

Hope

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Dear Prayer Leader,

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

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 and their co-founder Mary MacKillop and to the prayer style of mandalas.

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.

In your prayer, each staff member will be invited to light a tea candle as a symbol of light and hope. We would suggest that they be lit from the 3 prayer candles.

Reading and Reflection

The reading is Luke 24: 35-49. The reflection material invites us to consider what it means to have expectations of hope as Jesus did.

Prayer

The prayer style involves the creation of mandalas. If you are not familiar with mandalas then a bit more about them is written in the notes accompanying the prayer itself. You will need to have the included mandala sheets printed out and ready, as well as some coloured pencils or pens.

While time may not permit fully completing the prayer drawings, encourage your staff to finish them off during the day.

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 few ideas to get you started.

- Collect the mandalas – put them up without names around the staff areas
- Have a candle for each staff member. Put their name on it and split them into 4 groups. Each day, put out and light a different group of candles. On the 5th day put out and light them all.

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.

Hope

We Gather

God of hope,
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



We Listen

Then they told what had happened on the road to Emmaus, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

(Luke 24: 35-43)

We Respond

What beliefs sustain your hope?

What experiences have you had which have affirmed your beliefs?

We Pray

As we go about our day O God,
As we strive to walk with Jesus as people of hope.
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

Words of Wisdom

One Pace Beyond

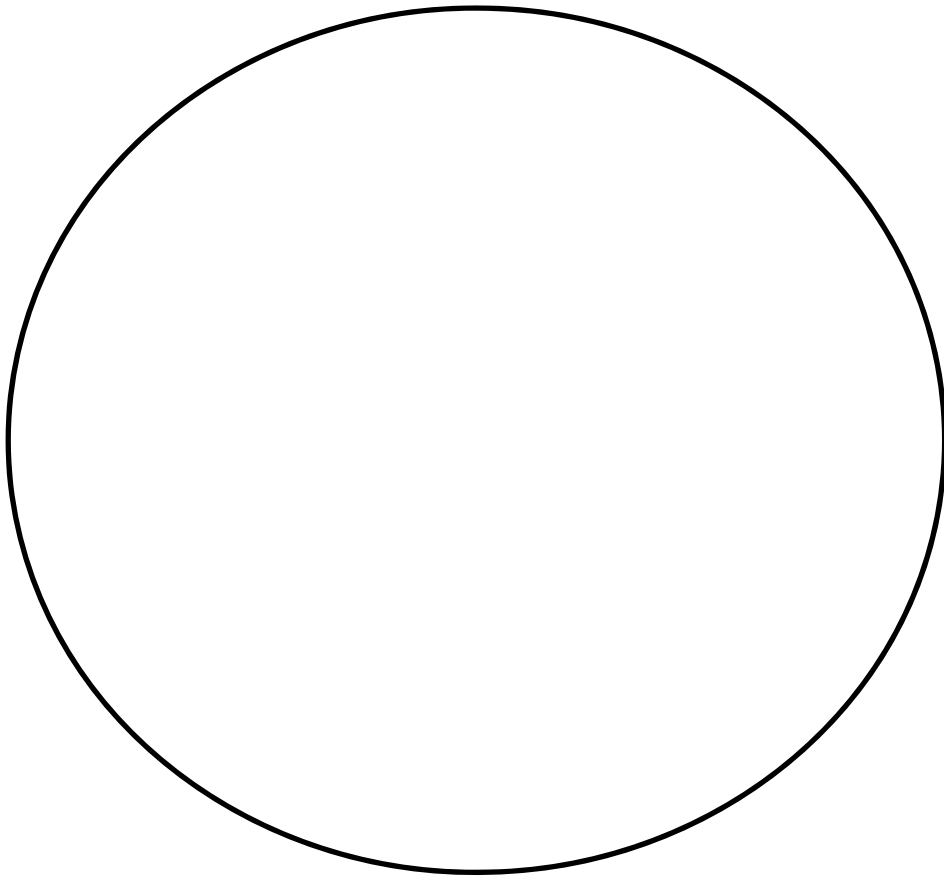
Take down your lantern from its niche and go out!
You may not rest in firelight certainties.

Secure from drifting fog of doubt and fear.
You may not build yourself confining walls and say:
“Thus far, and thus, and thus far shall I walk.
And these things shall I do, and nothing more.”

Go out!
For need calls loudly in the winding lanes
and you must seek Christ there.
Your pilgrim heart shall urge you still one pace beyond
and love shall be your lantern flame.

M. Raphael Consedine PBVM

Hope



Representing wholeness, and all things encompassed by God, a mandala's centre point symbolises that God is the centre of our lives.

All other shapes and colours within the circle represent what the artist sees as encompassed by God.

A mandala may be representative of feelings, emotions or actions.

Hope

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:

***Tea candles
Copies of mandala sheets
Coloured pens / pencils
Head, Heart, Hands candles
Staff candle
Matches***

Prayer intentions book

Setting up for Prayer Stations

- ***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 your handout sheets.***
- ***Make sure your tea candles are available.***
- ***Have mandala sheets and coloured pencils ready.***
- ***Organise someone to read the scripture passage***

We Gather

Leader:

Our prayer journey this week invites us to walk with Jesus as people of hope.

The symbol of today's prayer is that of light.

In many different traditions lighting candles is a sacred action. In the Catholic Christian tradition, lighting a candle is an old, old ritual of prayer used individually and together. They are found in cathedrals and roadside shrines - lit in need or in gratitude. It is a sign of God's presence and the light of Christ.

For the Presentation Sisters, founded by Nano Nagle, the lantern is a recognised symbol of their work, their mission and their charism.

As we reflect today on Jesus' call to trust and live with hope, we are reminded of the light he provides for us in our lives.

I invite you to take a candle now as a sign of your willingness to follow this week in the footsteps of Jesus in being a person of hope.

(pass candles among staff – don't light yet)

Opening Prayer

Leader:

God of hope,

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

(Light your tea candle and invite others to do the same)

We Listen

Scripture

Leader: *Invite someone to proclaim the Word*

A reading from Luke 24: 35-43 (NRSV)

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

Then they told what had happened on the road to Emmaus, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Jesus calls us to walk with Hope

Leader:

In the Emmaus story we are given an insight into the very human response to Jesus' resurrection.

For the disciples, the stories of Jesus' reappearance are understandably a rollercoaster ride of emotions.

They are grieving and sorrowful, then, in a matter of moments filled with elation and then confusion.

When Jesus asks them "Why are your hearts filled with doubt?" we don't hear the disciples reply. But we know Jesus would have reassured them in similar words to those he gave Jairus, upon the death of his daughter - "Don't doubt – Only believe!"

When Jesus called his disciples to follow him and to trust God - He called them to believe! To dig deep. To have faith. To have hope!

It is with that same hope and belief that Jesus also invites us to follow.

This kind of hope is not a Pollyanna kind of hope – it is not about self delusion. And this kind of belief is not a blind belief – it is not about a mindless acceptance of the unbelievable.

Rather, it is the culmination of what we **do** know; what we **have** experienced that points us to the mystery of what is possible and makes the inexplicable reality of God's outpouring very, very probable!

It is a belief and a hope that more likely springs from wisdom than from other kinds of knowing ... and grows the kind of faith that is deeply grounded and not easily dislodged.

Hope which is faith filled knows what it is to live in the presence of God; to walk with Jesus; and to believe in what might otherwise not be believed.

As we read the Gospels and hear Jesus' story, remember that which he says so often – it is your faith that saves you; do not fear; do not doubt, only believe!

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

Reflection

What beliefs about God.....about life.....sustain your hope?

What experiences have you had which have affirmed your beliefs?

Individual Prayer

Leader:

Today our individual prayer is in the form of the mandala.
(You may wish to pass out samples for staff to look at while you read)

The mandala pattern is used across most religious traditions. Loosely translated to mean "circle," a mandala is far more than a simple shape.

It represents wholeness and all things encompassed by God. Mandalas in the Christian tradition always tell a story. One of the most famous examples is the stained glass 'rose window' in Notre Dame Cathedral.

Usually, the mandala is invisibly split into four quadrants with a centre circle. The 'story' moves from one quadrant into another and the centre is the main point or focus of the 'story'. As they are created the centre point symbolises God who is the centre of our lives.

A simple way to create a mandala is to have the centre point symbolise God as the centre of our lives. The other shapes and colours within the four quadrants of the circle reflect all that the artist sees as encompassed by God.

It may be representative of feelings..... emotions..... or actions.

As we take this quiet time,
I invite you to take some colours
and create and colour a centre point for your mandala signifying God.

You can then begin to fill your mandala with any pictures, images, colours, shapes or patterns that have significance or meaning for you.

Pass out sheets

Leader: (after a few minutes)

Spend a moment looking at your completed mandala (or soon to be completed one).

Think about what it represents for you?

What does it say?

Does it reflect the way you are feeling?

Does the 'story' need to change in any way?

Allow some silent time to contemplate this

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 as people of hope,
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