

# People of Fidelity

## 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 capacity of FIDELITY.

The People of Fidelity prayer introduces participants to *A Personal Creed* as a style of prayer.

This prayer forms part of a series of 9 prayers that are based on the capacities of a Christian community as detailed in the *Catching Fire Spiritual Formation Framework*: Principle, Prayer, Presence, Welcome, Ritual, Journey, Purpose, Commitment, Fidelity.

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

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.

In each prayer there is an invitation for the Prayer Leader to share an aspect of their own experience. This is an invitation only and is not named in the participants' handout.

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

Gather - Listen - Respond - Go Forth

## ***People of Fidelity***

### Preparation beforehand:

- ✓ Print sufficient copies of the *Fidelity* handout for all staff from the end of this document.
- ✓ Print additional copies of the Leader guide for those assisting as readers, etc.
- ✓ Print sufficient copies of the [article \*Forgiveness and Other Acts of Love\* available here](#). (Double-sided A4)
- ✓ Ensure you have sufficient copies of the *Fidelity* prayer card to distribute towards the end of the prayer. (Included in the school's resource pack.)
- ✓ Prepare strips of paper, pens/textas and glue sticks, sticky tape or staplers to make the paper chain.
- ✓ Prepare a CD player and some quiet music.
- ✓ A bell or chime
- ✓ Identify three people to be Candle Lighters
- ✓ Identify one person as Bible bearer
- ✓ Sections identified as 'Leader' may be divided amongst different people but it is helpful to have a recognisable leader of the prayer.

### 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:

- ✓ Coloured cloth/s
- ✓ Three PrayerFire candles labelled 'Head', 'Heart' and 'Hands' (+ matches to light the candles)
- ✓ Display copies of *Fidelity* prayer cards
- ✓ Bible and a book stand or small easel to display the Bible
- ✓ Cross or crucifix

Approximate time required: 20 mins

## ***We Gather***

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

Leader: Our prayer today continues our focus on the Capacities of a Christian community. In today's prayer, we are called to be People of Fidelity who live out the best of the Catholic Christian educational tradition and stand together with all who work in the name of Catholic schooling.

Our prayer today will invite us to reflect on our Christian statement of belief – our Creed – and also on our personal beliefs about our work in Catholic schools.

Let's prepare ourselves to enter fully into this time of prayer together by pausing and allowing ourselves to be still and to rest in the presence of God.

*Ring a chime or bell then pause for a moment of silence. Ring the chime again to end the silence.*

Let's now begin by reminding ourselves 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)*

*Bible bearer reverently places the open Bible on the book stand in the prayer space.*

Leader: Let us pray together,

**All: God of faithfulness,  
You call us to be people of fidelity;  
honouring the best of the tradition we inherit.  
Remind us of all our brothers and sisters  
who share in the mission and ministry of Catholic schooling.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, our teacher. Amen**

Leader: Let us pray together, our declaration of faith - our Creed – that unites us with Catholic people throughout time and throughout the world.

**All:** I believe in one God, the Father, almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God,  
Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
through Him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:  
And by the Holy Spirit,

was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.  
For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
He suffered death and was buried.  
and rose again on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures:  
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified.  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.  
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church.  
We profess it in Christ Jesus.

**All: Amen.**

## ***We Listen***

Leader: Instead of listening to a reading from scripture today, I'd like to invite you to each quietly read and reflect on the extracts that you have from a book by Stephanie Dowrick.

*(Silence or quiet music while people read and reflect.)*

## ***We Respond***

Leader: To quote from what we've just read, "Fidelity asks of us that we have a sense of who we are ... that, through living observantly, we discover what our values are."

Those who work in Catholic schools have a strong sense of community among their fellow staff members and a bond with all others who work in Catholic schools.

This bond is forged in the unique and valuable nature of the work we do.

It is sacred work, because it is precious lives we nurture.

In undertaking this sacred work we are called to honour the ministry of each other and all those in the past and still to come who will have given their head, heart and hands to the work.

Standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before us and holding to our hearts the community gathered here, I want you to take a moment to name for yourself a belief that you personally hold about your work; your ministry; your vocation in Catholic schooling.

*(pause)*

In front of you, there are strips of paper. I'm going to invite you to take one of those strips of paper and write a word, draw a symbol or write in full the belief you hold.

When you have done that, we'll use the glue sticks / staplers / sticky tape to form a paper chain of our beliefs – our creed statement about our work.

*(allow time for people to write their personal belief statement and then form the strips of paper into loops and into an interlocking chain.)*

*(once formed, place the chain of beliefs into the prayer space. Keep the chain on display throughout the next week.)*

Leader: These are our beliefs. These are the beliefs of those gathered. We profess them in Christ Jesus.

## ***We Go Forth***

Leader: Let's draw our prayer to a close by praying together our closing blessing ...

**All: As we go about our day, O God;  
As we strive to walk with Jesus as people of Fidelity,  
Remind us that we do not work alone;  
We are part of a company of travellers.**

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

**Amen**

## ***People of Fidelity ... Believe***

## Nicene Creed

**All:** I believe in one God, the Father, almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible  
and invisible.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
consubstantial with the Father;  
through Him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven:  
And by the Holy Spirit,  
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake He was crucified  
under Pontius Pilate,  
He suffered death and was buried.  
and rose again on the third day,  
in accordance with the Scriptures:  
He ascended into heaven and is seated  
at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son,  
is adored and glorified.  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic,  
and apostolic Church.  
I confess one baptism  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Leader: This is our faith.  
This is the faith of the Church.  
We profess it in Christ Jesus.

**All:** Amen.

## *We Listen*

A reading from: Forgiveness and other acts of love. Stephanie  
Dowrick, (1997)

## *We Respond*

We are invited to name a belief that we hold about our work; our ministry; our vocation in Catholic schooling.

Leader: These are our beliefs. These are the beliefs of those gathered. We profess them in Christ Jesus.

All: Amen.

## *We Go Forth*

**All: As we go about our day, O God;  
As we strive to walk with Jesus  
as people of Fidelity,  
Remind us that we do not work alone;  
We are part of a company of travellers.**

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

*People of Fidelity - Believe*

## *Spirit of*

# Fidelity

## *We Gather*

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

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

**All: God of faithfulness,  
You call us to be people of fidelity;  
honouring the best of the tradition we inherit.  
Remind us of all our brothers and sisters  
who share in the mission and ministry  
of Catholic schooling.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, our teacher.**

Amen