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UDPS

UNIVERSAL DAY OF PRAYER
FOR STUDENTS

Your Resource Toolkit



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FOREWORD

“ One of the things Christianity constantly reminds us of is that we’re connected at levels deeper than we can be aware of, and so connected in very significant ways with people we don’t know and might seem to have little in common with. To spend time in prayer together across the world is more than just a pious exercise; it points us to the central radical vision of Christian faith, that we are held together not by common ideas and achievement, and not even by shared student experience! What holds us in unity is the invitation of God to all. It’s a way of opening ourselves up to be channels for that invitation into love and justice. ”

Revd Dr Rowan Williams



WHY PRAY?

“When I think of the rich diversity of the contribution of students to visions for peace and justice, I think of the outstanding courage of Malala Yousafzai, attacked by the Pakistan Taliban, yet renewing the struggle for the right of girls to access education. I think of Palestinian young people in the West Bank and Gaza, prevented from travel, and forced to endure many limitations to their freedom, yet who persist in achieving education to a very high level. Students flock to centres of peace and reconciliation like Iona (Scotland) or Taizé (France) bringing hope and vision. They are a beacon-light to the very survival of the Church.”

Professor Mary Grey, Chair of the Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust

“Being a student is a dangerous privilege in many parts of our world. In the last year alone:

- 219 female students went missing from the town of Chibok, Nigeria after being kidnapped from their school and most likely sold into slavery.
- 43 male students went missing in Mexico having been abducted en route to a protest.
- 132 pupils were massacred in their lessons in Peshawar, Pakistan

It is vital that we join together in fervent prayer for students to have the courage to continue studying, the safety to do so and by God's grace to have the conviction to use their learning to work for a better world.”

Dr Krish Kandiah, President London School of Theology

“Across the world, wherever Christians pray and act and bear witness to the liberating power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, there are students among them. In contexts of rich diversity and many challenges, they bring their search for discernment, intellectual rigour, creative imagination and a passion for justice as a gift to the Body of Christ. It is right and important that this unity in diversity is encouraged and resourced in prayer.”

Dr Kathy Galloway, Head of Christian Aid Scotland



INTRODUCTION

UNITING THE CHURCH

Every year individuals, churches and communities around the world unite to lift up students in prayer on the Universal Day of Prayer for Students (UDPS). The UDPS is coordinated by the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), and has been celebrated since 1898, making it one of the oldest ecumenical days of prayer. It serves as one of the tangible signs of our common life and connection between students and alumni of WSCF all around the world.

We invite all our members and friends to unite in prayer for the world, the church, students, and WSCF itself on (or around) the 3rd Sunday of February. You may also choose to set an alternate date that is more convenient for your community.

On 15 February 2015, people are coming together from different denominations to bring words of encouragement and support around the theme 'We are Many, We Are One' – inspired by the theme for the 2015 WSCF General Assembly.

We are thrilled that individuals, churches and organisations have partnered with us to produce this resource. We hope you find it useful to lead members of your congregation or group in prayer.

WHY STUDENTS?

Students come from every walk of life, representing a rich tapestry of experiences, cultures, traditions and languages. They have the potential to shape our world for the better. If the world could see how our faith brings our diversity together and unites us in Christ, how might we change?

We believe a transformation can happen. A world acting more justly, a people speaking up for the poor, and a church bringing healing to broken communities. By joining us this Sunday to pray for the global body of students, you are helping to realise this vision.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

In this resource you'll find a selection of prayers, reflections, stories and activities to use within your church service or with your student group. The toolkit is designed to allow you to incorporate elements of the resource into your own liturgy for the Universal Day of Prayer for Students.



REFLECTIONS

SAM SLATCHER, SCM MEMBER, DURHAM

St Paul's letter to the Corinthians reminds us that we are united in our diversity. United by Spirit, we belong together whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. Paul uses the metaphor of a body - a living and breathing body to describe how we coexist: multiple independent parts that are necessary to sustain life. In the same way the body requires every part to function, a functioning society needs a healthy diversity of different roles: teachers, doctors and nurses, politicians, poets, musicians and so on.

Yet there is a deeper message. Paul writes "the parts [of the body] that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment". Do we have a bias for recognising the presentable parts or those who speak the loudest? What about those whose contribution goes unnoticed? Take away the seemingly insignificant parts, and we all crumble. Who is it we should treat with special honour, realising our freedom is dependent on the contribution of others?

KIRSTY ANN MABBOTT, SCM MEMBER, MANCHESTER

Love Your Neighbour. Your neighbour may be a different colour, ethnicity, nationality, race, faith, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, class, caste, age, occupation, lifestyle, marital status or family situation. Regardless of these differences, your neighbour is still a thinking, feeling human being, *just like you*; a person with gifts, talents and skills, *just like you*; someone who no matter how well adjusted has baggage, *just like you*; and is a child of God, made in God's image, a masterpiece and work of art of God's, *just like you*.

We may number in the billions as a species but we are one species, there are no sub-sets, mutations or mistakes. That person who you struggle to connect with, or the one demonised by the media, they are still children of God. The terrorist and the freedom fighter (depending on your viewpoint), they too are your neighbour. We are many but we are one because God created us in God's image and loved us and became like us so that we could become more like God. Let us reflect the true diversity and creativity of God by acknowledging and celebrating our difference and shouting, "We are many, we are one."



REFLECTIONS

DANIEL LEUNG, STUDENT AT LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

“Catholics are just as much Christians as Protestants, and the differences are petty, it’s only that it’s blown out of proportion.” This was the way I attempted to explain (in my limited Chinese) to my grandfather why there is a divide. My theology lecturers would definitely be disappointed with that explanation, but it did lead me to wonder whether we can see beyond our theological differences at least for a common purpose.

Monsignor Ronald Knox once said, “In view of the fact that art in Catholic churches is so atrociously bad and that in Protestant ones it is so interestingly good, it is surprising that Catholics should pray with their eyes open and Protestants with their eyes shut.”

The quote reminds us of the differences in our cultures (the art) and the expression it leads us towards (eyes open or closed). Those differences should be celebrated but not used in antipathy to create division. Communities of Christians may be separated by culture, expression and theology, but they are praying. We are all praying to the same Lord.

PROFESSOR JOHN HULL, THE QUEEN’S FOUNDATION

When I lost my sight I became sharply aware of being peculiar. I was disorientated and in mourning for a lost world, the world of sight. Slowly I began to realise that I had not so much lost a world as slipped from one world into another. If by ‘world’ we mean a coherent human experience of living in a unique way, then we may describe all major disabilities as occupying their own distinctive world. It is this diversity of worlds which must be recognised before the unity of all humanity can be realised. The majority world, which is so powerful because it is ‘normal’, must make room for other human worlds. If the many worlds are not recognised, the most powerful world will become totalitarian. The path to real unity lies through diversity.



AROUND THE WORLD

TAIWAN AND HONG KONG

In March 2014, 100,000 Taiwanese people took to the streets of the capital Taipei to rally against a trade agreement between Taiwan and China. Students were at the heart of the movement, including members of SCM Taiwan, offering shelter and prayer during the height of the rallies.

“This student-led movement is a turning point for a generation of young people in Taiwan to pay more attention to social justice issues. We hope all concerned friends can support us by calling for our government to listen to the voices and concerns of Taiwanese citizens. Despite the challenges, we continue to work towards protecting and preserving Taiwan’s democracy.”

- Wu Yi-Lin, Member of SCM Taiwan

The struggle for democracy swept into Hong Kong in September and October 2014, as students and citizens began a campaign for universal suffrage – the right to elect their political leaders. Students led peaceful sit-ins and used powerful symbols of nonviolence to send a message of unity to the authorities.

“We envision that our nonviolent protest for universal suffrage will ultimately bring a long-term positive change in society, so that a culture of peace and spirit of democracy becomes deeply rooted in every aspect of our lives and communities.”

- Lau Kim Ling, SCM Hong Kong Secretary

Students are inheritors of today’s world. One powerful truth to the idea of democracy and universal suffrage is that it brings all people – from different backgrounds and experiences – together in unity. So today we pray that we might create a world that is truly free and just. We stand, we sit and we walk with those who dare to challenge the injustice of broken political systems, with prophetic voices pointing to a world marked by unity in diversity.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that the voices of students and citizens in Hong Kong and Taiwan would not fall silent, but continue to pursue the cause of democracy.
- Pray for students to be emboldened in their faith, and that the student movement will continue to grow and remain rooted in the values of nonviolence and community.



AROUND THE WORLD

MEXICO

On September 26 2014, 43 students from a school in Ayotzinapa, Mexico, disappeared. They were presumed to have been kidnapped in Iguala, Guerrero, whilst en route to a conference hosted by the mayor's wife. The students had planned to hold a protest that day. Before reaching the conference, they were stopped and detained by police, and subsequently transferred to a local crime group (called 'Guerreros Unidos'). The crime syndicate tortured and killed them, with most of the remains still to be identified.

The disappearance and subsequent massacre of the students sparked nationwide protests and political turmoil. The mayor of Guerrero and his wife have since been arrested on suspicion of ordering the kidnappings.

Since the events of September, students in Mexico and the surrounding region have launched an online solidarity campaign called 'We are all Ayotzinapa', spread through social media using the hashtag #SomosAyotzinapa. Despite living in the midst of fear and intimidation of crime syndicates or those in official positions of power, students are standing up for their security and the right to express their opinions.

"The World Student Christian Federation of Latin America and the Caribbean, with the prophetic sense that comes from our faith which calls us to build a world of justice and peace, where life is privileged above all, expresses our sorrow and indignation, and joins in solidarity with our movement in Mexico from our Student Christian Movement network (SCM) in Latin America and the world, in their struggle for justice."

- Statement of Solidarity, WSCF Latin America and Caribbean

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for the security of all students in Mexico and the surrounding region, that courage and the ability to speak out would overcome the fear of violence and intimidation.
- Pray for justice to be served in the case of the 43 missing students, that families and loved ones would find a measure of peace.
- Pray that the solidarity campaign organised by students would not fall on deaf ears but inspire a new generation of students to become a fearless prophetic voice of justice.

PRAYERS

GATHERING PRAYER

In arriving and leaving,

God is with us.

In belonging and loving,

God is with us.

In questioning and challenging,

God is with us.

In answers and disagreements,

God is with us.

In journeying and resting,

God is with us.

In grieving and singing,

God is with us.

In worshipping and taking action,

God is with us.

Let us worship God.

Listen and be radical,

how will we translate our response into action?

Rosie Venner, SCM Links Worker 2007-2011

A PRAYER FOR UNITY

To our God who unifies us, Grant your church the will to come together,
The patience to live and work amidst our differences,

And the joy of the Lord to sustain our strength.

Teach us to celebrate our diversity, So that all people may be welcomed in without fear,
And encounter the immeasurable love of Christ.

Fix our eyes on the one who unites,
Our king and our servant,
And encourage us to draw from your well,
To offer our lives to each other,
And to share in the riches of your kingdom.

Amen.

WE ARE MANY, WE ARE ONE

Lord, you prayed that we may all be one as you are one with the father. Look not on our sins of division, but on the faith of your Church. Send your spirit on all your faithful people, that our pursuit to grow in faith, hope and love of you draw us closer, that one day we may share in one communion. Amen.

Daniel Leung, Liverpool Hope

Gracious God, you have been generous in the creation of many human worlds. Give us grace to share in your love for variety, your celebration of difference, and to rejoice in your diverse creation. You, O God, are the Lord of all worlds, and in you we may become one. Amen.

Professor John Hull, The Queen's Foundation, Birmingham

God of life, we are your body. In our gratitude for our coexistence, in honour of the differences that express your diversity, help us recognise one another as partners in life's journey. Help us come to know those who are less visible whom we must treat with special honour, as you showed us in the unconditional love of Jesus.

Sam Slatcher, SCM Member, Durham

God of diversity and uniqueness, help us on our daily journey to recognise those we meet as being in your likeness. Forgive us when we trample on the individuality and diversity you created in each person. Give us hearts that celebrate and praise your wonderful creation that is humankind. Amen.

Kirsty Ann Mabbott, SCM Member, Manchester



WORSHIP AND LITURGY IDEAS

These prayers originally appeared on WSCF Europe's website, and were part of a resource adapted from the 2010 Lenten study compiled by the World Council of Churches, the World YMCA, and WSCF.

LIGHTING A CANDLE

God bringing light and banishing fear, we light this candle as a sign of our willingness to be your light in the world. We remember before you our own communities, the places where we live and work, the people whose lives are connected to ours. We bring before you all the people whose stories we will witness today, and all those whose stories have shaped our lives.

In Jesus you show us how to confront violence and how to transform it into peace and justice. Fill us with your peace, that we may be peacemakers. Fill us with your truth, that we may speak truth to power. Fill us with your courage, that we may bring hope to those who live in fear. Fill us with joy, that we may be your beacons in the world. We ask it in the name of Jesus, our brother and our friend. Amen.

HYMN AND SONG SUGGESTIONS

- Thine be the Glory
- All Are Welcome
- God of Justice (We Must Go)
- God's Spirit is in my Heart
- Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh on me
- We are marching in the light of God/Siyaham' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos
- We Will Walk With God/Siyahamba
- Somebody Prayed For Me

Songs for Children

- One More Step Along the World I Go
- If I Were A Butterfly

SCRIPTURE SUGGESTIONS

Ezekiel 37:21-22 Unity of God's people

Genesis 11: 1-9 Tower of Babel

1 Corinthians 12: 4-11 Varieties of gifts but the same Spirit

1 Corinthians 12: 12-26 Just as the body is one and has many parts

Ephesians 2: 11-22 Christ has broken down the dividing wall

John 10:16 I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold

Acts 2: 1-13 Pentecost

Galatians 3:28 In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek

Psalms 133: 1 How very good when kindred live together in unity



ECUMENICAL WORSHIP – A SIMPLE SERVICE

This content is adapted from materials used at a WSCF Theology Conference, available to view on www.wscf-europe.org/resources/worships

Song

Thanksgiving to God

We remember the words of Jesus when he prayed, “May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

Today we gather from different backgrounds, experiences, cultures and countries. We give thanks to you Lord for this chance to be together. We give thanks for gathering us now. Amen.

Meditation

This prayer of Jesus is a vision. A vision for unity among those believing in him, that they would love one another and that they would be a sign to the world so that the world may believe. Jesus prayed that his followers would not be divided, but that they would experience the unity between him and his Father. This unity is shown through a community centred on prayer, dialogue and mutual service.

By this harmony the world will recognise that Christians preach the good news of God with their life and word, sharing the word of God who has a vision for humanity and who preserves this creation.

"All these are the work of the one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks – slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." (1 Corinthians 12,11–13)

This ‘spirituality of unity’ is an essential element of Christian lifestyle. We need to take our time to recognise one another, to understand and to love each other, to be proclaimers of the good news.

Silence and Prayers

Song



SERMON NOTES

These sermon notes were compiled by Revd Kara Cooper, Methodist Chaplain at Lancaster University.

SUGGESTED TITLE

Us & Them

SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 4:3-15 and Acts 11:1-12a

MAIN POINT

If we are truly to have the fullness of life that Christ offers, then we absolutely need to widen our experience of people. We need those who are different from us to show us the fullness of the kingdom.

INTRODUCTION

(Suggested interactive style, using Q&A to get people participating)

What defines our community? What makes us the group we are? Where are our boundaries? (E.g. Age, geography, belief, doctrine, shared experience etc.)

So that's who's in. Let's be really honest, who do we find it difficult to include? Why? (Possible answers might include those with different ages, beliefs, lifestyles, worship practices, etc.)

POINT ONE

We define our identity within our community. E.g.—“I’m a Methodist/Baptist/Catholic.” “I’m an East Londoner/Lancashire born/farmer/pensioner/student.” And if we’re really honest, human nature is that we like that which is similar to us. The church as a whole (and our individual communities in particular) has a habit of welcoming another’s diversity so long as it conforms to our community and doesn’t challenge us. All communities do this. If you don’t agree with ‘us’, you must be ‘them.’

POINT TWO

What might we have to learn from groups that are different than us? If there are students worshipping, perhaps ask them what makes the life of a student unique? (Possible answers might include: no down time, always working or studying, in the process of becoming an adult, learning who I want to be and how, giving up childhood habits, a life beginning in debt etc.) The word disciple comes from the Latin *discere* (to learn) and *discipulus* (learner). Learner = student. If we are called to be Christ’s ‘discipulus,’ then perhaps we should learn how to be learners. Other communities (not just students) have much to teach us, and we need to be open learners.



POINT 3

The gospel is only good news if it's good news for everyone. Jesus continually did that which was life-giving and radically inclusive. He reached out to all the groups that church and society deemed 'them' and brought them front and centre. He broke every social taboo, pulled to the heart of his ministry those whom the world would ostracise. Messy loud toddlers. Bleeding women. Broken people. People of other nationalities and beliefs. (You may want to refer to John 4—the context of the Samaritan woman) Jesus hung out at the place where 'the other' community was known to gather. He asked questions and told stories and listened to her stories, and lives were transformed.

POINT 4

We do not try to reach out and welcome all and tear down divisions because of some human-imposed call to inclusivity. That will always fail in the end. We do this because Christ himself has made it so. See Acts 11 reading, where God effectively tells Peter to get over himself and his human definitions of who's in and who's out.

POINT 5

We can only experience the true fullness of life that Jesus offers when we are engaging with 'the other.' We need students. And pensioners. And toddlers, men, women, people of variant gender, people of non hetero-normative sexuality, refugees, social workers, teachers, entrepreneurs, rich and poor, a rainbow of nationalities. We need to share stories, because we need to learn from each other, and we need 'the other' to teach us.

PRACTICAL ACTION

Could your community organise an outing to a local mosque or synagogue? Invite that community to share food and learn from one another. Speak to a local LGBT group (without judgement) and learn of their experiences and stories of God, faith, church, and life. Find out where the students or young adults in your community gather. Is there a way you can hang out there like Jesus hung out at the well? Invite some sort of society with different beliefs to share food, stories, and conversation.

PRAYER

God of diversity, teach us all to be students and learners. Help us to encounter those who are outside our own community and to learn from them. Give us ears to hear their stories and courage to share our stories graciously. Help us to share in the fullness of life you offer, for all people. In the name of Christ we pray, Amen.



ALL-AGE ACTIVITIES

The activities in this section were kindly adapted and cross-posted from the 'Messy Church' resources, a publication from the Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF). You can access the original set of resources here: <http://www.ctbi.org.uk/pdf/view.php?id=626>

SERVICE ACTIVITY: WATERCOLOUR MINGLING

Materials needed:

Watercolour paper

Scissors

Water

Watercolour paint

Aims:

By demonstrating the mixing of colours to create lots of different (and hopefully beautiful!) patterns, the church will have an opportunity to discuss the value of diversity and demonstrate that we are drawn together through common themes e.g. beauty, justice, love.

Details of Activity:

- Cut up the watercolour paper into small squares.
- Paint the square with water and add small shapes using different colours of watercolour paint. Watch them flow into each other creating different patterns.
- Back the finished work of art on to a piece of card.

Discussion:

Talk about the different 'colours' of Christianity – the different styles of worship from quiet monasticism, loud worship bands, solitary hermits, massive churches in huge arenas and churches from all round the world. Together they make a beautiful and varied pattern.



SERVICE ACTIVITY: SHARING GAME

Materials needed:

20-25 containers (e.g. pots, jars, buckets)
Selection of objects that can fit into the containers

Aims:

To promote the idea of unity and diversity being the catalyst for community, which involves acts of hospitality, generosity and sharing. The activity can encourage discussion on how church could incorporate unity and diversity.

Details of Activity:

- Two competitors or teams face each other across a floor space (on which may be a tarpaulin or other waterproof covering).
- In front of each team are the containers – pots, jars or buckets some of which are empty and some of which are full.
- At the signal, each team tries to fill up all the opposite team's containers that are empty.
- After a set time (about 1 minute, depending on age of participants) see which team has managed to share most of its resources with the other team.

Discussion:

Talk about how different this game is from the way the world often works, where people try to snatch off each other instead of give to each other. God loves his churches to share what they have with other churches and with the world. When one church in the Bible was starving, another sent money to the Christians there. And he will always come along and fill up our buckets from his never-ending supply when we need it!



MOVING FORWARD

WHAT NEXT?

You can continue to keep students around the world in prayer, and the work of organisations like SCM and WSCF. SCM currently supports over 25 student societies around the country, helping to organise events for students from all denominations to come together. Follow our prayer blog (<http://www.movement.org.uk/prayer>) for regular updates.

Visit www.movement.org.uk for more general information and sign up for our email newsletter. You can also follow @SCM_Britain on Twitter and 'like' us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/StudentChristianMovement) for regular updates.

If you are interested in the global student movement and what students are doing around the world, follow the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) on www.wscfglobal.org

SUPPORTING CHURCHES

This year, SCM is launching a new series of events called '*What Students Want*' to connect church leaders to share ideas to engage students and young people. If you are interested in growing your student ministry, come along to the first event in London. More details are available at www.movement.org.uk/events.

SCM also supports churches more generally—we'd love to connect with you! Visit www.movement.org.uk/get-involved/churches-chaplaincies to find out more.

Thank you for using this resource and praying for students.

