# REPENT: a selection of prayer ideas to repent of all that separates us from our neighbour, to confess our taking peace for granted, and to say sorry to God for the times when we have stood in the way of peace

*Supplementary PowerPoint template available, with Bible verses, song lyrics and additional material.*

## A Prayer of Acknowledging Prejudice

*‘“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength … Love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.’ (Mark 12:30-31)*

Loving Father, I come to you as I am.

I don’t come perfectly. I bring all that I am, including those areas of darkness that I see in myself.

I bring my heart, beating with love for those I cherish but so easily closed to those who are different.

I bring my suspicion of people who represent the unknown.

I bring my tendency to cling to certainty over curiosity.

I bring the walls that I put up between me and my neighbour.

I bring the closed fortress that I construct around my heart.

Reduce it to rubble, Lord. Tear those walls down.

Help me to lean into curiosity, rather than withdraw into certainty.

Help me to love my neighbour, whatever their race, gender, age, nationality, social status, sexual orientation, religion, and all those things that cause me to judge another person before I even know them.

Give me the grace and courage to accept the differences I see in people and love them in your name.

I ask that you shine your light in my heart, and obliterate the darkness.

Amen.

**Question for reflection:** What are the obstacles to our obeying the charge of Jesus to love our neighbour?

## A Prayer of Confession

*To help people centre on God and what he might do in this time of confession, you could play ‘Veni Sancte Spiritus’ (‘Come, Holy Spirit’) by Taizé Virtual Choir:* [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=us-v4slsUX4*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=us-v4slsUX4)

*The repeated refrain of the song is very easy to pick up, so you might like to invite the congregation to sing along. They can close their eyes with their hands opened in a posture of openness, or watch the video featuring a choir from around the world.*

*Once you feel enough time has passed, fade the music down and lead the following prayer:*

Come, Holy Spirit. As I open my hands to you, I also open my heart to you. And in this posture of openness, I confess.

I confess taking peace for granted.

*Pause.*

I confess retreating to the comfort of passivity.

*Pause.*

I confess seeing images of rockets and rubble and carrying on like it was normal.

*Pause.*

I confess the times when I have witnessed conflict in my own life and done nothing.

*Pause.*

I confess choosing despair, escalation or indifference over peace.

*Pause.*

I confess running away from reconciliation because it seemed too hard.

*Pause.*

I confess leaving the peacemaking to others.

*Pause.*

I confess only seeing the world as it is, not as it could be.

*Pause.*

I confess not leaving space for you, Prince of Peace, in my life.

*Pause.*

Come, Holy Spirit. I am weak and I need you. Amen.

## Prayer Station

*This prayer station idea is to identify that misguided anger can stand in the way of peace.*

* *Cut out red and yellow circles. Draw angry faces on the red ones and happy faces on the yellow ones.*
* *Glue one of each back-to-back. Lay them out with the red sides facing upwards.*
* *Invite people to pick an angry face and reflect on a specific time when they have reacted with impatience or anger – when they have been upset and not fully forgiven the person, still remembering the grievance today. Offer the following prompt:*
* ‘Reflect on this situation and think of ways you could have reacted differently. Ask God to give you the grace and strength to show patience towards those who have hurt you.’
* *It can take time and prayer to move on from hurts that deeply affect us, but with God’s help we can turn the face over and reveal a smiley face that expresses letting go of hurts and finding deep peace in our hearts.*

## Meditation on Scripture

*Read this passage of Scripture a few times. Allow the words to reach your heart, identifying what God wants to give you and what you want to receive.*

‘Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.’ (Philippians 4:4-7)

*Once people have had a good amount of time to meditate on the text, lead the following prayer:*

O God, I know that worry is the enemy of peace, and yet I allow my worries to eat away at my mind and disturb my peace.

I thank you with all my heart for your goodness and faithfulness all my life. I need your peace today to help me overcome all the things that unsettle me, and so I offer my worries to you right now.

Thank you for being at work in my life. Thank you that Jesus is with me. Thank you that I can offer you all the pain and hurt I am suffering and receive the peace of Jesus in my life.

Amen.

## Invitation to the Mercy Seat

Our mercy seat is a beautiful place to meet with God when we feel the desire to acknowledge the holiness of God, the glory of Jesus and the power of his Holy Spirit.

*Use the song ‘Be still, for the presence of the Lord’ by David Evans (SASB 353). Sing the song first, then have the music played quietly in the background while everyone has an opportunity to respond.*

*You might like to leave these words from the final verse displayed on the screen (they are available in the in the supplementary PowerPoint template):*

‘No work too hard for him,

In faith receive from him.

Be still, for the power of the Lord

Is moving in this place.’

*Offer the following prayer, which is available as a downloadable printout. Leave a copy on everyone’s seat with a pen, inviting them to underline any words that have specific meaning for them today. As they feel led, they can come to the mercy seat and leave their prayer as a personal offering to God.*

**H**ere I am, Lord, safe in your peaceful presence. I set aside this time for you, and I remember that wherever I am right now, I stand on holy ground.

**E**nter those conflicted places in my heart, Holy Spirit: those places where I harbour bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness.

**R**econcile me to my neighbour, in those times when I have stood in the way of peace. I confess walking the wide path of the world, rather than the narrow path of Christ.

**E**verything is yours. And so I pause to reflect on your creation, torn apart by conflict. I know it breaks your heart.

**I** long for peace. Peace in my heart. Peace in my family. Peace in my community. Peace in my country. Peace in our world. I think of those people, places and situations where peace needs to come, and I prepare to offer them to you.

**A**s I offer these people, places and situations to you, I release them to you. You are God. I am not. So I lay them down, knowing that the true transformation comes from you.

**M**y prayer is for peace. As I step into whatever is to come, show me what it means to be a peacemaker. I pray in Jesus’ name, the perfect Prince of Peace. Amen.