

Prayer

Year B, Pentecost 4

By Beth Barnett

This is a prayer engagement, focusing on the theme of “people missing from our community”, using 1 Samuel 16.
Use this resource during Prayer, or Confession times.

You will need:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 body shapes, roughly 30cm tall, cut or torn from package carton cardboard Write one line from the prayer on each person and number them 1-8. Hide these figures around your gathering space• Blue yarn, cut into one metre lengths• Powerpoint with the prayer (included in the Visions and Voices Resources Zip)• Art image by Chris Booth “Anointing who” (included in the Visions and Voices Resources Zip)
Time required:	

Introduction

We heard in our Old Testament reading today how, as the prophet Samuel came to the town of Bethlehem to choose the new king, all of Jesse’s sons were there, except the youngest - he was missing, left out, forgotten. He was missing from the gathering that celebrated God’s goodness, from the ritual showing that God loves and accepts his people, from the feasting as Samuel sacrificed a calf and barbecued it up. Missing from the important decision making for God’s people.

Today we bring our prayers thinking of those who are missing, those excluded and left out or forgotten. We will remember them in our prayers, knowing they are not forgotten by God.

To prepare for this, around our gathering space today are 8 cardboard people who have gone ‘missing’.



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If you would like to, now is the time to see if you can find them. On each missing person is part of our prayer - there are numbers to help us order the prayers. If you find a missing person you can decide if you would like to read the part of the prayer on it in our prayers, or ask someone else to read. Choose that person now.



We will pray together with words, but we will also pray together in symbol. We have been using strands of blue wool as a symbol of the voice of the Lord through these weeks - as we've seen the blue swirls in the art images with our readings.

As we pray today you are invited to take some blue wool and wrap it around the cardboard 'missing people' to remind us all that God speaks, not to the people we notice or who seem important or seen, but God speaks and calls those who are missing and left out. At the end, we'll bring all our missing people wound in blue wool to the front.

Let's pray together.
I invite you to join in the line 'we pray for those who are missing' in blue.

Our Finders will read the sections on their missing people in italics

Leader: Loving God

All: we pray for those who are missing

Finder 1: We pray for those who are missing out on basic living needs

Leader: food and clean water, safe shelter and steady trustworthy community

All: we pray for those who are missing

Finder 2: We pray for those who have been forgotten by our leaders

Leader: left to struggle alone

All: we pray for those who are missing

Finder 3: We pray for those who are missing from our workforce

Leader: those denied work by our tardy border policies
those too unwell to work and dependent on others
those whose life work and skills are no longer called upon,
as the world changes and industries shift.

All: We pray for those who are missing

Finder 4: We pray for those who are missing from our faith communities

Leader: those absent from celebrations of your great love and life to the full
who have been hurt by churches
or excluded from participating
or simply not invited.

All: We pray for those who are missing

Finder 5: We pray for those who are missing when we make decisions

All: We pray for those who are missing

Finder 6: We pray for those who are missing loved ones

Leader: Those who have died or moved away or held in hospital or become estranged. We pray for the day when you will reconcile us all and no one will be missing.

All: We pray for those who are missing

Finder 7: We pray for those who are missing from our history telling

Leader: Those whose stories have not been honoured.

All: We pray for those who are missing

Finder 8: We pray for all those who are missing from our life together

Leader: Those left aside because of gender or age or occupation or faith or capacity or education or ethnicity.

Thankyou for the countless stories of scripture that show us your love for those who are missing, and your call to include and raise up those who are small and forgotten.
Amen.