

AN INTRODUCTION

USING THIS RESOURCE

The Spirituality Commission for the Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark, in collaboration with the Anglican Diocese of Rochester, has produced Ways Into Prayer. Its purpose is to help us to develop and deepen our relationship with God. It is primarily intended for use with groups in parish or school settings (but can also be used by individuals who want to learn more about different approaches to prayer).

The resource offers easy to follow introductions to different methods of prayer with leader's notes and guided prayer exercises.

The material in this leaflet has been adapted from the 'Prayer Pack' developed by the Anglican Diocese of Rochester. Permission has kindly been given for use within the Archdiocese of Southwark.
Archdiocese of Southwark Spirituality Commission: www.southwarkdsc.org.uk



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Prayer lies at the very heart of the life of the Church and is the foundation of Christian discipleship. Each time we celebrate the Eucharist, after the words of consecration, we proclaim "the mystery of faith".

The Catechism of the Church says: "Great is the mystery of faith! ... This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer." (Section 1 Prayer in the Christian life - 2558)

In the words of Thomas Green, prayer is an "opening of the heart and mind to God... a personal encounter with God in love."

(Opening to God – A Guide to Prayer, 2006. Ave Maria Press)

In prayer we relate to God with the whole of our being: with heart, mind, body and soul. As in any human loving relationship, developing trust and becoming comfortable with the 'other' takes time and patience. Our experience of prayer is likely to have its ups and downs, but with persistence we grow closer to God. Each of us has our own unique way of praying. There is no right or wrong way of praying. We pray as we can, not as we can't. Prayer will always be a journey of discovery where we will continue to be surprised by God.

The Southwark Diocese Spirituality Commission has produced Ways Into Prayer to support you on your journey. We hope you find it helpful.

Using the resource

We offer many different ways of praying, each one explained in a '**Leaders Guide**', with helpful notes on how to lead a session and we offer a summary in a single '**Prayer Guide**' leaflet that can be used as a handout.

The Ways Into Prayer pack has been designed as a series of prayer exercises that can be undertaken in any order.

One approach has no priority over another. However, if you are leading a series of sessions, we recommend that you begin with 'Listening to God in Silence and Stillness'. The pack also includes a 'Review of Prayer' to encourage you to notice what takes place for you as you pray, and to reflect with God about this.

The leaflets currently available are (note to help locate leaflets they have been labelled as below):

Way's Into Prayer	Leader's Guides	Prayer Guides	Other
Review of prayer			A3
Listening to God in silence and stillness	B1	B2	
Centering prayer	C1	C2	
Intercessory Prayer: Bringing your concerns into prayer	D1	D2	
God in my day – The Examen	E1	E2	
Multi-sensory prayer – Prayer using images and symbols	F1	F2	
Multi-sensory prayer - Prayer using your own creativity	G1	G2	
Praying with music	H1	H2	
Praying with the Bible: Lectio Divina - Sacred Reading	J1	J2	
Praying with the Bible – Using your imagination in prayer	K1	K2	
Praying with the five senses	L1	L2	
Adoration	M1	M2	M3

How to use Ways into Prayer

- You will need to consider whether you want to cover all or some of the approaches and then whether to plan for a day or days or a series of evenings. It will take 1 ½ hours to introduce each way of praying: a 30 minute introduction to the way of praying, 30 minutes practice and 30 minutes sharing in small groups. The sharing is optional and it is up to you to decide if it would be appropriate for your group.
- The resources can be 'personalised' to meet the needs of your group, and can be used in any order, though we strongly recommend you begin with the leaflet 'Listening to God in Silence and Stillness', as this is the foundation for all the others.
- We suggest participants are asked to bring a bible and notebook to each session.
- After each session, encourage participants to continue using this way of praying at home.
- It will be helpful to encourage participants to use the Ways Into Prayer: Review of Prayer leaflet and perhaps keep a simple prayer diary to reflect upon their experience of prayer.
- It is important to remind participants that a little patience may be required before the approaches become a natural part of their prayer life.
- Not every approach to prayer will feel appropriate for them, it is important to "pray as you can, not as you can't". At the same time be open to what is new because what is helpful for us may change over time.
- Facilitators may be available to introduce Ways Into Prayer and provide training for parish use through the Southwark Diocesan Spirituality Commission.

For more information about Ways Into Prayer and how to take it forward in your parish or group, please contact:

Southwark Spirituality Commission
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