

## FORM 7

**A. DEVELOPING OUR SPIRITUALITY**

It is important to emphasize that Catholic spirituality results from God's free gift of supernatural grace. Spirituality is the consequence of our being loved, touched, healed and transformed by God's grace. To grow spiritually is not a chosen extra, it is an essential aspect of our call to a new life in Christ.

This programme was originally designed for a half day, however it could be divided to develop a number of shorter lessons. Extra suggestions have been added for this purpose.

1. **Prayer** — preferably a psalm type prayer that can involve all students in reading. Time of intercessory prayer.
2. **'Spirituality'** — Brainstorm on to OHP all the words, ideas, thoughts they associate with the word 'spirituality'.
3. **Distribute** a sheet of quotes defining spirituality, "Spirituality Is" (See page 77 or develop your own.)

Ask students to:

- a) Underline words or phrases that have a significant meaning for them.
- b) Put a question mark next to ideas they do not fully understand.
- c) Choose one quote or write their own that describes their own spirituality.

After a suitable length of time gather in groups of 4-5 and share the chosen or written description of their own spirituality.

Give a summary of what spirituality is (See OHP page 77 and allow for questions on ideas they did not fully understand.)

**Note for the Teacher:**

Basically this unit deals with a history of Christian Spirituality expressed in a Western European culture. There are other cultural means of expressing Spirituality which are important to consider and which students could research.

eg: Maori Spirituality (refer Form 3 Topic F)  
Samoan (or other Pacific Island) Spirituality  
Australian Aboriginal (see extra resource p.82)  
American Indian (refer Form 5 Topic A pp.32-33)

4. **History of Spirituality.** Give out handout **Spirituality - A History** (page 78) and in small groups, ask students to prepare a timeline showing the various developments of spirituality.  
(These timelines may be developed so they can be used by teachers in Forms 3-5 when teaching the History of the Church and students may be asked to present these timelines to these levels explaining the development of spirituality in the context of the History of the Church units.)

5. **Individually reflect on and write a written response to:**

What do you understand to be expressions of Catholic Spirituality in the 20th Century?

In small groups list these on newsprint for display.

6. **Distribute sheets containing some basic prayers.**

- The Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Apostles Creed
- Glory Be
- Ten Commandments
- Beatitudes
- Two great commandments of the Gospel.

Ask students to spend some time on their own with these, and emphasise this is a time of personal reflection. They will not have to tell others what they've written, but will have an opportunity for discussion if they want to.

Allow a time of questioning and discussion — allowing students to answer each other's questions as much as possible.

7. **Spirituality and Personality** — Discuss the fact that we all have different personalities and our different personalities mean that we develop different spiritualities. In Form 6 '**Developing Personal Prayer**' (pages 63-65) students were encouraged to experiment with different types of prayer until they found what suited them — it would be good to refer back to this, or experiment again, and discuss what types of prayer suit what types of people — this may require some group work and some individual work depending on the trust level of the class and whether you decide to keep the discussion general or ask students to relate their own personal experiences — it is a good opportunity also to work with your school chaplain or person responsible for spiritual guidance in the school.

(It may be possible to have students spend time on the Myers Briggs personality types and explore what these tell us of suitable ways to develop our prayer.)

8. **Our different personalities affect our choices in life**, what we choose as an occupation, what we choose for our hobbies, the friends we choose, the lifestyle we choose and our choice of spirituality and how we decide to live this spirituality. Our faith tells us that God chooses people for special tasks — all have their own specific spiritualities, their own gifts to give to the Church and to humankind.

**Activities**

A study of the variety of spiritualities found within the Catholic Church.

Study of the different Religious Orders within the Diocese, or well known internationally, and what makes each Religious Order unique.

A general discussion on Religious Orders students have had contact with or have heard of and how they see the spirituality of these Orders lived.

Invite members of local Religious Orders to speak on their spirituality and vision.

Collect mission statements or other appropriate material from Religious Orders that will enable students to discover the spirituality reflected in each Religious Order.

Study the forms of spirituality found among the laity.

Discuss various groups found in the local Parish Communities — charismatic, Marian Mothers, St Vincent de Paul, Cultural groups, etc.

Invite speakers from these groups to discuss their understanding of spirituality.

#### 9. Spirituality is a relationship with God.

Discuss — What do we need to form a good relationship?

Ideas that surface should include communication and time.

How do we communicate with God?

Ideas may include — through scripture, other people, Liturgy, sacraments, prayer etc.

Types of prayer. There is no one right way to pray. We discover that our ways of praying change according to maturity and needs. (Pause for students to think and comment on how they prayed at 5, 10, 15 and now!)

What is your relationship with God?

Lead a suitable prayer meditation to discover this. A good example is *The God Tree*. (**Imagine That**, by Marlene Halpin. Wm C Brown Company, 1982)

#### 10. Where to from here?

As part of your education in a Catholic school, elements of spirituality have been built into your life — class and school prayers, Liturgies, lifestyle. However soon it will become your responsibility to choose.

What attitude will you take?

- totally carefree
- philosophical but underneath 'scared'
- hopeful and trusting
- willing to make mistakes and learn from them
- God in the background
- God forgotten
- The Church as a place for Baptism, Marriage, Funeral
- The Church as a place for when you need help!
- A Christmas - Easter commitment
- A Sunday commitment
- A belief that you are an integral part of the Church — and that the future of the Church, is in part your responsibility.

Students will be able to list other attitudes that they see around them, and have themselves. (There are some 'Charlie Brown' cartoons that may be good starters for this discussion).

Ask students to write a paragraph, draw a cartoon or some other way describe the attitude, they will, or they hope to take with them.

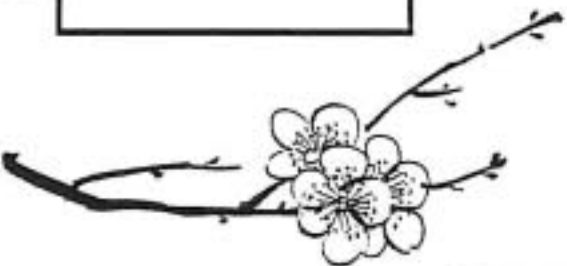
## SPIRITUALITY IS....



*Spirituality is the consequence of our being loved, touched, healed and transformed by God's grace. To grow Spiritually is not a chosen extra; it is an essential aspect of our call to a new life in Christ.*

*Jesus spent most of his life at Nazareth, as a carpenter; he was involved in the ministry of preaching, teaching and healing for only a few years. We tend to forget the graced moments in our ordinary, everyday lives. Spirituality is part of our total being; it is God's graciousness to our whole self. God does not speak only to the soul, but to the total person, the fully human person.*

*We tend to think of our spiritual life as the time we spend in prayer or worship, but in reality our spiritual life is the life of the ordinary, everyday happenings. Eating, studying, gardening, cooking, being on the sports field, watching TV, in the family, at school...*



*'The word 'spirituality' comes from 'spirit' - 'to breathe'. This suggests that our spirituality is creative and life giving, it may be compared with the Spirit of God creating light from darkness' (Genesis 1:3). Jesus describes the movement of the Spirit in John 3:8 - 'The wind blows wherever it pleases; you hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going, that is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit.'*

*Spirituality involves 'conversion' - not in a single event or an instant happening, but an ongoing, continual turning to God, recognising God as the centre of our being.*

*Christian spirituality involves our relationships, with people and the community we live in, it is not confined to our relationship with God. Our relationship with God is interwoven with our relationship with other people, each has an influence on the other.*

## SPIRITUALITY - A HISTORY

In order to appreciate spirituality we need to reflect on the changes that have occurred through the years, the changes of spiritual styles and devotions. Spirituality has always been influenced by the events of the world at the time, and various eras have emerged — the martyrs in Rome, the hermits in Egypt, the monks of the Middle Ages, the Salvation Army workers on the docks of London, the Christian communities of Senegal and South America. People respond to the invitation 'follow me' (Luke 6:28) according to the world they live in. We need to reflect on the traditional forms of spirituality and incorporate these into our own forms of spirituality.

Over the two thousand years in which Christian spirituality has developed, millions of people from many cultures and eras have sought to find God in their lives. The forms in which faith and prayer have been expressed have varied according to cultural forms, styles and symbols. These expressions have had significant meaning in one time and culture but are not necessarily appropriate in a different time and culture. There are some common elements, such as God's love for us, the redemptive grace of Christ and our need to pray, which endure through all times and cultures.

### The Early Church

*'And as you go, proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand'*  
(Matthew 10:7)

The disciples gathered around Jesus as a community, and from there were missioned to take God's word to all people. Before his death, Jesus promised the community the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit - the Advocate — *'When the Advocate comes, whom I shall send you from the Father'* (John 15:26). The post-resurrection community gathered at Pentecost — *'They were filled with the Holy Spirit'* (Acts 2:4). At this time it was clear that the call of Christ was for all people, there were no élite, no thoughts of some being called to holiness and others not.

When Christians were persecuted for their faith, the martyrs, those who died for their faith, soon became the heroes and heroines. At this time the ultimate meaning of being Christian was to be willing to die for Christ.

In the fourth century, with the change of political climate, the persecution era came to an end, and hence other forms of expressing one's true Christianity were sought. One of these expressions was that of a hermit moving to a hermitage, so as to be fully devoted to contemplation, prayer and penance. These hermitages developed into communities of monks and the monastic era began. By the seventh century monasteries were well established, especially in the Benedictine tradition. The Benedictine spirituality stressed the value of work, in contrast to society at that time which tended to see work as degrading.

The monastic movement arose from a desire for total and full-time dedication to God and the service of one's neighbour. There was a sense of adventure in the quest for holiness. The poor, the sick, and lepers were seen as people needing special love and care from the dedicated monk. Monasteries flourished throughout Europe, with the monks within the monastery walls and a community of other people around the monastery, so they could mould their lives and spirituality on that of the monks.



## Middle Ages

During the Middle Ages many different Religious Orders were founded, each developing its own form of spirituality. These Orders included the Franciscans, Carmelites, Dominicans and Augustinians. Many of these, especially the Franciscans, sought to touch the lives of the people. At this time a number of devotions became popular: devotion to the Blessed Eucharist, Heart of Jesus, Mary, the Saints, statues and processions as well as the practices of fasting, discipline.

This was the era of mysticism, of contemplation. Meister Eckhart and the Rhineland mystics were influential. Thomas a Kempis wrote the '**Imitation of Christ**' and an unknown author wrote the '**Cloud of Unknowing**'. These books stressed the necessity of contemplation as a way of holiness. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries confraternities and guilds were popular as they offered spiritual formation for their members through prayers and devotional practices.

## 1500-1900

The time of the Reformation was one of renewal in many areas, including that of spirituality.

St Ignatius of Loyola (founder of the Jesuits) saw good in the world as well as evil, and tried to integrate the apostolic and the contemplative life. Ignatius developed methods of discernment that assisted people to find ways to God through their work. Ignatian spirituality stressed a personal relationship with Christ; this emphasis has had a major influence on the development of spirituality through to the modern day. Other outstanding people at this time were Teresa of Avila, St John of the Cross and Martin Luther. Teresa and John, from within the ancient tradition, wrote from their personal experience of a mystical union with God through the gift of love. They rank high among Catholic mystics. On the other hand, Martin Luther, the founder of the Protestant reformation, sought a new way to God, through 'faith and Scripture alone'.

Other influences at this time were Jansenism (a movement which stressed moral austerity and the evil of the human body and human desires and an elitist notion of salvation) and Quietism (a belief that we can do nothing at all for our salvation, that the way of Christian spirituality is a way of complete passivity). Against these ideas St Francis de Sales, Alphonsus Liguori, Jean Jacques Olier and others, promoted and taught a startling perception of how Christian life can be lived in a refreshing new way; their followers were inspired by avid love of God and burning generosity. During the nineteenth century there was a growth in missionary congregations.

Congregations for women such as the Sisters of Mercy, Presentation, Franciscan, and Bridgidine Sisters, Sisters of St Joseph and the Mission Sisters, influenced millions of Catholics through their work in schools, parishes and hospitals. The Society of Mary (Marists), De La Salle, Christian Brothers, Jesuits, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Dominicans, Franciscans, Vincentians, and Carmelites provided priests and brothers in ministries in schools, parishes and retreat centres. At the same time the London Missionary Society, the Salvation Army and the Wesleyan Church also reached out in their missionary activities.

## Twentieth Century

With the expansion in technology that has allowed greater communication throughout the world, the increase in national and international violence, the development of materialism, secularism, marxism and capitalism, there is a renewed search for God. The 'Green' movement, aware of the dangers of ecological and nuclear destruction, prompts people to re-evaluate their values. The Christian modern movements of spirituality tend to be towards:

- the whole person as important
- the community aspects of life
- the development of small groups for spiritual support
- Liturgy as celebration within the community
- baptism as a common starting point in the spiritual life of all
- a cry for justice in the world
- an ecumenical searching
- a sense of Church as a Christian community, sharing in prayer and committed to the Gospel values
- earth-consciousness, a realisation that our lives are linked with the whole cosmos, and that this is our responsibility
- spirituality within the context of ordinary life.

The Charismatic movement and creation spirituality are both influences on the direction of spirituality in the twentieth century.

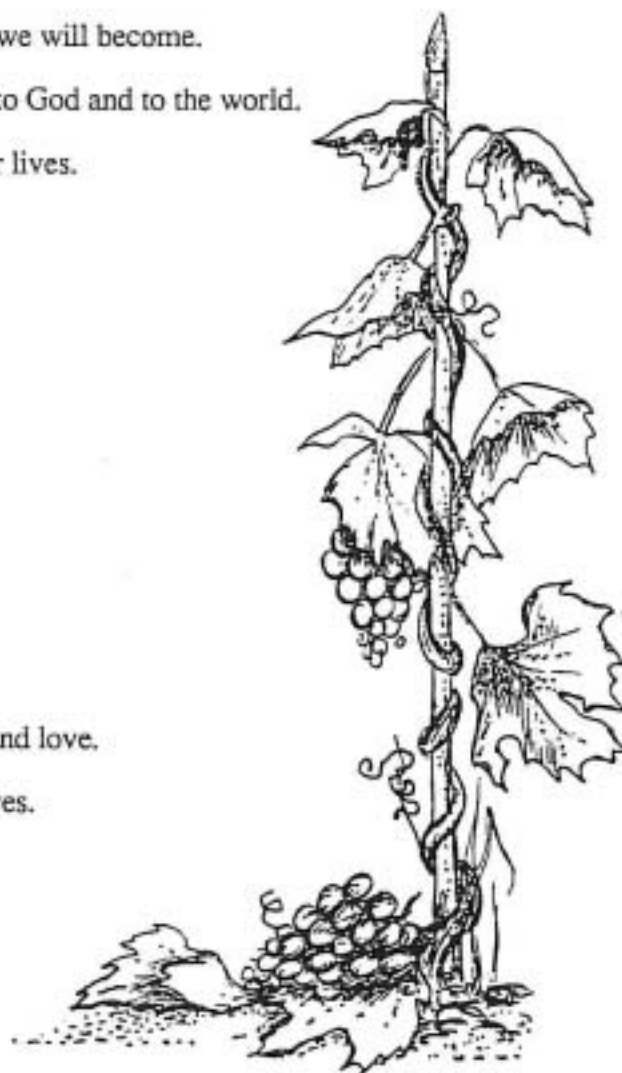
The Second Vatican Council has reaffirmed the vocation of all baptised people as disciples; thus spirituality for laity is constantly developing. Today's spirituality is concerned with finding God in the everyday, ordinary actions of life: it is relational, involved in world situations as well as with a personal relationship with God.



## FORM 7

**SPIRITUALITY:**

- A search for God in the everyday events of life.
- An endeavour to become more fully a man or woman in the Spirit.
- The very essence of what it means to be human.
- Involves our whole person in our experience of life.
- Involves choices.
- The way a person lives out his or her ideals.
- Becoming what God hopes we will become.
- The way we give ourselves to God and to the world.
- Allowing God to change our lives.
- A journey.
- A discovery.
- A response in faith.
- A search for meaning.
- Discipleship.
- Relationships.
- Living our Baptism.
- Meeting Jesus.
- Developing our faith, hope and love.
- Allowing the Spirit in our lives.





## RESOURCE SHEET FOR TEACHER

## SPIRITUALITY — AN ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVE

*God has asked us to love Him with whole mind, heart and soul. So I must give myself to God as an Aboriginal.*

*This is what God wants or else He would not have made me what I am. Really it is the only way I can go about it.*

*When I read the Gospels, I read them as an Aboriginal. There are many things in the Gospel that make me happy to be an Aboriginal because I think we have a good start.*

*So many of the things Christ said and did, and the way He lived, make me think of the good things in our way of life.*

*Christ did not get worried about material things. In fact He looked on them as things that get in the way and make it hard to get to our true country.*

*He was born in the countryside, in a cave, like many of us have been born. He walked about like us and with nowhere to lay his head. He died with nothing on a cross. So many of our people died with nothing.*

*He had his own little group like us. He was strong on sharing — "If someone wants your tunic, give him your cloak."*

*We do a lot of things like that. Of course He went a lot further: In the Eucharist He shared himself as nobody else could.*

*He liked the bush as we do. He loved nature. He saw in the lilies of the field a glory greater than Solomon's. He loved the big things like the hills and open spaces.*

*He loved the little things like the mustard seed and the grain of*

*wheat and the corn, drops of cold water and the little sparrows.*

*We have similar things like seeds and berries and yams, small water holes, and we like the quietness of the hills and the bush.*

*Like Him we have a deep sense of God in nature. We like the way He uses the things of nature to teach, and the important part nature plays in the Sacraments.*

*We have Dreamtime figures who formed the world, who gave us law and ceremony and life creatures, from where our spirits come.*

*We find it easy to see in Christ The great Dreamtime figure, who, more than all others gave us Law and Ceremony and life centres, and marked out the way we must follow to reach our true country.*

*We have certain things in nature for our dreaming. We call some of these brother or sister. They not only represent our dreamtime figure but in some way they are him.*

*In some way he lives in them and is them. So he is ever present. So it is not over difficult to realise that Christ is with us always ... the same yesterday, today and forever.*

*We do not find it strange when he says He is the life, that we can and must live with his life, that in this life of His we are one.*

*In some way He lives in us and is us, so that what we do for each other we do for Him.*



**NOTE FOR THE TEACHER**

1. Where possible, prepare other sheets like this on various Spiritualities and discuss with students.

Refer to Form 3F topic 'The Beginnings of the Church in Aotearoa/New Zealand' and 5A topic 'Reverence for Life' for ideas on Maori spirituality.

What can students draw out from the material? How can they relate the particular form of Spirituality presented, to their own?

**Other Follow-up Ideas**

1. Students research their genealogies/whakapapa and find out about the Spiritualities of the different ethnic groups they link with (Refer Form 3 Topic A **My Story**).
2. Interview people of the different generations to find out what their most important values are, their idea of God and how they pray.



<b>B. PRAYER FOR HEALING</b>
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**1. Pray with the Gospel stories of healing.**

*The Blind Man* (Mk 8:22-26)

- a) Read the Gospel story.
- b) Place yourself in a prayerful atmosphere and re-read the story — let your imagination lead you into the story — become one of the characters of the story — allow the character to unfold with you in the story.
- c) Reflect on the experience. Completing the following might help you.
  - If I had been the blind man in this story I would have.....
  - When Jesus touched me.....
  - When I could first see I.....
  - Seeing Jesus made me.....
  - My own feelings are of
    - (a) hope
    - (b) confidence
    - (c) growing awareness
    - (d) freedom.
  - I feel in my spiritual life I am
    - (a) in total darkness
    - (b) reaching out for help
    - (c) beginning to see
    - (d) seeing quite clearly.
  - In my own life there are areas that need the healing touch of Jesus.  
Some of these areas are:
  - Spend some time talking with Jesus about those areas that need healing.
  - Use your journal to record some of the feelings, ideas, hopes and fears you now have.
- d) Other suitable passages to develop in this way are:
 

Luke 4:40-56;	Luke 6: 6-11;	Luke 7:36-50;
Luke 17:11-19;	Mark 10:46-51;	John 5: 1-15.

**2. Pray with the theme: God Wants to Forgive Me.**

- a) Set the atmosphere for prayer.
- b) Pray together:

*'Father, lead me to a close awareness of your eagerness to forgive me'.*

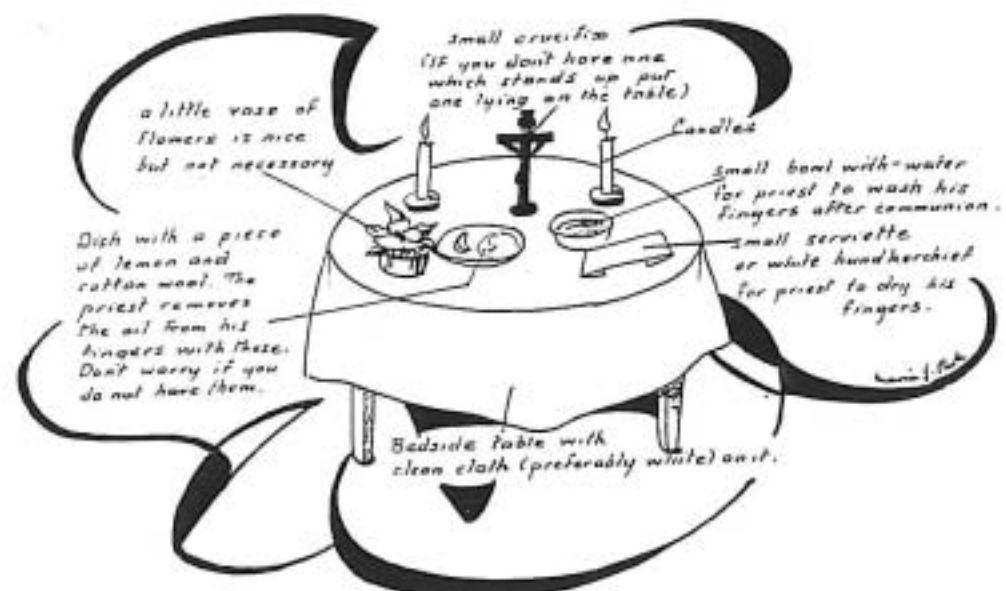
- c) Take time to reflect on the reading (possibly have each student have a copy) and read out aloud a word or phrase that is important to you.
- d) A time of quiet to reflect on God's loving forgiveness.
- e) Conclude reciting the "Our Father".

### 3. Prayer with Christ on the Cross

This prayer aims to heal a painful relationship, or area of relationship. If used as a group-class exercise it will be necessary to allow freedom to participate or not and opportunity for individual follow up if necessary.

- a) Imagine the person you are having difficulty in your relationship with — it may be a person who makes you angry, jealous, resentful...
- b) Share, in your imagination, the feelings you have towards this person.
- c) Now imagine you are the other person, try to imagine how the other person is really feeling, why they are hurting you.
- d) Imagine you can see Christ on the cross (a central crucifix would be a good focal point for the prayer) — visualise the physical agony of Christ on the Cross as you listen to the story of the crucifixion. (Mt 27:32-54). As you stand at the foot of the Cross what are your feelings? What do you want to say to Christ? What do you want to do? What in your life needs Christ's forgiveness?
- e) Go back to the relationship that is hurting you — share this with Jesus — ask Jesus to help you see what is hurting you and how you are reacting to the pain. Describe your feelings and then listen — listen to Jesus' loving response to you.
- f) Imagine that the person who is causing you or has caused you pain, is coming up the hill of Calvary. How do you feel as this person approaches you and Jesus? How does Jesus treat this person? What does Jesus say? Ask Jesus to help you see yourself and the other person with the same love and forgiveness that Jesus shows you.
- g) Hear Jesus speak the words:  
*'Father, forgive him, he did not know what he was doing'*  
*'Father, forgive her, she did not know what she was doing'*  
*'Father, forgive them, they did not know what they were doing'*
- h) Spend time with Jesus and the person with whom you've had difficulties — time just being with them.
- i) Try to approach the person concerned and if possible, seek a reconciliation with them.
- j) Give thanks for the forgiveness and healing, and if possible resolve to do something as an acknowledgment — it may be an act of kindness towards the person, a special prayer, an extra effort on your behalf.

- k) Encourage students to repeat this type of prayer on their own, to talk about their experience of this type of prayer, to be realistic in the fact that deep hurts and difficulties will not be healed in one time of prayer — may need to be persevered with in prayer — and may need help from people skilled in spiritual direction or counselling.
4. **Using Artwork/clay modelling/writing as a medium for healing:**
- a) Read one of the Gospel stories of healing:
- |      |           |      |           |      |          |
|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|----------|
| Luke | 4:40-56;  | Luke | 6: 6-11;  | Luke | 7:36-50; |
| Luke | 17:11-19; | Mark | 10:46-51; | John | 5: 1-15. |
- b) Reflect on some area in your life that needs healing — it may be a memory, an anger, a resentment, a jealousy, a particular situation, a lost hope, a sense of grief.....
- c) When you've spent time thinking of the area — use the medium of art/clay/writing to reflect your feelings, about this area — whatever you create or write will be for you alone — you will not be expected to explain it unless you choose to do so.
- d) After a suitable length of time to 'create' — gather the creations together (if people have written, be sensitive as to whether they want this displayed or not) in a suitable environment for a time of prayer.
- e) Either - Celebrate a suitable sacrament of reconciliation liturgy.  
or - Conclude with a prayer time together, taking time to ask forgiveness and to pray for each other.
5. **Plan and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.** This may be a suitable conclusion to any of the Prayers for Healing ideas.
6. **Plan and celebrate an 'Anointing of the Sick' Liturgy** — this may include members of the class seeking anointing or you may arrange it with a local Parish.





## FORM 7

**C. SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS**

Gill, Jean

**Pray as You Can**

Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, 1989.

A book for those who already pray and want to develop and grow in different forms of prayer, includes the use of dreams and imagination in prayer. Deals with distractions and feelings in prayer, praying with scripture, creativity, art and writing in prayer, the need for discernment and direction in prayer. A book for teachers and seniors who are serious about developing a prayer life.

Linn, D &amp; M

**Healing Life's Hurts**

The Missionary Society of St Paul the Apostle, New York, 1978.

Develops the theme of healing and suggests practical prayer ideas for healing at some depth.

Treston, K

**Paths and Stones, Spirituality for Teachers**

Creation Enterprises, Australia, 1988.

Although a book basically written for teachers, it covers many aspects of spirituality that could be adopted for Form 7.

**Rite of Penance****Pastoral Care of the Sick**