

Creative Prayer Ideas

Education Sunday 2011

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

Use these creative prayer ideas in an all-age worship service, at a more informal prayer event, or as prayer stations in your prayer room.

1. Objects

Preparation: Ask pupils, teachers and others involved in education in your congregation to bring an object with them to worship which represents their school life or their involvement in education. It could even be an object which specifically relates to something they would like prayer for.

Bible verses: 1 Peter 5:7; Philippians 4:6-7

Sing a song together or play a piece of music and ask those who have brought objects with them to bring them to the front of the church and place them on a table or altar, as if prayerfully bringing them to God. This is a simple but powerful way of connecting worship and sacred space with everyday life. A prayer like this doesn't need to use a lot of words and provides a visual focus for a simple, spoken prayer or quiet reflection.

2. Prayer Wall

Preparation: Provide a selection of brick-shaped pieces of paper or card, a large wall or display board and some blue tack or drawing pins.

Bible verses: Psalm 106:1; Colossians 3:16-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

Use a prayer wall as a way of expressing thanks to God for the gift of education. Invite people to take a brick and write down what they like or appreciate most about school or about the education they received as they were growing up. It could be the name of a teacher, a subject they enjoy or enjoyed, a memory of school, or a specific prayer of thanks about how education has shaped and impacted their life. When the prayer wall is complete it will provide a visual reminder of the strong foundation education can provide for life.

3. Education for all

Preparation: Set a large globe on a table with some small Post-It notes. Print out a selection of articles, stories and facts about places where education is not freely available, or where poverty prevents people getting a good education (visit www.campaignforeducation.org for information and stories).

Bible verses: Deuteronomy 24:17; Isaiah 1:17; Zechariah 7:9

Invite people to think about countries in the world where education is not freely available, or where many children and young people are denied an education because of poverty or other difficult circumstances. Display the articles, stories and facts to help people find out more. On the Post-It notes, people can write down the name of the country, or a situation they have heard or read about, and then stick it on the globe as a way of representing and praying about this injustice.

3. Building a strong community

Preparation: You'll need a game of Jenga or similar building blocks.

Bible verses: 1 Corinthians 3:10-11,16-17; Galatians 5:22-23; Hebrews 3:4

Either: Write on each building block a value that is important in a school community (ask pupils and teachers for ideas, eg thoughtfulness, fairness, safety, prayer, encouragement, working together). Invite people to play a game of Jenga and think about what happens when these values are missing from a community.

Or: In a quieter setting, you could invite people to take a Jenga brick and write on it a value they hope will grow in their school or in schools they know. As they add the brick to help build the tower they can be encouraged to think about how they might help to bring these values into the school.

3. Sand and stones

Preparation: You'll need a large, deep tray or container of sand, a similar container filled with a selection of large stones or rocks, and a small watering can or jug of water. Have copies of the parable of the wise and foolish builders* from a variety of translations, including a Children's Bible.

Bible verses: Matthew 7:24-29*; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11

This activity helps people to reflect on their own lives and what they are built on, as they meditate on the parable of the wise and foolish builders. Encourage people to touch the sand and the rocks and then explore what happens when the rain is poured over the sand and the rocks. As they read the parable they can reflect on what happens when storms or difficult times come and our lives aren't built on Jesus' words and teachings. Invite people to pray that they would not just hear but follow and live out Jesus' teachings.

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