

## How to Lead a *Praying in Color*<sup>TM</sup> Workshop

Because it is active and visual, the *Praying in Color* practice adapts well to a workshop format. The workshop can be geared to both specific age groups or mixed age groups. The time frame can vary from 45 minutes to an all-day workshop. The flexible design and universal appeal make it an ideal focus for a church workshop or a small group retreat. *Anyone* can lead a *Praying in Color* workshop! All you need is the book, some experience with praying in color, and lots of enthusiasm!

Once you've decided to offer a *Praying in Color* workshop, you'll need to decide:

- Who is this workshop for – adults, teenagers?
- Where will it be held? At church, a home?
- How long will the workshop be?
- Will you supply paper and colored pencils or markers, or will people bring their own?
- Will you provide books as part of the workshop fee, or will you sell the books there?

When you've made these decisions, you're ready to plan your *Praying in Color* workshop. Here is a suggested timeline:

1-2 months beforehand:

- Make arrangements for a space. Ideally, you will have a room with tables. If you don't have tables, you can use clipboards or sketch pads. You will also need an easel, an overhead projector, or a whiteboard.
- Start publicizing the workshop – from the pulpit, during Sunday morning announcements, through your church newsletter, and so on. You could also distribute a flyer, put up a poster, and place a display ad in the local newspaper.

One week beforehand:

- Decide how you're going to open the workshop. You might say a prayer, read a Scripture verse, or begin with a song (a chant or canon works well). The more participatory the better.
- Gather the materials you will need for the workshop. If you're providing supplies, we suggest the following:
  - Fine black roller ball pens
  - Colored pencils or markers
  - White sketch paper
  - Dry-erase markers (if you are using a whiteboard)
  - A timer
  - Clipboards (if there are no tables)

The day of your workshop – order of events:

- Arrival
  - When participants arrive, allow them to mill around. Greet people and make conversation.

- Introduce Yourself
  - When the workshop begins, introduce yourself. Even if someone else introduces you, restate your name. “I’m Sybil MacBeth and I’m excited (grateful, happy, enthusiastic—whatever word you choose to use) to be here today.”
- Opening
  - Begin with the prayer, Bible reading, or a song.
  - Include an ice breaker, if you want. This could be something physical like stretching or gentle movement. You also could do a duet or trio exercise to get to know each other.
  - Ask everyone to brainstorm all of the names they use for God in their prayer time. Write these down on your whiteboard or easel.
- Introduce Praying in Color
  - Outline what *Praying in Color* is and what you will be doing during the workshop. If it seems appropriate or helpful, read the part of the back cover of the book aloud that describes the reasons for *Praying in Color*. Or, describe your experience. If the practice is new to the group, following Chapter 3 of the book and introducing *Praying in Color* as an intercessory prayer form is the easiest and most basic way to start.
- Begin to Pray in Color
  - Using “The Steps” of Chapter 3 in the book, ask everyone to draw a shape on their paper, large enough to put a name inside. For the first shape you might suggest that they write God, Jesus, Father, Holy Spirit, or whatever name they use when they pray. Then ask them to draw more around the shape keeping their God name as the center of their attention. Give them suggestions about how they can adorn their shape—squiggles, lines, dots, squares, petals. It might help to put a time limit on the drawing (3 minutes is suggested).
  - When the 3 minutes are up, you can model how the rest of the time will go. “I’d like to pray for John; he has lung cancer and no insurance, so he’s pretty scared.” You don’t have to have a long explanation, but a little bit can make it more personal. Ask the whole group to pray for John by creating a new shape and drawing. Remind them that this process is not about having the right words but about spending time offering the person into God’s care. The drawing, the movement, and the silence are the prayer.
  - Ask if there are any questions. Take a few minutes to answer these questions or concerns from the group.
  - Ask for Intercessions from the group. “Does anyone else have someone they would like us to pray for?”
- Continuing the Process
  - Continue this process with about 7 or 8 names. Then suggest that each person spend another 5-10 minutes finishing their drawings.
- Closing

- Ask people if they would like to share anything they observed from the process. Some people might like to share their drawings. Ask if there are any further questions.
- End with a song, a verbal prayer, a movement prayer, or a blessing to close your time together.

**Further Suggestions:**

The previous section describes the format for about an hour-long workshop. If you are doing an hour and a half or two hours, consider sharing one of the *Praying in Color* Scripture exercises in Chapter 10.

Some people in the workshop might like to try the prayer practice for a month and reconvene to compare notes and share their experience. If the workshop is at a church, you might create a parish prayer board for prayer requests. Place a basket of colored pencils or markers near the board. Instead of just writing a person's name, invite people to make a prayer drawing for a person they want on the prayer list. Even people who did not attend the workshop will catch on to the idea.

For more information about *Praying in Color*, or to order additional copies, visit [www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com) or call 1-800-451-5006.