

Creative Prayer

based on the Micah Challenge Policy Manifesto



How to use this creative prayer guide:

This guide has been designed to work for a variety of church settings.

You will find sessions on:

- Praying for the G8
- HIV and AIDS
- Water and sanitation
- Trade Justice
- Climate Change
- Inclusive education

Each session contains statistics, a case study, prayer points, and a creative idea. You can use these in any way you choose. You may want to read prayers from the front of the church, set up prayer stations around the church or give the congregation prayer points to take away.

If you develop any of your own prayer ideas, do let us know at:

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G8 World leaders

From 6-8 June, world leaders will be meeting for the G8 summit in Germany. Poverty will be high on the agenda. Please pray that the following world leaders will take bold actions and will make decisions that have a positive impact on poor communities around the world.

G8 leaders

- Canada: Prime Minister Stephen Harper
- France: President Jacques Chirac
- Germany: Chancellor Angela Merkel (holder of presidency)
- Italy: Prime Minister Romano Prodi
- Japan: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe
- Russia: President Vladimir Putin
- United Kingdom: Prime Minister Tony Blair
- United States: President George W. Bush

Prayer action

You will need whistles (available to order from the [Micah Challenge website](#)).

Together as a congregation – have a two minute silence, punctuated only by a member of the church reading the name of one of the G8 leaders every 15 seconds.

Encourage people to use the time between names to pray for that leader. To finish, pray that each leader would be reminding of the commitments they made in 2000 to halve poverty by 2015.

Then blow your whistles!

HIV and Aids

Ensure money and plans are in place to deliver HIV prevention, treatment and care for all by 2010.

Statistics

- 40.3 million people worldwide are living with HIV and AIDS
- More than 25 million people have now died because of AIDS
- 95% of those infected with HIV live in poor countries
- Only one in every ten women living with HIV knows her status
- Today 1600 babies, one every minute, will be born with HIV
- More than 75% of all adults, and 90% of children, who urgently need treatment, are not receiving it

Case study

Ethiopian Shewaye Hailu, 35, has HIV. She discovered this when she was nine months pregnant.

She was given medication by the church based Kale Heywet project and as a result, her daughter Lydia is not infected.

'I am very happy – I have a healthy child,' she says. 'If Lydia had been infected, I would have been in agony and very worried. But thanks to the medical treatment I can raise my daughter, I can work and I'm in good health. 'Now I'm being trained in tailoring and knitting, which enables me to buy wheat and oil. I am optimistic about the future. Hope has returned.'

Prayer points

- Pray that the fear and ignorance surrounding HIV-testing would be broken down so mothers can access medicines to protect their babies.
- Pray that mothers and fathers with HIV would get treatment and live long enough to see their sons and daughters grow up.
- Pray that the local church, here and across the world, would realise its full potential for stopping the spread of HIV.
- Pray that governments would honour the promise they made in 2005: to provide universal access to AIDS treatment by 2010

Reflection

You need: flour and water

Esther lives with her ten-year-old daughter Alinafe in Malawi, southern Africa. Esther has HIV. Esther and Alinafe's staple diet is a substance called nsima – a starchy paste of maize flour and water. It's filling but not nutritious – and Esther needs a healthy diet to work with her HIV medication, so she can live long enough to see Alinafe grow up.

Mix a paste of flour and water. Touch and taste it. Think about the strength of glue and the limitations of flour to give your body strength if this is all you eat every day. Reflect on what holds your own life together. What sustains you? Is it enough to help you when trouble hits? What enriches your life? How can you enrich other people's lives?

Water and sanitation

Ensure that the G8 agree a robust Global Action Plan on water and sanitation and work hard to implement it

Statistics

- Around 30,000 children have died today from preventable diseases, dirty water and poor sanitation
- 1.1 billion lack access to clean water
- 2.6 billion lack access to basic sanitation
- In Africa, an estimated 5% of GDP is lost to illnesses and deaths caused by dirty water and the absence of sanitation
- Over 300 million people in Africa drink dirty water daily

Case study

It's mid-afternoon and Chinapadaguda village wears a deserted look. A lone woman sits vigil on a raised wooden platform, near a trail that leads to the community. Her duty for that day is to watch over the grain crop so that birds don't eat it up. Lakshmi Markami hardly understands her state language Oriya. The tribal village she lives in speaks the local Koya dialect. But attempting Telugu, the language of neighbouring state Andhra Pradesh, she exclaims 'Neellu Theeyaga undhi' – the water is sweet – pointing to the well nearby. On the well's platform is the inscription 'a gift of love'.

The well was drilled by Tearfund partner Eficor, who are being helped by your gifts to strengthen villages across India, in their ongoing fight against poverty. Chinapadaguda's transformation dates back to a visit from Eficor's survey team to the village in Orissa, east India. A meeting took place with the help of a translator. The people were vocal about their need for a safe source of drinking water close to their homes. Soon their excitement became tangible. An unspoken question hovered in the air, 'Can it really be true that one day we will have a well of our own?' Today, a sense of appreciation is equally tangible. 'Life was difficult,' Dulki Markami remembers the past, when he drank from the river Sabari, a tributary of the Godavari river. The muddy water was filtered by digging a small pit by hand on the river bank. The water was made clear but was still polluted. Drinking it caused diarrhoea, dysentery and skin disease. Now, thanks to Eficor's practical demonstration of God's love, life is much better. 'We don't have to walk long distances, spend an hour filtering the water and come back with a pot full,' says Rangami, one of the villagers who now have enough water to clean their houses and even take a bath. 'The best thing that has ever happened is that we have water to drink throughout the year.'

Prayer points

- Pray for more dialogue on the issue to be encouraged through the global church
- Pray for the lobbying and research work that is done to encourage governments to respond to the crisis
- Pray that communities be given the basic rights of having adequate water and sanitation

Reflection

You will need: Glasses of clean water and glasses of water containing soil

Look into the glass of clean water. Consider how clear and pure it is, and imagine taking a long drink on a hot summer's day. Then look into the dirty glass, and imagine that you've just walked for five hours to collect it. Now you have to give it to your children. The water could well be disease ridden, but you are left with no choice.

Stop Climate Chaos

Ensure that the UK's Climate Change Bill includes an annual target of reducing domestic carbon emissions by at least 3%

Statistics

- 150,000 people already die every year from climate change
- The area of the world stricken by drought has doubled between 1970 and the early 2000s
- 100 million more people will be flooded by end of century
- By the end of the century, rising sea levels and crop failures could create 150 million refugees

Case study

Mr Mengesha Beyene – age 82, Abay Atir Village, Ethiopia

Mr Mengesha recollected that he used to get much harvest in the past. Sorghum (a type of cereal) used to be plentiful and it took his family three to four days to bring in the harvest into the granaries. He explained that grain used to be stored in pits dug in the ground, each holding approximately 5,000 kg. In those days, the harvest used to last for at least two years. He pointed that nowadays, the harvest does not last more than seven months. People tend to borrow money from money lenders and rely more and more on market purchase. For him, the sad indicator of the whole problem is that there are very few households who even own granaries these days. The small harvest is placed in sacks and kept inside a hut until it runs out.

Prayer points

- Pray that the Climate Change bill, which will be finalised in June this year, will commit the UK government to drastically reduce carbon emissions
- Pray that poor communities will be able to adapt to the impact of a changing climate
- Pray that Christians will take a lead in changing their own lifestyle to have a positive impact on people and planet.
- Pray that all governments will play their part in finding the resources to help developing countries adapt to cope with the threat of climate change.

Reflection

You will need: Leaves

Take a minute to closely examine a leaf. Reflect on how intricate it is, thanking God for the beauty of his creation.

Now focus on your own breathing, thinking about the natural balance God has established. You breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. This carbon dioxide is absorbed by plants, creating a life sustaining cycle.

But this balance is being upset by excess emissions of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide. In the West we have all contributed to this, from excess air travel, to leaving lights on, to keeping our appliances on standby.

As the resultant climate change devastates poor communities around the world, take a moment to say sorry to God for your contribution.

Trade Justice

Ensure regional trade agreements such as the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements help bring trade justice.

Statistics

- Unjust trade rules rob poor countries of £1.3 billion every single day
- International trade is worth \$10 million a minute
- But poor countries only account for 0.4 per cent of this trade. Since 1980 their share has halved
- The three richest people in the world control more wealth than all 600 million people living in the world's poorest countries

Case study

Halidou is married with six children. He depends on the income he receives from his cotton crop to provide for his family's needs but he struggles to survive on the low price he receives.

He's been told the price will decrease even further. 'I was sad to hear such news,' explains Halidou. 'Even when the price is higher we have problems because we cannot afford our hospital bills and prescriptions and we cannot buy school items for our children. Everything we buy comes from our cotton money ... I feel that poverty is coming. We are in poverty now, but a greater one is coming.'

Rich countries give large subsidies to their cotton farmers, allowing them to sell their cotton cheaply and still make a big profit. The international price of cotton is forced down and West Africa's 10 million cotton farmers remain locked in poverty.

Prayer points

- That farmers in poor countries will see steady demand and fair prices for their produce, so that they can provide for their families.
- That churches will take a lead in the use and promotion of fairly traded products.
- Pray that poor countries will be able to choose their own trade policies – policies that protect the environment and the poorest in their communities.

Reflection

You will need: Chocolate

Imagine that you are a cocoa farmer in West Africa. This year's crop has been meagre as unexpected changes in the climate have led to a shorter growing season. Your crop has now been harvested and you are off to the market to sell it. Upon arriving you are surprised to discover imported chocolate from x being sold. Not only that – it is half the price of the lowest price you could possibly charge. The cocoa growers from x have been given government support in the form of subsidies, meaning they can charge far less than you. Your only option is to sell at a lower price. As you walk home, you know that there isn't nearly enough money in your pocket to feed your family until the next crop.

Take and eat a piece of chocolate. Most cocoa farmers will never have tasted it. Pray for them and pray that the unfair trade rules keeping them in poverty would be reversed.

Inclusive education

Ensure the inclusion of disabled children within national education plans

Statistics

- The World Health Organisation estimates that just 2% of all disabled children in the developing world receive an education
- The World Bank estimates that 40 million of the 115 million children out of school are disabled
- In comparison - the whole child population (under 16s) of the UK is only 12.1 million and every child in the UK goes to primary school. (UNICEF, 2006)

Case study

TBC - World Vision

Prayer points

- Pray that the UK Government would ensure that the 10-year education plans are inclusive before funding them
- Pray for teachers who do not discriminate against disabled children or exclude them from learning
- Pray for teachers who are positive role models, because they are responsible for forming children's attitudes to one another

Reflection

You will need: any books or magazines

Pick up a book or magazine. Close your eyes. Imagine if you can, being excited about learning something new. Now imagine that without this learning you are likely to spend the remainder of your days in desolate poverty. Keep your eyes closed. You are blind. You are one of the 40 million disabled children who are unable to access education. Pray for these children, that they would know their value and that governments around the world would make inclusive education a priority.