

Reconciliation

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Dear Prayer Leader,

Thank-you for leading this prayer on the charism of Reconciliation.

A charism is like a living gift. It is a way of living or doing, inspired by Jesus, which links us to God. As you pray with your staff, we hope that you will develop a clearer appreciation of how each charism can impact on your life and the lives of those around you.

In this prayer module, your charism is also linked to the spirituality of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart and Mary MacKillop and also to the prayer style of Written Prayers.

Gathering

Each prayer starts with a brief ritual that serves to engage and focus everyone to the spirit of the prayer. As well as being a means of focusing your staff, it is also a way to add another level of meaning and understanding to the charism.

Reconciliation is about reaching out or 'holding out a hand' to another, the ritual for your prayer involves inviting staff to symbolically place a hand cut-out into the prayer space.

Reading and Reflection

The reading is Luke 15:11-20. The reflection material invites us to consider what it means to be people who work towards reconciliation and the building of genuine relationships.

Prayer

The prayer style involves writing down the prayer of your heart onto the hand cut-outs. Staff will be invited to write on the hands that they place in the prayer space at the start of the prayer.

Surprises

Add to the experience of the prayer by continuing to bring your prayer's charism to people's attention during the week. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- *Cut out Reconciliation quotes. Every few days put out a different batch on the table, on the walls, in pigeonholes, on teacher's desks.*
- *On a large hand cut-out write: "Reconciliation - Who have you reached out to today?"*
- *On a hand cut-out write: "Reconciliation - What have you let go of today?"*

The structure and ideas we have 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 staff.

Best of luck.

Reconciliation

We Gather

God of friendship and forgiveness,
You lead us on life's journey
As we gather here in Your name,
Open our *ears* to hear Your voice.
Open our *hands* to Your work.
And open our *hearts* to Your Spirit.

Amen



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We Listen

Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them.

A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' "

So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

We Respond

Remember a time when you experienced a restoring of a friendship.
What was said? How did you feel?

Is there someone whom you wish to reconcile with?
What will you do about starting this?

Is there a relationship you have had to let go?
Have you done this with a sense of God's love for you both?

We Pray

As we go about our day O God,
As we strive to walk with Jesus,
Remind us that we are the face of Christ,
Who is with us always.

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

Amen

Reconciliation

Using the notes:

Sections to be read by the leader are marked with Leader: at the beginning.

Texts in bold type are notes and guiding information for leaders and provide a guide for what to do or say.

Resources:

*Hand cut-outs
Head, Heart, Hands candles
Staff candle
Matches*

Prayer intentions book

Setting up for prayer:

- *Prepare a prayerful space suitable for your staff to gather around. Have ready...*
 - *The 'Head', 'Hands' & 'Heart' candles to light in the opening prayer.*
 - *Your staff candles.*
 - *The prayer intentions book.*
- *Have the 'Quickfire Prayer Cards' ready to distribute at the end of the prayer time.*
- *Have hands ready in a number of small piles or baskets/bowls ready to be distributed.*
- *Organise someone to read the scripture passage*

We Gather

Leader:

Our prayer journey this week invites us to walk with Jesus as people of reconciliation. When we work to reconcile we are restoring relationships and bringing harmony to them.

Mary MacKillop, founder of the Josephites in Australia, knew the struggle of personal hurt and the challenge of letting this go. Through it all she maintained her deep faith and her vision and mission.

The journey to reconciliation always involves a letting go – and an openness to new relationships – with yourself, with God, with others.

In his life, Jesus reached out a hand to people who were shunned, in pain and isolated. When we do this too we are walking the path of reconciliation.

Here in Australia, the theme of reconciliation is always prominent.

As we begin our prayer, I invite you to take a hand cut-out and place it in the prayer space as a sign of your willingness to journey this week in the charism of reconciliation.

Opening Prayer

Leader:

As we gather, let us begin with the sign of the cross.

God of friendship and forgiveness,
You lead us on life's journey

As we gather here in Your name,
Open our minds to know Your voice.
Open our hands to do Your work.
And open our hearts to hold Your Spirit.

(Light 'head' candle)
(Light 'hands' candle)
(Light 'heart' candle)

Amen

We Listen

Scripture

Leader: *Invite someone to proclaim the Word*

A reading from Luke 15:11-20 (NRSV)

The Parable of the Lost Son

Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.' " So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with mercy; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

Jesus calls us to walk as reconcilers

Leader:

We have all heard of the story of Beauty and the Beast.

The Beast, once a handsome but unkind prince, was cursed with the form of a beast until he received the kiss of someone who would love him as he was.

Jesus had his own story about a beauty and a beast.

We read it in the story of the "Prodigal Son".

In it, we see how similar Jesus' 'loving father' is to the Beauty of the fairy tale.

"The son got up and went to his Father.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with mercy for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him." (Luke 15)

In the fable, Beauty sees past the meanness, the rudeness, the anger and she kisses the Beast. Magically, he is released from his curse.

In the parable, the father also sees past the thoughtless choices and alienating behaviour of the son and embraces him with love, releasing him from the curses of loneliness, of living with regret and of always feeling unlovable, untouchable.

Jesus calls us to live as the loving father and as Beauty did, to see past the things in others which have hurt us, to put aside the damaged egos and friendships, the differences and to see the beauty and potential that can be released through forgiveness and reconciliation.

Jesus has called us to be a part of a reconciling community;

To repair and build relationships;

To release the Beauty within every Beast;

To be the 'loving father' to every 'lost son'.

Leader:

There are a few minutes of quiet time now to think about what we have just listened to and to spend some time considering the questions for reflection on our handout sheets.

We Respond

Reflections

Remember a time when you experienced a restoring of a friendship.
What was said? How did you feel?

Is there someone whom you wish to reconcile with?
What will you do about starting this?

Is there a relationship you have had to let go?
Have you done this with a sense of God's love for you both?

Individual Prayer

Leader:

Our prayer today involves not speaking aloud our thoughts and prayers but putting these words of our hearts down into print.

I invite everyone to pick up their hand cut-out.

As you look at the hand, think about those people who have reached out their hand to you in reconciliation, and those with whom you journey everyday at work and at home.
When was the last time you said 'I'm sorry'?

When you are ready you are invited to write on your cut-out.
What you write is up to you. No one will ask you to share it.
It is personal and private – between you and God.
Perhaps you will write a letter, perhaps a list, perhaps a poem or a prayer.

Whatever you choose to write it will be your prayer.

Encourage people to find some personal space if they wish – it is much easier to write honestly and from the heart if you don't feel someone is right up close to you.

After a little while if people look as though they are struggling to start you may like to suggest that...

If you haven't found a place to start writing yet then write this down as a starter-
"God, there are many people who bless my life..."

(silent time to write)

Shared Prayers

Leader:

As we pause now before our prayer time ends,
we stop to light our staff/school candle.

(Light the staff/school candle)

We pause in silence to pray for the intentions we have added to our staff intentions book....
(place it into the prayer space)
and those who are already on its pages.

We add to these the prayers that are known only in our hearts....

As our candle burns throughout today, may the One who hears the cries of the poor, listen to
our prayers and may our hearts be opened to hear the response.

(Allow for silent prayer)

We Go forth

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us pray together...

As we go about our day O God,
As we strive to walk with Jesus.
Remind us that we are the face of Christ,
Who is with us always.

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

All: Amen