

IMAGINED PRAYER

What would God say?



MODELS OF PRAYER
WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

ST MARYS CF10

What would God say?

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Introduction

This is a relatively short publication because the resources inside are meant as models and examples of prayer with young people to inspire you to create your own.

We know that prayer is not just about bombarding God with requests and needs but this, more often than not and if we are honest, is where we often start. People not prone to prayer will often turn to God when they are in need. He is always there.

We know that prayer is about being attentive to God discovering his will, being in his presence, so that all of our life becomes prayer, aiming to be able to 'pray constantly as St Paul teaches us. And so prayer is a dialogue – yes, it is speaking to God, being with God but it is also about listening to God.

The prayers presented in this publication are an imagined dialogue, bringing to God the assumed and imagined needs and experiences of young people, and imagining what he may say in return – in a way that can be perceived by whatever young people are there listening to you speak.

These prayers are presented as using several voices – but they can effectively be used just by one voice – perhaps just yours, when leading an assembly of young people.

When I was Youth Chaplain – a phrase I often use, unfortunately – this model of prayer proved an effective one in School Assemblies and in other gatherings of and celebrations involving young people, and I pray that it will be one that will be of benefit to you in your ministry with young people.

Why not have a go – and get involved in the dialogue between young people and God, and imagine what they may say to God, and what God may say to them!

Fr Dean Atkins

The Future's Bright

Voice 1 (or a voice for each)

I'm looking forward to my 18th birthday.

I'm looking forward to the summer and getting a bit of sun.

I'm looking forward to the World Cup.

I'm looking forward to my holiday in Ibiza

I'm looking forward to the weekend and going clubbing with my mates.

I'm looking forward to leaving school and being independent.

I'm looking forward to going to University.

I'm looking forward to spending the weekend at my Dad's.

I'm looking forward.

Voice 2 (or a voice for each)

I'm not looking forward to my exams.

I'm not looking forward to the weekend.

I'm not looking forward to P.E. ... again!

I'm not looking forward to going home tonight.

I'm not looking forward to telling my parents I'm pregnant.

I'm not looking forward to anything.

I'm not looking forward.

Voice 3

Look up.

Don't be afraid.

Yes, the future is uncertain, the future is unknown.

But I'm looking forward.

I'm looking forward to seeing what you make of your life.

I'm looking forward to being part of your future – if only you'll let me.

I'm looking forward to all the exciting opportunities and sharing the adventure of life with you.

I'm looking forward to everything that I hope for you.

I'm looking forward.

I'm always looking forward

Looking forward to all the exciting possibilities.

So put the past behind you – where it belongs

And face up to the future.

I will be there.

Working it out

(One or More Voices:)

I can't work out why I'm no good at Maths and my friend is.

I can't work out why I can't kick a football straight and my friend is the next Marcus Rashford

I can't work out why Liverpool won the FA Cup and United didn't!

I can't work out why people are so interested in Posh and Becks.

I can't work out why my father is so bad tempered.

I can't work out why my best friend isn't talking to me.

I can't work out why my great grandmother is still alive at 93 and my cousin's baby has died.

I can't work out why people are dying of starvation and thirst.

I can't work out why some people have to suffer so much.

I can't work out why countries have to go to war.

I can't work out a lot of things. There are lots of things I can't work out

(One voice:)

I know there are lots of things you can't work out.

Things confuse and frighten you.

I know you get angry and upset.

And so do I.

When you can't work things out just look at the cross.

Different shapes and sizes.

Some with me on,

some with me off.

Some very elaborate

or just two twigs tied together.

Some made with flowers, some made with ash.

Whatever it looks like, when you can't work things out, look at the cross.

It will remind you that, yes, there is pain in the world.

It will remind you that, yes, there is suffering around.

It will remind you that, yes, there is confusion and things you can't work out.

But it also shows you how much I have loved you and will always love you.

There are lots of things you can't work out.

Work this one out:

*I love you so much that I was went to the cross to wipe away your sins
and all that separates me from you.*

I want to be close to you.

And sometimes I discover you don't want to be close to me.

I can't work that one out.

All the things you can't work out

We'll work out together as we go along.

We'll work them out together

the things you can't work out.

'I am Here' (I)

Voice 1

I am here because my friend asked me.

I am here because I have nothing better to do.

I am here because I had my arm twisted by someone who kept on and on at me.

I am here to make up the numbers.

I am here because I want to be here and I've been looking forward to it.

For whatever reason, I am here.

Mind you,

I should be careful of my language!

In the past, when people say to you 'I am here'

you usually have something for them to do

and they are offering to do it

like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Moses.

I'm not sure that's the case for me

But anyway, I am here

and so are you.

Voice 2

I am here because I promised to be with you when two or three are gathered in my name.

I am here because I am interested in you.

I am here because Saturday mornings aren't the same without you.

I am here because I enjoy your company and there's no better place to be.

I am here because I love you.

For lots of different reasons

I am here, and so are you.

'I am Here' (II)

Voice 1

I am here because I have to be.

I am here because no -one else wanted to do the job that I'm doing.

I am here because there was nothing else in my diary
and I couldn't find an excuse not to come.

I am here because it's my responsibility to be here.

I am here because I'm excited by the mission ahead.

I am here because there's so much to do.

I am here because I love Jesus.

I am here because I want to be here and I've been looking forward to it.

For whatever reason, I am here.

Mind you, I should watch my language!

In the past, when people say to you 'I am here'

you usually have something for them to do

and they are offering to do it

like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Moses.

I'm not sure that's the case for me

But anyway,

I am here

And so are you.

Voice 2

I am here because I promised to be with you when two or three are gathered in my name.

I am here because I'm interested in you and enjoy your company.

I am here to save the world, and I want you to be involved in it!

I am here because your work is my work, and you can't really do it without me!

I am here because I love you.

For lots of different reasons

I am here.

And so are you.

God, I'm bored!

A Meditation for a School Assembly

Voice 1

God, I'm bored!!!

God.

I'm bored.

This priest has been going on for ages now
and it's nearly 9 o' clock.

Mind you,

I don't know why I'm in such a rush I've got double physics next.

God, I'm bored.

I'm bored with school.

Bored with parents giving me grief.

Bored with being told what to wear, where to go,
who I'm supposed to be with.

Bored with the charts.

Bored with pretending to like TV programmes that everyone talks about.

Bored with my friend going on . . .and on . . . and on . . . about that boy she fancies.

Bored with trying to be what I'm not.

God, I'm bored!

Voice 2

You're bored?

That's so sad.

There's so much to live for.

And so much that you have to give.

I came that you may have life.

Life to the full.

Life is so exciting

And full of possibilities.

I know that life isn't always all what you want it to be.

But I stretched out my hands and died for you to make life worth living.

It's good to hear from you

So, from time to time, let me know how you are feeling,

Even if it's just to say

'God, I'm bored.'

Can I have a word with you, God?

Voice 1

Can I have a word with you, God?

I won't keep you long. I know you're busy and all that.

What with saving the world and everything.

I saw a film about that once.

This man had 48 hours to turn back time to avoid disaster and save the world.

He did it with one second to go.

Bit far-fetched I think it was.

Sorry, I'm going off the point now.

I'm always doing that.

My mind's always wandering,

running, racing.

I'm like it in school.

One minute I'm paying attention and then next minute I'm thinking about *(insert name of recent celebrity!)*. Sorry. I shouldn't be talking to you about *him/her* should I?

Anyway, where was I?

Oh yeh. The World.

Not a bad place is it?!

I love it. There's loads of stuff I think is great.

I don't always think that, mind.

I must admit, I don't watch the news much.

I grab a few headlines on my timeline

but there are other thing to read,

too many things to read.

Oh yeh. The world. Sorry, wandering again!

I just wanted to say that I do care.

I care about people in other countries –
even though the furthest I've travelled is France on a school trip a few years ago.
I don't speak French or anything
but there was a spare place and all my friends were going.
But what I mean is, that I care about peace.
I'm not sure what to do about it, though.
I don't understand the politics or anything.
It's all a bit confusing.
But it would be great if we could all live together in peace

I care about the poor.
I helped with *Christian Aid Week* last year,
raised some money.

I care about people closer to home, too.
I'm scared by some of those people I see who are homeless in shop doorways.
They look scruffy. And hard.
My mother says they're all on drugs, and it's their own fault.
That's not true though is it?
But I do care about them.

I care about my friends in school.
And I care about that boy in school who's always on his own,
just cos he's a bit 'different.'
I want to talk to him
but I'm afraid people will make fun of me.

I care about my grandmother.
She's not well.
Having said that, mind, I haven't seen her for a while.
Maybe I should make more effort.

I care about the church.

Now that doesn't mean I always go to church.

I have to say this to you now....but sometimes I'm there and...well...don't take this the wrong way, God, but it's boring.

But I do care.

I care about so much.

Hey, thanks for listening.

I didn't do bad, did I?

I only thought of Britney once!

Well, twice now! Oops.

I'm going now.

It's probably time for another song or something.

Voice 2

Hey, don't go yet.

I just wanted to say that it's good to hear from you!

There's nothing like a good chat!

I'm glad you're enjoying life.

That's what it's there for!

We've got a lot in common, you and me.

We care about the same things.

The world's a great place!

Though I guess I'm a bit biased, seeing that I made it and everything!

There's still a lot we have to sort out together, though.

But I know that together we can do it.

I came into the world to show you how things can be done.

I came into the world to save it.

There are so many good people about, doing good things.

Yes, I know people make mistakes. But I'm always there.

I'm not as bad as people make me out to be, you know!

I get a bad press sometimes.

But I love you.

Completely.

And I love being around you.

*Oh yeh, just a few other things. **(insert Celebrity name!)** You like him/her, then?*

You do know that you can talk to me about anything, don't you?

It doesn't matter what it is. I think it's good to be open.

Anyway, enjoy life!

And remember, I'm never too busy to spend time with you!

Give my love to your grandmother.

And anyone else you meet along the way!

Good Morning God?

Voice 1

Morning, God.
Sorry I didn't say 'good' morning
But the morning's not really that good.
My parents were arguing again today
And my father banged his way out of the house
Leaving my mother in tears
And the dog hiding under the stairs.
And in all the fuss I forgot my school assignment.
It took me all weekend to do that assignment
And now I'll get in the neck from my teacher!
And to top it all off
I've got PE last session.
God, I hate PE!
Not like my friend – he's football mad!
I can't stand it, God!
So, all in all, not a good morning.

Mind you, things are much better after talking to you.
Are you having a good morning, God?
Is your morning good?

Voice 2

Morning.
Sorry, you're not feeling too good this morning
Some days are better than others, I know.

*Don't let everything get you down.
There are lots of people to help you through it
And make things better.
It won't be like this forever.
Life is tough sometimes
And you've had a rough deal this morning.
I know what family life can be like sometimes.
It's not all it's cracked up to be!*

*Anyway, it's good to hear from you.
I always like to hear from you.
Things are better after talking to you.
Anyway, I hope your morning gets better.
Just remember, I'm always around...I'm never far away!*

Voice 3

Good Morning God!
How are you?
I can't believe it!
I woke up this morning to great news!
I've been accepted for that football coaching course!
I applied for it ages ago
And this morning I got the letter through the post!
I'm dead excited!
I can't wait!
I couldn't wait to tell my mates on the bus this morning.
I don't know how I'll be able to concentrate in school today!
My mind's full of football!
Anyway, thanks for everything, God.
Life's great!

Voice 2

Good morning!

And what a good morning!

Life's exciting isn't it?!

And that's the way I meant it to be!

I love to watch you play football

It's great to see people using the gifts I gave them!

By the way, since you're so excited and full of happiness

Have a word with your friend.

He's not having such a good morning.

I'm always in need of someone to show others that I care for them.

There are loads of people around who need comfort and healing,

There are lots of people who aren't enjoying life.

So, why not pass your good morning onto others.

That's how I do lots of my work!

Anyway, I'm really excited for you...

And by the way, have fun on the course!

Prayer

God our Father,

you are so close to us that sometimes we take you for granted.

You are always there to listen to us.

You are always there caring for us and loving us.

You are always there sharing in our life.

Help us to bring your love and care to others,

and to share in people's sadness as well as their gladness.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Expectations

Voice 1

I expect you've heard it all before, God?

Do you ever get bored? You know... hearing the same things over and over again?

*Do you ever get fed up hearing the same prayers
and dealing with the same things over and over again,
from one year to the next, from one century to the other!
You've been around for ever!*

I expect you've heard it all before, God?

Do you ever get bored?

You know...hearing me say the same things over and over again?

*Do you ever get fed up of the same prayers
And dealing with the same things that bother me,
From one day to the next?*

And I expect you get used to me being quiet too.

I know that's difficult for me!

But sometimes I don't say anything to you.

*Sometimes, I go for days, or weeks or months
without whispering a word.*

What do you expect God?

I'm only human after all?

Voice 2

I expect you've heard it all before.

You hear me saying the same thing over and over again.

I expect you get bored, with it all at times.
I expect you get bored hearing the same things
Just like anyone does.

But still, I say the same things to you.
Things like, 'I love you' and that 'I'm with you always.'
What do you expect? I'm God!
But I did come to you as a human being
To show what I expect of you and every human being!
And to remind you that I fill every expectation
that you have of a God who loves you.

Anyway, I'll be quiet now.
I expect you'll want time to think about that one!

It's me, again!

Voice 1

Hellllooooo!

Is anybody there?

(quieter) Hello?

God?

Are you there?

It's me.

Again.

Well - when I say 'again' I it's been a while since the last time.

I'm just wondering...

How are you?

Is that the kind of question I can ask you, God?

Or is it the wrong thing to say?

I don't mean to be rude.

There are lots of things going on at the moment

that I think you might be worried about.

But why am I telling you that?

You're God.

I suppose what I'm trying to say is that I'm worried about them.

I'm a bit worried about the church

I don't really feel a part of it and people don't always take it seriously.

It's difficult going to church. Even my friends don't understand.

I'm a bit worried about that man I saw huddled in the doorway.

He had a blanket. And a dog. And a few coins in a plastic cup.

But I think he wanted more than that.

I'm a bit worried about all that trouble in Iraq.

Are we really going to war? What's gonna happen?

Does anyone know? Do you know?

I'm a bit worried about my grandmother. She's not well at the moment. She's talking funny and wearing her clothes back to front!

But I know she's not well. And I'm worried.

I'm a bit worried about where I live.

Don't get me wrong. I like living there and there are loads of good people around.

But, sometimes, I get the feeling people don't care.

I'm a bit worried about my exams. I know I have to put some work into it!

But it just seems so much. And I can't always see the point.

I'm a bit worried about the way I look.

I mean, that girl I like loves Justin Timberlake and I can never compete with that!

I'm a bit worried about my friend. He's not been himself for a while.

I think there's something on his mind. But I don't know what to say to him.

What shall I say to him?

I'm a bit worried, God.

God, I'm worried.

Are you there, God?

God, are you there?

Voice 2

Hello.

Is anybody there?

It's me.

Again.

Well, when I say 'again' - I really haven't been anywhere.

I've been here all the time.

I'm just wondering how you are.

I know you're worried.

I know there are lots of things to worry about.

*I know you're worried about the world and the place where you live.
I know that church isn't always what you want it to be - don't get me talking on that one!
I know that your friend isn't quite right and that your grandmother is acting strange.
I know that you've got lots of pressures and decisions to make.
And I know, more than anyone, that people are worried about war.
But, you know, when you came looking for me earlier,
I was right here.
I'm never far away.
Sometimes, I get pushed out of the equation
But things don't add up without me.
And you don't need a maths exam to work that one out!
And though people may try to push me out
And make me irrelevant.
Though people may say I'm dead or that I never existed in the first place -
I am here. Just waiting.
I'm not going anywhere.
By the way, don't worry too much about Justin Timberlake!
I think Kylie might stand in between him and the girl you like!
I think you're beautiful.
Just as you are.
Anyway, it's good to hear from you.
We must do this again!*

Talking about 'it'

This meditation/prayer was inspired by a Radio Advert – this time one on Sexual Health aimed at Young People. In the following reflection the word 'sin' and 'sinned' is 'dubbed out' by leaving a slight pause during the first section

Voice 1

Some people don't like talking about _____.

They like doing it. Sometimes they don't know they're doing it. And they discover that they've _____ without even wanting to. You see, _____ is something you can do in private and no one else knows it's happened. And other times _____ is done very publicly.

When we _____ against others we _____ against God himself.

Often _____ can be fun, when you first do it. But it can make you feel shameful and unhappy. Even the smallest of _____ can weigh heavily upon your shoulders, if you keep it to yourself.

The trouble is that _____ separates us from God. But we shouldn't ignore it. There's no need to ignore it. We shouldn't be scared. We can talk about _____ to God.

Voice 2

Ok so let's talk about it.

Let's talk about . . .sin.

Some people use it to make you feel bad about yourself.

Well, you may not have been as good as you should have been.

You're not perfect.

I know that!

But do you think that for one single moment, for one split second, I ever stopped loving you?

You rely too much on yourself.

I am always there for you. Always willing to forgive you.

I died on the cross to deal with sin.

So come on, don't let sin get in the way. Put it behind you.

Voice 1

Thank you Lord,

through your cross and resurrection

you bring healing and wholeness and forgiveness of sin.

You overcome sin and open up a way to walk with you forever.

Thank you Lord

for dealing with our sin

and helping us to talk with you. **Amen.**

The Good Old Days

A Prayer for priests and youth leaders

Lord,

I remember the good old days

when the churches were full and everyone was happy.

I remember the days when we sung proper hymns

and we could talk to you in a language that we didn't really understand.

I remember the days when the church meant something to people.

I remember the days when we could leave the doors of the church open all day

I remember the days when people wore hats to church and had a bit of respect.

Them were the days.

The good old days.

Somehow the past is safe

Cos it can't be changed.

I like to look back and forget about all the bad things that ever happened.

But here we are trying to get to grips with where we are

And gazing into the future

I know you remember the days

The good old days.

But the future is far more exciting

so full of possibilities.

so full of dreams and visions.

So give us a glimpse at what you have in store.

Give us some idea of what you want us to do.

Here we are, foolishly I think, offering ourselves

because following you is like walking blindfolded

across a tightrope in high winds
with a swamp of alligators beneath.

Well, it's not really.

I'm getting carried away now.

It's just that I'm a bit excited.

We're a bit excited.

Please keep us that way.

Amen.

What would God say?