

All of us pray in different ways at different stages in our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow in our relationship with God.

There is an artist, a poet, a musician in all of us, recognised or not! This is an area where many of us need time to be encouraged to break away from the myths of the past and the inner voice saying 'I can't draw, I can't write, I can't sing.' By freely entering into the experience of the 'creator' within ourselves through the different creative mediums – knowing that we are not going to be judged, don't have to perform, or to produce a result – can be the most liberating experience, leading into a deeper relationship with God, who continues to create through each of his creatures.

This way of praying is often a challenge, letting go of some of the more classical and formal ways of praying, and being prepared to enter into an 'experience' of the creator within ourselves. Trusting and exploring freely with the different creative mediums of paint, clay, free writing and poetry can bring us into a deeper place of prayer, and knowledge of the Creator God.

Book suggestions

Bird, Ann (2003) *Colour me Spiritual*, Foundery Press.

Julian Merryweather, Sheila (2003) *Colourful Prayer: A New Way to Pray When Words are Inadequate*, Kevin Mayhew

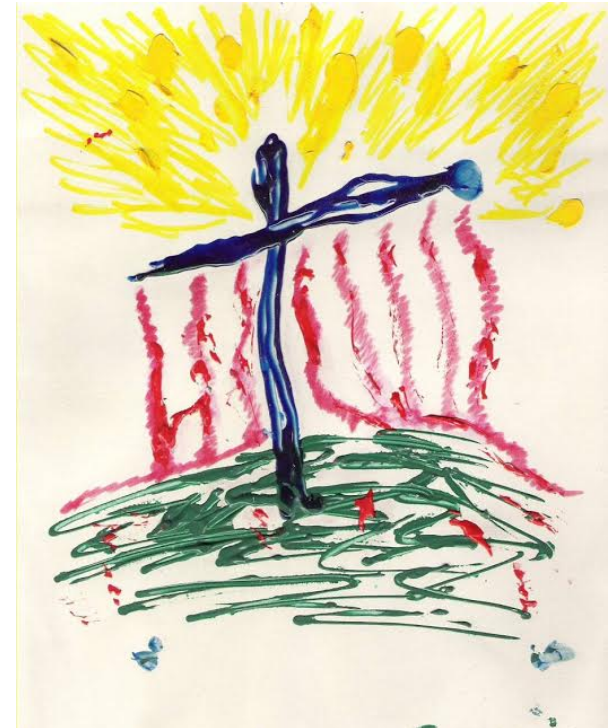
Pavitt, Pamela (2006) *Ideas into Images*, Granary Press.

Reynolds, Peter (2004) *The Dot*, Walker Books.

Front cover image: Graham and Katy Hill

Multi-sensory prayer

Prayer using your own creativity



Using our heart and hands to draw, colour, craft or shape is another way in which we can explore the quiet depths of ourselves and bring our feelings before God. We can reveal more of ourselves...to ourselves.

Ignore the critical voice saying you're no good at this sort of thing. Relax into the activity, take time to be still and ask God to guide your heart and hands as you create. Allow your creativity to express what you may have found hard to express in words. Use the pencils, colouring pens, mandalas, playdough or magazines to draw, colour in, cut, paste or sculpt whatever comes to mind.

Don't worry about the end result: it is the *process* that matters.

A few ideas to get you started

Write your name – or your signature – and look at it from all angles, colouring it and adding symbols if you like. You might want to use the hand you don't normally write with, to make it even more interesting. Or let the pencil or colouring pens wander freely, without any idea in mind what the picture might turn into.

Try a self-portrait – Look in the mirror, and study your reflection. What do you really see? Does it tell you something about yourself, about your life? You could even try and draw your face from memory.

Choose a passage from the Bible to reflect on, and draw or sculpt whatever comes to mind.

Look through the magazines and cut out pictures that speak to you. Use the pictures, glue and paper to make a collage.

When you have finished creating your picture, collage or sculpture, look at it carefully ... What can you see? What is it saying to you? How does it make you feel? You may find there are things you want to say to God, or sense that God is in some way speaking to you.

Feeling stuck? Just remember you are not being judged on the quality or the content of your artwork. There is no need to rush, no need to feel any concern about the end result. Just enjoy, if anything, the movement and quiet sound of pencil or crayon tracing over paper, the feel of the playdough, the process of *creating* something, regardless of the end result.

When you're ready, gently bring yourself back into the room and **end your prayer** by saying thank you, or using words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

Please feel free to take your artwork home with you or leave it here to share with others.

