

# People of Presence

## 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 PRESENCE.

The People of Presence prayer introduces participants to journaling 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 Presence***

Preparation beforehand:

- ✓ Print sufficient copies of the Presence prayer 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 the Presence prayer card to distribute towards the end of the prayer. (Included in the school's resource pack.)
- ✓ It would be helpful to have on hand some spare pens and textas/crayons for the journaling exercise.
- ✓ 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:

This prayer is best conducted in an outdoor space. If the whole prayer is not conducted outside, it requires that participants are able to move into an outdoor area with ease for the Listen and Respond portion.

If gathering outside, you might keep the prayer space relatively simple. You may need to protect the candles from any breeze.

If gathering inside initially, 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 Presence prayer cards
- ✓ Bible and a book stand or small easel to display the Bible
- ✓ Cross or crucifix
- ✓ A3 Presence 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 (begins) our focus on the Capacities of a Christian community. In today's prayer, we are called to be People of Presence who recognise and give their attention to God's presence in the world, in those around us, and in our own lives.

The call to be People of Presence is a call to pay attention ... to attend ... to attend to our own needs; to attend to the needs of others; and to attend to the needs of the world.

The prayer style that we will use today is a form of journaling in response to the natural environment.

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 all creation,  
You call us to be people of presence.  
Help us to slow down and notice what we take for granted.  
Open our hearts and our minds to your presence:  
around us; in others; and in creation.**

**Renew within us a child-like wonder and awe.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Word made flesh. Amen**

## *We Listen and we Respond*

Leader: As People of Presence we are called to recognise and give attention to God's presence in the world, in those around us, and in our own lives.

Recognising this divine presence in ourselves, in others and in the world is a core belief of Christian faith.

When we are attentive to the world and to others, we are attentive to God.

Today, we are going to take a few minutes to be attentive in a particular way to God's presence in the natural environment around us.

The inside of your prayer sheet has a few prompts for being attentive.

I invite you to take five minutes alone to either sit or walk and be aware of the elements of nature around us every day.

After you've had five minutes being attentive, take another few minutes to journal inside your prayer sheet, either in words or images, about what it is that you noticed or what it prompted you to think about.

Please take this time by yourself and allow others to also be by themselves.

At the end of our time, I will ring the chime/bell to call us back together.

Make sure everyone has a copy of the prayer sheet and a pen or pencil. Participants find a space to sit or walk and be attentive to the natural environment.

At the end of the time, ring the chime/bell to call people back together.

Invite the group to break into 2s or 3s to share about what they noticed and where their reflection took them.

In thanking the group for their participation, the leader might take the opportunity to share a personal reflection on their own experience of being attentive in nature and being conscious of the presence of God.

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

## *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 Presence, Help us to notice your generous gifts all around us and help us to be fully present to those we encounter.**

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

**Amen**

## *People of Presence ... Attend*

## *We Listen and We Respond*

As People of Presence we are called to recognise and give attention to God's presence in the world, in those around us, and in our own lives.

When we are attentive to the world and others, we are attentive to God.

1. Take a walk or find somewhere to sit and be attentive to the natural world.
2. Take the time to 'notice' what you normally miss.
3. Take the time to appreciate God present in creation.
4. Take the time to be attentive to your senses.
5. Journal in response to what you have become attentive to in this time (write, draw, compose).

## *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 Presence, Help us to notice your generous gifts all around us and help us to be fully present to those we encounter.

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

## *Spirit of*

# Presence

## *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 all creation,  
You call us to be people of presence,  
Help us to slow down  
And notice what we take for granted.  
Open our hearts and our minds to your presence:  
around us; in others; and in creation.  
Renew within us  
a child-like wonder and awe.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Word made flesh.  
Amen**

*People of Presence - Attend*