

Easter Sunday 17th April to Pentecost Sunday 5th June 2022

50

50 DAYS OF
WHOLEHEARTED
PRAYER

Prayer

Trails

An invitation to go on a journey with God



THE METHODIST CHURCH
IN IRELAND

IRISHMETHODIST.ORG/50DAYS

Go on a journey



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Pentecost Sunday 5th June 2022

The Prayer Trail is an invitation to go on a journey with God - to walk, stop, sit, speak, listen and be with God in the outdoors.

The Prayer Trail

GETTING STARTED

The trail can be in your church grounds, local parks and streets, the country roads near the church. Adapt it to suit your circumstance.

Each 'trail' consists of a series of stations including a Bible verse and a reflection point.

This is not a race to be completed quickly. Linger, walk with awareness and go slowly. This is not an exercise for the body as much as it is refreshment for the soul. Do not feel you need to stop at every station or complete every activity or pray every prayer. This is not a task to be accomplished and checked off a list. It is the practice of being in the presence of God.

As you pray, invite the Holy Spirit to awaken us for the challenge of "living wholeheartedly as followers of Jesus, for the transformation of the world."

The stations are varied in focus; some invite us to be more aware of God working in our own lives, some lift our eyes in praise and worship, some invite us to look outwards to pray for the needs we see around us as we seek God for the transformation of the world.



As you use this guide, a small Bible, pen and a journal may be helpful. Silence your phone. Go slow. Be aware. Listen, speak, sing, and pray. God is waiting to meet you on this journey.

The trail can be for children, all ages together or adults – whatever is appropriate.

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To engage children throughout the prayer trail, think about how to engage their senses at each stop:

- Bring a bag and have a list of things they should collect along the way, e.g. leaves, a stick, a flower (or ask a parent to take a photo of one they see that they like), a photo. Use these at bedtime/at the end of the trail to ask them questions about their experience of the trail - do they remember why they collected each thing?
- Include some paper and colouring pens/crayons so they can draw or record their thoughts as they pray. Use the activity and colouring sheet provided. Also, you could ask them to draw the house of a friend with the members of the family and ask them what they want to pray for. Or bring them past the house of a friend or family member that they think needs God's love and care. Ask them to draw/write their prayer and deliver it to their friend. While sitting on the bench ask them to draw what they see, ask them how they are feeling and pray into that together.
- Ask the children questions about what they can see, feel, hear, smell as you go. Say prayers of thanks, blessing or sorry depending on what they mention. This could be useful for between stops along the trail.
- You could create small cards with each verse of scripture that is mentioned and give them to the children to collect as they journey the trail. You might ask them to choose which verse they like best at the end and place it somewhere they can see every day as a reminder.



The following are suggestions for places to stop at or items to collect on your walk; you can adapt all these to suit your environment.

Get creative!



Houses

These are the homes of people – families and individuals who are all precious to the Lord. Pray for peace in the home, for love and kindness to be shown. That they would know God’s love and care. Ask God to reveal himself to them and that they would recognise His goodness and mercy.

A prayer for the home. “Lord Jesus bring peace to this house, may everyone who lives here know that you love them and care for them. Give them hope and joy.” Amen.

Oak Tree

As the oak has deep roots that go down and anchor the tree, so help us to go deep into God and his word so we can weather the storms of life.

A prayer for wisdom Lord Jesus, “Thank you for the oak tree and the promise of wisdom as I grow older. Please help me to think carefully about the decisions I make. Help me to grow in wisdom and offer that wisdom to others. Lord, please be my teacher.” Amen.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”
James 1:5



Flowers

Jesus tells his listeners to not be worried about the future – where they will get their next meal or what clothes to wear (Matthew 6). He asks us to “look at the lilies” which do not worry or work, and yet are so beautiful and well cared for by the earth. Spend a moment looking at the flowers. Jesus ends his speech with this line: “So don’t be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time.” Mathew 6:34 (The Living Bible)

Close your eyes and think about anything you’re worried about. Give those things to God and ask him to give you peace. Maybe next time you see a beautiful flower you can remember to give God your worries.



A Bench

Do you ever feel that you go through life on auto pilot? That life is so busy that you don’t get a chance to stop? Jesus was busy but he knew that he needed time to withdraw from the crowds and be alone. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." Mark 6:31

Take time to rest a while, look around you and observe your surroundings. Be actively present and pray for what you see. Ask God to guide you as to where you could show his love and hope.



Photograph

As you walk the prayer trail is there an object or a scene that you want to remember? Take a photograph of it and use it to prompt you to continue praying.

Stick

Find a stick lying on the ground; feel the texture, can you identify which type of tree it comes from? Each stick comes from a different tree just as we come from different families, yet are united together in Christ. Pray for unity in the church and in our country.

“Lord of the church and nations we pray for your peace and unity to rest with each person. Help us to be peacemakers and to seek the good of others above ourselves, clothe us in righteousness.” Amen.

Leaves

As you walk round see how many different types of leaves you can collect. You can use them as a prayer activity at the end of the walk. Hold each one in turn thinking of a need either for yourself, the world or someone you know. Maybe you would like to hang them somewhere and ask God to hear your prayer, press one in your Bible to remind you to pray for a situation you thought about.



Cairns

In bible times God's people stacked stones to remember and make a mark about something very important about God and his promises. You could build your own stone marker using the stones provided or others you may find nearby. Remember God is faithful and does not break his promises.



Boat

Jesus travelled by boat, he slept in a boat, he calmed the storm from a boat, he invited Peter to walk on water to come to him. Consider the great faith Peter had as he stepped out of the boat. Help us to fix our eyes on Jesus and keep them there.

“Lord when I feel weak, you are strong; when I waver, you are constant; when I get distracted, you gently call me back. Thank you for your great love.” Amen.

Creatures

Birds of different types and colours are all around us

– can you see or hear any?

Are there dogs being walked, barking, wagging their tails around you?

If you are near fields can you see farm animals?

Are there sheep, cattle, hens, horses...?

Perhaps you can see tiny little insects when you look closely.

God created all these 'creatures great and small'. What a wonderful God we worship. Lift up your heart to Him in praise for all that He has created.



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