**Suggestions for families praying and worshipping together at home**

**Thankfulness bunting –** Create a little ‘washing line’. Cut out triangles of colouredpaper, write (or draw) ‘thank yous’ on each and peg them up. Change a few daily.

**Bubble prayers (worries) -** Talk together about what we are worried about. Blow some bubbles (bubble mixture or washing up liquid) to represent our worries and give them to God. As we focus on him, our worries will grow smaller. Some will even disappear.

**Candle time –** Gather round a candle at the end of the day and pray for family, friends and community. Give to God things that have made you happy today; things that have made you sad.

**Prayer jar (objects) -** collect some objects from around your home (eg. A plaster, sweet, eraser, plastic animal, birthday cake candle, deflated balloon, little person figure, seed, glow in the dark star) and put them in a transparent, lidded jar. Take it in turns to shake the jar and say a prayer based on the first object you see.

**Prayer jar (layers) -** mix food colouring gels with salt in bowls so that you end up with several colours. Spoon a layer of each coloured salt into a transparent lidded jar so that each layer represents a prayer. (If you happen to have craft sand in several colours, use that instead but it seems a less likely commodity!)

**Prayer jar (glitter storm) -** Fill a transparent, lidded jar with water and add glitter. Screw the lid on tightly (and tape it too if possible). Shake the jar and watch while the glitter swirls and then settles. God brings us his peace, Say the words, ‘Be still and know that I am God’. (if you don’t have any glitter, cut up tin foil into tiny pieces and use that instead. The pieces will be heavier and sink faster but still give a similar effect.)

**Prayer pot –** find a pot you like and fill it with pieces of card or paper on which you’ve written the names of people, places in your community or countries of the world. Take it in turns to remove a piece of card and pray for that person, community place or country.

**Photo prayers –** look at photos of family members and friends together. Choose a photo and stick post-it note prayers around it.

**Hand-shape prayers –** Draw round your family’s hands on paper and cut the hand shapes out. Write or draw your concerns on them. Find a colourful piece of fabric (like a scarf) and put the hand shapes on it as if they are reaching out and touching Jesus’ cloak.

**Cross and pebble prayers –** make a simple wooden cross from sticks, planks or twigs. Collect pebbles to represent worries and concerns. Bring them to the cross and leave them with Jesus.

**Playdough prayers –** make your own salt dough [3 cups of flour, 1 of salt, 1 (and a bit) of water] or use readymade Playdough if you have some. Give each person a piece and make something you are thankful for, something you are sorry for, something you want to praise God for.

**Pipe cleaner prayers –** make a pipe cleaner figure to represent someone you want to pray for. (Use scrunched tin foil if you don’t have any pipe cleaners.)

**Prayer paper chain –** cut strips of paper and write the name of someone in your family, someone from your church or school or workplace, a friend or a neighbour on each. Glue or tape the strips together to form a chain. Even though we can’t get together at the moment, we are together in prayer.

**Fruit bowl prayers –** enjoy a dish of fruit together, praying for the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, self-control – Galatians 5) may grow in each family member.

**Kitchen cupboard prayers –** Look at the labels on your tins, packets and jars and see where each item of food is produced. Pray for the people producing it and packaging it and the people delivering it to the shops and to people’s homes. Pray for your local food banks too.

**Fridge magnetic letters prayers –** use the magnetic letters on your fridge to make key words for prayers.

**First aid box prayers –** use a first aid box as a focus for praying for those who are ill or injured and those working so hard to look after them.

**Hand washing prayers –** pray for people in the world who don’t have easy access to a tap or clean water which we take so much for granted. Pray for charities which are working to help more people to access clean water.

**Garden prayers –** If you have a garden or outside area, or are able to go for a walk, look for (and take photos if possible) signs of spring, hope and new life. Thank God for each one.

**Alphabet Praise –** Think of a word starting with each letter of the alphabet to describe God. Some letters will be much easier than others! Write the words on post-it notes and leave them somewhere you can keep coming back to so you can add to them. Choose a word to discuss together and use it as a focus for your prayers. (This activity could last for a whole week!)

**The Lord’s Prayer – a phrase a day.**

**‘Our Father in heaven’ -** Draw a picture of your idea of the best Dad/Parent ever. As a family, write the qualities you would like that person to have. Thank God that He IS that Father!

**‘Hallowed be your name’ -** Names are important to us. Look up the meaning of yours if you don’t know it. God’s Name is very special – Hallowed or Holy, to be respected. Write ‘God’ or ‘Lord’ or ‘Holy’ in bubble writing and decorate the letters as beautifully as you can in felt pens, crayons or scraps of fabric, coloured paper, sequins and other collage materials. Talk about how we can ‘honour’ God’s name in our lives

‘**Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven’ -** make crowns with paper, card or newspaper (or anything else you think lends itself!). Cut out coloured paper shapes and draw or write your ideas of what God’s kingdom is like (eg. Full of hope, love, joy, forgiveness, healing and justice, welcoming, peaceful). Stick these ‘jewels’ on the crowns and wear them as you pray the Lord’s Prayer.

‘**Give us today our daily bread’ -** Enjoy making some bread with bread mix (or make scones if you don’t have bread mix) and talk about what ‘our daily bread’ really is. Jesus said, ‘I am the Bread of Life’. What do you think he meant? You could write this with food colouring on your bread. (Write it on a slice of bread if you’re not able to make any.)

**‘Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us’ -** Write or draw (with **washable** felt pen) something you are sorry about, not on paper but on a j-cloth (or similar type of kitchen cloth). Swap cloths with someone else and wash their cloth in warm, soapy water. It is now clean! Give it back to them and receive yours, also now clean. That’s how God forgives us! Thank him and ask him to help us to forgive each other, something we often find hard.

‘**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil’ -** Play a game of Snakes and Ladders together. Our lives are full of challenges. God will give us the strength to make good choices and get through the tough times. Find a pebble or stone to decorate and make beautiful with permanent markers or paint, sequins and glitter – or light a candle and rest in God’s presence.

‘**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen’ -** Make a special flag together. Use a piece of old sheet and a broom handle if possible, or a bamboo cane and paper if not. Decorate it with whatever you have available (paint, markers, scraps of fabric, wool, ribbons, anything sparkly, sponge prints or potato prints) to depict the wonderful closing phrase of the prayer. Say the whole prayer together and wave the flag at the end.

 Jean Elliott March 2020