

# COMMON PRAYER

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## CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of the downloadable 622 service booklet
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: Clock or watch with second hand for timing
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

## ICE BREAKER: FOREIGN FILM DUB

Have the group come up with pairs of ideas and languages. (For example: “Tourists on a beach discover buried treasure / Japanese” or “Firefighter rescues goldfish from burning building / German”. Assign two actors and two interpreters (see note below about group sizes). The actors act out the scene, pretending to speak in the foreign language. The interpreters make up English translations to go with whatever the actors are doing. This is usually very funny, but it can also be quite impressive when a group manages to sync well. Spend a few moments debriefing afterwards to give teens a chance to consider what worked and what didn’t, what was difficult, what was funny, etc., focusing particularly on what was needed for groups to be most “in sync”.

THIS GAME IS TRADITIONALLY DONE WITH TWO ACTORS, TWO INTERPRETERS AND AN AUDIENCE (WHICH SUPPLIES THE SCENE AND LANGUAGE), BUT IF YOUR NUMBERS ARE SMALL YOU CAN DO IT WITHOUT AN AUDIENCE AND WITH JUST ONE ACTOR AND ONE INTERPRETER. FOR LARGER GROUPS, TIME SCENES TO GIVE EVERYONE A CHANCE EITHER TO ACT OR INTERPRET. FOR SMALLER GROUPS, SWITCH ROLES, LANGUAGES AND SCENE IDEAS A FEW TIMES.

IF YOUR TEENS ARE CONFIDENT WITH IMPROVISATION GAMES, HAVE THEM COME UP WITH JUST A TITLE (“THE GOLDFISH RESCUE” OR “BURIED TREASURE”) INSTEAD OF A FULL SCENARIO.

## 622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

## DISCUSSION: WHY BOTHER WITH EACH OTHER?

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- Can you think of some times when you’d prefer to be alone? How about some times when you’d rather not be alone? What kind of people do you prefer to spend time with?
- In the Church, there are lots of different people. Suggest some ways in which they are different, and some things they might have in common.
- The writer of the New Testament epistle to the Hebrews tells Christians not to neglect meeting together (10:25). Why do you think that might be?

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*A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):*

- *We all have times when we want to be alone and times when we want to be with others. We need both time alone and time with others in order to be healthy. We usually enjoy the company of people that we have something in common with, shared interests or values, but that doesn't mean we only want to be with people who are just like us. Sometimes the people we admire the most are people who have gifts and abilities that we ourselves lack, so they balance us out.*
- *People in the Church come from every demographic. We have different ages and are at different stages of life. Some are married and some are single, some are students or workers or unemployed people. We come from different nationalities and ethnicities, etc. What we have in common is Jesus. We come together to worship, to pray, to serve, and to encourage one another in our common faith.*
- *Christians need each other. Together we form "the body of Christ" – we all have different gifts and abilities that we are meant to use to build each other up (1 Cor 12). When we stop meeting together, we lose the support that we are supposed to both give to and receive from others in the Church.*

## THE LESSON: 2 TIMOTHY 1

The first part of the lesson begins with a brief explanation of common prayer in the Church which can be read aloud. You may wish to pause so that the teens can ask any questions they might have about that before moving on to the introduction to today's text. Next the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

Before the Christian Church began, it was the custom of ancient Israel to pray together using words that the whole community could identify with: the psalms. When we talk about "common" prayer, like the prayers we find in the Book of Common Prayer, what we mean is that these are prayers which all believers have "in common". We can say these prayer together or alone and be reminded that we are not isolated in our faith, but belong to the family of God. This family does not just include the people present at our church or meeting, but it is a body that stretches across time and space. So even if we are saying these prayers alone in our bedroom, there is a sense in which we are also praying with many other Christians around the world, and also joining with the tradition of saints and martyrs who have gone before us.

If you are not in the habit of praying at all or if you are used to making up your own prayers, using prayer book prayers can take some getting used to. But keep in mind that, "just as a great love song expresses the feelings of thousands who are in love, so a great prayer can find an echo in our own hearts. It is able to speak for us as if the words were our very own". (Sue Careless, *Discovering the Book of Common Prayer: A Hands-On Approach*)

Questions? Comments?

In the Apostle Paul's second letter to the young Christian leader Timothy, he wrote urging that all sorts of prayers be made for all people. This would be a tall order for us to keep on our own, which is why it's important to remember that we never pray in isolation.

Refer to 2 Timothy 1:1-4.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

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- Summarize some of the ways in which common prayers (such as we find in the BCP) can help us. (*Teens can refer to the first two paragraphs of the lesson or offer some thoughts of their own*).
- What are the different types of prayer that Paul mentions in today's text from 2 Timothy? What do those words mean?
- What are some specific things that Paul suggests should be prayed for?
- Are there things that you feel you often forget to pray about? What kinds of things are they?

*A few notes and reflections for reference:*

- *Common prayers can remind us that we are not alone when we pray. They can help us to find just the right words.*
- *We are urged to pray prayers of: supplication, which means requests for ourselves; intercessions, which are requests for others; and thanksgivings, which are prayers of gratitude.*
- *We are told to pray for all people, for world leaders, peace, quiet, godliness and dignity in the lives of believers.*
- *Many of us, when we pray, are most aware of our own immediate needs. We may forget to pray even for those family members and friends we love. But also, we may forget to pray for those people who are not as intimately connected to us: our church leaders, teachers, political leaders, and many of the others with whom we come in contact. There are "common prayers" in the Prayer Book that can help.*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

## PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY "AT-HOME CHALLENGE" IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

At home, find a quiet space and spend some time praying with the Book of Common Prayer. (If you don't have a hard copy, you can find the text online here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline>). Consider the exhortation in 2 Timothy to make "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings... for all people". This is a good opportunity to pray for people and situations that you might sometimes overlook or forget about.

If you don't know where to start, try flipping to the back of the book where you'll find a section called "Forms of Prayer to be Used in Families" (page 728). There is another section called "Prayers and Thanksgivings" starting on page 39 that contains a great variety of additional prayers.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

*O God, our refuge and strength, who art the author of all godliness: Be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of thy Church; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (COLLECT FOR THE TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, BCP PAGE 256)

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## 622 (AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE "PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS" SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the "Grace", the final prayer in the booklet.

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### 2 TIMOTHY 1: **FOR ALL PEOPLE**

<sup>1</sup>First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup>for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup>This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, <sup>4</sup>who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.