

PEACE PRAYER SERVICE

Leader's Notes



This prayer service is designed for secondary schools, youth groups and other communities to reflect on and pray for peace.

Please adapt and/or use this prayer service in a way that best suits your purposes. If you do edit this resource, please ensure content and photos from this resource remain with the appropriate credit to Caritas Australia and the photographers.

Theme: Peace

Materials Required: Scripts for each reader, a candle, Peace Prayer Service PowerPoint

Desired outcomes: For participants to reflect on what peace-building means and Jesus' teaching about peace.

Time allocation: 20 minutes

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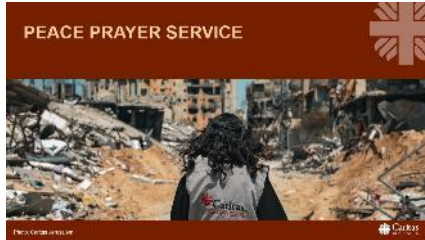
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[Slide 2] Introduction

Leader: Welcome. As we gather, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the _____ people. We acknowledge and offer our respect to their continuing culture and the contribution they make in the life of this region.

We see pictures of conflict almost every day on the TV or internet. We have all watched recent fighting in Gaza and in many other places around the world such as Ukraine and Sudan. We remember the people who have lost their lives or been injured in conflicts, and the families that have been left without food, water, shelter or medical care.

We gather around the person who brings together all the nations of the world, as one family – Jesus, the Light of the world. Jesus said to his disciples, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. A peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you.”

Today we gather to pray for peace in our world. We begin in the name of the +Father, and of the +Son, and of the +Holy Spirit. Amen



[Slide 3] Reader 1:

Loving God,

We gather here together to pray for peace. Our hearts are breaking as we see what is happening to your people around the world, especially in Gaza. We share the pain of those who suffer because of the blindness of others. In this sacred moment, we remember the ancient road from Jerusalem to Gaza, where your Spirit once led Philip— and we too feel called to walk the path of compassion and justice. We humbly call on your name in this hour of death.

All: Amen.

Suggested hymns:

- *Christ be our light (Bernadette Farrell, As One Voice Vol.2)*
- *We are Called (David Haas, As One Voice Vol.2)*

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[Slide 4] Reader 2:

Please stand for the Gospel reading.

A reading from the Gospel according to John 14: 27-31 (NRSVCE)

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us be on our way.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

[Slide 5-8] Leader: Please sit down quietly. We are now going to reflect quietly on 4 quotes. I encourage you to think about who said these words, why they might have said them, what it means for you, or identify a particular word that stands out.

Slowly share the following slides with quotes. You might choose to accompany the slides with some instrumental music

[Slide 5] "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata

[Slide 6] "Darkness can only be scatter by light, hatred can only be conquered by love." Pope John Paul II

[Slide 7] "Peace is a precious gift, which must be promoted and protected...Never has the use of violence brought peace in its wake. War begets war, violence begets violence." Pope Francis

[Slide 8] "Help us, one and all, to build bridges through dialogue and encounter, joining together as one people, always at peace." Pope Leo XIV



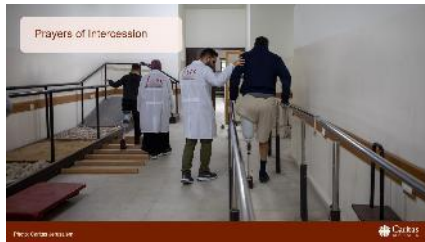
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[Slide 9]

Leader: Loving God, we come together in prayer, asking for your blessing and guidance.



[Slide 10]

Reader 3: For world leaders - that they may follow the inspiration of Pope Leo, who says “the daily suffering of the population—especially in Gaza and other territories—risks being forgotten, even as the need for adequate humanitarian aid becomes ever more urgent. Today more than ever, humanity cries out and pleads for peace.’

Lord hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer

Reader 4: For those in pain and grief because of war - that all who suffer may find hope in the response of others around the world and in a vision of a better tomorrow towards which we can work together.

Lord hear us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer

Reader 5: For ourselves - that we may share God's love for the whole human family, building bridges not walls, so that we react with compassion to those in greatest need, wherever they may be and especially in Gaza.

Lord hear us

All: Lord, hear our prayer

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[Slide 11] Leader: I now invite *[insert name of person]* to light a candle in solidarity with those who are being impacted by war around the world.

Light the candle.

Depending on the size of the group gathered, you could invite everyone to light a candle, or one person from each class/group.

As the candle is lit, a reader recites this prayer:

Reader 6:

God of light,

You meet us in the darkest places.

Every year, when we light our Easter candle, we pray 'may the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our minds and hearts.'

We pray today that all people may work with you to dispel the darkness of violence and war.

May this fragile light be a sign of our hope for the people of Gaza.

May they find healing and lasting peace.

Amen.

Allow a quiet moment before continuing.

Leader: In this quiet moment we pause to ask ourselves how we can be people of peace.

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[Slide 12] Leader: How can my eyes, the way I see the world, bring peace and love?



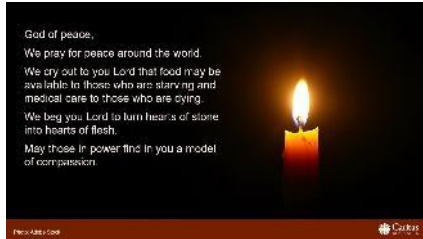
[Slide 13] Leader: How can I use my feet to do good and bring happiness and peace?



[Slide 14] Leader: How can I use my hands to bless and help, and bring peace to those around me?

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[Slide 15 and 16] Leader: Let us now pray for our sisters and brothers all over the world who are affected by violence and conflict.

Reader 7:

God of peace,

We pray for peace around the world.

We cry out to you Lord that food may be available to those who are starving and medical care to those who are dying.

We beg you Lord to turn hearts of stone into hearts of flesh.

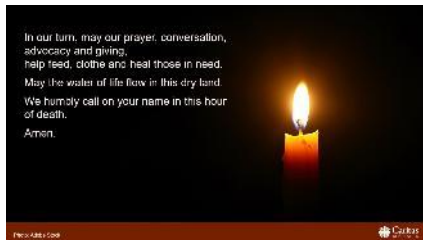
May those in power find in you a model of compassion.

In our turn, may our prayer, conversation, advocacy and giving, help feed, clothe and heal those in need.

May the water of life flow in this dry land.

We humbly call on your name in this hour of death.

Amen.



Leader: Let us go forth in peace. In the name of the +Father, and of the +Son, and of the +Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Suggested hymns:

- *No Hands but Ours (Amanda McKenna, As One Voice The Next Generation)*
- *City of God (Dan Schutte, As One Voice Vol. 1)*