The reading is Mark 9:2-10. The reflection material invites us to consider what it means to be people of God outside of our "comfort zones" and to live with courage as Jesus did.

Prayer

The prayer style involves using the clay from the opening of the prayer to mould shapes. In your prayer, each staff member will be invited to take a piece of clay and to mould it into the shape representing a challenge in their life. They then will have time to reflect and pray about that challenge.

You will need to have handy the paper bags provided and to have attached the prayer label /stickers to the bags. You may like to have some bowls of warm water available for washing hands at the end.

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 few ideas to get you started.

- *Email or send a written message around staff rooms with just the word " **courage**" written on it.*
- *The following day send the same message adding "In proportion to one's courage -Life shrinks or expands" -Anais Nin*
- *The day after - "Courage is being scared to death - but saddling up anyway'- John Wayne*

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.

Courage

We Gather

God of tenderness and strength,
You lead us on life's journey
As we gather here in Your name,
Open our *ears* to hear Your voice.
Open our *hands* to Your work.
And open our *hearts* to Your Spirit.

Amen



Image: [Courage](#) Sean Dreilinger, shared under a Creative Commons (BY-NC-SA) license

We Listen

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

(Mark 9:2-9)

We Respond

Try to recall a 'mountaintop' experience
A time when you were filled with an overwhelming sense of God's presence
when this sense obliterated any other feelings or thoughts
when you were left with a sense of awe.

Think of a time when you have chosen to stay 'hidden' rather than speaking out?

Consider another time, when you did step forward.

In what way were these two occasions different?

Why did they each receive a different response from you?

What will take most courage from you in the week ahead? Close your eyes and pray for the strength and love you need to maintain your courage.

We Pray

As we go about our day O God,
As we strive to walk with Jesus
Remind us that we are the face of Christ,
Who is with us always.

May your grace, mercy and peace,
Bless us, protect us and transform us all,
This day, now and forever. *Amen*

Courage

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:

Modelling clay

Paper bags with prayer stickers attached

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.*
- *Have clay & bags (with attached prayer stickers) ready for staff*
- *Have a bag or bin close by to collect the plastic as the clay is unwrapped.*
- *Organise someone to read the scripture passage*

We Gather

Leader:

Our prayer journey this week invites us to walk with Jesus with faith and with courage.

The great saints, like Francis of Assisi founder of the Franciscan friars, model for us what it is to have the courage to be open to whatever life's journey may bring.

Throughout our lives we are moulded and shaped along a unique journey. It is through the gift of courage that we can confidently open ourselves to the challenges and potential this journey brings safe in the knowledge that, through all of it, it is impossible to fall out of the hand of God.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, God declares to Jeremiah:

"Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand"
(Jeremiah 18:6)

Through this moulding clay we have for our prayer today, we are reminded of God, the great potter, who works each day shaping and moulding through the experiences of our lives. It is our task to become more aware; more conscious of the loving presence of God in all we experience.

The most fundamental way that Jesus 'held His centre' was to be completely open to God's love; to have the courage to open up to the totality of that love, and trust where it would take him.

He did this through prayer and through his every choice, day after day.

Please take and open this modelling clay, as a sign of your willingness to follow this week in the footsteps of Jesus and his charism of courage.

Opening Prayer

Leader:

As we gather, let us begin with the sign of the cross.

God of tenderness and strength,
You lead us on life's journey

As we gather here in Your name,
Open our minds to know Your voice.
Open our hands to do Your work.
And open our hearts to hold Your Spirit.

(Light 'head' candle)
(Light 'hands' candle)
(Light 'heart' candle)

Amen

We Listen

Scripture

***Leader:** Invite someone to proclaim the Word*

A reading from Mark 9:2-9 (NRSV)

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen.

Jesus Calls Us to Walk with Courage

Leader:

Mark's community would have seen themselves in the reactions of Peter, James and John up on the mountain. These followers of Jesus proposed setting up a sanctuary, on the mountaintop – far away from the troubles down below.

Mark's community knew, as the disciples had experienced, the courage it takes to be a follower of Jesus..... Living as they did in a world full of tension and persecution, the idea of staying in a place of safety and setting up a special place high in the mountains, and out of the public eye was a very attractive proposition! A high Christian profile was, and can still be, a dangerous thing.

The transforming experience of the mountaintop is one that can sustain a lifetime. Martin Luther King, described the impact of his own experience.

"I've been to the mountaintop..... . And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land... I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man"

Martin Luther King's world was, in many ways, not that dissimilar to the world of the disciples. Like Peter, James and John he was strengthened in courage and faith by his vision from the mountain.

As modern disciples, we also face challenges to our courage.

We are pressured by a society that likes to make up its own mind on what to believe is good and tells us to "keep our beliefs to ourselves".

We live **in** the world and while we need the 'mountain experience', our journey is to live **in** the world; to be the voice which speaks out on poor Government policy, which speaks out against the unjust treatment of asylum seekers, which applauds and promotes care of the environment.

Our challenge is to live with courage, to be the voice of justice, of compassion, of love, of forgiveness. It is to be the voice, the hands and the face of Jesus.

It takes courage to go to the mountain – to be open for transformation and it takes courage to leave the mountain to go out in the world and do what needs to be done.

But as disciples that is where Jesus leads us.

Adapted from "Calls us to Courage"

Faith and Life, Archdiocese of Brisbane. Transforming love, hope for the world. Lent to Pentecost program year B. Brisbane (Qld): Penfold Buscombe; 2005.

Leader:

There are a few minutes of quiet time now to think about what we have just listened to and to spend some time considering the questions for reflection on our handout sheets.

We Respond

Try to recall a 'mountaintop' experience ...

A time when you were filled with an overwhelming sense of God's presence

when this sense obliterated any other feelings or thoughts

when you were left with a sense of awe.

Think of a time when you have chosen to stay 'hidden' rather than speaking out?

Consider another time, when you did step forward.

In what way were these two occasions different?

Why did they each receive a different response from you?

Individual Prayer

Leader:

Our prayer opportunity today is a tactile prayer.

It is an opportunity to allow our hands to steer our prayer.

In the reflective and creative way of a potter I invite you to take your clay in your hands and begin to knead it.

Push it... pull it..... and stretch it.....

Roll it into a ball..... make it flat like a pancake.

As you work with the clay think about something in the world that challenges you....

Something that you know you need support and courage to address.

As you work with the clay, let it form something which represents your challenge.....

When your moulding is complete spend some time reflecting with God about your clay, what the shape is about, and the challenge it represents.

(Allow time in silence or with quiet music for people to work their clay)

Leader:

When you have made your prayer, place your symbol in a bag and pray in silence the prayer written on it.

O God,

I offer this to your keeping. I know it is too big for me

And so in moulding this shape I let go

Into you...Into faith...Into hope...Into love.

When you have made your prayer seal the bag.

If you wish to pray this prayer again simply remove the clay and again bring it before God in prayer or if you wish, remould the clay into a new intention.

Shared Prayers

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)

Go Forth

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us pray together...

As we go about our day O God,
As we strive to walk with Jesus
Remind us that we are the face of Christ,
Who is with us always.

May your grace, mercy and peace,
Bless us, protect us and transform us all,
This day, now and forever.

All: Amen

