

THY KINGDOM COME
THEPRAYER

**Creating a prayer
session for young
people – a guide and
practical resource for
youth workers**

Created by

Youthscape

as part of the resources for
Thy Kingdom Come
on Pentecost Sunday 2024



About this resource

On Sunday 19th May 2024, young people across the UK and beyond will be joining together in prayer as part of The Kingdom Come 2024.

This resource helps you create a 45 minute session for a youth group as part of Thy Kingdom Come activities this Pentecost.

It's based on The Youthscape Prayer Band, a simple daily reminder for young people to develop the habit of prayer.

About The Youthscape Prayer Band

The Youthscape Prayer Band is a fantastic new way to help young people develop the practice of daily prayer. It's a physical and practical reminder of six types of prayer with the simple challenge to complete the circle - and all six prayers - through each day.

The Prayer Band has five different coloured beads, and a small silver cross. Each marks an approach to prayer drawn from Christian tradition and Scripture.

Confession - is a prayer where we acknowledge and repent from our sins. Through these prayers of confession, we come clean with God about our mistakes and our need for God's grace and forgiveness

Praise – is when we acknowledge who God is and what He has done. We are thankful for God's blessings in our lives and we recognise God's character and what it means for us as Christians.

Our world – Prayer isn't just for our own needs or the people closest to us. As Christians we pray for the planet and for people all over the world, especially those caught up in suffering, war, persecution and injustice.

Friends and family – We pray for those we share our lives with – at home, at school or college, in our church and community. We pray for those we love and care about, and we pray about any relationships that are difficult or painful.

Me – We pray for ourselves and our own needs. Not just the practical needs we have, but the decisions we have to make, the ways we want to change and grow, and the kind of person we want to become. Sometimes we simply tell God how we feel, knowing he will understand.

Listening to God – Prayer is two-way communication so it means we also stop to listen to God. He speaks in different ways to us – through the Bible, through others or simply in our own hearts and minds. Prayer isn't complete without space for God to speak.



Three options for creating a prayer session for your youth group

Option 1: Prayer meeting – ready-to-use session

You will use the prayers and plan provided in this resource to create a session for your youth group to hold on Pentecost Sunday.

This option uses the template provided but, of course, you can adapt and change it to suit your youth group and context.

If you decide to use this option, you will need to set up a room where young people can sit comfortably for the session and where there is a screen if you decide to use any video or slides.

Option 2: Prayer meeting – designed by young people

You will work with young people in the group to plan and create the session – so they are not simply participating in it but have put it together themselves.

This option requires some pre-planning in the weeks before Pentecost with young people so you may need to change your planned schedule to allow the space for this to happen.

If you decide to support young people to create this session, you might consider running it twice – once for the young people on Pentecost Sunday and perhaps then also for the wider church with the young people leading.

Option 3: Prayer stations

You will create six different stations in a room or several rooms. Young people will visit each station and complete an activity. They can visit the stations in any order and stay at each one as long as they choose.

This option requires more preparation because you will need to design and decorate each station, but it gives young people autonomy in how they will interact with the content.

If you decide to set this up in one room – perhaps a church hall or main worship area, you will need to set up each station in a part of the room far enough from the other stations so that young people do not disturb each other.

Option 1:

Prayer meeting – ready-to-use session

1. CROWDBREAKER

(5 mins)

Start with a simple game or activity that warms everyone up.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

(2 mins)

Introduce the session and explain how it's going to work – and what you're asking everyone to do. This might be a good place to remind people they will be some opportunities to prayer quietly themselves but also out loud – though no one is going to be forced to do so!

Remind the group that anyone can talk to God. He is close by and longs to hear our prayers. No one is excluded from the opportunity to pray.

3. CONFESSION

(6 mins)

Start by explaining to everyone that confession is a prayer where we acknowledge and repent from our sins. Through these prayers of confession, we come clean with God about our mistakes and our need for God's grace and forgiveness.

Ask everyone in the group to briefly think about ONE thing they know they should do less of and ONE thing they know they should do more of.

Read Psalm 51, verses 1 to 10 in a contemporary translation as a prayer.

OR

Use this prayer of confession from The Church of England which has a response that everyone says together at the end of each section.

God our Father,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins.

For turning away from you,
and ignoring your will for our lives;
Father, forgive us:
All save us and help us.

For behaving just as we wish,
without thinking of you;
Father, forgive us:
All save us and help us.

For failing you by what we do
and think and say;
Father, forgive us:
All save us and help us.
For letting ourselves be drawn away from you
by temptations in the world about us;
Father, forgive us:
All save us and help us.

For living as if we were ashamed to belong to your Son;
Father, forgive us:
All save us and help us.

4. PRAISE

(6 mins)

Explain that praise is when we acknowledge who God is and what He has done. We are thankful for God's blessings in our lives and we recognise God's character and what it means for us as Christians.

Place a large sheet of flip-chart paper in the middle of the room with the words 'God, you are..' written in the middle. Hand out pens.

Ask young people to write on the sheet things about God that mean something to them. You may want to give some suggestions – like 'loving', 'powerful' or 'everywhere'. You could play some music quietly whilst young people complete this activity. It doesn't matter if the same words are repeated.

Once everyone has had a turn, take some time to read through together the words that have been written. You could ask if the person who wrote some of them would like to say why they felt that word was important to them.

OR

Focus on thanksgiving alongside praise, and use the same activity above but ask young people to write down things they want to thank God for in their lives.

Once this activity has been completed, ask if one of the young people would read this simple prayer of thanks on behalf of everyone:

Lord I thank you for the blessings in my life:
For beautiful summer days

For music
For holidays
For my favourite foods
For fun hanging out with friends
For each one of those friends and what they mean to me
For school (sometimes) and the chance to learn
For people who care for me
For you and your love for me
For all these good things and more
All Amen.

5. OUR WORLD

(6 minutes)

This section focuses on prayers for the wider world. Share with the group that prayer isn't just for our own needs or the people closest to us. As Christians we pray for the planet and for people all over the world, especially those caught up in suffering, war, persecution and injustice.

Before the session use masking tape to create a simplified outline of the world on the floor of the room you're using – it obviously works better on a hard floor. Aim for it to be at least 2 metres square. This is quite an undertaking (!) and you may need to simplify the main continents and shapes. But it's worth the effort!

Provide tea lights for everyone – LED battery operated tea lights are available cheaply online – and explain you're going to create some time and space for young people to think about the different places in the world where there is suffering or need. When they have thought of somewhere that means something to them – perhaps they have seen something about it on social media or heard about it some other way – then they can go and place their tea light on that part of the world. As they do so, ask them to whisper a prayer for whatever the need might be.

OR

Instead of a map, place A4 photos on the floor showing different needs around world. Take some time to share with young people what situation each photo represents. Then complete the same activity as above, asking young people to place a tea light on the photo where they want to say a prayer for that situation.

6. FRIENDS + FAMILY

(6 minutes)

Move on to the fourth of the six types of prayer – for friends and family. Remind young people that We pray for those we share our lives with – at home, at school or college, in our church and community. We pray for those we love and care about, and we pray about any relationships that are difficult or painful.

Ask young people to think of a friend they know who might be facing something difficult or simply need our prayers. Ask two or three young people to say this prayer out loud – it doesn't mention the name of

young people and only they will know who they are praying for. The prayer can be repeated by different young people with everyone saying 'Amen' at the end.

Loving God,
I pray for my friend right now.
I pray that you will help them
with the struggles they are going through.
For you know exactly what they need in this moment.
Draw near to them, and let them feel your presence.
Open their eyes, ears, and heart to you.
All Amen.

OR

Hand out small pieces of paper to everyone – two or three each – together with pens. Ask everyone to write the names of friends and family they want to prayer for, one on each piece of paper. When the name is written then fold the paper and place it in the middle of the room.

Once everyone is finished, you will have a small pile of folded papers on the floor. Gather round the pile as a group and pause for moment of silence to think about the names that are there. They represent those we love and care for in this world, and perhaps even those we struggle to love and care for.

Say a prayer together over the pile of papers:

Father God,
We pray for these friends and family.
For those of them who do not yet know your love.
For those of them who need comfort and support.
For those of them we are close to and for those who are distant, for whatever reason.
Lord help us to be a better friend
and a better member of our family.
Show us how to share your love and joy.
All Amen.

7. ME

(6 mins)

Explain that we pray for ourselves and our own needs. Not just the practical needs we have, but the decisions we have to make, the ways we want to change and grow, and the kind of person we want to become. Sometimes we simply tell God how we feel, knowing He will understand.

Hand out paper to everyone, together with pens, and ask them to write three things on their paper:

SOMETHING THEY WANT GOD'S HELP WITH IN THEIR LIVES
SOMETHING THEY WANT TO THANK GOD FOR ABOUT THEIR LIVES
SOMETHING THEY WISH WAS DIFFERENT ABOUT THEIR LIVES

When they've finished, ask everyone to fold their paper into a paper plane. Place a bucket in the centre of the room and invite everyone to send their prayers to God by aiming to get the plane in the bucket. (There's no deep theological point being made here, just a chance to do something a little fun).

OR

Introduce this prayer attributed to St Patrick in the 5th century.

Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit,
Christ where I arise,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks to me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.
Amen.

Project the prayer on a screen or give copies out to everyone and have different young people say each line.

8. LISTENING TO GOD

(6 mins)

The final section is a reminder that prayer is not a one-way list of requests to God, it's a conversation. Part of growing as a Christian is learning to listen to God's voice. Remind young people that He speaks in different ways to us - through the Bible, through others or simply in our own hearts and minds. Prayer isn't complete without space for God to speak.

Ask one of the young people to say this prayer on behalf of everyone:

Holy Spirit, we need your help.
We really want to hear from you, God.
Holy Spirit, come and help us.
Give us eyes to see and ears to hear.
Take away the distractions, Lord.
Take away the pressure.
Let us simply hear what you have to say.
Speak to us through the Bible.
Speak to us through church.
Speak to us through others.
Speak to us in our hearts.
Lord we are listening - what do you want to say to us?
All Amen.

OR

Place on the walls around the room a selection of 10 or so different Bible verses, each one printed on A4 paper. Choose encouraging and positive verses that will be a good place to start for a young person. Ask them to walk around the room looking at each verse and ask them to pray as they go that God would highlight to them a verse to pay special attention to today. Reassure young people this isn't meant to be

a test, and they don't need to 'feel' anything, but they should also be open to a sense that God is speaking to them through one of the verses.

Give a few minutes for young people to walk around, perhaps playing some worship music in the background.

If appropriate, once the activity is completed, you could ask if anyone would like to share which verse they chose and why.

9. FINAL PRAYER

(2 mins)

Finish with the Lord's Prayer together:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Option 2:

Prayer meeting – designed by young people

Youth activities are often richer and deeper when they're created alongside young people not just for them. Of course, sometimes that's not possible but, if you can, you might want to consider working with some or all of the young people in your group to design a prayer session together.

It can help to use the six types of prayer as a starting point – it gives some structure to the session. You could also look together at the ideas in the ready-to-use session and see which ones, if any, young people would like to use or adapt. That may be enough to get everyone going and the ideas may flow from there!

Remember the six types of prayer are:

CONFESSION

PRAISE

OUR WORLD

FRIENDS + FAMILY

ME

LISTENING TO GOD

Young people could think about:

- What activities might work for each of these sections.
- Writing their own prayers for some or all of the sections.
- Choosing prayers they've read or used before and really like

In doing so they should also think about:

- Keeping everyone engaged through the session
- Giving opportunities for everyone to prayer, but only if they want to
- Deciding how much of the session people will be sitting and how much they will be moving around or active

Option 3:

Prayer meeting – prayer stations

Perhaps the most ambitious version of this session is creating prayer stations around a large room or series of rooms.

You can base each station on the activities described in the ready-to-use session. They may need a little adaption, but they will work as well for prayer stations as in a session together:

Ideas for stations:

CONFESSION: Record five or six different young people reading the prayer from Psalm 51. Put a track together a few minutes long and have it playing on a loop at the station. Display the prayer on a large sheet of paper and invite people to read along and make their prayer something personal to them.

PRAISE: Use the flip-chart sheet with 'God you are...' as the centre of the station and provide pens for young people to write on it.

OUR WORLD: Use the map of the world and the tealight activity for this station. You could also have some appropriate images or video playing on a screen, or add photos around the station.

FRIENDS + FAMILY: This station will work well if you have a supply of small pieces of paper and invite young people to complete the same activity as the ready-to-use meeting – writing the names of those they want to pray for and placing them folded in the pile. You can also display the prayer for this section and ask young people to say this once they have placed their paper on the pile.

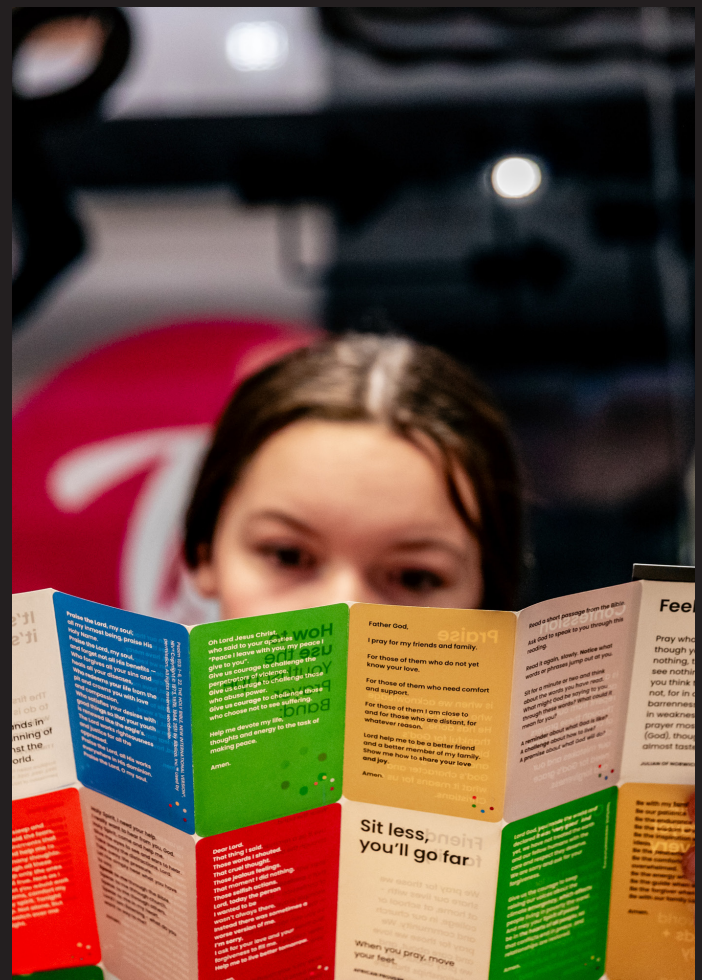
ME: The paper plane activity can be used for this station and create some fun alongside a more serious reflection about areas in our lives that we want to talk about to God in prayer.

LISTENING TO GOD: Display the Bible verses on A4 paper around the station. Give each young person three self-adhesive dot stickers. Ask them to read around the different verses and place a dot on any of them that they feel speak to them and through which God may be speaking.

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