# REFLECT: a selection of prayer ideas to reflect on the relative peace that we experience in the United Kingdom and Ireland, to lament the conflicts around the world, and to come simply before God in thankfulness for peace and in sorrow for all that stands in its way

*Supplementary PowerPoint template available, with the prayer of personal preparation, call and response and additional material.*

## A Prayer of Personal Preparation

*You might like to invite everyone to say this prayer together (the words are in the supplementary PowerPoint presentation).*

**O Lord, as I come to you with my prayers for peace, I want to spend a few moments quietly listening to your Spirit and feeling your peace in my heart.**

**I am reminded that my prayers start with a desire to live in peace with my family, my community, my country and beyond.**

**Thank you for blessing me with the gift of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Help me to keep my eyes on Jesus as I strive to live in peace. I long to reflect the nature of Christ, in whose beautiful name I come to you.**

**Amen.**

## A Prayer for the UK and Ireland

Loving Father,

Thank you for all who work to keep us safe and secure and maintain peace in our land. We especially think of our armed forces and the emergency services throughout the UK and Ireland. We give thanks for all those whose desire is to protect us and who work tirelessly for us to live in peace.

At the same time, we see the lack of peace around the world. We can so easily forget that safety is not guaranteed – that peace is not inevitable. And so, as we lament all the fighting, we thank you for the relative peace we enjoy in this land. Give us the grace not to take it for granted.

**Response:** *Why not pray for your local police, ambulance and fire services (and armed forces if there are any in your area)? There might be specific issues affecting these groups that you can lift up in prayer. You could follow up with prayer cards naming these issues, inviting people to pray through the week.*

## Poppies Prayer

*For this prayer you need a poppy, either real or in a picture as a visual prompt.*

* *The red petals speak of sacrifice both in the past and in the present day. Pray for all who are serving in conflicts around the world today.*
* *The black centre reminds us of those at the centre of world leadership. Pray for their hearts to be turned towards being peacemakers (Matthew 5:9).*
* *The green leaves suggest hope and new life. Pray for all who are working to help countries recover from war.*

## Breathing Prayer

*Guide people through this prayer as they inhale and exhale.*

Take a deep breath in and feel the presence of God filling your body.

*Pause.*

As you breathe out, let go of any tension you are feeling and try to relax.

*Pause.*

As you breathe in, deeply feel the peace of Christ invading your being.

*Pause.*

As you breathe out, give thanks for your relationship with Jesus.

*Pause.*

As you breathe in, give thanks for peace in your heart and mind.

*Pause.*

As you breathe out, release sorrow for all that spoils your peace.

*Pause.*

As you breathe in, look to the eyes of Jesus and meet his loving gaze.

*Pause.*

As you breathe out, claim the joy of being a follower of the Prince of Peace.

*Pause.*

As you breathe in, receive the free gift of peace that Jesus brings.

*Pause.*

As you breathe out, let go of those things that come between you and this peace.

## Responsive Prayer

*This prayer can be read aloud by one person, with everyone joining in for the responsive line in bold (the call and response is in the supplementary PowerPoint presentation).*

God of all comfort,

We remember in humble gratitude all those who have given their lives in war,

And we pray for all who still live with the physical and mental scars of combat.

We pray for places around the world where war is still a daily reality:

Draw near to all who mourn lost loved ones,

And strengthen all who work for peace.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Response: Heal and restore.**

Jesus Christ, friend and companion,

We pray for all who have had to flee their homes because of conflict,

And who find themselves adrift in a land that isn’t home.

We dream of a safer, kinder world:

Where every displaced person will find refuge,

And where communities destroyed by war will thrive again.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Response: Heal and restore.**

Holy Spirit, breath of life,

We lament the way in which war damages this beautiful Earth you have created,

Ravaging landscapes, destroying ecosystems and preventing crops from flourishing.

Brood over the chaos again, we pray:

Bring order and balance,

And birth new life in barren places.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Response: Heal and restore.**

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God in perfect unity,

We long for an end to strife:

Strife between nations, and strife in our local communities.

Teach us to pray for peace, to work for peace, to live in peace,

As we look forward to that day you have promised,

When you will cause wars to cease to the ends of the earth.

Lord, in your mercy,

**Response: Heal and restore.**

**Amen.**