

Year of Jubilee activities

Mini pilgrimage

Over the centuries, one of the ways followers of Jesus have nurtured their faith is by going on pilgrimage. A pilgrimage is a physical journey to a sacred place, with stops along the way for prayer, friendship, and taking in the beauty Creation. Often, pilgrims carry the prayers of others with them.

In this Jubilee year, many pilgrims will make their way to Rome to visit one of the Basilica's, such as St Peter's Basilica, to walk through the Holy Doors and to see many of the sacred places there. Along the way, pilgrims often carry a passport and collect stamps from the places they stop along their pilgrimage.

Of course, not everyone can travel to Rome, especially kids! So, why not create a 'mini-pilgrimage' in your school or church grounds?

PLANNING YOUR MINI PILGRIMAGE

- Consider your school or church grounds, what are some of the special/sacred features? This could include: Statues, artwork, outdoor features such as labyrinths, prayer/yarning circles or grotto's, places of natural beauty such a garden or playspace, and sacred places in your church such as the prayer candles but especially the tabernacle.
- Taking into consideration your context and the age/capacity of the children, choose at least 5 special/sacred features as designated 'stops' along your mini pilgrimage. Order the stops, in particular, deciding which will be the final stop at the culmination of your mini pilgrimage.

ON THE DAY

YOU WILL NEED:

- a large paper for recording people and needs to pray for
- pens
- hats, water etc depending on your context
- pilgrimage stop signs printed or your own alternative (see the A4 pages below)

Note - remember to put the pilgrimage stop signs in the designated places prior to your pilgrimage.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Talk to the children about pilgrimage in general to give context for the activity.
- Explain the mini pilgrimage you are about to make, discuss the stops you will make along the way.
- Discuss and brainstorm the many people and needs that you could pray for along your pilgrimage.
- Write these down on a large poster so that you can carry them with you.
- Gather anything else you need (e.g. water, hats).
- Just before you start your mini pilgrimage, stop to say a prayer together. For example:

Sign of the Cross.

Dear God, Thank you that you love us very much.

As we go on our pilgrimage, please be with us and teach us how to love you and follow you more each day.

Please listen as we pray for all of the people and needs we have written down together.

We ask this prayer in Jesus name.

Amen

- Then set out on your mini pilgrimage to find your first stop.
- When you get to the stop, take the page with all your prayer intentions and place it in a central spot. Invite the children to choose one of the things written down on the poster and together have a moment of silence to pray for that intentions.
- To close your moment of silent prayer, simply make the Sign of the Cross, collect your prayer poster and move to the next stop on your pilgrimage.
- At the next stop, once again take the page with all your prayer intentions and place it in a central spot, invite the children to quietly choose one intention from the prayer poster and have a moment of silence, finishing with the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue this way throughout all the stops you have chosen for your mini pilgrimage.

- At your final stop, finish your mini pilgrimage with a prayer such as this:
Dear God,
Thank you for being with us on our pilgrimage today and for listening to our prayers.
As we go from this place help us to stay close to you.
Help us to know your love and to share your love and hope with everyone we meet.
We ask this prayer in Jesus name.
Amen

OPTIONAL EXTRA

If you wish, give each child their own mini pilgrimage passport, with a stamp to collect at every stop along the way.

YOU WILL NEED:

- a copy of the passport for each child
- pens
- a stamp for each stop along your pilgrimage

INSTRUCTIONS:

- edit the mini pilgrimage passport template using the text type function to include the name of the stops you have chosen (there is enough space on the template for six stops).
- Print the mini pilgrimage passport on card, printing double-sided.
- Cut the mini pilgrimage passports along the solid line.
- Fold each mini pilgrimage passport concertina style with the title page at the front.
- Have the children write their names on the front.
- Provide a stamp at each stop to go on the corresponding page in your passports.



