

# ***Ideas for a Teaching a Praying in Color Session to a Group – Adults*** **2020**

## **Supplies**

Provide plain white paper, a black roller ball pen, and some thin colored markers. I usually make sure each person has access to 5 or 6 markers. You can supplement those supplies with various sizes of paper, colored pencils, rulers, graph paper....

## **Getting Started**

I often start the session with a simple song or verbal prayer.

I do two things before we actually start praying. I give participants:

1. A **Doodling Vocabulary**
2. A List of **Names for God**.

### **1. Doodling Vocabulary**

Start with a three-minute refresher “doodling” class. I ask participants to tell me the names of some shapes they could draw. They’ll probably say “circle, square, star, heart, rectangle, octagon....” I will say some of the shapes they might have missed like amoebas, blobs, clouds, irregular polygons.... As they say them I quickly draw them on the easel I’m using up front. They don’t need to draw them. Then I ask them how they could embellish or add to the shapes. They might say “lines, teeth, crosshatching, dots, polka dots, scallops, arcs, rays....” I draw the ideas as they say them. The idea is to let people know that anything goes in the drawing. They don’t have to be an artist, just a person who can draw lines or dots! But I also tell people to feel free to draw things that actually look like real objects--trees, flowers, people, cars—if they want to.

### **2. Names for God**

On another piece of easel paper I ask them to tell me the “God” names they use when they pray; “God, Holy One, Loving Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Creator, Higher Power, Beloved One...” You can write the names on the paper as they say them. I also remind them that we often add adjectives to those words: Gracious God, Brother Jesus, Eternal Creator.... The idea is to acknowledge that we use different names for God at different times or in our different prayers. Participants can use whichever name they want or whichever feels right to them in their prayer.

You might consider hanging those easel sheets on the wall so people who are timid about drawing can refer to them.

## **Praying in Color**

Then we get down to *praying in color*. I tell the group that we will be entering a time of quiet (no talking while drawing/praying). I ask them to take a big breath and let it out. We do this a couple of times. I tell everyone we will start praying by drawing a shape on our own piece of paper (I usually put my shape in the middle of the paper, but that isn't necessary). In the shape, ask them to write their God name-- whichever name they choose from the list you made earlier or from their own personal list. Then I say that for three minutes we will "ask God" to be part of this time together by drawing around the name for God. The asking can include words, but words are not necessary. The drawing is a way to get still on the inside and prepare for a time of intercessory prayer and listening to God. People can add to their shape using the doodle ideas above and also add color. They can pray with words in their heads or just be silent as they concentrate on the drawing and on the name of God. I often say—"Ask God with words to be present, but when the words run out, keep praying—do this by drawing and focusing on the name for God. Your marks, color on the page and your attention are the prayer." I also say, "If words come, pray them. If not, enjoy your quiet time with God."

I use an egg timer to time the three minutes. Any kind of timer, even a phone will do. When the three minutes are up, I ring a chime or a bell. Have anyone take a deep breath. You can also say one line of a psalm or other Scripture passage together. One of my favorite passages to use is a line from Psalms 71: "You strengthen me more and more. You enfold me and comfort me." (Book of Common Prayer) If I use a line of Scripture, I write it on an easel or project it onto a screen so everyone can see it and say it together out loud.

Next I say that we are going to pray for about five or six people, one at a time. We will all pray for the same person at the same time. I ask one person in the group (maybe by a raised hand) to tell us the name of someone they would like us to pray for and ONE sentence about why. Use just one sentence, because too much information leads to both worry and over-curiosity. You could model this: "I'd like us to pray for John. He's having hip surgery next week." That's enough information. When someone in the group offers a name and a one-sentence reason for the prayer, I ask the whole group to pray for the named person by drawing a shape on their paper and putting the name of the person in it (ask for spelling from the person who suggested the name.) For three minutes everyone will pray for the person by drawing, doodling, and coloring a shape with the name in it.

As they draw/pray, they can use words in their heads if they want (or write them down), but the words aren't necessary. Or they can start using words,

but when the words run out we continue to sit with God by drawing. We are offering the person into God's care without necessarily knowing what to say or what the person needs. We are spending time with them and God by drawing. The movement of our hands allows our bodies to participate in the prayer and to be less distracted.

Ring the chime or bell at three minutes. Have everyone take a deep breath and say the line of Scripture you chose. Then ask for another name. Pray for the new person for three minutes in the same way. Repeat the process as many times as you want. I encourage people to do the entire prayer drawing on one sheet. But if they draw "big," they can use more than one sheet. There are not a lot of rules!

Praying for five or six people takes about twenty-five minutes. It is enough time to establish the idea of the prayer practice and to help people to settle into the stillness and quiet. For the last name you might suggest that everyone draw a doodle for someone they personally want to pray for without saying the name out loud. It's a nice way to end the session. When the time is up and we have taken a breath and said the line of scripture, I might say, "And at the end of the prayer, the people said," and everyone responds, "Amen."

At the end of the prayer time, I'll ask; "What did you notice during this prayer exercise?" This is a safer question than "What did you think or feel?" "Noticing" opens the door for many kinds of responses. I also suggest they take their prayer drawing home and put it someplace where they will see it. Every time they walk past it, it is a reminder to pray for the people again.

This process takes about an hour.

The above ideas are just suggestions. Please feel free to experiment with your own presentation style. Below are a couple of examples. One is from an actual workshop.

God's Peace,  
Sybil

