

God * Be you * Stand Out * In God * Be you * Stand Out * In God * Be you * Stand Out * In God * Be you * Stand Out *

Prayer explosions Prayer explosions Prayer explosions



Prayer explosions

For teenagers & young people

Thank you for opening this document! By doing this you are expressing that prayer is important! We have created four guides to help you in your prayer time during the International Day of Children and Youth. You don't have to do these all at once. Take your time and let the Holy Spirit guide you as you open your Bible and start to pray.

Each session takes about 15 minutes and includes a Scripture reading, a short devotion and a prayer guide.

The topics are as follows:

1. In God
2. Be you
4. Stand out
7. Make your mark

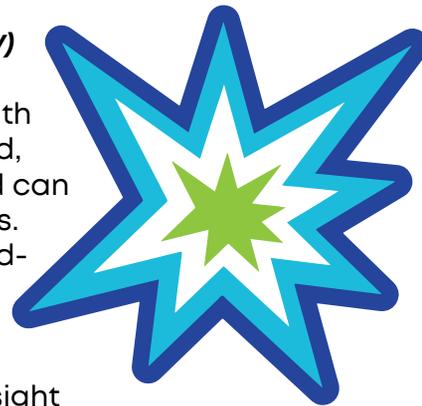
These materials have been created for teenagers and young people. However, even if you are a bit older, please feel free to use these resources

Prayer Explosion 1 | In God

Direct my footsteps according to your word' (Psalm 119:133 NIV)

The theme of the International Day for Children and Youth 2023 is 'Footprints'. We look at the marks we leave behind, the influence God has in our lives and the influence God can have through our life or the lives of the people around us. We start these moments of prayer by reflecting and meditating on Psalm 119:133.

Let's take some time and reflect on different translations of this Bible verse. Each version gives us deeper insight into and appreciation for King David's original text. As we look at the different translations, I invite you to surrender to the Holy Spirit and give him the space to shine his light into your heart. Feel free to pause and make room for whatever the Spirit reveals to you.



Psalm 119:133a

King James Version	'Order my steps in thy word'
New King James Version	'Direct my steps by your word'
New American Standard Bible 2020	'Establish my footsteps in your word'
New International Version	'Direct my footsteps in the way of your word'
Amplified Bible	'Establish my footsteps in the way of your word'



The words 'order', 'direct' and 'establish' pop up again and again in different translations. Order, direct and establish. When you order a meal at a restaurant, you have a particular goal in mind. You may be looking for something light or something filling. Your decision could be based on how the meal looks, tastes, smells or how it will make you feel. Whatever it is, you order what your heart desires. God has a particular desire for his creation, and he orders our steps to fulfil his divine plan.

He directs and establishes our steps according to his will and purpose. The apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 12 that we are all part of the body of Christ with very specific roles to play. No one part of this body is more important than the other. When one part is not well, the whole body suffers. God established, ordered and directed us all at the point of our creation with particular functions in mind and we all work together for his glory.

You're probably wondering what God ordered for your life. Which part of Christ's body are you? There are many ways of establishing who God says you are. Let's try the following exercise and see what comes up. Remember to make room for the Holy Spirit as he guides you.

Who am I?

Think of five people in your life. They could be family, friends, colleagues or school-mates. What would they say if you asked them to describe you in three words? Take some time and note down what they would say.

Name/ Picture	What would they say?



What do you think about what they've just said? Did they use any similar words to describe you? How does this make you feel?

If you look deeper into the words they used to describe you, a common theme will emerge. Words such as carer, strategist, creative, peacemaker etc. There's a divine reason why these themes exist. This is how we are perceived by the people around us and it reveals the role we play in the Body of Christ, as the Lord ordered. Just as an eye can't help but see and a nose can't help but smell, it is in our nature to live our lives according to our role in the body of Christ. Let's pause here and take this to God.

Pray

God, as I meditate on what you've ordered for and through my life, I'm discovering _____ about myself. Open my ears to hear how you want me to be in your world, as you have ordered. I tune into you now, Lord. Amen.

Open your heart, mind and spirit and receive wisdom as the Holy Spirit speaks to you. What is he saying? Who are you?

Bible
verse 1

'For we are God's handwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do'

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

Just as the sun rises not to warm itself and the river flows not to quench itself, God created us uniquely for a particular reason. He created us just as we are and directs us to where he desires us to live out his purpose. Where he establishes us, there is grace, provision and peace. Jesus reminds us that:

Bible
verse 2

'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing'

John 15:5 (NIV)

Our talents, time, resources, relationships, education, experience and positions are fuel for our lives. Sometimes these things can cause us to define ourselves outside of what God ordered. Let us choose today to abide in Christ and be who and what he says we are. Only then can we achieve the eternal goals we were created for.

I invite you to spend the next few minutes tuning into God and ask him to direct your footsteps as you continue to be you, in him.

Pray

Lord, thank you for seeking me out when I fall off the true vine. Help me abide in you as I endeavour to be who you made me to be. May I remain in you and you in me so I can bear much fruit. Thank you, Lord. Amen.



Prayer Explosion 2 | Be you

**'Direct my footprints according to your word'
(Psalm 119: 133 NIV)**

Have you ever had thoughts about yourself like these?

- 'I am not smart enough.'
- 'I am not beautiful enough.'
- 'I am not strong enough.'



There is a lot of competition in this world.

There is healthy competition, like the fun television programme where people compete for a silly prize or a donation for a charity, or when you play sports or games with your friends. But there is also unhealthy competition; when you feel the pressure to excel in everything, at work, at school etc.

When I check Facebook or Instagram, I see people who have better haircuts, achieve more and have visited more exotic places than I. Seeing those posts, it is very tempting to compare myself with them: 'I wish I was in that place!'

Competition and comparison can lead to anxiety and stress. We tend to compete and compare ourselves with others who are faster, smarter or stronger than us. End result: we feel bad about ourselves and think: 'I am not enough.'

Today we celebrate you! There is only one of you, even if you are a twin. We are all 'wonderfully made', special and unique. Some people have blue eyes, some have brown eyes, some people can do this, some people can do that, some people are right-handed, some people are left-handed. And you know what? You are God's masterpiece!

'For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago' (Ephesians 2:10 NLT).

You are a masterpiece and God prepared good things for us to do. So, God has a plan for you! Paul tries to illustrate what it means when you are made new in Christ Jesus:

'So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it' (Colossians 3:12-14 MSG).

It is like God changed your wardrobe. From now on, you wear socks of compassion, shirts of kindness, trousers of humility, a belt of strength and a jacket of discipline. But most importantly: your basic (underwear!) is love, all the time! The same love that brought Jesus into this world, healed people and conquered death is now flowing through your veins as a child of God. Embrace this identity and you will become the best version of yourself!



'Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives. That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original' (Galatians 5:25-26 MSG).

Do not try to be someone else; be you! This does not mean that you cannot improve or grow. Growth is part of God's plan, and we can certainly learn from others and imitate excellent actions and attitudes. But be careful in comparing yourself to others. Be content with who you are. Each one of us is made perfect in his image for his purpose. By being who God intended us to be, we can make our mark!

Prayer thought

'I am what I am by the grace of God. I will be what God made me and fulfil his plan for me.'

Prayer Explosion 3 | Stand out

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will' (Romans 12:2 NIV).

One of the greatest compliments you can receive is to be told that you are different. This might seem a contradiction to the moments when you want to belong to a certain group of people and try to be exactly the same. Or when you want to be as smart, cool, intelligent, skilled and talented as others. Paul reminds us that as a child of God, we can rely on God's spirit to transform us from the inside out by renewing your thoughts. As a result, we will be able to discern what God's will is and what God finds good, pleasing and perfect.

Paul explains what this means:

'Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down. Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody' (Romans 12:13-16 MSG).

Do you see what makes you different? It is your thinking! It is not all about you, but others! God's spirit will grow a love in you that goes beyond your understanding. It will enable you to love yourself and love and serve others in a special way. That is how you stand out!

You also stand out because God created you to be unique. There is no other person in this world who is the same as you. You are one of a kind! Your uniqueness comes from God. Remember what Paul wrote about this in his letter to the Galatians:

'That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original' (Galatians 5:25-26 MSG).



Why is it important for you to stand out?

We want to challenge you to show your uniqueness. Don't be an imitation of someone else. Don't be a moody, selfish, arrogant person. Be the one that stands out because of your compassion and kindness!

By standing out, you amplify your uniqueness and you bring glory to God. You point others to Jesus. You point them to a life of hope, joy and deliverance from sins. Or to paraphrase the words of the musical duo Mary Mary, take the shackles off your feet so you can dance. Be the dancer that encourages others to join the dance. That's how God wants you to be you.

How can you stand out?

We can influence those around us in a positive way, not by being the centre of attention, but through consistent 'day-to-day fruit of the Spirit action'. By loving those around us, being joyful in whatever circumstances, and bringing peace. We are a beacon to those in darkness around us. We stand out. You'll also stand out from the crowd by consistently choosing to do ordinary things in an extraordinary and supernatural way with great excitement. Excitement and enthusiasm are contagious. People are drawn to you when you are excited about life.

How do you keep standing out?

Sometimes being part of a group means conforming with its values. And sometimes this means that your uniqueness is at stake. So, base your choices on the Word of God and the leading of his Spirit. Connect to your spiritual family and friends who you trust and who are reflecting God's goodness in their lives. Then for sure you will be you, in God, and stand out!

Prayer action

You will need:

- Paper
- Pen
- Bright coloured paint
- Paint brush
- Match sticks

Write down something that has hindered you from being the best version of yourself and led you to conform. It could be something you are carrying in your heart and spirit, a past event that changed the way you view life, or an experience that completely changed you and made your journey with God unbearable and difficult. Light it up (safely and supervised if you are not 18 yet) and pray that God carries it (Psalm 55:22).

Paint the matchstick with a colour that attracts you the most and keep it as a reminder that you have cast all your burdens to the Lord so that you may be able to continue your journey light and burden-free. Start again, this time with God as your navigation and aim to stand out in all that you do. Let the colour you choose remind you to stand out and remember:

'You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill' (Matthew 5:14, MSG).



Challenge

You do not need to be a well-known person or hold a big position to stand out. Make your mark by having an impact on those around you. Let God continue to shape your character, as all your actions flow from it. Stay in God, be you and stand out.

Prayer Explosion 4 | Make your mark

'You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other' (John 15:16-17 NIV).

Congratulations! You have made it this far on your journey. All of our journeys are different, so I cannot begin to understand what yours is like. Is it easy? Is it full of hardships? Today we will look at our journey and the way we can bear fruit. Or in other words: how we can make our mark.



When we look at the life of Jesus, we see that it was all about serving others. In three years he walked through Galilee and Judea, teaching disciples and crowds, performing miracles and rebuking church leaders. He certainly made his mark!

If you go to Israel today, you see people who retrace his steps. They are trying to imagine even more tangibly what it meant to follow Jesus in real life. And Jesus is not the only one who is followed and looked at so closely. The life of Nelson Mandela is also looked at quite closely. People visit the presidential palace or Robben Island where he was held in prison. And there are more. Just think about Anne Frank, President Lincoln or William and Catherine Booth. Did you know volunteers of The Salvation Army take people to the East End of London on a tour, retracing the steps of our founders and reliving the early days of The Salvation Army?

Imagine leaving such a strong mark in the world.

The word footprint can be used in many ways. In forensics a footprint can be evidence in a crime scene. In archaeology, footprints have been found preserved in fossils that document prehistoric life. In the digital world, we have a digital footprint that we usually unintentionally leave behind that could open us up to identity threats. And then there is our ecological or carbon footprint that helps us understand our impact on the environment and climate change.

We all leave a trail of footprints behind us wherever we go based on the way we live our lives. Just think about it for a minute. What trail do you leave behind? Is it a path that others should follow, retracing your footsteps? Or maybe it's a path with a 'danger' sign next to it because you've done things that were harmful to yourself or others. Whatever your footsteps were, every new footprint you leave behind can point others towards Jesus. Do you choose your footsteps on the basis of love?

It is this love that made Jesus lay down his life for others (John 15:9-10; 12-13). And are you willing to retrace his loving steps? It is this extravagant love that opens up our hearts to love not just the people that are easy to love, but everyone, your worst enemies included.



Don't worry! When you allow Jesus to lead you and when you allow him to be your source of inspiration, the journey ahead will have real impact. It will not always be easy, but it's going to be worth it. And you're not travelling alone!

Challenge

Let's think about our own footprints for a moment. If you use social media, do your comments, messages and pictures show the way to Jesus? What does your social media footprint look like? And in the 'real world'? What do you say to people around you? How do your actions reflect Jesus?

We have the chance to motivate, inspire and influence others to live Godly lives. We have the chance to change this world and advance the Kingdom of God.

Think about this:

- What has God laid in your heart?
- Where do you feel led to make your mark?

Walk in the footsteps set out in God's Word. Let the Spirit of God inspire and guide you.

Prayer thought

God, may you direct my steps. May I walk in a way that pleases you. Guard my heart to hear from you. Inspire my actions to make a mark that brings people to your Kingdom.

