

Prayer station ideas: Ormskirk

Ormskirk Parish Church in Lancashire held a prayer event prior to Giving in Grace that featured a number of prayer stations. This paper details how they did this, to encourage churches to develop their own creative approach to help people pray.



This paper should be read alongside *A Case Study in Prayer*, which describes how Ormskirk Parish Church went about praying for their Giving in Grace programme.

The prayer co-ordinator in the planning team wanted to mark the beginning of the programme with a prayer event, believing that prayer is often the missing ingredient to initiatives in the church. The aim was not only to give people the opportunity to pray about Giving in Grace but also to experience new ways of praying.

The prayer stations were set up in a room below the church tower. People were asked to sign up for a one-hour slot. There was a good response from the church leadership and all those who attended found it to be a rewarding experience. The response on the Graffiti Wall was probably the most moving. People of all ages used their creativity to express their response to the other stations.

Station – Graffiti Wall

Items required:

- Large area of wall or free-standing noticeboard
- Roll of lining paper (or the back of some cheap wallpaper)
- Masking tape
- Marker pens with large nibs
- Felt-tip pens

Idea

To have somewhere for people to write words or draw pictures, in a visible way, that have come to them during their time of prayer so that everyone can share in their responses. It also provides somewhere to display items produced at the Craft Table station.

Practicalities

Cover an area of wall or large board with the lining paper and leave pens out for people to use. Paint is possible and looks good but there is much potential for mess.

Text for Station Card

Please use the marker pens and felt tips in the pot or any of the materials from the Craft Table to draw a picture to represent your prayer to God on the Graffiti Wall, or to write a prayer on it.

Station – Craft Table

Items required:

- Table
- Chairs
- Lots of blank paper and card
- Felt tips, crayons, chalks, colouring pencils
- Punches for cutting out shapes
- Glue sticks





- Scissors
- Disposable tablecloths

Idea

To have somewhere for people to write words or draw pictures, in a visible way, that have come to them during their time of prayer so that everyone can share in their responses. To let God use people's creativity to talk to them.

Practicalities

Paper crafts are suitable if mess is a problem; paints are possible; clay or play dough also works really well. Just put anything that could be used creatively on the table and let people go for it.

Text for Station Card

God gave us all the ability to be creative. Use any of the materials on the table to express your prayer to God. He may have put a picture into your head that you could put down on paper. You can stick what you make on the Graffiti Wall or take it home with you. Or maybe you'd like to make God a thank-you card, to thank him for the wonderful things he's done for us.

Station – Street Light

Items required:

- Flip chart or noticeboard
- Black and white map of the town/parish
- Black light
- Highlighter pens (yellow, orange and green work best)
- Blue tack
- Gaffer tape

Idea

To relate our prayers to one of the points of our church's vision: the StreetLight project, which involves visiting the shops in our town centre. Also to focus on reaching out to our community, and the impression that we give them of what God's people are like.

Practicalities

Stick the map on the flip chart or pin it on a notice board. Attach the black light just above the map, using the gaffer tape. Using the highlighter pens, people mark on the map a route that they take regularly. When the light is switched on, the highlighter pen that people have used on the map glows. Remember to set this one up near to an electrical socket outlet.

Text for Station Card

It is part of our vision to support the StreetLight project. We want to be a shining light to the community we live in, to show people what a difference God could make to their lives. We can do

that by our example, by the way we live. Everywhere the members of our church go, we are the light of Christ to the people we meet. Using the highlighter pens below, mark out a route on the map that you make regularly. Turn on the black light using the switch on the right-hand side to see how far our 'light' shines.

Station – The Cross

Items required:

- Large cross
- Christmas tree lights
- Some large nails (not sharp ones!)
- Cushions or bean bags to sit on



Idea

To have somewhere for people to reflect on what Jesus went through for us, what God gave for us. To focus on the cross, but realise that this is not something to get sad about, but to be extremely thankful for and joyful about.

Practicalities

If there is not a large cross available, make one by fixing

two large pieces of wood together using silver gaffer tape. Then cover the whole cross in gaffer tape. It looks really cool and stops anyone from getting splinters. Wrap the lights round the cross. The nails are scattered at the foot of the cross for people to pick up. It helps some people to have something tactile. Remember to set this one up near to an electrical socket outlet.

Text for Station Card

Look at the nails at the foot of the cross. Hold one of them. Think about what Jesus went through, how he suffered, and what he gave up. Now remember that he went through all that for you, so that you wouldn't have to pay the penalty for sin, but might have eternal life. The lights are there to remind us that the cross gives us hope, and gives us reason to be thankful, even joyful.

Station – Fruit

Items required:

- As wide a selection as possible of fruit on a tray or in a big bowl (Fairtrade or grown locally)
- Napkins or kitchen roll (for wiping fingers!).



Idea:

To reflect on God's provision for all our needs. To recognise that none of the things we take for granted in our daily lives would be there but for God's gift of creation, and to remember to be thankful. This idea can be extended into the area for drinks.

Practicalities:

Make sure the fruit is fresh don't put the station somewhere too warm.

Text for Station Card:

All good things come from God. He provides for all our needs. Please take a piece of fruit. As you eat it, think about all the good things God provided to enable you to be eating the fruit right now: soil, trees, sun, rain, farmers, transport – and our dependence on the whole world for the blessings we have.

Station – Pebbles and Water

Items required:

- Pebbles, if possible of different shapes and sizes
- Large glass bowl
- Large jug of water or bottles of water
- Plastic/paper cups
- Basket or similar (to put the pebbles in to start with)

Idea:

An act of confession and of handing things over to God. To experience God's grace in action as it refreshes, renews and heals areas of our lives that we are willing to let go of and place in God's control.



Practicalities:

Bags of pebbles are available from most garden centres, or somewhere that sells candles, and even some supermarkets. Bottled water is easier than a jug for children to lift and the lid can be replaced, as the water is out for a while. Using disposable cups means no washing up or disrupting the atmosphere in the room.

Text for Station Card

Take a pebble and hold it in your hand. Think about anything that is bothering you, or that you want to say sorry to God for. When you feel ready, put the pebble into the bowl of water, to represent you are handing these things over to God. He will cleanse, renew and

refresh those areas of your life. Using a cup, take a drink of water, and feel God refreshing you.

Station – Thank-You Letters

Items required:

- Writing paper
- Envelopes
- 'Post box'
- Pens or pencils

Idea

An act of thanksgiving. To enable those who feel less creative/who are better with words than pictures to put something down on paper. To give people privacy to express their thanks to God for things they may not wish to make public. Puts a new slant on something familiar to children.

Practicalities

To make the post box, cover an old shoebox in gift wrap and cut a slot in the top. No one reads the letters, as they are disposed of unopened at the end of the event (in a paper recycling bin) to respect people's privacy.

Text for Station Card

Big or small, we all have blessings to count. Think of the things you are most grateful for. Use the notepaper to write a thank-you letter to God. Post it in the recycling box.

Station – Bibles

Items required:

- A wide selection of Bibles in different translations and formats

The Idea

To ground our prayers in Scripture, while allowing unfamiliar translations to open our eyes to things we hadn't noticed before.

Practicalities

Try to get translations that are different from the one you usually use in church, including a selection of Children's bibles. Modern paraphrases like *The Message* and *The Street Bible* can bring the bible alive for some but can turn others off so have the KJV and other traditional translations as well. The poetry of older translations can have just as powerful an effect on people as more modern language.

Text for Station Card

Sometimes reading a passage in a version of the bible we are not familiar with can open up the passage to us, and reveal things we hadn't noticed before. Please feel free to use any of these bibles in your prayer time.



Station – Globe Clock

Items required:

- Clock that shows international time zones if possible
- Globe

The Idea

To reflect on our church's vision for overseas mission and expand people's vision of what our church can do.

Practicalities

A clock combined with a globe works well. The same exercise works with a separate globe and clock, or even just a globe and a list detailing the time difference in some countries of relevance to your church.

Text for Station Card

Part of our vision is to give more to overseas mission. This clock shows the time in different places around the world. Turn the globe round to see what time it is in some of the places where we support projects. Have you ever thought about giving some of your time to mission work? Pray about what it is God wants you to give.

Station – Listening Station

Items required:

- Suitable phone, tablet or laptop
- Digital play list
- Headphones
- Songbook

The Idea

People can be moved by music and lyrics more than any other type of worship. Select songs to help people focus on the theme of Giving in Grace.

Practicalities

If possible, make a songbook that includes the lyrics of the songs to be used. Reading the words while listening can help some people to focus. Quiet instrumental songs playing in the prayer room creates an atmosphere, so headphones are essential to this Listening Station, so as not to disturb the peace.

Text for Station Card

The songs have been specially selected for Giving In Grace. The words can be found in the songbook provided. Please feel free to browse through and listen to any of the tracks. The words may help you to think about God's grace and our response to it.

Station – Candles

Items required:

- Votive candles
- Tray
- Gravel or sand
- Matches

The Idea

To think about our witness to our community as part of our church vision and as an act of commitment to Christ in response to God's grace.



Practicalities

Obviously there are Health and Safety issues with this one. Check out your church's policy, and any insurance policy guidelines. Make sure the station is well away from anything flammable. Children in the room must be supervised at all times. Consider extra-long matches or using a taper with children, but don't exclude them.

Text for Station Card

Please light a candle as a sign of your commitment to be a light for Christ in our church and our community. Place it in the gravel, away from the sides of the tray.

Station – World Impressions

Items required:

- Squashy balls (tennis/cricket ball sized)
- Box or bowl (to put them in)

The Idea

To reflect on what effect our lifestyle has on our planet, and what effect God would want us to have.

Practicalities

If you can get them, balls made to look like the Earth or globes are ideal, but they need to be small enough to fit in someone's hand.

Text for Station Card

Take a ball and hold it in your hand. Imagine that this is our planet. God gave it to us to take care of. Squeeze the ball. Each of us makes our own impression on the world we are living in. Think about the impression you want to leave.