

PRAYER IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS





Consider –

What is prayer for
me?

What is prayer for
my students?

What is prayer for
my staff?

Where is my
sanctuary – the place
where I am aware of
God's presence in
my life?

Where is my
students' sanctuary
the place where they
are aware of God's
presence in their
life?

Where is my staffs'
sanctuary – the place
where they are aware
of God's presence in
their life?

PRAYER OR
REFLECTION?

p. 5/6

PRAYER OR
REFLECTION?

p. 7



THE NECESSITY TO COMMUNICATE IN
ANY RELATIONSHIP IS WELL
RECOGNISED.

Think of someone you love.
Think about all the ways you
communicate with them.



What is true of human experience between people is also true of our relationship with God and every individual. Without **communication** there can be no living relationship.

Give AND take.



CHRISTIAN PRAYER...

- Takes place in a wide variety of ways – there is no single “right” way to pray.
- Is individual – people prefer to pray in different ways according to their life experiences and their personality.
- Engages the whole person. It is not just a cognitive exercise.
- Needs to be learnt and developed through practice. Certain skills are required.

~ Prayer Strategies: a Teacher's Manual (Beth Nolen)

DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS OF PRAYER

- VOCAL PRAYER

EXAMPLES: OUR FATHER, HAIL MARY, NICENE CREED, PRAYERS OF PRAISE, THANKSGIVING, PETITION AND SORROW

- MEDITATION

EXAMPLES: USING GUIDED IMAGERY, STORY, SCRIPTURE, NATURE AND ART

- CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

EXAMPLES: SILENCE, MANTRAS, BREATH PRAYER, MOVEMENT, JOURNAL WRITING, MUSIC

SUGGESTED PRAYER FORMAT p. 8

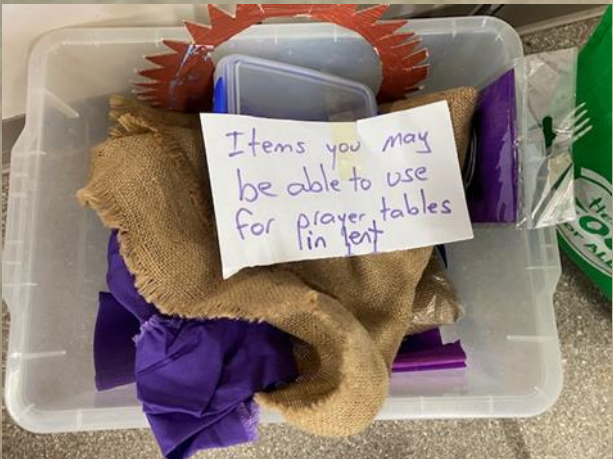
GATHER

FOCUS

REFLECT

RESPOND

GATHER



FOCUS



REFLECT



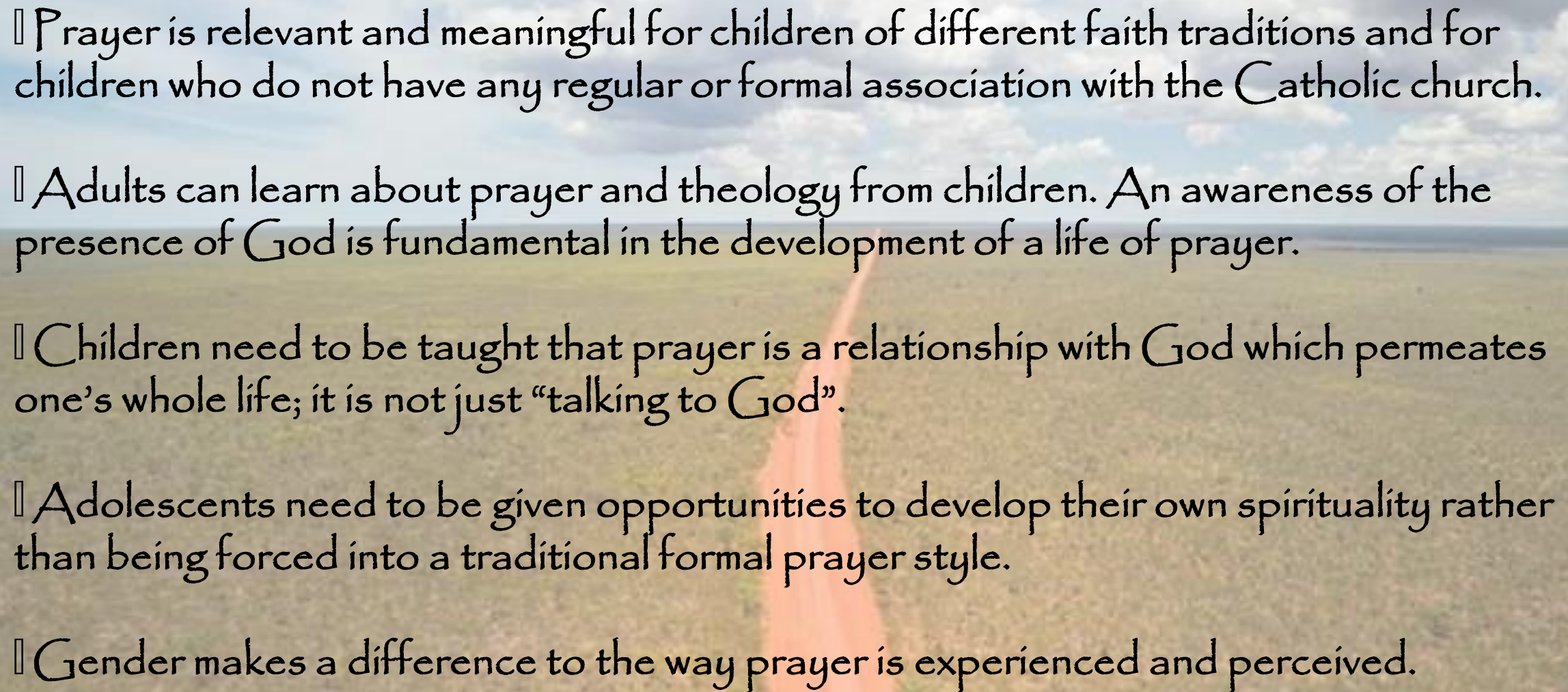
RESPOND



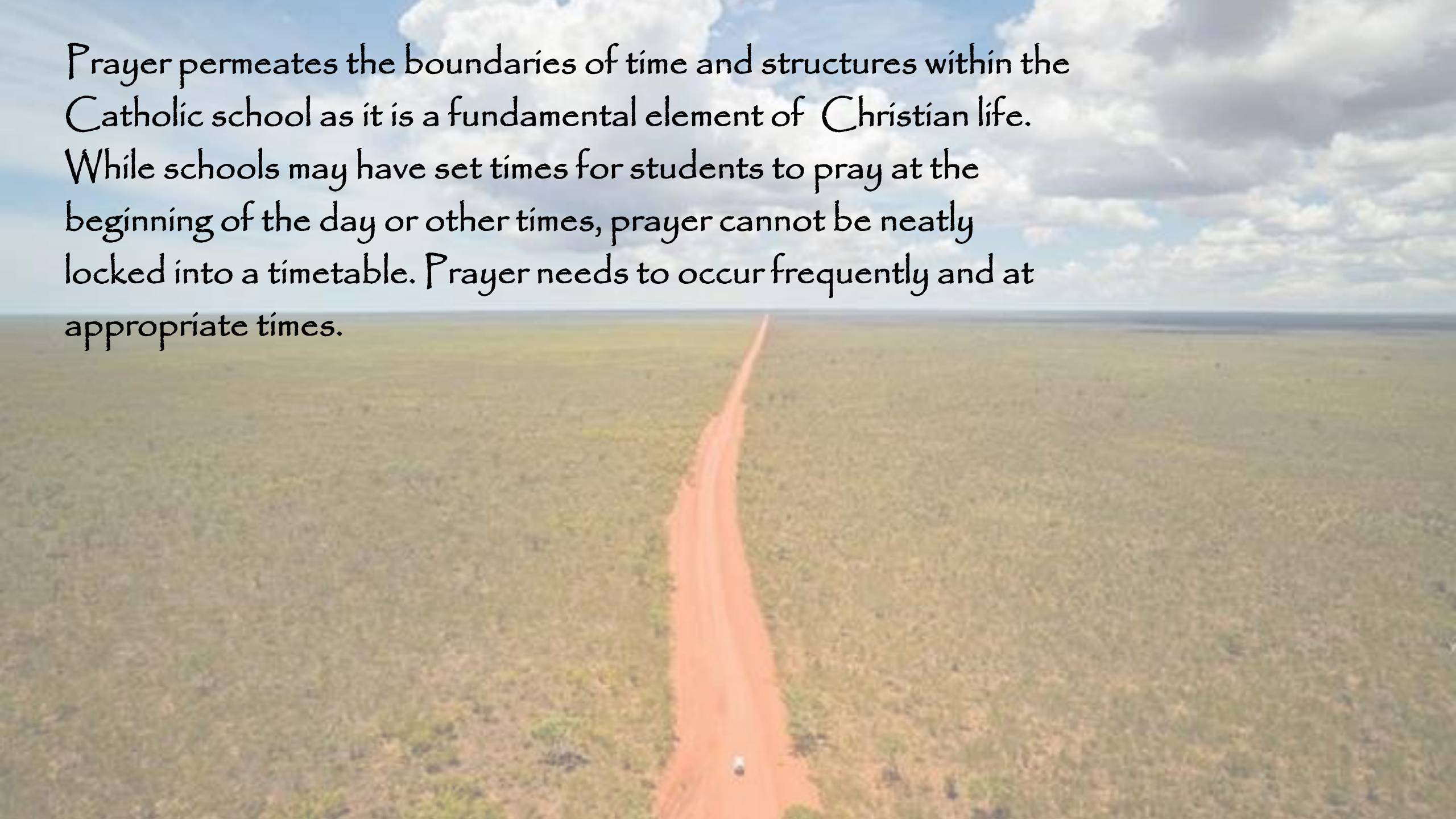
WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT PRAYER AND CHILDREN (p. 10 NOTES)

Research in the field of children and prayer has revealed the following:

- All children have the capacity and potential to pray.
- Children's faith develops in different stages.
- Children develop their images of god as they grow older.
- Children need mature adults who have a good understanding of their own faith development and of theology for them to model different ways of praying and to help them develop their understanding of God.
- Prayer experiences for children need to take into account the whole child – the physical, emotional and spiritual.
- Prayer experiences for children need to engage the senses and include both verbal and non-verbal elements.

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- A dirt road winds through a vast, open landscape under a cloudy sky. The road is reddish-brown and leads towards the horizon. The sky is blue with white clouds. The ground is a mix of green and brown, suggesting a natural, open environment.
- ▮ Prayer is relevant and meaningful for children of different faith traditions and for children who do not have any regular or formal association with the Catholic church.
 - ▮ Adults can learn about prayer and theology from children. An awareness of the presence of God is fundamental in the development of a life of prayer.
 - ▮ Children need to be taught that prayer is a relationship with God which permeates one's whole life; it is not just "talking to God".
 - ▮ Adolescents need to be given opportunities to develop their own spirituality rather than being forced into a traditional formal prayer style.
 - ▮ Gender makes a difference to the way prayer is experienced and perceived.

Prayer permeates the boundaries of time and structures within the Catholic school as it is a fundamental element of Christian life. While schools may have set times for students to pray at the beginning of the day or other times, prayer cannot be neatly locked into a timetable. Prayer needs to occur frequently and at appropriate times.





Teachers need to have the skills to:

- Identify the opportunities that arise for prayer each day.
- Provide students with the opportunity to pray each day.

This will enable students to:

- Recognise the need for prayer in their own lives.
- Understand that prayer is an essential part of daily life and the whole life of the Catholic school.

What are some appropriate times in your class?

PRAYING WELL WITH CHILDREN

- Dedicate sufficient time and quality
- Incorporate a liturgical dimension
- Allow them to participate in substantial, creative ways
- Give them the opportunity to encounter the sacred up close...incorporate a meditative silence, involve special items (both explicitly religious and not) from their families, etc.
- Provide experiences designed to foster a living and personal relationship with God

PRAYING IN DIFFERENT WAYS

- ▮ Traditional prayers (such as the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Nicene Creed)
- ▮ Formal and informal prayers (prayers of praise, thanksgiving, petition and sorrow)
- ▮ Meditation (using guided imagery, story scripture, nature and art)
- ▮ Contemplative prayer (through silence, mantras and breath prayer)
- ▮ Other methods of prayer (through movement, journal writing and music)

TYPES OF PRAYER

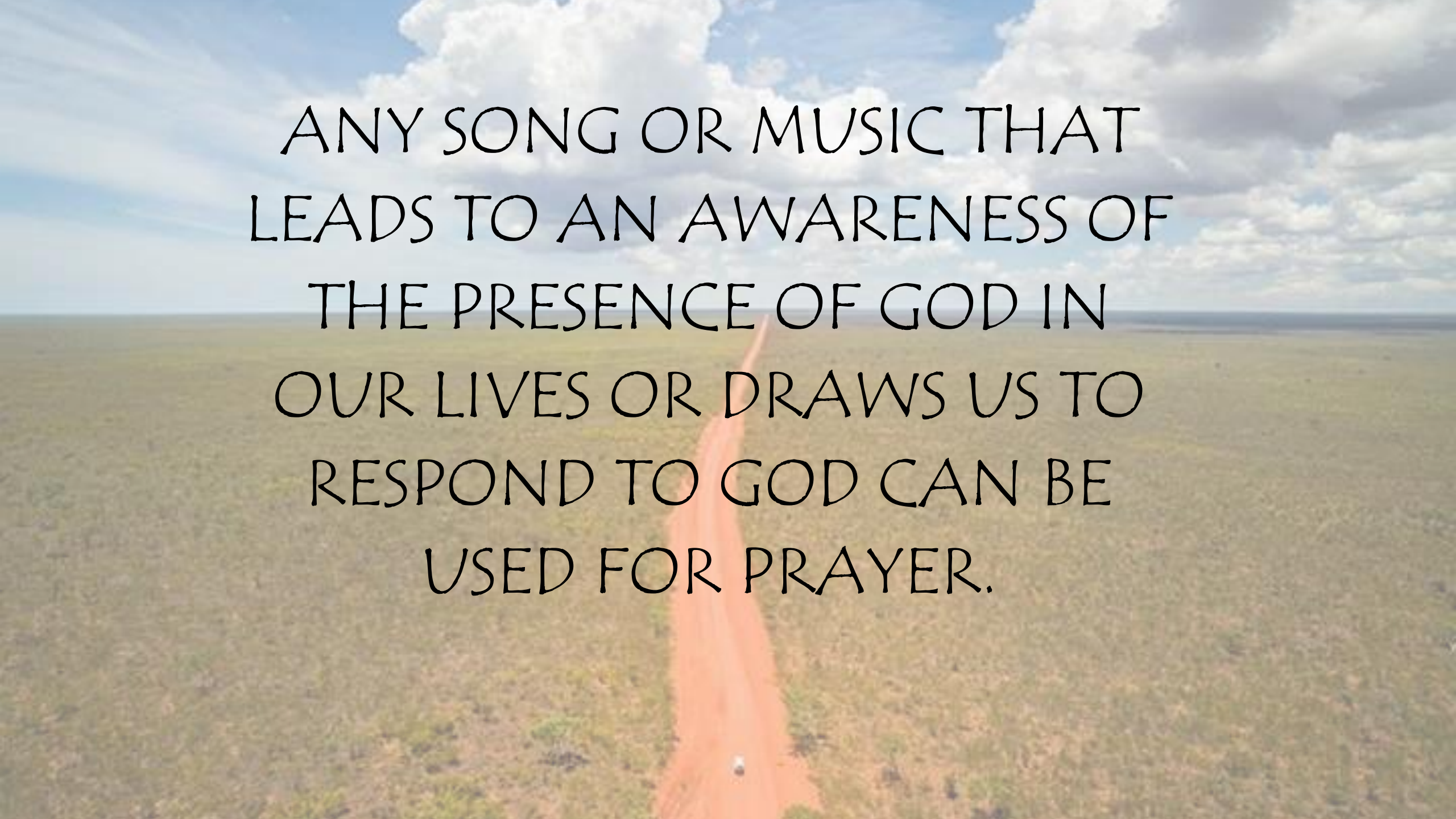
- Blessing and Adoration (praising God)
- Prayer of Petition (asking for what we need, including forgiveness)
- Prayer of Intercession (asking for what others need)
- Prayer of Thanksgiving (for what God has given and done)

FORMAL?

INFORMAL?

PRAYER
THROUGH
MUSIC



A person wearing a long, flowing red robe stands in the center of a vast, flat, greenish-brown landscape. The person's right arm is extended, pointing towards the horizon. The sky is filled with large, white, fluffy clouds against a pale blue background. The overall scene is bright and open, suggesting a sense of vastness and connection to nature.

ANY SONG OR MUSIC THAT
LEADS TO AN AWARENESS OF
THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN
OUR LIVES OR DRAWS US TO
RESPOND TO GOD CAN BE
USED FOR PRAYER.



Prayer Beads





MANDALAS P. 19-22



LABYRINTHS p. 23/24



PRAYER WALKS p. 26/27



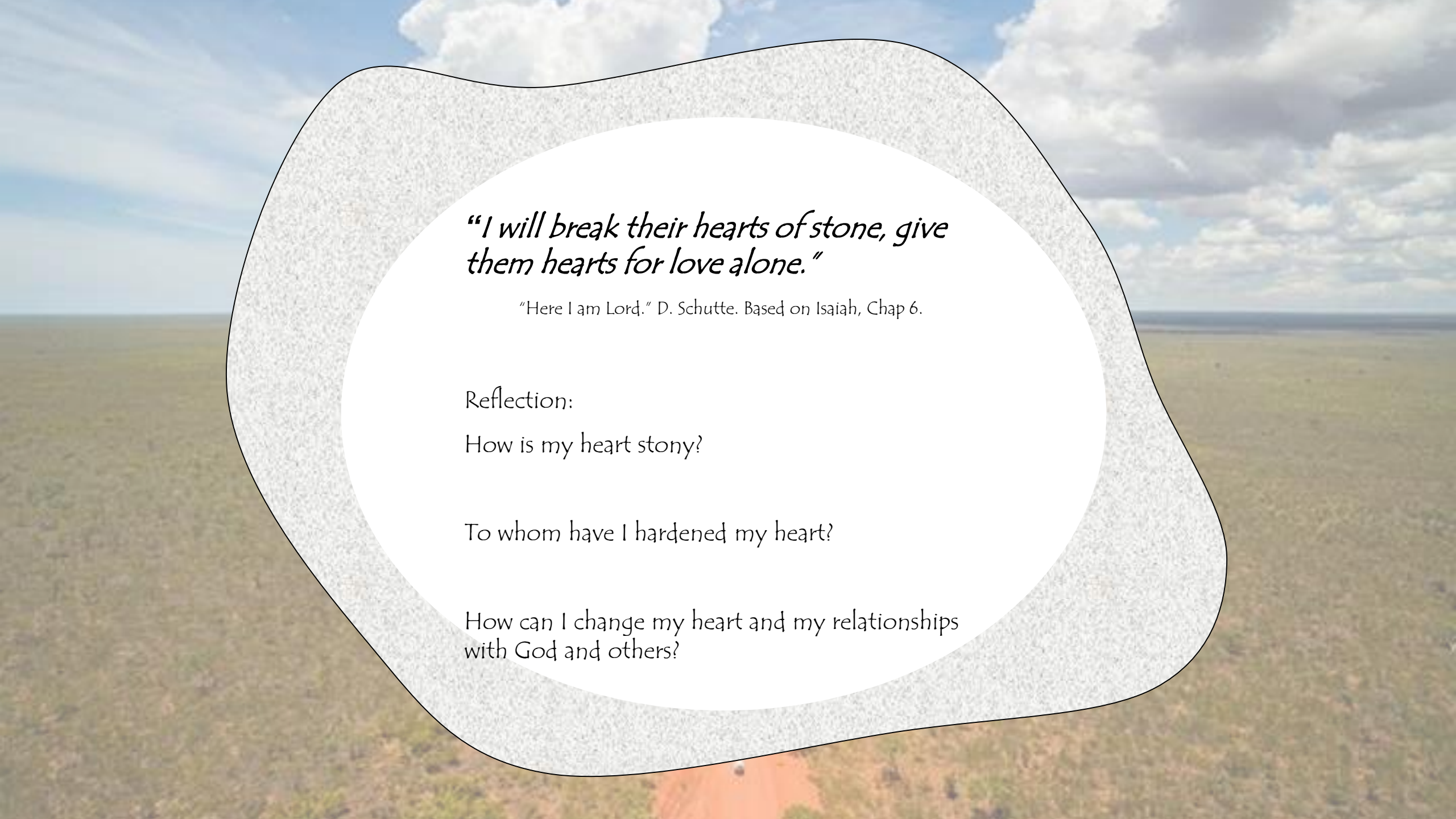
MEDITATION



Silence is the
pre-requisite for prayer







“I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.”

“Here I am Lord.” D. Schutte. Based on Isaiah, Chap 6.

Reflection:

How is my heart stony?

To whom have I hardened my heart?

How can I change my heart and my relationships with God and others?



helping
hands

Shelley helps...

ween

Miranda





LOCAL FLAVOUR IS
NECESSARY, AND
INDEED DEMANDED
BY VATICAN
DOCUMENTS!!



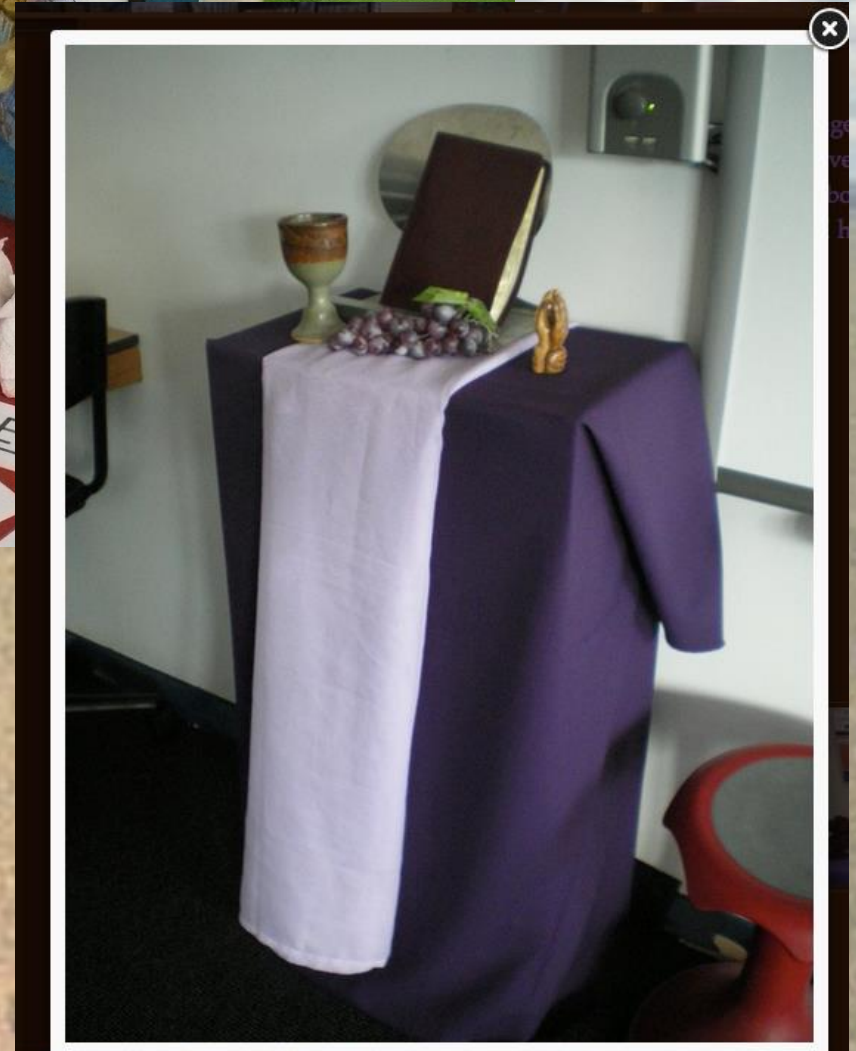
PLANNING YOUR PRAYER SPACE



CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR PRAYER

- Create a physical setting that is comfortable and conducive to praying and learning about faith.
- Consider reserving one special area of the room as “sacred space” where children can gather for prayer and religion class
- Use visual cues for seasons and symbols

PRAYER FOCUS





WHAT NOT TO DO WITH A PRAYER SPACE....



THINGS TO CONSIDER

Provide a wide range of prayer experiences

Choose the time to pray

Choose the place and space to pray

Use scripture for the basis of prayer

Develop the concept that prayer is a part of life

Be creative!

...both in staff prayer
and in
classroom prayer!