

MATERIALS FOR MISSION EDUCATION

PRAYER IN MISSION CLUBS:

Prayer is an important part of our lives as missionaries. It can be a rich experience with children. Below you will find several ways to incorporate prayer into your mission club meetings: suggestions for composing your own prayers for mission clubs, the Mission Rosary which is the official prayer of mission clubs, and traditional prayers and prayers written for mission intentions.

COMPOSING YOUR OWN PRAYERS

Use scripture and the mission activities you are doing to inspire prayer with the children. Consider writing short prayers that help students make a connection between what they are learning and doing and God's role in it. It will also help them start a habit of asking God's guidance in their lives and praying for others.

In this section you will find:

1. examples of prayers that reflect the specific work your club is doing
2. ideas for helping children become more familiar with the scriptures you are using
3. suggestions of specific scriptures.

EXAMPLES OF PRAYERS:

To see how prayer can be written and integrated into mission club work, read these examples from an actual class:

A group of fifth graders embarked on a project about hunger at local, national and international levels. Each of the meetings began with a Scripture and a prayer.

1) Prior to the first meeting, the students had read stories similar to those found in the *TO LOVE TENDERLY* and *TO ACT JUSTLY* books. The prayer for this meeting incorporated the stories:

Scripture:

"I give you a commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you should also love one another."

John 13:34

Prayer:

Dear God our Creator, who gives us the earth and all its abundance,

*We pray with the children of Kenya,
we pray with Agnes and Adam, their young cousins, their grandmother and aunts
and uncles.*

*We pray with the children of Vietnam,
We pray with Thuy Tien and her loving brother Bai, their parents and grandparents
and their teachers.*

*We pray with the children of Nicaragua,
We pray with Carlos, his sister Mercedes and brother Diego, their parents and
grandfather.*

*We pray with the children of Afghanistan, Zambia, Iraq, Ireland, Ghana, China,
Brazil, and all the many beautiful places on earth. We pray with our sisters and
brothers, asking that you show us the way to make a better life for all. Amen.*

2) At the second meeting, the students and leaders made plans to work to alleviate hunger. This prayer led into that planning session:

Scripture:

St. Paul wrote:

And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work."

2 Corinthians 9:8

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, you knew hungry people when you lived on earth. You know that right now, there are still millions of hungry people on earth.

Today we first thank you, with full hearts and full stomachs, for all that you have given us.

Next, we ask you to fill our hearts again, this time with compassion for those who are hungry. We ask you to fill our souls with a great longing to help make the world a more just and equal place.

And lastly, we ask you to show us the way to do this. Amen.

3) The following was said at the closing session. At this point, the class had visited a food shelf, educated schoolmates about hunger, then collected food for the food shelf, and money to donate to a world-wide program working to end poverty and hunger. This prayer is similar to the second one, but builds upon it, recognizing the work accomplished. Once again, it was written to help children reflect on their relationship with Jesus and the need for His help in their work.

Scripture:

"If we are rich and see others in need, yet close our hearts against them, how can we claim that we love God? My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be real love, which shows itself in action."

1 John 3: 17-18.

Prayer:

Dear Jesus, you knew hungry people when you lived on earth. You know that right now, there are still millions of hungry people.

Today we first thank you, with full hearts and full stomachs, for all that you have given us.

Next, we thank you for the opportunity to help others who are hungry. We know you said, "When I was hungry, you gave me food." We saw you in the others we helped.

Now we know that in our town, some children have food for a month because we helped. We know that somewhere in our world, some children have food all the time because of the animals we provided. Thank you for helping us with that.

We ask you to keep filling our souls with a great longing to help make the world a more just and equal place. Amen.

BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH SCRIPTURES:

For students old enough to read fluently, there are additional ways to make an impact with the scriptures:

- After having used a scripture with a prayer, have someone print it by hand or on a computer, large enough to be read at a short distance and hang this up so students will be able to read it again over the next few days. Hang copies over water fountains, near lockers, etc.
- Make bookmarks with this scripture for each student.
- Provide students with a word scramble with the scripture. A simple example: " When I was gruhny, you aveg me ofod."
- Challenge students to find other scriptures that seem appropriate for the subject you are studying. Ask them to be prepared to explain what the reading means to them.

With younger children:

- Give each child a piece of paper with the scripture written on it, with enough room for drawing. Have them decorate it.
- Using this artwork, have them read along with you as you pray the scripture each day for several days, or ask parents to use it as a meal or bedtime prayer.

SCRIPTURE SUGGESTIONS FOR MISSION CLUB PRAYERS:

Depending on the topics or issues your club is working on, you will find scriptures to help with prayer. Suggestion of appropriate scriptures:

Jesus stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 4:17-21

You have been told what is required of you. Only this: to do justice, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

The maker of heaven and earth, the seas and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry.

Psalms 146:6

Then let justice surge like water, and goodness like an unfailing stream.

Amos 5:24

The Lord does righteous deeds, brings justice to all the oppressed.

Psalms 103:6

You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth and summoned from its far-off places, you whom I have called my servant and will not cast off—fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed; I am your God. I will strengthen you, and help you, and uphold you with your right hand of justice.

Isaiah 41:9-10

If we are rich and see others in need, yet close our hearts against them, how can we claim that we love God? My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be real love, which shows itself in action."

1 John 3: 17-18.

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the ropes of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.

Isaiah 58:6-7

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common...there was no needy person among them...

Acts 4: 32,34.

I give you a commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.

John 13:34

"I was hungry and you gave me food..."

Matthew 25:35

If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your life shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

Isaiah 58:10

And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5:9

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Matthew 5:6

Do to others whatever you would have them do to you.

Matthew 7:12

If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.

1 Corinthians 12:26

For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.

2 Timothy 1:7

If God so loved us, we also must love one another.

1 John 4:11

No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us.

1 John 4:12

THE MISSION ROSARY

The Mission Rosary is often used in conjunction with mission education. It was created in 1951 by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. Each decade is a different color. These colors represent an area of the world where missionaries continue to work today.

- GREEN symbolizes the forests and grasslands of AFRICA.
- BLUE is for the ocean surrounding the ISLANDS OF THE PACIFIC
- White symbolizes Europe, home of the Holy Father, shepherd of the world
- RED shows the fire of faith that brought the first missionaries to the AMERICAS
- YELLOW, is for the morning light of the East, symbolizing ASIA.

"Peace will come only when the hearts of the world have changed. To do this we must pray, and not for ourselves, but for the world. The world means everyone," explained Sheen. "When the World Mission Rosary is completed, one has embraced all continents, all people in prayer."

Call your diocesan mission office to find out where these rosaries are made in your diocese. Often they are made by church groups that do not charge for them.