

Prayers

- ◆ Prayers for people involved in education
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- ◆ Pray for a teacher – using a DVD clip

Prayer is obviously a very important component of worship. Here are four suggestions for prayer activities that will involve the congregation in innovative and reflective prayer.

Prayers for people involved in education

These prayers have a response that the congregation can join in with:

Leader: Fill them afresh with your Spirit
All: **and inspire them to walk in your ways.**

Invite teachers in nurseries, schools, colleges and academies to stand

Lord God, we thank you for teachers, for their enthusiasm and hard work and for all they invest in the children and young people they teach.

Help them as they transform their places of work and their relationships through the way they teach.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit
and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite those who work in schools, colleges and academies in other capacities to stand – teaching assistants, administrators, school meal supervisors and so on

Lord God, we thank you for the many people who enable schools to run smoothly and who provide a nurturing environment for our children.

Help them to know their value and to enjoy the work that they do.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit
and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite school governors to stand

Lord God, we thank you for school governors who play the role of a critical friend in the life of the school.

Help them to make wise decisions, to know when to affirm and when to ask questions.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit
and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite those involved in further and higher education to stand, both students and lecturers, and those in other roles

Lord God, we thank you for all those in further and higher education, those who teach and those who learn.

Help them to be salt and light in the places where they study and work, able to point people towards you through what they do and say.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit
and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite parents, carers and grandparents to stand – all those



who care for children

Lord God, we thank you for those among us who nurture the next generation. Help them to love without condition, to set boundaries with wisdom and to find support and encouragement along the way.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit
and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite pupils to stand – children and young people attending nursery, school, college or academy

Lord God, we thank you for these children and young people attending nursery, school, academy or college. Help them to make the most of the opportunities that they have – to be diligent students, to play creatively and to know that you delight in them as they seek to follow you.

Fill them afresh with your Spirit
and inspire them to walk in your ways.

Invite everyone else to stand

Lord God, we thank you for the education we have received from teachers and schools, from colleges, academies and universities, from parents and friends. Help us to support those who work in education, to appreciate the important job that they do in shaping the future of our world and to remember them in our prayers.

Fill us afresh with your Spirit
and inspire us to walk in your ways.

Footprints activity – giving thanks for those who have taught us

You'll need: a long roll of plain wallpaper or thick lining paper; felt tips or marker pens in containers

Unroll the wallpaper down the central aisle of the church, or in another suitable location such as a side aisle or across the front or back of the church. Use masking tape to attach it to the floor for safety. Put the pens in containers at intervals along the length of the paper. It may be best to get a few volunteers to do this during the opening song or one directly before this prayer activity, so that the paper doesn't get ripped or dirty while everyone is coming into church.

Introduce the theme of the time of prayer – thanking God for those who have taught us. Invite people to think of a significant teacher in their lives, it could be a teacher from their school days past or present, or a church leader, a parent or friend, and what that person taught them. Then invite people to place their foot on the paper, facing the front of the church, and to draw round it. It might be easier if people work together in twos, so that they draw round each other's feet. Those who are less mobile will need help. People can keep their shoes on, or take them off if they prefer. Then people should write inside the outline of their foot a prayer of thanks for the person they thought of. It's a good idea to play some worship music during this activity, to help people to focus on their prayer. You could put a few examples of footprints on the paper in advance, to show people what to do and in which direction their feet should be pointing!

Once people have drawn their own footprint and prayer, they can help others, or walk along and read the prayers, adding their own to what has been written. This may be more active and noisy a time of prayer than your church is used to, but prayer doesn't have to be quiet and solemn all the time.

Once you can see that most people have written their prayers, invite them to stand quietly and look at the paper, to reflect on all the people that are represented there, and the steps



forward in life that they have inspired. Lead a prayer from the front to close the activity. You could use words like these:

Lord God, we give you thanks and praise for the people in our lives who have taught us and helped us to take steps forward in our journey with you. We thank you for our nursery school teachers, for those who taught us at primary and secondary schools and academies, for university and college lecturers, for everyone who has taught us along the way. We ask your blessing on all those who work in education in our congregation. Help us to support and encourage them, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayer to use with the all-age talk

If you use a screen or can print the prayer, individuals or pairs of children or adults can read the first sections (in black) and the congregation can join in the red sections. Alternatively it can be read by two adults one reading the black, the other the red (*italic*) sections and people can affirm this silently.

**Thank you God for Nehemiah:
For the way he did his job well.**

May we work using the gifts you have given us.

For the way he obeyed your call.

Help us to follow his example.

For the way he cared.

May we show practical care of others.

For the way he encouraged people.

May we never be discouragers.

For the example he set.

Help us to remember that other people are witnesses to our behaviour.

For the way he made a difference.

May the world be different, better, because we have been here.

For his courage to challenge wrong.

Give us courage when we need to challenge wrong.

For the way he was a cupbearer of

your love.

Help us to be cupbearers of your love wherever we are, in whatever we do.

(Optional) Children bearing paper cups with heart-shaped paper confetti inside can throw the confetti as a reminder of the love we have to take to others. If you have a balcony it could be thrown from up there to increase the impact. Do clear up afterwards!

Pray for a teacher – using a DVD clip

In his clip on the DVD, the [Rt Revd James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool](#) talks about how teachers can open doors in children's lives to let the future in. He talks about a lady in one of his former congregations who teamed up with a teacher and prayed for her and the children she taught every day. You could use this clip to launch a similar idea in your own church.

You will need to get teachers signed up to this scheme in advance. Many teachers will be glad of the prayer support, but don't assume that all teachers will be. Suggest a way that the scheme could work so that it's supportive but doesn't take up too much time for everyone involved. Perhaps the teacher and prayer partner could meet after church once a month to talk about how things are going. Teachers can share general points for prayer – perhaps there are exams coming up, or a school production, or an inspection. It will then be up to the individuals involved to develop the relationship further in a way that suits them.

Teachers and prayer partners will need to be sensitive to the confidentiality that are necessary in relation to individuals, particularly pupils and schools. Teachers may not want to give full details of situations, for example not disclosing pupils' names, but God will know all the details and prayer will still be effective!

