Intergenerational Worship

Prayers based on Matt 11:2-11 (+a little bit of Isaiah 35 +Luke 1:46-55)


What is this: Intergenerational Prayers

Where it’s used: In any intergenerational gathering, but specifically Lectionary based gatherings.

Time: 5 -10 minutes

Bible Focus/theme: Matt 11:2-11 (+Isaiah 35 +Luke 1:46-55)

What’s needed:

• Orange traffic cones; yellow and black striped hazard tape, bright yellow or orange signs reading ‘God at work’.
• A small team worded up to wear hard hats and Hi-viz vests, and set out the cones and tape and signs at the appropriate time in your gathering. At least one person from this team needs to prepared to engage in the scripted dialogue with the leader of the prayers.
• Fluoro yellow or orange post it notes and pens

Introduction

Leader: It’s time to get ready for our prayers for the world. When we pray for the world, we join in with God’s work in the world. All of our readings today announce clearly that God is here and he’s working to set things right in his wise ways. We pray confidently in faith, knowing that God is already at work.

• Display image of Mary and Elizabeth ‘Magnificat’ by Chris Booth
Here’s the way Melbourne artist Chris Booth sees the way Mary (Jesus mum) and Elizabeth (John the Baptist’s mum) as workers in the kingdom building of God – he’s drawn them in hard hats and with Bulldozers and diggers.

But sometimes, even people of courageous faith can doubt and wonder whether God is really at work in the world, and what God is up to.

In our Advent readings we have been hearing about John the Baptist – what a full on prophet he was – right from the before he was born he seemed plugged in to God’s Spirit, God’s presence, and God’s good ways of love and justice. And then as a grown up, he got people ready for God’s kingdom, and pointed people to Jesus.

- Display image of John in Prison.

But even John sometimes had his doubts about whether God was really at work and whether Jesus really was bringing God’s Kingdom. Here’s the image Melbourne artist Chris Booth has created showing John in prison at the end of his life, sad and wondering whether Jesus really is the one doing God’s work…bringing the hope and promises of transformations as amazing as flowers in the desert, stream of water, and damaged people made whole, and safe ways and home for everyone.

- During this last paragraph, the team in hard hats and hi-viz arrive and begin to set up the cones and tape and signs. As they finish they take off their hard hats and add them among the cones, and signs. They engage in a bit of general ‘construction site’ type banter…

(To Spokesperson of the team) Hang on a minute, it seems we have a timetabling problem. What are you doing here? This isn’t a construction site. There’s no road works scheduled here. We are in fact about to pray.
Spokesperson: (looking at a clipboard) I think you’ll find that it is a construction site – and that road works are scheduled here.

Leader: No, really there’s not. We are here to pray, to pray for the work of God’s kingdom.

Spokesperson: Exactly. That’s what we’re here for too. The crew and I just thought you could use a bit of help in praying for God’s work, and building the kingdom. So here we are.

Leader: Right. How is this going to work?

Spokesperson: Well, here we have some hard hats; you wear one of those everyone knows you’re a worker on the job. So they’ll get us praying for those who are on the job with God’s work.

And here’s some hazard tape – You put that around so that everyone can clearly see it’s a work zone. So that gets us praying for the spaces that we know God is at work, or that we know needs some of God’s kingdom building action.

And then we’ve got the God at Work signs. That’s to help us think about the kind of work God does, and to pray for that – for love and justice, lifting the poor, feeding the hungry, bringing good news and hope, strengthening those who are weak or afraid.

Leader: Right, that sounds good, but we had some prepared prayers, from the readings. How about we pray our prayers together, joining in the responses, then we’ll take some time to write some Hard-hat, Hazard tape and God at Work Sign prayers on the post it notes.

• Rehearse the response
  “You are faithfully working to bring your love and justice to all things. and you are calling us to join you and do the same”

Prayers

Our Great God,

You are faithfully working to bring your love and justice to all things. and you are calling us to join you and do the same

You bring down those who are high and mighty, and need to get real

And you lift up those who are low and downtrodden

You are faithfully working to bring your love and justice to all things. and you are calling us to join you and do the same
You have concern for the poor, and take their side against the rich

You are faithfully working to bring your love and justice to all things. and you are calling us to join you and do the same

You give your attention and mercy to slaves

And you laugh at the way the powerful are so concerned to hold onto their positions.

You are faithfully working to bring your love and justice to all things. and you are calling us to join you and do the same

You have woven the story of wandering, homeless families into your great story, and shown that you have good ways of living – sharing mercy, help, gifts, love, hope and strength with one another, with strangers and even our enemies in need.

You are faithfully working to bring your love and justice to all things. and you are calling us to join you and do the same.

Amen.

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Remind your gathering of the three kinds of prayers and give time for people to ove around the space and add their prayers.

**Hard Hats:** Pray for someone you know who is working with God in building the kingdom.

**Hazard tape:** Pray for the places and spaces you know of that you want to see God’s kingdom ways increase.

**God at Work signs:** Pray for our community to see more clearly how God is at work, and how we can join in.