

People of Purpose

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 PURPOSE.

The People of Purpose prayer introduces participants to *The Examen* 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 Purpose

Preparation beforehand:

- ✓ Print sufficient copies of the *Purpose* 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 *Purpose* prayer card to distribute towards the end of the prayer. (Included in the school's resource pack.)
- ✓ Ensure you have sufficient printed copies of the 'gift box' 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
- ✓ Prepare the Principal/Leadership team for their role in the Go Forth section.
- ✓ 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)
- ✓ Copy of the 'Capacities Wheel'
- ✓ Bible and a book stand or small easel to display the Bible
- ✓ Cross or crucifix
- ✓ A3 *Purpose* poster
- ✓ Display copies of the 'gift box' image.
- ✓ Display *Purpose* prayer cards

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 Purpose with a strong sense of personal and professional vocation.

You will notice the 'gift' symbols arranged in our prayer space today. When we are fully people of purpose we act out of love towards those around us and acting out of love is a real gift to the other person.

Our prayer style today will be a form of the Ignatian *Examen* prayer which is used to prayerfully review your day or sometimes a week in your life.

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 love,
You call us to be people of purpose.
Open our eyes to the greater significance of our work:
giving witness to your love
and transforming the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, your gift of love. Amen**

We Listen

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

Reader One: An adaptation from the First Letter of John.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

All: We love because God first loved us.

Reader One: God sent God's only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us.

All: We love because God first loved us.

Reader One: Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ... If we love one another, God lives in us, and God's love is perfected in us.

All: We love because God first loved us.

Reader One: God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

All: We love because God first loved us.

Reader One: There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

All: We love because God first loved us.

Reader One: The commandment we have is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

All: We love because God first loved us.

Reader One: Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

(Adapted from 1 John 4:7-12, 16b-21)

Leader: I'd invite you now to close your eyes for a moment.
With your eyes closed, I'd like you to call to mind an experience from your time at this school or some other school in which you've worked.
I'd like you to think of an occasion where you have seen genuine love in action. It might have been an action of love towards yourself or it might have been an action of love that you witnessed or became aware of.
Bring that experience to mind and sit with it for a moment.
(Pause and allow people to remember.)

Thank you. You might like to open your eyes again.

I wonder if anyone would like to share with us all the essence of that expression of love that came to mind?

(If no one has shared after 15 or 20 secs, the leader should be ready to share an experience – or have one or two others already prepared for this.)

(After the sharing, the leader thanks people for their contributions and for the diverse picture of love that has been painted for the group.)

Leader: Let's listen now to a short Gospel passage that reminds us that the love we give to others is the measure of the love that comes back to us.

(Reader One hands the Bible to Reader Two.)

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

Jesus said, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.
Do not judge, and you will not be judged;
do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.
Forgive, and you will be forgiven;
give, and it will be given to you.
A good measure, pressed down,
shaken together, running over,
will be put into your lap;
for the measure you give
will be the measure that comes back to you."

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

(Luke 6:36-38)

We Respond

Leader: Some of you might already be familiar with a style of prayer that emerges from the Ignatian, or Jesuit, tradition known as the *Examen*. It is a form of reflective prayer that invites us to recognise the movement and work of the Spirit in our daily lives. It is a style of prayer that many people find helpful to pray on a daily or weekly basis and you can do it almost anywhere and at any time. What we're going to do now is a simple version of the *Examen*.

Firstly, I'd invite you to sit comfortably and close your eyes.
Take a moment to recall that you are in the presence of God.
Be conscious of God's presence around you and within you.

(Some variation of the following may be required, depending on which day of the week your prayer is being conducted.)

Take a moment to let your mind roam back over the last day or so at school. Just touch very briefly on the wide variety of interactions with students, parents and colleagues you have had over that time – some positive; some possibly negative. *(Pause.)*

We now call on the Holy Spirit to give us the strength, the wisdom and the courage to look at these experiences with God's eyes, not just our own, so that we might learn from them and grow as people of purpose. *(Pause.)*

Think back now over the experiences and interactions of the last couple of days.

Where did you receive an expression of love in your work?
Where did you demonstrate love in your work?

(Allow a couple of minutes for thoughtful reflection.)

Now, take the time to offer these experiences and thoughts prayerfully to God.
(Pause.)

Take a moment now to look forward to the day ahead (*or tomorrow*) and anticipate the interactions that you will have. What opportunities will exist for you to experience and also to express love?

Ask God to help you with this day that lies ahead and to help you make the most of the opportunities for giving and receiving love.

(Allow a couple of minutes for thoughtful reflection.)

When you're ready, open your eyes and we'll continue

We Go Forth

Leader: As a reminder of the gift that we are to one another when we act out of love, I'm now going to ask (Principal and/or other leadership members) to present each of us with one of the gift symbols. I'd encourage you to keep the symbol in a really visible place for yourself throughout the coming week as a reminder of the call to be People of Purpose, acting out of love.

(Principal and/or others present the gift symbols to each person, saying, "(Name), We are People of Purpose.")

Leader: Let's now pray our closing blessing together...

**All: As we go about our day, O God;
As we strive to walk with Jesus as people of Purpose,
Remind us of our vocation
to transform the world with love.**

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

People of Purpose ... Love

We Listen

Reader: An adaptation from the First Letter of John.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

All: We love because God first loved us.

Reader: God sent God's only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us.

All: We love because God first loved us.

Reader: Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ... If we love one another, God lives in us, and God's love is perfected in us.

All: We love because God first loved us.

Reader: God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

All: We love because God first loved us.

Reader: there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

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All: We love because God first loved us.

Reader: Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

(Adapted from 1 John 4:7-12, 16b-21)

Think of an occasion where you have seen genuine love in action.

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus said, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure that comes back to you."

The Gospel of the Lord. All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ. (Luke 6:36-38)

We Respond

The Examen 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
Purpose,
Remind us of our vocation
to transform the world with love.**

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

Spirit of

Purpose

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 love,
You call us to be people of purpose.
Open our eyes to the greater significance of our work:
giving witness to your love and transforming the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, your gift of love.
Amen**

People of Presence - Attend