

People of Journey

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 JOURNEY.

The People of Journey prayer introduces participants to the use of a *Finger Labyrinth* 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 Journey

Preparation beforehand:

- ✓ Print sufficient copies of the *Journey* handout for all staff from the end of this document. (Double-sided A4; colour copied if possible but will print well in black and white.)
- ✓ Print additional copies of the Leader guide for those assisting as readers, etc.
- ✓ Ensure you have sufficient copies of a circular Finger Labyrinth.
- ✓ A bell or chime
- ✓ Identify three people to be Candle Lighters
- ✓ Identify one person as Bible bearer
- ✓ Identify two people to be Readers
- ✓ 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 *Journey* prayer cards
- ✓ Bible and a book stand or small easel
- ✓ to display the Bible
- ✓ Cross or crucifix
- ✓ A3 *Journey* poster
- ✓ Copy of the 'Capacities Wheel'

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 Journey who are a part of the 'people of God' narrative and find a place in the wider Church.

In our prayer today we will remember the journey of faith on the road to Emmaus and we will ponder our personal journeys in Catholic education through the use of a personal labyrinth.

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: Companion God,
You call us to be people of journey.
You call us to enter into the story of your people
that stretches back through all of time.
Remind us that our journey of faith
is walked in and with this community.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, who walks with us. Amen**

We Listen

(Bible bearer takes the bible from the prayer space and hands it to Reader One.)

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

Now on that same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all the things that had happened.

While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognising him.

Reader Two: When have we failed to recognise Jesus' presence in our lives?
(Pause for a moment's quiet reflection)

Reader One: And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?"

They stood still, looking sad.

Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him,

"Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"

He asked them, "What things?"

They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us.

They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.'

Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!

Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?'

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

Reader Two: How might the scriptures help to nourish our life and help us to interpret our own story?

(Pause for a moment's quiet reflection)

Reader One: As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.
But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.'
So he went in to stay with them.
When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.
Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him; and he vanished from their sight.
They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?'
That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.
They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!'
Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reader Two: When have you experienced that moment of recognising the presence of God in your life; in nature; or in another person?

(Pause for a moment's quiet reflection)

Reader One: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

(Luke 24:13-35)

We Respond

Leader: You each have in front of you a labyrinth that we will use for our prayer response in just a moment.

Labyrinths have their origins in the tradition of pilgrimage journeys.

Pilgrimage has been an important part of the spiritual life for Christians throughout history. Christians see life itself as a journey: coming from God and returning to God. A pilgrimage is a symbol that is acted out in both the outward and homeward journeys.

Pilgrimage is found in all the great religions of the world. It is a journey both outwards to hallowed places and inwards to spiritual connection and purpose.

In the Middle Ages pilgrimages were very popular. Pilgrimage was long and very dangerous - not at all like a holiday! It may have taken many years. For many people, pilgrimage was made impossible by distance, time and expense.

As an alternative to undertaking the lengthy and costly pilgrimage, many important cathedrals in Europe constructed large-scale labyrinths. Labyrinths allowed people to still engage in the prayerful, symbolic act of pilgrimage without travelling for months or years.

Like a pilgrimage, the labyrinth represents a journey to our own centre and back again out into the world. The labyrinth is a metaphor for life's journey. It is a symbol that creates a sacred space and place and takes us out of our ego to '*that which is within.*'

Today, walking a labyrinth or following a finger labyrinth is used by people of various beliefs as a meditation or prayer tool.

At its most basic level, the labyrinth is a metaphor for the journey to the centre of your deepest self and back out into the world with a broadened understanding of who you are.

I'd now like you to place your labyrinth flat in front of you and place the index finger of your non-dominant hand at the entrance to the labyrinth. (*i.e. right-handed people use their left hand forefinger.*)

The labyrinth is not a race or competition. We are using it to help us engage in prayerful reflection. As we move very slowly through the labyrinth, I will invite you to reflect on some questions.

So, as you begin to slowly trace the path of the labyrinth with your finger, I invite you to turn your mind back to when you first started working in a Catholic school.

(pause)

From the journey of your time in Catholic education, call to mind a moment of great joy that is a highlight of that journey. Also call to mind someone who shared that journey with you at the time of joy. *(pause)*

Call to mind a time of sadness that has been part of that journey and again call to mind someone who shared that journey with you at the time. *(pause)*

When you reach the centre of the labyrinth, rest there for a moment and give thanks for the companions who have been part of your journey in Catholic schools.

(pause)

Now, as you slowly trace the path of the labyrinth back again ... how does your story or journey so far influence and inform the journey still ahead of you? *(pause)*

In which parts of your journey do you need Jesus to companion you? *(pause)*

And finally, as you come out of the labyrinth ... who would recognise you as a companion on their journey? ... How might you be a better companion on the journey with colleagues at school?

(Optional – leader invites participants to hold their labyrinth in two open hands and hold it up in reverence / as an offering, saying, "We offer our journeys to one another.")

We Go Forth

Leader: Let's now bless each other and our journeys with our final blessing...

**All: As we go about our day, O God;
As we strive to walk with Jesus as people of Journey,
Remind us that we make this journey in community
And we find you revealed in one another.**

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

Amen

Distribute the Quick Fire Prayer Card for this week, 'Journey' and remind the group of the invitation to continue the style of this week's prayer throughout the week.

Leader might like to invite the group to comment on the experience of using the labyrinth for their reflection and prayer. The leader might be able to share a personal experience of pilgrimage, walking a labyrinth or an experience of companioning or being companioned.

People of Journey ... Companion

We Listen

The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)

When have we failed to recognise Jesus' presence in our lives?

How might the scriptures help to nourish our life and help us to interpret our own story?

When have you experienced that moment of recognising the presence of God in your life; in nature; or in another person?

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

We Respond

Like a pilgrimage, the labyrinth represents a journey to our own centre and back again out into the world. The labyrinth is a metaphor for life's journey. It is a symbol that creates a sacred space and place and takes us out of our ego to 'that which is within.'



"Classical" or "Cretan" design, well-known in antiquity.
[Labyrinth graphic by AnonMoos / CC BY-SA](#)

We Go Forth

All: As we go about our day, O God;
As we strive to walk with Jesus as people of
Journey,
Remind us that we make this journey in community
And we find you revealed in one another.

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

Amen

Spirit of

Journey

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: Companion God,
You call us to be people of journey.
You call us to enter into the story of your
people that stretches back through all of time.
Remind us that our journey of faith is walked in
and with this community.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, who walks
with us. Amen