

# People of Principle

## 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 PRINCIPLE.

The People of Principle prayer introduces participants to Interactive Prayer 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 Principle***

### Preparation beforehand:

- ✓ Print sufficient copies of the *Principle* handout for all staff. (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 *Principle* prayer card to distribute towards the end of the prayer. (Included in the school's resource pack.)
- ✓ Ensure you have a single A3 copy of each of the eight photo images and multiple smaller copies of each image. (Included in the school's resource pack.)
- ✓ A bell or chime
- ✓ Identify three people to be Candle Lighters
- ✓ Identify one person as Bible bearer
- ✓ Identify two 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)
- ✓ Bible and a book stand or small easel to display the Bible
- ✓ Cross or crucifix
- ✓ Display *Principle* prayer cards
- ✓ A3 *Principle* poster
- ✓ Copy of the 'Capacities Wheel'
- ✓ Around the outside of the prayer space or to one side, spread out and display the 8 x A3 photo images and place the multiple smaller images in front of the relevant A3 image.

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 begins (continues) our focus on the Capacities of a Christian community. In today's prayer, we are called to be People of Principle who live the gospel values of Jesus' vision.

You'll notice the images that are spread around for our prayer today. The style of prayer that we will use as part of our response today will see us using those images in a form of Interactive Prayer.

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 challenge and invitation,  
You call us to be people of principle;  
You call us into life in all its fullness;  
And you call us to live the values of your good news.  
Give us the strength to answer your call to wholeness.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, our model. 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 of Matthew.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.

Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*(short pause)*

Reader Two: We are called to HUMILITY – focusing on the poor and not status or riches.

*(short pause)*

Reader One: 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

*(short pause)*

Reader Two: We are called to EMPATHY – grieving over the injustice of the world.

*(short pause)*

Reader One: 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

*(short pause)*

Reader Two: We are called to SELF-RESTRAINT – getting angry but never getting aggressive.

*(short pause)*

Reader One: 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

*(short pause)*

Reader Two: We are called to RIGHTEOUSNESS – seeking justice, not vengeance, even for those we dislike.

*(short pause)*

Reader One: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

*(short pause)*

Reader Two: We are called to MERCY – extending compassion to all those in need.

*(short pause)*

Reader One: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

*(short pause)*

Reader Two: We are called to INTEGRITY – being whole-hearted in a desire to do what is right, not what is popular.

*(short pause)*

Reader One: 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

*(short pause)*

Reader Two: We are called to NON-VIOLENCE – working for peace in the midst of violence.

*(short pause)*

Reader One: 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*(short pause)*

Reader Two: We are called to PERSEVERANCE – suffering for just causes rather than inflicting suffering on others.

*(short pause)*

Reader One: The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Matthew 5:1-10;

<http://wecan.be/beattitudes/a-credo-for-today>)

## ***We Respond***

Leader: As we sit for a moment with that reading and interpretation of the Beatitudes, you will notice that we have a number of images that represent some of the gospel values that we are called to live if we are to be people of principle.

The style of prayer that we will use today is sometimes called *Interactive Prayer*. Very simply, it involves interacting with some medium and using that medium as a prompt for prayer.

Today, we are using images, but interactive prayer could also use music, art, colour, objects from nature, or almost anything at all that can be used as a stimulus for prayer.

So, for our prayer today, in a moment I'm going to invite you to move around and look at the different images, allowing them to challenge you and speak to you.

When you have found the image that challenges you or speaks to you most strongly about the gospel values we are called to live, pick up one of the smaller versions of the image and return to your place.

When you're back in your place, I'll give you the next direction.

*Allow time for people to move around and select an image. When the majority of people have chosen an image, continue...*

Leader: As you sit with your image, I'd like you to form a short prayer that is in response to, or inspired by, your image.

On your prayer sheet there are a few suggested stems that you might like to use to help form your prayer.

*e.g. God, give me the strength to ...; God, I give thanks for ...; God, help me to ...; God, give courage to those who ...*

*Allow a couple of minutes for people to formulate their prayer then continue ...*

Leader: I'm now going to invite you to place your card in the prayer space and as you do so, share your prayer. I'd encourage you to share your prayer aloud, but if you like you might just pray it silently.

*Allow time for everyone to place their card in the prayer space and share their prayer.*

## ***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 Principle,  
Open our hearts to the values of the gospel,  
that we might be transformed  
and transform the world.**

**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, 'Principle' and remind the group of the invitation to continue the style of this week's prayer throughout the week.*

*The leader might like to share a personal experience of how they use some form of stimulus (image, music, art, nature) to interact with as part of prayer or a personal experience of Principle in action.*

## ***People of Principle ... Transform***

## ***We Listen***

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 5:1-10):  
*The Sermon on the Mount*

Blessed are the poor in spirit

HUMILITY – focusing on the poor and not status or riches.

Blessed are those who mourn

EMPATHY – grieving over the injustice of the world.

Blessed are the meek

SELF-RESTRAINT – getting angry but never getting aggressive.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

RIGHTEOUSNESS – seeking justice, not vengeance, even for those we dislike.

Blessed are the merciful

MERCY – extending compassion to all those in need.

Blessed are the pure in heart

INTEGRITY – being whole-hearted in a desire to do what is right, not what is popular.

Blessed are the peacemakers

NON-VIOLENCE – working for peace in the midst of violence.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake

PERSEVERANCE – suffering for just causes rather than inflicting suffering on others.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(<http://wecan.be/beattitudes/>)

## *We Respond*



## *We Go Forth*

**All: As we go about our day, O God;  
As we strive to walk with Jesus  
as people of Principle,  
Open our hearts to the values of the gospel,  
that we might be transformed  
and transform the world.**

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

***People of Principle -  
Transform***

## *Spirit of*

# Principle

## *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 challenge and invitation,  
You call us to be people of principle;  
You call us into life in all its fullness;  
And you call us to live the values  
of your good news.  
Give us the strength  
to answer your call to wholeness.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus,  
our model. Amen**