

**Church of Ireland
Youth Department
(CIYD)**



**Day of Prayer for Young People and
Youth Ministry**

Sunday 7th February 2016

Introduction

Last year saw the first CIYD Day of Prayer for Young People and Youth Ministry. A number of dioceses across the island organised events such as prayer spaces, worship services and Prayer and Pancake parties which were attended by all ages. At each of these events, the focus was on praying for the needs of young people and for the youth leaders and ministries that serve them. A resource was produced to aid dioceses in the organising of their events.

This year, there was a desire for the Day of Prayer to happen again; however after some discussion it was decided to take the different approach of encouraging congregations around the country to pray together about these topics on a set day.

The House of Bishops approved the date of Sunday 7th February as an appropriate one for undertaking this. However, participation is completely optional and at the discretion of those leading services on the Sunday in question. Furthermore, if another Sunday would be more suitable in your context, then of course do what works for your own schedule.

The idea is simple: this pack contains a selection of prayer ideas that can be used during the service. Some are for praying aloud, some provide stimulus for silent prayer and some are more interactive. If you were involved in last year's event, you may recognise a number of the ideas from then, as well as some new ones. Perhaps one or more of these might appeal to you. You might choose to use them during the Prayers of the People or in some other way that you feel appropriate. Indeed, you might choose to completely change and adapt them as suitable. The aim is not that the Day of Prayer would take over the service, but rather that the prayers would simply slot in and be part of the rhythm of the worship on that day.

So, if the idea appeals to you, please do select one or more of the ideas from this pack and use them during your Sunday worship on February 7th. Of course, prayer for our young people is important at all times, so hopefully this resource pack may prove to be helpful on many other occasions also.

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact Amy McCrea (Youth Ministry Development Officer, Southern Region) at amy@ciyd.org. Also, if you are planning to participate on the day, please do let Amy know, simply so that CIYD can have an idea as to what is happening across the island.

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” Matthew 18:19-20 (NIV)

Some General Prayers

*You might choose to use some or all of the following prayers and to include a congregational response such as “Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**”*

- We pray for the young people of this parish and diocese and of the wider community. We thank you that you created each one of them lovingly and carefully and that you know each of them intimately. Help us to always see them through your eyes. We pray that they would come to know Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life and that they would live in his light as they grow.
- We thank you for youth leaders (*you might choose to name those relevant to your parish/diocese*) who faithfully give of their time, energy, talents and other resources in order to invest in the young people in their care. Help them to live lives that point young people towards Christ as Lord and Saviour. At times when they feel inadequate, help them to trust you and to rely on you to give them the strength and wisdom they need. Draw near to them when they grow weary and refresh them for all that they have to do. Help us all to support and encourage them in their valuable ministry.
- We thank you for the youth ministry in our parish/diocese (*as applicable*) and pray that it would bring glory to you. May it be a safe place for young people as they grow and develop; may they feel comfortable and confident there and may good and lasting friendships begin and grow. Most of all, we ask that it would be a place where young people would hear and understand the gospel and grow as disciples of Christ.
- We thank you for the many contributions that young people make towards the life of the Church. Help us to appreciate their optimism, enthusiasm, passion and energy, which greatly enrich our worship and fellowship. Thank you for the encouragement that they can be to other Christians of all ages. Help us always to value them as fellow members of the Body of Christ and to provide them with opportunities to use the skills, gifts and talents with which you have blessed them.
- There are many challenges and pressures facing young people today; in school, with their friends and peers, online and even in the home. The teenage years are a time of many different types of change. Help us to be aware of these struggles and to be supportive of young people as they negotiate them daily. We pray that they would look to you as their ultimate source of guidance, comfort and help.
- We pray that you would help all of us here present to support young people as they grow in their faith. Many of us, at services of Baptism and Confirmation have promised to support and encourage children and young people in their Christian growth and development. Help us always to be mindful of this and to actively seek opportunities to live out such promises.

We pray especially for parents and guardians who seek, in the midst of hectic family life, to raise their children in the Christian faith.

- We pray for all young people who are considering or preparing for Confirmation. Make ready their hearts and minds and bring them to a true and lasting faith in you. By the power of your Holy Spirit, help them to live out their Confirmation declarations and promises for their rest of their lives, keeping their eyes firmly fixed upon you.
- We pray for young people who for various reasons have many doubts and questions about the Christian faith. We pray for those who have been hurt in some way by Christians or the Church and who now struggle to believe in you. We ask you to work your purposes out in these situations and to help us to support such young people in appropriate and loving ways.
- We pray for young people who are seeking to live out their faith in their daily lives; in their families, friendships, schools and workplaces. We thank you for their commitment to you and for their passion to share the message of your grace and love with those whom they meet each day. Give them courage at times when they may be mocked, ridiculed or sidelined by others for their actions and words. May they be ever aware of your presence with them and know that even in the most difficult of circumstances, you will never leave them or forsake them.

A Prayer for Difficult Times

You might choose to print this prayer out or project it on a screen so that all can participate.

At times of anxiety and worry

Reassure our young people

At times of hurt and upset

Comfort our young people

At times of tension and stress

Help our young people to cast their cares upon you

At times of rejection and failure

Remind our young people of their worth in your eyes

At times of change and turmoil

Be the constant in our young peoples' lives

At times of wrongdoing and guilt

Remind our young people that you forgive and renew

At times when there are difficult decisions to be made

Remind our young people that you are the way

At times when different voices and ideas compete and cause confusion

Remind our young people that you are the truth

At times when it seems difficult to carry on

Remind our young people that you are the life

Statistics

You might find some of these statistics useful to integrate into prayers. Alternatively you might choose to read out or display some of them and allow the congregation to spend some time in silent prayer after hearing/reading each one.

- In Northern Ireland, 83 % of 16-25 year olds say that drug and alcohol abuse is an issue of huge importance to them.
(Source: Belfast Telegraph, 08/04/2014)
- In the Republic of Ireland, the suicide rate among teenage girls is higher than any other EU state, at almost 2.5 times the EU average. The suicide rate among teenage boys is the second highest in the EU.
(Source: Irish Examiner, 21/03/2014)
- In November 2013, 7% of those attending worship in Church of Ireland churches were aged 12-18
(Source: Church of Ireland Census 2013)
- In 2015, 42% of 10-20 year olds in the UK participated in meaningful youth social action.
(Source: Youth Social Action in the UK-2015)
- According to the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland, one in five young people in the Republic of Ireland is experiencing a mental disorder. *(Source: RCSI PERL Group Mental Health Report, 2013)*
- In 2015, 43% of young people in the UK were victims of bullying.
(Source: The Annual Bullying Survey 2015)
- Young people aged 10-14 in the Republic of Ireland provide 24,758 hours a week of unpaid care to family members.
(Source: Republic of Ireland Census 2011)

Interactive prayers

Some of these prayers involve using items to inspire prayer- others involve moving around, writing and drawing.

- **Stones:** In advance of the service, ask young people to write down (on rocks/stones in permanent marker) some of the things that are troubling them and their peers in 2016. This should be done anonymously. What are the things that prove difficult for them and which cause anxiety? During the service, distribute the stones to the members of the congregation. You might choose to lead some prayers about the issues that were raised, before allowing time for the congregation to pray silently about the issue written on the stone that they were given. Please note that it may be helpful to ask each young person to write their response on a number of different stones, to ensure that there are enough for each member of the congregation.
- **Salt and Light:** On one side of the church, leave out bowls of Ready Salted crisps. On the other, leave out tea light candles (some of them lit so that the others can be lit from them). Encourage the congregation to eat a crisp and to light a candle, as they do so praying that young people would be salt and light, sharing God's message of love and hope with the world around them through both word and action.
- **Sweets:** As the congregation leave, hand each person a boiled sweet. Encourage them to find a quiet moment during the week to suck their sweet and pray for one particular young person for the duration of the time that it takes to finish it.
- **Thumbprints:** In advance of the service, ask young people to make their thumbprint on sheets of paper and to write their names beside them. Perhaps have about two young people put their thumbprint on each page. Hang the pages up on the walls of the church, spaced out around the building. Provide opportunities for the congregation to move around and write their prayers for the young people around the thumbprints.
- **Photographs:** In advance of the service, gather together a selection of photographs of youth ministry within the parish/diocese/area. For example, you might include pictures of youth group meetings or a diocesan trip. Stick each of them in the middle of a piece of paper, ensuring that there is a good amount of paper left around the edges of each photograph. Hang the pictures up on the walls of the church, spaced around the building. Encourage people to draw further images around the photos, expressing their prayers for what they would like God to do in and with the ministries shown.
- **Water:** This activity focuses on praying for youth leaders. Have some glass/see-through plastic jugs of water and disposable cups laid out at various points around the church. It is important that you use as clear and clean

water as possible for this activity. Encourage the congregation to pour out and drink a cup of water, using the following steps:

- *Look:* Look at the pure water in the jug. Ask God to help those with responsibility for leading young people to live pure lives, according to his Word.
- *Fill:* Pour out some water into one of the cups. As you do, ask God to fill the leaders with all that they need to do their work: love, patience, energy, wisdom etc.
- *Drink:* As you drink from the cup and are refreshed, ask God to refresh the leaders spiritually and physically in the work they do, which can often be tiring and draining.