

Christian Aid Week 15–21 May 2011

Prayer stations

Sometimes in worship it can be helpful to create a number of **prayer stations**, small areas around the church or worship space where people can go to pray silently and make a sign of concern and commitment. Below are five suggested prayer stations relating to the themes of Christian Aid Week. They can be set up simply with a small table at each, or using existing church furniture, such as the altar, a bench or even steps. You can use some or all of these, depending on space, numbers and time available. They should be widely spread around the church to give people space to move among them.

These can be used in several ways – in place of the intercessions in a Christian Aid Week service, as a reflective prayer time after the formal worship has ended, or as an accompaniment to a Christian Aid Week exhibition or display. The simple guidelines given for each station should be available on a sheet of paper at the station, and a brief spoken introduction given at the beginning of the prayer time if it is in the context of a service. Quiet music played in the background, whether live or recorded, is also helpful and allows people to move comfortably from station to station.

1. Living hopefully

You will need:

Simple wooden cross, tea lights, images from Jinotega (downloadable from the photo gallery on the Christian Aid Week DVD-ROM)

'I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly.' (John 10:10)

The stories from Jinotega give an example of fullness of life coming into flower. Spend a moment in thanksgiving.

There are still many places in the world where it is hard to imagine abundant life or even the hope of it. The Christian witness declares that there is always hope, even in the darkest circumstances. Pray that we do not give up on the hope that our faith gives us. Pray for perseverance never to give up in the struggle for justice.

Light a candle beside the cross and offer a prayer for areas of the world where hope seems faint. Pray for the wisdom to discern our own part in making that hope a reality.

2. Dreaming dreams

You will need:

World map, sticky notes, pens

Fátima and Gustavo have the courage to dream dreams and to embrace a vision of something beyond themselves. The love and care they have for their community shows them the way to fullness of life.

Jesus shows us also that the way to life is the way of love ('I am the gate', John 10:9)

Spend a moment giving thanks for the breadth of vision we are offered by people like Fátima and Gustavo. Pray for the same generosity of spirit, and for the courage to dream dreams for the world.

Write or draw your dream and post it on the map of the world.

3. Sharing our resources

You will need:

Loaf of bread

The apostles were drawn together by their love of Jesus and of each other, and they sold their possessions and distributed the goods to those in need (Acts 2:44-45). They ate their food with glad and open hearts.

This model of faith is challenging for us today. Spend a moment thinking of how best you can share your resources.

Then break off a piece of bread. Offer a bit to someone standing near you as a sign of sharing.

4. Giving a voice to the voiceless

You will need:

Images of Gustavo and Fátima (downloadable from photo gallery), two large pieces of cardboard, several large markers

Christian Aid is working with organisations like Soppexcca to give people a voice. With Soppexcca's help, Gustavo and his community have been able to speak out for what they need.

How do Gustavo and Fátima speak to us? Write what you hear them saying on one piece of cardboard. On the other piece, write any voiceless situations that you would like the world to hear more from.

Pray for people who are silenced, people who have found a voice, and for a strengthening of our own voice for justice.

5. The fruits of the earth

You will need:

A large bowl of coffee beans

Pick up a handful of coffee beans. Savour the smell and crunch a bean to enjoy its taste.

Give thanks for the growers of the coffee. Consider how closely we are connected to people in distant countries and think about how this affects our actions.

Is there any lifestyle choice you would like to change? Pray for the clarity to see what you could change and the will to put this vision into action.