

*After a moment's silence invite the person you have asked to prepare,
now to read the following prayer:*

Lord, I am looking at my hands.
Help me to see them as you do.
When I am angry... make me calm.
When I am frightened ... make me strong.
When I am greedy... make me generous.
When I am sad... make me happy.
Lord, teach me to give myself
to you each day. Amen.

*Pass a sheet of paper and a pen to each person. Ask them to put
their hand on the paper and to draw around it giving the outline.
Then explain that they are to take this 'hand' away with them,
and over the next few days use it to help them to celebrate
God's gift of new life that is given to us at Easter.*

*Say that on Holy Thursday the hands will be collected in
and placed around a Cross, that will serve as a prayer focus for the
Triduum - Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday
and Easter Sunday.*

Next, pray the Lord's Prayer together

Our Father...

and then close the time of prayer with the following prayer

Leader: God of mercy and compassion,
be with us all as we prepare for Easter,
as we prepare
to celebrate the love that Jesus showed for us
in his dying on the cross
and in his rising to new and eternal life.

Help us to trust, and not to fear.
Help us to receive your mercy
and to be helped to say sorry.
Help us to rejoice in your everlasting love for us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Enjoy the meal that follows!

A Lenten Service of Family Reconciliation



**Liturgy
Office**

ENGLAND
& WALES

Acknowledgements: Scripture from *The Jerusalem Bible* © 1966 by Darton Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd. Copyright details of 'Hands prayer' unknown. All other texts © 2005, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales.

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Family Prayer Service

Introduction

Hands are something that we can use to do good, or to hurt and do wrong.

When we go to celebrate reconciliation the priest will lay his hand on our head, or at least extend his hand towards us, when he says the prayer of absolution. This is a sign of blessing, a sign of the mercy and love that God shows us.

Preparation

1. **FIND A TIME** when you and the family can pray together, and still have time for a meal together afterwards.
2. **INVITE SOMEONE** from the family to prepare to read the *Hands* prayer and the Scripture reading during the time of prayer.
3. **TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR THE PRAYER** – decorate the meal table with some flowers, and a lit candle. You will need a number of coloured pens or crayons, and a piece of A4 paper for each person present.

Everyone will be invited to trace around their hand and then use the shape of their hand for a prayer activity over the days that follow. You need to decide how they might use the hand:

- You might see this hand as God's hand – and write on it all the good things that God has given you.
 - You might see this hand as the healing hand of Jesus – and write on it the sort of healing that you would ask Jesus to offer you.
 - You might see this hand just as your hand – and write on it the things that you would like God to forgive.
4. **DECIDE WHETHER YOU ARE GOING TO LEAD THE TIME OF PRAYER**, or whether you would like someone else to do this.

Follow-up

COLLECT the hands in in good time before Holy Thursday.

PREPARE a small table or other space to place the 'hands' and a Cross as a focus for family prayer during the Triduum.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Leader: God our Father gives us our hands to do good with.
But when we do wrong, he is ready to forgive us,
and help us to do better
Let us look at our hands for a moment,
and think how we do use them,
and how we might use them for good.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Invite the person who has prepared to read the following passage (Romans 8.8-11):

'Let us listen to a reading from scripture where we hear how God uses his hands'

A reading from a letter of St Paul to the Romans

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God.

Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him.

If Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.