

SPACE PREPARATION

You might ask students to bring symbols from the reading which is a contemporary adaptation of Matthew 25:35ff....rice, water, medicines, library book etc. These could be used creatively during the prayers of intercession.

Another approach is for students to bring images of Developing Countries from this week's newspapers. These might be critiqued later as part of the lesson for issues of dignity of the human person etc.

GATHERING PRAYER

Open our eyes, God,
to the needs of our sisters and brothers who lack the basic necessities of life.

We pray for the millions who are hungry, who do not have clean water, basic health care, or adequate housing.

Make us aware that so many live without the things that we consider basic.

Give us the wisdom to understand the causes of such poverty

Show us how we can be a part of the work of changing our world so that all your people can be called to the table and share more equally in the fruits of your creation.

Amen.

BLESSING OUR BODIES FOR JUST ACTION

Leader: *For each prayer you will be invited to cover your eyes or ears etc as directed and then after a pause you remove your hands for the second part of the prayer.*

We cover our eyes:

God bless our eyes
so that we will recognise injustices.

We cover our ears:

God bless our ears.....
so that we will hear the cry of the stranger.

We cover our mouths:

God bless our mouths.....
so that we will speak words of welcome to newcomers.

We cover our shoulders

God bless our shoulders.....
so that we will be able to bear the weight of struggling for justice.

We cover our hands

God bless our hands
so that we can work together with all people to establish peace.

Modified form *On Frequent Journeys* by Beverley O'Grady.

READING ADAPTED FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 25: 35ff.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,
I was not concentrating at school and you supplied rice for my lunch break;

I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was young and without access to fresh water and you sunk my village a well;

I was a stranger and you invited me in,
I was the child of a refugee in Australia and you helped with my homework;

I was naked and you clothed me,
I was a young parent but your surplus clothes dropped at Vinnies clothed my kids;

I was sick and you took care of me,
I was infected with HIV at birth but your solidarity money provided anti-viral medicines;

I was in prison and you came to visit me,
I was imprisoned by my illiteracy, in a small island school and you furnished its library.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION FOR ACTING JUSTLY.

Come Holy Spirit; fill the hearts of your people gathered here today, that we may be aware of the people around us, especially the oppressed.

Response: Give us the freedom to see.

Come Holy Spirit; fill the hearts of your people that we may be aware of the structure of power, especially those that keep people poor or powerless or confused or unfree.

Response: Give us the wisdom and courage to speak out.

Come Holy Spirit; fill the hearts of your people that we may be aware of ourselves and our bias, stereotypes and all that holds us captive.

Response: Give us the strength to break free.

Come Holy Spirit; fill the hearts of your people that we may be aware of all the possibilities for freedom and joy and life.

Response: Give us the determination to act.

Add other prayers contributed by students.

AFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT TO ACT JUSTLY: WHAT IS TRUE LORD?

Reader: We are called to proclaim the truth
And let us believe:

**All: It is not true that this world and its people
Are doomed and lost.**

R: This is true:
I have come that they may have life
In all its abundance.

**All: It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination,
death and destruction.**

R: This is true:
The deaf hear, the dead are raised to live,
The poor are hearing the good news.

**R2: It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word,
And that war and destruction have come to stay forever.**

All: This is true:
Death shall be no more,
Neither shall there be mourning
Nor crying nor pain any more.

**R: It is not true that our dreams of liberation, democracy and human dignity for all
people are not meant for this earth and for this history.**

All: This is true:
It is already time for us to wake from sleep,
For the night is gone and the day is at hand.

Adapted from an address by Allan Boesak, South Africa World Council of churches.

CONCLUDING PRAYER:

Help me to sense your presence Lord,
especially in every person
that I meet today.
Help me to sense your presence
as Marcellin Champagnat did;
to realise You are being born among humanity,
with us,
among us, in us.

Especially the poor
and young people.

Send your light
so that I might see
You are a God close to me

Amen.

OR

God of peace,
Where there was only fear, today we hope.
Where once our children suffered, now they laugh.
Where all the land was empty, now the rice grows tall.
And the people who were scattered build their homes.
Together in our love we will realise our tomorrow.
In place of cries of war, we sing your praise.
In farms, in fields, and cities we will celebrate your justice.
Raise our voice against oppression, reap a harvest full of hope.

(Linda Jones, Cafod, UK.)