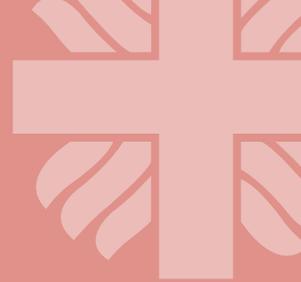


PRAYER SERVICE

THEME: POVERTY



This prayer space is designed for primary school aged students around reflecting on poverty in our world. It could be used for a single class or year level or for the whole school. There is a commissioning element to the liturgy which might be used at the beginning of learning for a class or as part of the culmination. It can be easily adapted for your school, students and your local situation.

Set up

Prayer Space:

- *Prayer cloth*
- *Bible*
- *Candle*
- *Cross*
- *Space for other things to be added after the Gospel. (Bread, water, clothes, empty medicine bottle or box, toy hand cuffs or rope)*

To begin ask students to pause in silence and stillness then have a student bring forward a lighted candle and place it in the prayer space, or have them light one in the prayer space.

Opening Song suggestion:

Light the Way – Andrew Chinn (From Welcome to All)

We are God's Hands – Andrew Chinn (From People of Peace)

Leader: We gather here today in the presence of God our Father ready to do His work. Let us begin with the sign of the cross. In the name of the Father...

For the times we have failed to do God's will, let us pray:

Reader 1

Lord, you give us many gifts.

Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Lord, you forgive us for our greed and selfishness

Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

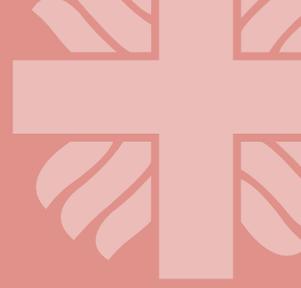
Lord, you show us how to be kind.

Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy

PRAYER SERVICE

THEME: POVERTY



Leader: Let us pray,

God of Creation, Each one of us is made in your image. Open our eyes, our hearts and our hands; May our love be free, bold and inclusive.

All: Amen.

Reader 2: Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Happy are those who hunger for what is right.

They will be satisfied.

Alleluia.

Leader: Gospel

Matthew 25:34-40

(New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised Catholic Edition – NRSVACE)

(Two different ways of proclaiming the Gospel are shared here:

- 1. Read as per below and for each of the I was statements, have a student bring up something to symbolise it and then place it into the prayer space. {Hungry – bread, thirsty – water, stranger – welcome sign, naked – clothes, sick – empty medicine, prison – rope or toy hand cuffs}*
- 2. The liquid picture version on page 3. As the Gospel concludes, the children place their symbols into the prayer space.)*

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

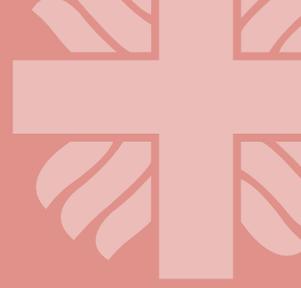
Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

PRAYER SERVICE

THEME: POVERTY



Leader:

A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew.

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

for I was hungry and you gave me food, (*Child 1 turn around with bread, then freezes*)

I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, (*Child 2 turn around with water, then freezes*)

I was a stranger and you welcomed me, (*Child 3 turns around motions a hug, then freezes*)

I was naked and you gave me clothing, (*Child 4 turns around with some clothes, then freezes*)

I was sick and you took care of me, (*Child 5 turns around with medicine, then freezes*)

I was in prison and you visited me." (*Child 6 turns around with rope or handcuffs and freezes*)

(As each child's part comes they unfreeze to speak then refreezes when they have finished saying their line three times {x3})

Child 1: Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food (x3)

Child 2: Or thirsty and gave you something to drink? (x3)

Child 3: And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, (x3)

Child 4: Or naked and gave you clothing? (x3)

Child 5: And when was it that we saw you sick (x3)

Child 6: Or in prison and visited you?" (x3)

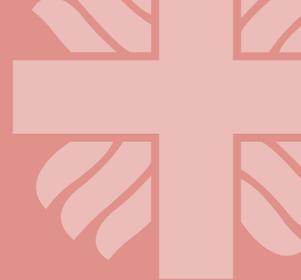
Leader: And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER SERVICE

THEME: POVERTY



Reflection Suggestions:

Choose one or more of the suggestions below:

- *Have a staff member share some thoughts on what it means to them to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome a stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick or visit the imprisoned. A short explanation that these form part of the Church's teaching of the Corporal Works of Mercy.*
- *Ask students what they think each of the statements mean (this could be done before hand and the students share their response with the rest of the assembled or they could be asked on the spot). Conclude with a time of silence.*
- *Pause for some quiet time of reflection.*
- *Invite students to think about one action that they could do in the next week that responds to this Gospel. These could be shared verbally and or written for all to see some ideas.*
- *Use a song and associated video clip, one suggestion: [Walk with Me](#) - Gary Pinto.*

General Intercessions

Leader: Jesus taught us to pray for our needs so now, let us place them before him:

Reader 3: For the Church, that we proclaim the message of 'good news' to the poor, a message of love, justice, truth, hope and above all human dignity.

(Pause) Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 4: For organisations like Caritas Australia, that they continue to work for the good of all.

(Pause) Lord, hear us.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader 5: For people living in poverty, that we may know their needs and respond in love.

(Pause) Lord, hear us.

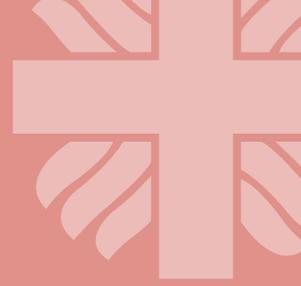
Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We make all these prayers and the prayers of our heart through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

All: Amen.

PRAYER SERVICE

THEME: POVERTY



Commitment:

Suggestions:

- *If this is a liturgy used in conjunction with the beginning of learning (or culmination of learning) about poverty classes could be commissioned with one of the Corporal Works of Mercy for a certain period of time. This could be as simple as inviting six student representatives to come forward whilst some quiet music plays and collect one of the symbols of the Gospel from the prayer space and take it back to their class group as a visual reminder of their commitment.*
- *Have a simple commitment ceremony shared below. Slides of the pledge are available in the accompanying PowerPoint.*

Leader: We know that there are people in our world who are hungry, thirsty, feel like strangers, are homeless, are imprisoned and are lonely. Today we are challenged to play our part in making the world a better place for all. Let us stand and pledge our support to work together for justice and dignity, walk together in hope and build a better future for all.

The response is: We will

Will you work towards a just and fair world,
A world in balance,
At peace and free of poverty;
A world which the Church in Australia helps build, where all humans can live in dignity?

Response: We will

Will you make it your mission to transform hearts and minds in the Australian community, inviting them into just and compassionate partnerships with the poor?

Response: We will

Will you commit to educating others, through your words and actions, of the importance of environmental responsibility?

Response: We will

Will you help to end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity?

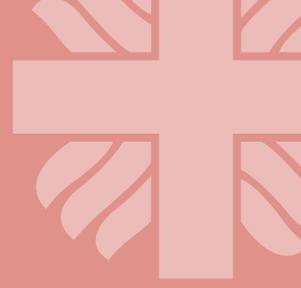
Response: We will

Let us seal our pledge by praying the Our Father together.

All: Our Father who art in heaven...

PRAYER SERVICE

THEME: POVERTY



Final Blessing:

Leader: God, you taught us through your son the dignity of every human being and gave us the great command to love one another.

May we go into the world and take with us the hope of God who is love.

We ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen

Dismissal:

Leader: Go now in peace to love the Lord and to show love and generosity to those in need.

All: Thanks be to God.

Closing song suggestion:

[Walk with Me](#) – Gary Pinto [Lyrics](#) (Could be used again, if used in the reflection)

[Hands and Feet](#) - Audio Adrenaline

[Go make a Difference](#) - Steve Angrisano