

Sample Lesson Plan for Teaching Elements of the Syllabus SECTION E: THE CELEBRATION OF FAITH
PART 5: PRAYER

Syllabus Aim	To show how ritual and worship have always been part of the human response to life and to the mystery of God
Syllabus Objectives	As a result of studying this section the students should 1. have an understanding of the importance of prayer in the lives of individuals and in religious traditions;
Key Concepts	Communication with God, personal prayer, communal prayer
Description of Content	1. Exploring the idea of prayer as a need to communicate with God 2. Looking at important people in the spiritual traditions
Methodology	A variety of methodologies are used including interpretation of data, self-assessment activities, research, discussion, group work and role-play. In using this variety of methodologies students would be given the opportunity to explore and clarify the concepts, as well as elaborate on their existing knowledge and understanding of the content.

Procedure

Introduction

Present students with pictures of people at prayer (using Photospeak pack etc.)

Discuss: What are the people in each of these pictures doing?

How do you know what they are doing?

In your opinion, why do people pray?

If someone from another planet visited your school, what would you tell them prayer is?

Adapting surveys on prayer from for example Show Us the Way or Prayerways give students time to research or interview people about the importance of prayer in their lives.

Take feedback from students giving them time to present the findings of their research to the class.

Or Read accounts of young people talking about Prayer for example in *Reality Magazine, January 1997* and give students time to complete the following:

Written Assignments:

1. Whose thoughts on prayer are similar to your own? Explain.

2. Whose thoughts on prayer differ from your own? Explain.

Take feedback and discuss: What is prayer?

Why do people / young people pray?

How important is prayer in peoples' / young peoples' lives?

Conclude by highlighting the importance of prayer in the lives of many individuals and by summarising the reasons why people pray.

Exploring the idea of prayer as a need to communicate with God

Read accounts of people talking about the importance of prayer in their lives for example from *The Irish Soul* - S. J. Costello and *The God We Never Knew* - M.J. Borg and discuss:

1. What exactly does John do when he prays?

2. How much time does he like to spend in prayer?

3. How often does he like to pray?

4. How does he feel when he does not have time to pray?

5. Do you think John feels that his prayers are heard? Explain.

6. In your opinion, why does John like to pray for fifteen minutes each day?

7. Are there similarities between the reasons why friends spend time talking together and John's reasons for praying each day? Explain.

Conclude by noting the ways in which prayer is a need to communicate with God.

Discuss: What prayers do you know from different religious traditions?

Take feedback from the students and give them time to research prayers from religious traditions with which they are unfamiliar using sources such as *World Religions: A Voyage of Discovery*, *World Religions and Beliefs*; the Qur'an; Hebrew Scriptures etc.

Using this information give students time to make a board game or distribute *Student Work: BOARD GAME - PRAYER IN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS* to each pair/ small group of students. Explain the rules and give students time to play the game i.e. Roll a dice and move the markers of the players around the board. When the marker of a player lands on a prayer square, the player earns a second throw of the dice. The first marker to reach Finish is the winner.

Discuss: How many prayers are included in the board game?

To what religious traditions do these prayers belong?

What do these prayers show about the place of prayer in the religious traditions?

Group Work: Divide the students into groups representing different religious traditions. Each group has to research the place of prayer in their religious tradition by finding answers to the following questions:

How often are members expected to pray in this religious tradition?

Do members have to make any special preparations before they pray?

Do members have to wear any special clothing when they pray?

In this religious tradition, is there a special day of worship in the week?

How do members of this tradition worship God on that day?

Group Task: Design a Role Card that describes the place of prayer for a member of this tradition e.g.

Your name isand you are a Prayer is a very important part of your religion. You can pray at You can pray in
Before praying you must If you wish you can use a
.....

When students have completed their task collect the role cards from each group.

Who am I? Role Play: Ask for three volunteers to role-play an interview with the teacher. The volunteers are all members of different religious traditions and are being interviewed on the importance of prayer in their religious traditions. Distribute Role Cards to the volunteers. Ask the three volunteers to sit in a central position. Remind the volunteers that they should not disclose the name of their religious tradition when they are being interviewed. The rest of the students are asked to listen to what each volunteer says and take notes so as to identify which religious tradition each represents.

Ask each volunteer to answer the following questions:

1. What is your name?
2. How often are you expected to pray in your religious tradition?
3. What do you do when you pray?
4. Do you have to make any special preparations before you pray?
5. Do you have to wear any special clothing when you pray?
6. In your religious tradition, is there a special day of worship in the week? Explain.
7. How do you worship God on that day?

When the role play is complete the students observing the role play, discuss:

1. Name the religious tradition to which volunteer 1 belongs?
2. How important is prayer in his religious tradition? Explain.
3. Name the religious tradition to which volunteer 2 belongs?
4. How important is prayer in his religious tradition? Explain.
5. Name the religious tradition to which volunteer 3 belongs?
6. How important is prayer in her religious tradition? Explain.

Written Assignments: Prepare a report in word or picture on prayer in one of the religious traditions.

Looking at important people in the spiritual traditions

Give students time to research the place of prayer in the life of important people in spiritual traditions.

e.g. ABRAHAM

Read Hebrew Scriptures Book of Genesis 15:3; 18:20-33; 22:1-19 or articles in Prayerways etc.

Written Assignments: Give examples of times when Abraham prayed to God in action.

Give examples of times when Abraham prayed to God in words.

Take feedback and discuss: How important was prayer in Abraham’s life? Explain.

How did Abraham influence his descendants understanding of prayer?

Written Assignments:

Write a paragraph on Abraham and Prayer. You may use the following hints in your answer:

- how he prayed
- when he prayed
- why he prayed
- prayers he said

e.g. Jesus of Nazareth

Group Work Task: Divide students into pairs/small groups and give students time to look up the following references from the Gospels and write one sentence about what each reference tells us about prayer in Jesus’ life: Lk 3:21; Mk 1:32-35; Lk 4:16-19; Lk 6:12-15; Lk 9: 28-31; Lk 10:21; Matt 6: 9-13; Mk 14:32-36; Lk 23:34; Lk 23:46.

Written Assignments:

From what you have read about prayer in Jesus’ life, write three sentences under each of the following headings:

Times When Jesus Prayed	Reasons Jesus Prayed	Where Jesus Prayed	Prayers Jesus Said

Take feedback from students as to when, where, why and how Jesus prayed and discuss:

How important was prayer in Jesus’ life? Explain.

How did Jesus influence his followers understanding of prayer?

Resources which teachers have suggested include:

A Time To Live New Christian Way Series 3 Veritas, pages 161-162.

All About Faith 2 Gill & Macmillan, pages 97-107.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Veritas Publications.

Cyberclass Manual Scholastech Disk 3

In the Beginning – H. Casey Eden Pub., page 114

Logos

Prayerways. Keyway Series. Veritas Publications.

Reality Magazine, January 1997

Show Us The Way New Christian Way Series 2 Veritas pages 157–170

The God We Never Knew: Beyond Dogmatic Religion To A More Authentic Contemporary Faith.

M.J. Borg, Harper San Francisco.

The Irish Soul: In Dialogue. S.J. Costello, Liffey Press.

World Religions and Beliefs, Ellen Fleming & Brigid O’Hara. Gill and Macmillan.

World Religions: A Voyage of Discovery, Jeffrey Brodd. St. Mary’s Press.

Student Work: BOARD GAME - PRAYER IN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Instructions: Roll a dice and move the markers of the players around the board. When the marker of a player lands on a prayer-square, the player earns a second throw of the dice. The first marker to reach Finish is the winner.

1 Start	2	3 Prayer Square “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone” <i>The Shema, a Jewish prayer</i>	4	5 Prayer Square “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” <i>A Christian Prayer</i>
6 Prayer Square “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.” <i>The Shadadah, First Pillar of Islam</i>	7	8	9 Prayer Square “Om. Let us think about God who made the world, may he guide our minds.” <i>The Gayatri mantra A Hindu Prayer</i>	10
11	12	13 Prayer Square Grant perfect joy to these loving companions ... Praise be You, O Lord, who grants the joy of bride and groom. <i>Part of a blessing in the Jewish Marriage Ceremony</i>	14	15 Prayer Square In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe,... <i>Opening lines of The Exordium, a Muslim Prayer from the Qur’an</i>
16	17 Prayer Square Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <i>Opening lines of “The Lord’s Prayer”, a Christian Prayer</i>	18	19 Prayer Square May all living things be well, happy, peaceful and prosperous. May no harm come to them; may no problem come to meet them; may they always meet with success. A Buddhist prayer	20
21 Prayer Square Dear departed one, may your sight return to the sun and your soul be released to return to the earth to enter a new body or to enter the realms of light. <i>A Hindu Cremation Prayer</i>	22	23 Prayer Square I take refuge in the Buddha I take refuge in the Dharma I take refuge in the Sangha <i>Buddhist Prayer said at the start of meditation</i>	24	25 Finish

(Prayers adapted from World Religions: A Voyage of Discovery; World Religions and Beliefs; Qur’an; Hebrew Scriptures; New Testament)