# Prayer, Worship and Creative Ideas

## Prayers

### Call to worship (Psalm 8)

**Leader:** Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

**All:** You have set your glory in the heavens.

**Leader:** Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

**All:** When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

**Leader:** You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet.

**All:** All flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, and the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

**Leader:** Lord, our Lord,

**All:** How majestic is your name in all the earth!

### Thank you for your provision

Father Creator,

We come before you today giving thanks for your provision and goodness to us at this harvest time. We are grateful for your love that not only provides for our needs but also made a way for us to know you through Jesus Christ.

It is easy for us to lose focus on what you have given us. We pray that today, as we look to your creation, a wonderful gift, that we will learn to be thankful for our world. We thank you that you are a good Father who has given us everything we need.

Forgive us for doubting you, for worrying, and for trying so hard to work everything out on our own. Help us to trust you more. Help us in our unbelief.

Help us to help others, and to share and care as you taught us. In Jesus’ name.

Amen.

### A prayer of repentance

May the God of grace, who loves all that he has made and in Christ welcomes home all who come to him, heal our brokenness, forgive our sins and return us to a life of justice, mercy and simplicity, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

### Give thanks for the good gifts

**Leader:** God of all creation,

**All**: We give thanks to you for your good gifts to us.

**Leader:** For the beauty of creation and its rich and varied fruits.

**All:** We give thanks to you for your good gifts to us.

**Leader:** For clean water and fresh air, for food and shelter, for animals and plants.

**All:** We give thanks to you for your good gifts to us.

**Leader:** Forgive us for the times when we have taken the Earth’s resources for granted.

**All:** We ask your forgiveness and seek your help to do better.

**Leader:** Forgive us for the times when we have wasted what you have given us.

**All:** We ask your forgiveness and seek your help to do better.

**Leader:** Transform our hearts and minds.

**All:** Renew our minds so that we see and act as you do.

**Leader:** Teach us to care and share.

**All:** Renew our minds so that we see and act as you do.

**Leader:** Transform our actions and behaviours.

**All:** Renew our minds so that we see and act as you do.

**Leader:** Father, Creator of all,

**All:** We give thanks, seek forgiveness, and ask for your renewal. Amen.

### A Benediction

God, the source of all around us, earth and seas, and stars above,

Grant us grace that we may honour all you give in perfect love.

### A responsive benediction

**Leader:** As we gathered to give thanks,

**All:** We give thanks for your provision.

**Leader:** As we worshipped in Spirit and in truth,

**All:** We give thanks for your word and empowerment.

**Leader:** As we leave this gathering filled with joy,

**All:** We give thanks for your Spirit who leaves with us, within us.

**Leader:** As we go into your world with your love in our hearts,

**All:** We give thanks for your invitation to share in your mission to the lost.

We thank you for your provision and presence. Now use us for your Kingdom’s sake.

Amen.

## Worship Ideas

### Prayer map

#### You will need:

* a large map of the local area – or design your own
* lots of coloured dot stickers, but in two colours only

Give everyone the same coloured dot to stick on to a place on the map they go to regularly – school, work, nursery etc.

Pray for each person now represented on the map, that they will dare to share something about Jesus in the places where they go.

Then give everyone two or three more dots of the different colour, and ask them to think of the names of just two or three people that they could share with and show something of the love of Jesus to this week. Ask them to try their best to do just that, and then invite them to stick these dots around the ones already on the map. You should end up with dots of two colours – representing each person and their harvest fields.

Pray for the people who might hear about Jesus this week, or who might get invited to the next Messy Church / event / service, that they will listen and respond.

### Global community

#### You will need:

* paper, pens and scissors for each person

Ask people to draw around their hand on a piece of paper and cut out the shape.

We are all part of a global community. We are required to reach out a hand to support and equip those who do not have the same material resources as we do. Pray for politicians and other decision-makers. Pray for those involved in the financial system. Ask God to show you a way that you can reach out, either by lobbying politicians or by direct action. Is there a lifestyle change you need to make, eg commit to using Fairtrade goods where available?

### Giving all we have

#### You will need:

* card coin templates or circles cut out of brown paper/card
* pens

Write on one side of the coin something that you want to thank God for.

As Jesus watched the widow give her apparently small offering in the Temple (Mark 12:41-44) he teaches us that she gave all she had and there is so much value in her gift.

On the other side of the coin, write down something that you can do or give to make the world around you a brighter place.

Invite people to place their coin in a significant place (such as the Mercy Seat or altar table) to signify their commitment to God to do something beautiful with his help.

### Bunting

#### You will need:

* card/paper cut into bunting triangles with two holes at the top
* pens/pencils
* string or ribbon

Set up an area within your worship hall for the children (and any others that might like to take part) to decorate bunting with something that they want to give thanks to God for. If the children go out for their own activities during the meeting, then you could invite them to come and share what they have done before they leave. Collect and display the bunting triangles somewhere visible on your building as an act of witness to your community about the breadth and magnitude of God’s goodness.

### Gratitude jar

#### You will need:

* jars
* strips of paper
* pens

Encourage people to write on strips of paper examples of God’s provision during the recent months and to each store them in a jar. Thank God for all the ways his love and faithfulness has been evident and use these as a reminder during the times of life when this is less clear to you.

### What a wonderful world

#### You will need:

* A5 paper for everyone
* the song ‘What a Wonderful World’ recorded by Louis Armstrong

Give each person an A5 sheet of paper and explain that they have just over two minutes (Armstrong’s recording of ‘What a wonderful world’ is a fraction short of two and a half minutes) to create something with the piece of paper that resembles God’s creation or harvest. For example, they could tear out a circle to represent the moon, or the shape of a tree, snail, banana etc.

Once the song has finished, pick out two or three and show them to the congregation. *These shapes didn’t just happen – you made them*. State that what they have made points to our Creator and reminds us that God has given us such a fantastic world to enjoy and care for.

### Play-dough praise!

#### You will need:

* Play-dough (enough for seven people)
* Cards printed each with one of the following words: world, flowers, Adam, Eve, snake, apple, leaves

This simple interactive reading provides an opportunity to explain how God’s creation (our world) is spoilt by humanity’s selfishness and greed. Before you read (perhaps during a song), ask for seven volunteers each to create a play-dough sculpture of one of the words printed on the cards. While you read the following, get each person to hold up their sculpture as their word is mentioned in the story.

*Here’s our creative version of Genesis!*

*In seven days God created the world and he saw that it was good. In this beautiful world was the Garden of Eden, a place full of beauty and peace. There were beautiful flowers and plants as far as the eye could see.*

*Into the garden God placed Adam, the first man, and Eve, the first woman. In the centre of the garden, God placed a special tree and made it clear to Adam and Eve that the fruit of this tree was out of bounds. One day a snake appeared before Eve and tempted her to take a bite of the fruit of the special tree – a lovely juicy apple.*

*The apple gave Adam and Eve God’s special knowledge of what was right and wrong, and they discovered that they could choose to do as they pleased rather than what pleased God. For the first time they felt ashamed and covered themselves in clothes made of leaves.*

*And so God’s creation was spoilt by the wrong choices that Adam and Eve made, and the world has never been the same since.*

### Indescribable

Play the song‘Indescribable’ by Laura Story and Jesse Reeves, recorded by Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IlVfkY5q54.>

Spend some time contemplating everything that God has created.

Think about how fairly (or not) we share all of the resources and produce God has provided for us.

Ask your group to consider how they would go about making things fair if they were in charge of the world. Ask them also to consider how they could start to make a change in their own lives to try and make things fairer.

## Creative Activities and Ideas

### Thankful tree

#### You will need:

* brown poster board paper or a display board
* hand cut-out templates on different coloured paper
* pens
* sticky tape

Create a tree trunk using brown poster board or draw on a display board. Hand out the paper hands and pens. Ask people to write or draw things that God has created and/or provided for them. Take time to say thank you to God for these wonderful things. After all the handprints are completed, add them to the tree trunk with sticky tape. This could be done as a display on a bulletin board or a wall.

### God made all things good

#### You will need:

* large pieces of blue and green paper to make an image of sky, land and sea
* tissue paper, textured card, felt and fabric scraps
* animal templates, pens, crayons and pencils, glue and scissors

Cut out shapes of birds, animals, fish, insects and plants to stick on to each part of your landscape. Talk about the food harvests we get from the sky, land and sea. Thank God for his abundant provision for us and all living things. Pray that we will do what is required to serve and preserve his creation.

### A closer look

#### You will need:

* high-resolution photographs of different animals/objects to show on projector and
* screen
* suggested images: bugs, a spider’s web, the Earth

First show a tiny section of the photograph zoomed in and ask people to guess what it might be. Then show the full original image so that people can see what it really is.

Do the same with each image you have selected. Share that God’s creation is perfect and detailed and that he is worthy of our praise.

### Being grateful

#### You will need:

* two large sheets of paper and pens

Form two teams and give them five minutes to write down as many things as they can think of that they are thankful for – they must be things that they are genuinely thankful for. At the end ask each team to read out what they’ve written. Give a point for each thing they’ve listed, but the other team, or anyone watching, can challenge them to justify what they’ve written if they don’t think it’s genuine.

Recent scientific studies have suggested that people who are more grateful have higher levels of wellbeing and happiness and lower levels of stress and depression. In fact, showing gratitude has been said to have one of the strongest links with good mental health, more than any other character trait. Scientists have also discovered that gratitude not only increases wellbeing and happiness, but has also been shown to improve a person’s altruistic tendencies. That means that people who are grateful are more likely to give, to share what they have with others and to sacrifice their own profit for the benefit of the wider community. (<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2022/11/practicing-gratitude/>)