

**Prayer**

A NURSING INTERVENTION



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**Prayer of Mother Teresa of Calcutta**

- ▶ May today there be **peace within**.
- ▶ May you trust God that **you are exactly** where you are meant to be.
- ▶ May you not forget the **infinite possibilities** that are born of faith.
- ▶ May you use those **gifts that you have received and pass on** the love that has been given you.
- ▶ May you be **confident** in knowing you are a child of God.
- ▶ Let this presence **settle** into your bones,
- ▶ and allow your soul the **freedom** to sing, dance, praise and love.
- ▶ **It is there for each and everyone of us.** Amen

**Learning Outcomes**

- ▶ 1. Use prayer as an intervention for individuals and groups in the practice of FCN
- ▶ 2. Explore various theological concepts about prayer and healing.
- ▶ 3. Use pertinent scriptural resources for prayer sessions related to physical and spiritual healing.
- ▶ 4. Examine prayer practices that can promote spiritual growth.

Adapted from: Foundations of Faith: Community Nursing course based on the curriculum developed through the Westburg Institute for Faith Community Nursing, which curriculum is owned by the Spiritual Care Association, New York, NY.

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## Terms

- ▶ Prayer: prayer as "an address (such as a petition) to God in word or thought."
  - ▶ prayer is conversing with God. Not just talking to the Lord but listening, listening or being quiet before God and talking or saying what's on your heart can be easy or difficult.
- ▶ Centering Prayer: praying while reading and reflecting on scripture or sacred reading.
- ▶ Meditation: A process of focusing and calming your mind 
- ▶ Lectio Divina: slow, contemplative praying while meditating on scripture

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## What is Prayer?



- Prayer is a **vehicle** to lift the mind and heart to God.
- Prayer helps us to **center and focus** on spiritual health and wholeness.
- Prayer **expresses** gratitude, praise, lifts spirit to God and helps to **alleviate** anxiety.

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## Why FCN Nurses Need Prayer?

- ▶ Prayer can be done is **preparation** of a visit.
- ▶ To know how to **prioritize** our lives, to clear our minds, reduce stress
- ▶ To **connect** with the God of wisdom and work.
- ▶ To **receive** God's gift of healing and comfort.
- ▶ For personal **faith development**.

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### 5 Steps of Prayer Development

- ▶ Reading: can be specifically religious or general reading
- ▶ Prayer: Prayer requires concentration, time and space.
- ▶ Meditation: Quiet reflection on the "Why?"
- ▶ Contemplation: can be centered or more free-floating.
- ▶ Action: write or record prayer

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### What helps you to pray?

- ▶ Online prayer groups
- ▶ Small groups
- ▶ Prayer partners
- ▶ Centering Prayer
- ▶ Prayer Journal
- ▶ Prayer Walk





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### Group Session- write a prayer

For each group, read the scenario and begin the process to write a prayer for that situation. You may not actually write a prayer but discuss the process with the group. Some one can summarize the process and say the prayer. Time- 10 minutes

Group 1: Called by family of a 4 Y.O. child in emergency surgery following a car accident. The mother is now in a surgical intensive care unit but expected to live.

Group 2: Received a call from a congregant to visit a neighbor who is an atheist but was spiritual support after a recent cancer diagnosis and a poor prognosis.

Group 3: Your pastor has asked you to see a college age women who has just failed 2 courses and is afraid of judgement by the congregation that she failed....

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### The Types of Christian Prayer

Contain these elements:

- ▶ Adoration and Praise of God
- ▶ Penitence or asking forgiveness
- ▶ Lament expressing sadness or anger
- ▶ Petition asking to for an answer to a specific request
- ▶ Thanksgiving-gratitude
- ▶ Supplication, intercession- praying on behalf of another
- ▶ Blessing – special blessing on another
- ▶ Meditation-pondering the nature of God

### Judeo Christian Prayer

- ▶ Belief in a God who is **personal and loving**
- ▶ Belief that God **hears and answers** prayer
- ▶ Posture varies, eyes open/closed, hands folded, raised.
- ▶ Words **expressed or not.**

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## Jewish Prayer- "To stand in self-judgement"

- ▶ Special Occasions such as Hanukkah and Pesach: Passover, is one of the most commonly observed Jewish holidays, even by otherwise non-observant Jews.
- ▶ The **Shema** - Shema Yisrael ("Hear, O Israel") are the first two words of a section of the Torah that is the centerpiece of the morning and evening prayer services, encapsulating the monotheistic essence of Judaism. In its entirety, the Shema consists of three paragraphs: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Deuteronomy 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41. Themes of hope, courage and commitment.
- ▶ Saturday prayers - family groups hope, courage and commitment
- ▶ The **Mi she Berach** - A "Mi she Berach" is a public prayer or blessing for an individual or group, most often recited in synagogues when the Torah is being read. Because it is not an officially mandated prayer, there is a lot of room for creativity regarding whom to bless or how they can be blessed. **Prayer of healing**
- ▶ The **Kaddish** -The Kaddish is a hymn of praises to God found in Jewish prayer services. The oldest version of the Kaddish is found in the Siddur of Rab Amram Gaon, c. 900. The central theme of the Kaddish is the magnification and sanctification of God's name. Prayer of mourning daily for 11 months.

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## Buddhism- Path to Enlightenment.

- ▶ Does not teach about a supreme being, but **prayer and meditation** are central. Seek the **true nature of life** through **morality, meditation, and wisdom**
- ▶ Prayer aids: mantra, folding hands, prayer wheels and flags

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## Islam Prayers- Salat or Namaz

- ▶ Obligatory, 5 times per day: dawn, noon, midafternoon, sunset, evening.
- ▶ Body, mind and soul in contact with Allah.
- ▶ Pray alone, with families or in mosques.
- ▶ Ritual washing before prayer (wudhu) required before prayer

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### Hinduism – Verda texts and draw on dharma as a system of morality

- ▶ Supreme God with a multitude of deities that emanate from God.
- ▶ Individual prayer
- ▶ Involves using a mantra




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### Native American (not included in the slides from Westburg)



- ▶ One general truth that threads throughout the Native American spiritual beliefs is the belief of the **Mother Earth spirituality**. The Native Americans felt that the **earth was our mother, the sky our father, and all things were interconnected.**
- ▶ The many Creation myths of the Native American stress the mutuality and interdependence between people and other forms of life. There is **mutual respectfulness required when interacting with trees, birds, and plants and also natural forces such as the wind and the rain.**
- ▶ Their creation stories emphasize that Creation did not just happen a million years ago and end there, but that the **Spirit that first infused the world is still with us now and can be experienced as "immanence", the spirit which imbues all things.**

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### Using Prayer as a Nursing Intervention

- ▶ What needs to exist for prayer to be a **meaningful** nursing intervention?
  - ▶ A **significant** nurse/client relationship. Significant= trusted relationship
  - ▶ **Assessment** – the nursing process.
    - Are they used to praying?
    - Do they use written or spontaneous prayers?
    - How do they reference God?
    - Do they have personal spiritual items with or on them?

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### Ethical Aspects of Prayer

- ▶ Get their **permission/consent**
- ▶ Do **NOT** use prayer as a time to preach
- ▶ Maintain **confidentially**, even in church! May be more difficult if you are an FCN in your own church.
- ▶ Pray in a **culturally relevant** way
- ▶ Consider the **physical needs** of the person: time, concentration
- ▶ **Don't defend God or His answers**

### How do I Pray for Others?

- Starts with **personal prayer** for yourself, for humility and for honesty.
- The nurse who prays will know the God who hears prayer.
- You can pray with the
  - ▶ person, or alone.



### Reflection

- Have you ever had someone else pray for you, with you?
- Was that experience meaningful to you? What made it so?
- Was that experience a negative one for you? Why do you think so?

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### Prayer Resources for the Parish Nurse

- ▶ Denominational books of worship
- ▶ Books of Prayers
- ▶ Ministers, priests, spiritual directors
- ▶ Senior nurses who have experienced prayer with patients.
- ▶ Nurses' Christian Fellowship, Catholic Nurses' Fellowship

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### Prayer Practice

- ▶ Write out a prayer you could pray with a person having elective surgery. Group 1
- ▶ Write out a prayer you could pray with a person who has just heard a negative prognosis. Group 2
- ▶ Write out a short prayer for those who had an unexpected loss or death. Group 3

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