

Black History Month 2023 Prayer Ideas

Use these creative prayer ideas to get people thinking about Black History Month and beyond just the month of October. These can be adapted to best suit your corps setting.

1. Prayer Time (preparation required)

If you have any black people or people of colour within your congregation, ask them to lead the prayer time during the Sunday meeting. Try not to restrict them by giving them a subject. Let them choose a topic that is close to their heart or that they are passionate about and ideally related to Black History Month.

Additionally, why not ask the people of colour within the corps, or that you know within the community, what they would like prayers for throughout October? If you have people from many different nations (including British-born black people), perhaps consider asking a different group of people to lead a prayer time during every Sunday in October.

2. Go on a Prayer Walk

If you have an active corps, walk outside every business and shop that you know is owned or run by people of colour. Stop and pray a blessing over the people and the business (restaurants and hairdressers are a good place to start).

3. Paper Chain (preparation required)

You will need:

- pre-cut paper templates in the shape of a person (you could use coloured paper sheets in different 'skin tone' shades of brown, beige etc)
- pens/pencils (skin-tone coloured pencils or crayons are available to buy online)
- glue or sticky tape

Ensure everyone in the congregation has one paper person. Ask them to write or draw on one side how they see themselves, and to write or draw on the other side how they believe that others see them. Allow enough time for people to work through their thoughts.

Pray together that everyone will see themselves as God sees them, and that everyone will see other people - especially people of colour - as God sees them. In the end, if they are willing, ask everyone to stick their paper



person to another's so they are 'holding hands' to form a paper chain which can be displayed at the corps.

4. Handprint Prayers (preparation required)

You will need:

- Washable/water-based paint
- Paper plates or alternative shallow dishes
- Handwash soap and disposable paper towels/tissues

Before preparing this prayer activity, find out which countries the people in the congregation identify as being part of as much as possible. Offer enough different colours of water-based/washable paint dishes and designate a colour to each country, eg blue for England, red for Scotland, orange for Egypt, yellow for Ukraine etc. It does not matter what colour represents what country, so long as there are enough colours so that every country has its own assigned colour.

Encourage people to place their hands in the paint dish that they identify with, and then place their handprint on a large sheet of paper. If they identify with more than one country, ask that they clean their hands between paints so that the paints don't get mixed up (or if they only identify with two countries, they can use different hands for each paint colour).

The goal is to end up with a gloriously multi-coloured handprint painting and prayers of gratitude that the congregation is so diverse. Prayers may also include that the people representing all these colours will feel truly included and valued. If all the hands are of the same colour, share prayers for wisdom on how to reach out into the community and strive for ways to proactively become an inclusive corps that invites and welcomes people from all racial and cultural backgrounds.

5. Who do you know?

Encourage people to spend some time thinking about the people of colour known to them personally. Pray that everyone will find ways to have healthy and necessary conversations around race, as well as really get to know and understand each other better. Pray that the corps will be a welcoming space which allows all people to be themselves and not to feel that they need to act differently in order to fit in.



6. *Who's the outsider? (Preparation required)*

You will need:

- Paper / sticky notes
- Pens/pencils

Ask people to remember a time when they felt like an outsider. Ask them to write down on the piece of paper / sticky note what happened and how they felt. Gather these together and distribute them back out for others to read. Spend time reflecting and praying for those who may be experiencing similar situations, especially those who may be treated as outsiders because of their racial background.

7. *'Saluting our Sisters' person profiles (Preparation required)*

Approach a few individuals and ask them to put together a brief description and summary about the inspiring lives of iconic British black women who made history. Ask them to briefly present these person profiles and then share prayers on the legacy the women have left and how their lives may continue to impact and inspire future generations of black women and girls.

Here are some suggestions:

- Mary Seacole - a pioneer black nurse who risked her life to help British soldiers fighting during the Crimean War
- Lilian Bader - one of the first black women to join the British Armed Forces
- Claudia Jones - founder of the Notting Hill Carnival
- Olive Morris - a community leader and social change activist