

Written prayers

for young people facing exam pressure

On 26 May 2016 we had a special time of prayer lifting up young people facing exams and their surrounding pressure, inspired by the time of year and [this deeply concerning headline in our news](#). The following prayers were written out of that time, together with a reflection on our blog which provides helpful further insights to fuel your prayers. (<http://journey.thesanctuarycentre.org/2016/05/31/lions-do-not-belong-in-cages/>)

(You may also be interested in this creative prayer resource on the same topic, published after a prayer time on the same topic in 2015 -

http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/resources/creative_ideas_for_praying_for_young_people_at_exam_time.pdf)

Psalm 139 (sort of)

Lord you know me,
everything I am and think.
You know when I sit down to revise
and when I get up out of the chair
because I can't take in anymore
and I need a break.
You know what I'm thinking,
all the ways I try to cope,
the words on the end of my tongue,
the ones I bite back and the ones I don't.
When I feel on top of the world you are there,
when the lows hit hard you are there too.
Even when I walk into an exam room you are there,
you are the hand I can hold on fast to
even though I like to think I don't need one.

On the days I want the dark to close around me
and wish away the light, you're still there
because my darkness isn't darkness to You.
When I wake anxious in the middle of the night
you can choose to make the night shine like day.
The light and dark are the same to you,
knowing that helps me feel calm.

You created my innermost being,
you put me together in my mother's body.
And even though I doubt it
after a day of scrolling through picture perfect faces,

I am fearfully and wonderfully made
because I'm made by you and that's enough
to give me worth. Please help me to believe it.

Every day of my life is precious to you.
You cared enough to think about each one
of them before I was even born
so on the days when tomorrow is too
much to think about, I don't have to.
Thanks, it makes it easier.

Sometimes I wish you would
come and slay this enemy,
the one that calls me worthless
and makes me doubt your name.
I hate it, but you know that already.
I'll leave it in your hands.
Help me see beyond this moment
to the future. Though most of all
right now I'd just like you to lead
me through the next few days
Which way do we go? I'm glad you're here.
Could you just keep holding my hand?

An unlocking prayer

Lord Jesus, how we need you.
You came to set us free
but we keep building cages
around ourselves
and around each other.

We raise the bars so high
– again and again –
demanding the results we want
and grading each other
on our own, faulty, definitions of success.

Lord Jesus, how we need you.
Come and show us what we are doing
when we set standards which lock and enslave
even those we are so desperately seeking
to most protect, nurture and release.

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Lord Jesus, you know how each unique one is made
and the purpose and context in which their gifts will thrive.
Show us how to dismantle the lies we have raised up.
And how to set each one free to reach *your* potential for them
with your glorious, life-giving, character-building truth.