People of Commitment

Introduction - for the Prayer Leader

Dear Prayer Leader,

Thanks for leading this prayer based on the capacity of COMMITMENT.

The People of Commitment prayer introduces participants to Intercessory 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 Commitment

Preparation beforehand:

✓ Print sufficient copies of the Commitment handout for all staff from the Staff PrayerFire CD. (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 Commitment prayer card to distribute towards the end of the prayer. (Included in the school’s resource pack.)
✓ Prayer Intentions book. (Included in the school’s resource pack.)
✓ Slips of coloured paper for the intercessory prayer. (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 one Reader
✓ 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)
✓ Cross or crucifix
✓ Display Commitment prayer cards
✓ Bible and a book stand or small easel to display the Bible
✓ A3 Commitment poster
✓ Copy of the ‘Capacities Wheel’
✓ Display the Prayer Intentions book

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 our focus on the Capacities of a Christian community. In today’s prayer, we are called to be People of Commitment with a passion for making a difference in the world through our vocation and witness.

Today we will listen to a reflection on the power of teaching and our prayer style will be a form of Intercessory Prayer: praying for others.

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 passion, You call us to be people of commitment; making a difference in our world through our work in this school. Set alight the fire within us that we may live out our convictions with our head, our heart and our hands. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our teacher. Amen
The Power of Teaching

Reader One: I feel sometimes powerless and small, overwhelmed and inadequate, engulfed in thoughts and feelings that perhaps what I am doing is insignificant, that my life's pursuit, that my teaching, is futile.

And I say "Who am I to change the world? Who am I to think that I can make a difference?"

And then I reflect on the young people under my charge, and I think about my role and about what power, if any, I have.

And I find that I am not devoid of resources or strength, that I am, indeed, endowed with talent and ability and strength.

I do, after all, decide what will be taught. And it is largely my prerogative when it will be taught and how, and where, and why it will be taught.

To a great extent I determine the curriculum. And the richness and intensity with which it is taught is in my hands.

I have that power.

And I have the ability to think and to plan and then to implement; to select from my repertoire of skills the one best suited to my purpose, yet still able to adapt myself to student needs with the dexterity of an artisan.

Most adults would be fortunate to perhaps last out one day overseeing a roomful of kids. My orchestration makes enlightened music of the chaotic din.

I guess you could say this is power!

I have the power. I have the vigour to motivate, the fullness to laugh, the courage to control. I have the power to uplift and to create and, when I'm red-hot, the intensity to inspire! I can form my students into lines or circles, triangles or squares.

With just one look I can let a student know that everything is well with the world and that he or she has a perfect right to aim for the very top of it all!

And I can use my hands: turned up to lift them up; or turned down to keep them down.

What power do I have in the system? In the eyes of my students, I am the system.

And I have the power to lead them places they did not know existed, to build them back up when society tears them down, to catapult them higher than I myself will ever reach; and to push them gently, but assuredly, into the unknown, painting for them in broad brush strokes a future I can never hope to see.
And every day I have the wherewithal in my classroom to build walls or to build bridges between the generations.

And it is within my discretion to design a rigid, competitive structure or a cooperative, helping network in my classroom.

I even affect the weather! What I do every day determines whether their world will be indifferent cold or sweathouse hot, or warm, inviting, alive and vibrant with learning.

I have an awesome power.

If I succeed I pass the knowledge about what is important to the next generation. And, because their world will be the better for my labour mine is an important service to a just cause.

Mine is a present power and a future power. If I can reach the children of today I touch the children of tomorrow. Mine is a giving power.

All that I know about the world and about how one learns about the world I must give.

And in the giving of my gift, I receive my greatest power: the power to teach my students to learn how to learn.

Empowering them is of the essence, for if their teacher feels sometimes powerless and small, how insignificant must they sometimes feel?

And when the last day comes, and it is time for us to part we gather together, say our good-byes, and separate.

After that there is sadness but a certain contentment that I am sure only teachers feel.

It is a happiness that comes from knowing that a part of us forever, transplanted, lives... No, thrives! inside of each individual who has gazed at us across tired brown desks and called us "Teacher."

Even on a down day - when I'm feeling puny and insignificant - I try hard to remember that all it takes is one person - just one person! - to make a difference in their lives.

And, there is no reason in the world that that person cannot and should not be me! I can make a difference! That is my power. That is the power to teach.

By Dr. Frank Trujillo

www.inspiringteachers.com/classroom_resources/inspirational_humorous
Leader: Our prayer response today is going to be a form of Intercessory Prayer – praying for others.

If we are to be people of Commitment, passionate about making a difference in the world, one of the ways we will make this difference is through prayer that is not only for our own needs but also for the needs of others.

I invite you to close your eyes for a moment and call to mind just two people who need your prayers. It might be a student; a member of staff; a family member; friend; or even a public figure that comes to mind. They might need your prayer because of a situation you know they are dealing with; they might need your prayer because you are struggling to understand them.

Simply bring those two people briefly to mind. (pause)

You have two pieces of paper. On each piece, I invite you to write the name or initials of one of the people for whom you wish to pray or perhaps a symbol of what you want to pray about.

(allow time for people to write names)

Place the two pieces of paper in front of you or in your lap and sit comfortably.

Take a few deep, slow, cleansing breaths and allow yourself to descend deep into the centre of your being ... be conscious that you are in the presence of God.

Now take in your hand the name of the first person and look at the name for a moment.

Silently name the person and what it is that you are praying for. Don't try to censor or carefully construct your prayer, just lay it out before God. (pause)

Now become silent in your mind. Allow a visual image of God surrounding the person to emerge in your imagination. It could be a bright light, or Jesus holding the person in his arms, or any image that presents itself to you. In your mind's eye, see the person becoming whole and reconciled in the situation. Feel the grace of God transforming the person or the situation. (pause)

In your heart, ask that God's desire and purpose for the person be fulfilled. Release the person into the fullness of God's care. Leave the outcome in God's hands. (pause)

Now, I invite you to repeat that process for the other person you have identified. (pause while people pray silently)

After sufficient time has passed ...

Thank you. I’d like to invite you all to fold the names of those people and place them into our prayer space.
Distribute the Quick Fire Prayer Card for this week, ‘Commitment’ and remind the group of the invitation to continue the style of this week’s prayer throughout the week.

Point out the Prayer Intentions book and explain that it will remain on display throughout the coming week. All staff are invited to add names and intentions into the book at any time. The Prayer Intentions book should be placed in the prayer space of future staff prayer times and people encouraged to continue to add to it throughout the year.

The Leader may wish to share an experience of being moved to pray for another person or an experience of having others pray for them.

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 Commitment,
Open our eyes to our capacity to make a difference.
Open our eyes to the needs of those around us.

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

Amen

People of Commitment ... Make a difference