These are sample outlines for the four introductory prayer sessions with mentors as recommended by the CPCF. This outline assumes six people new to the prayer (new participants) and three experienced companions (mentors). Modify this outline to meet your group’s needs. The first session takes about two hours. Subsequent sessions are about 90 minutes each. The durations shown for each activity are estimated minutes. Adding the start times for each activity can help the presenters stay on track. Add the names of the mentors who will be leading each session and activity, together with the names of the participants who will be new to the prayer.

Remind all participants to bring their journals.  Check to see if anyone needs any special accommodations. Bring at least one copy of the prayer form in large print. Bring copies of the handouts for everyone. Bring a Bible each time for the person who will read the scripture passage. Encourage everyone to arrive a few minutes early if possible. See if you can get your pastor or priest to lead the first activity, “Opening.”

Provide a copy of the completed outline to each mentor.

**First Session** (date, time & location)

Mentors: (List the names of the mentors for this session)

Participants: (List the names of the participants for this session)

Handouts: *Bishop Quinn’s quotes*, the *Disclaimer*, *Confidentiality and Sharing*, the standard *Companioned Prayer form for Ordinary Time*, and the *Guidelines for Praying*.   
Hand these out at the end of the session. (Bring large print versions as needed.)

Notes: (Provide any additional notes or instructions for the mentors of this session)

| **Start Time** | **Est. Min.** | **Led by** | **Activity** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 10 |  | 1. **Opening** 2. Welcome 3. Opening prayer (and a blessing if your priest is leading this activity) 4. Introductions (everyone introduces themselves) |
|  | 15 |  | 1. **About the learning experience** 2. Brief overview of what happens when:  * Two sessions experiencing the prayer * Two sessions learning to companion others * Opportunity to continue in weekly prayer meetings * A one- or two-day retreat  1. Important housekeeping items:  * Please silence your cell phones. * Who to contact if you cannot make it to your session, if you need to swap sessions, or if you have questions. * Personal restroom breaks are very convenient when we are separated into small groups. * Briefly discuss the Disclaimer * Any questions? * Discuss privacy, sharing, and confidentiality * Any questions? * Discuss any applicable Safe Environment principles, special needs and accommodations. * Examples include: mobility, hearing, sight, attention deficiency, or other special needs. Let us know privately if you prefer. * Any questions?  1. Primarily learning from your experiences of praying and companioning  * Experiential learning rather than lecture * Discuss journaling as supporting your experiences (and provide journals as needed) * Ask participants to bring their journals to all of the sessions.  1. Read Bishop Quinn’s remarks 2. State the focus of the four sessions, which is to become familiar with the prayer so you can participate in a continuing Companioned Prayer group, where spiritual growth and gifts are truly experienced. 3. But now, in this special time of these four sessions, we have a wonderful opportunity to first experience the prayer with personal guidance, and to freely ask questions. |
|  | 10 |  | 1. **Scripture reading** 2. Read once (not a formal lectio divina): 1st Samuel 3:1-9  * Invite everyone to settle in, and listen, with their eyes closed.  1. Reflections on the reading:  * Invite responses to the reading. * What are they seeking in listening for God? |
|  | 5 | Mentor A  Mentor B  Mentor C | 1. **Mentors’ testimonies**   Share your personal experiences of the prayer (and their significance to you), or what the prayer has meant for you.   1. Mentor A shares 2. Mentor B shares 3. Mentor C shares |
|  | 20 |  | 1. **How to pray** 2. Briefly describe how praying with a companion works: Acknowledge that most of this will not make much sense until after they have experienced the prayer.   ▪ Both people begin with personal preparatory prayers.  ▪ One person reads, the other person has their eyes closed throughout and prays.  ▪ Eight movements, with instructions within each part for both the person reading and the person praying; and time for personal reflection in each movement.  ▪ Includes awareness of how we physically feel.  ▪ What we pray about (*ASKING GOD*); and taking it to the loving heart of Jesus (*GOD’S LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE*).  ▪ Continuing to notice and to see if there is anything more that God may wish you to be aware of, cycling, and ending; including “Yes/No” to “Does this feel right to journey with some more?”   1. Read the “General Guidelines for Praying”   ▪ Read the first 5 bullets (do not read the 6th bullet)   * Any questions?   ▪ Read the last 4 bullets (do not read the 6th bullet)   * Any questions?   *Do not describe each prayer movement in detail. Do not yet share the printed prayer form. Do not discuss sharing of symbols.* |
|  | 45 | Mentor A  Mentor B  Mentor C  All: | 1. **Mentors companion one person at a time**  * Remind people to bring their journals with them when they break into small groups. * Separate into small groups throughout the church nave:   1. Mentor A companions persons 1, and then 2   2. Mentor B companions persons 3, and then 4   3. Mentor C companions persons 5, and then 6   *Reflective discernment: Immediately after each person is companioned (with an ending prayer or blessing), the mentor asks a question or offers a reflection to help them discern the significance of their prayer experience to them.  After their response, invite them to journal.* |
|  | 5 |  | 1. **Group sharing/discussion**   *Try to maintain silence until group sharing begins*  When everyone rejoins the large group:   1. Explain that sharing and questions after our prayer experience are especially helpful during these learning sessions.  * There is no judgement of the value of your experiences. We are not looking for any kind of experiences. The personal or spiritual value of your prayer experiences are discerned solely by you. * When we share, we should share not only what we want to witness to, but also share what doesn’t seem to be happening. For example, if it feels like not much happened, or perhaps we were nervous about it, or how it was different praying with another person, or some other aspect of our prayer experience. * Especially in these learning sessions, when we share in this way, we not only get to understand our own prayer experiences better, we also gain a better understanding of what happens as we pray, and the nuances of how to pray. So in this sense, the sharing is of great value, and we hope that you will share something, even if it is very general in nature.  1. Individual sharing of their prayer experiences  * Ask participants to close their eyes, settle in, and recall what their prayer experience felt like, bringing to mind what came during their prayer and where they were at when their prayer ended. *[pause about 20 seconds]* * Invite participants to open their eyes, and to share or to remain silent. *[Remain silent until someone begins to speak, which can take a minute. Allow plenty of time for sharing (do not rush it).]*  1. Invite any other questions or comments. Respond as appropriate, including any instructional feedback as necessary. Share a relevant personal Companioned Prayer story or experience. (if needed, other mentors may also share a question, principle, or pointer about the prayer.) 2. Refer to or quote a scripture passage appropriate to the group’s shared experience or to the topic being discussed. |
|  | 5 |  | 1. **Closing** 2. Hand out:  * the “Disclaimer” * “Confidentiality and Sharing” * the standard CP prayer form for Ordinary Time * the “Guidelines for Praying”   Ask everyone to read these handouts before the next meeting.   1. Remind everyone of the date and time of the next session, and remind them to bring their prayer form and journals. 2. Closing prayer |

**Second Session** (date, time & location)

Mentors: (List the names of the mentors for this session)

Participants: (List the names of the participants for this session)

Handouts: None; but bring copies of the prayer form for anyone who forgets to bring theirs.

Notes: (Provide any additional notes or instructions for the mentors of this session)

| **Start Time** | **Est. Min.** | **Led by** | **Activity** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 10 |  | 1. **Opening**    1. Welcome    2. Opening prayer    3. Scripture reading, e.g., Matthew 11:28-30  *(read just once; not a formal lectio divina)*  * Invite everyone to settle in, and listen, with their eyes closed. * After the reading, invite responses to the reading. |
|  | 15 |  | 1. **How to pray** 2. Brief Q&A from previous meeting 3. Discuss symbols (hand out the CP form again)   ▪ Read the 6th bullet of the “General Guidelines for Praying”  ▪ For this learning session, encourage sharing of symbols so they can learn that experience.   1. Discuss the *BEING OPEN TO GOD’S SPIRIT* movement   ▪ Review cycling and following any changes  ▪ Respond to “b” with a “yes” or “no”  ▪ Review how to let your companion know when you are finished with this movement.   1. Explain that their prayer subject or symbol will change as they progress through their prayer. 2. Any questions? |
|  | 45 | Mentor A  Mentor B  Mentor C | 1. **Mentors companion one person at a time**  * Remind people to bring their journals with them when they break into small groups. * Separate into small groups throughout the church nave:  1. Mentor A companions persons 1, and then 2 2. Mentor B companions persons 3, and then 4 3. Mentor C companions persons 5, and then 6   *Reflective discernment: Immediately after each person is companioned (with an ending prayer or blessing), the mentor asks a question or offers a reflection to help them discern the significance of their prayer experience to them.  After their response, invite them to journal.* |
|  | 10 |  | 1. **Group sharing/discussion**   *Try to maintain silence until group sharing begins*  When everyone rejoins the large group:   1. Reiterate that sharing and questions after our prayer experience are especially helpful during these learning sessions. 2. Individual sharing of their prayer experiences   ▪ Ask participants to close their eyes, settle in, and recall what their prayer experience felt like, bringing to mind what came during their prayer and where they were at when their prayer ended. *[pause about 20 seconds]*  ▪ Invite participants to open their eyes, and to share or to remain silent. *[Remain silent until someone begins to speak, which can take a minute.]*   1. Did anyone share a symbol of what came? And if so, what was it like to hear it said back to you? 2. Invite any other questions or comments. Respond as appropriate, including any instructional feedback as necessary. Share a relevant personal Companioned Prayer story or experience. (if needed, other mentors may also share a question, principle, or pointer about the prayer.) 3. Refer to or quote a scripture passage appropriate to the group’s shared experience or to the topic being discussed. |
|  | 5 |  | 1. **Closing** 2. *No additional handout*s 3. Remind everyone of the date and time of the next session, and remind them to bring their prayer form and journals. 4. Closing prayer |

**Third Session**  (date, time & location)

Mentors: (List the names of the mentors for this session)

Participants: (List the names of the participants for this session)

Handouts: *Guidelines for the Companion*, to be handed out at the end of the session. (Bring large print versions as needed.)

Notes: (Provide any additional notes or instructions for the mentors of this session)

| **Start Time** | **Est. Min.** | **Led by** | **Activity** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 5 |  | 1. **Opening** 2. Welcome 3. Opening prayer 4. Scripture reading, e.g., John 15:4-5a,9 *(read just once; not a formal lectio divina)*  * Invite everyone to settle in, and listen, with their eyes closed. * After the reading, invite responses to the reading. |
|  | 20 |  | 1. **How to companion** 2. Explain that it’s easy: just read the bold text (everyone should refer to the prayer form – provide a copy to anyone who needs it). Italics text are instructions for you, the companion.   ▪ *OPENING PRAYERS* are extemporaneous (what is provided is only a sample). Always invite the person to say a prayer silently or out loud, and to say “Amen” when they are finished.   1. Read the first 6 bullets of “Guidelines for the Companion”   ▪ Any questions?   1. Read remainder of “Guidelines for the Companion”   ▪ Any questions?  *Do not yet hand out the “Guidelines for the Companion.”* |
|  | 50 | Mentor A  Mentor B  Mentor C  All:  All: | 1. **Participants companion each other, all in the church nave**  * Let participants know that we will now break into pairs and they will take turns companioning each other. But a mentor will be with them to assist the companion as needed. * Let participants know that their mentor will no longer ask about their prayer experience. Sharing of personal experiences will only be encouraged when we return to the large group. But the mentor will ask about companioning. * Remind people to bring their journals and prayer forms with them when they break into small groups. * Separate into small groups throughout the church nave:  1. Mentor A is with persons 1 and 2 (Mentor A observes, and provides support as needed) 2. Mentor B is with persons 3 and 4 (Mentor B observes, and provides support) 3. Mentor C is with persons 5 and 6 (Mentor C observes, and provides support)   *Immediately after each person is companioned, the mentor:*   * *Encourages the companion to say a prayer for the person.* * *Encourages the companion to invite the person to briefly write in their journal.* * *Asks the companion what companioning was like.* * *Asks the person who prayed if they have any suggestions that might help the companion next time.* * *Asks the companion if there was anything that the person who prayed could have done differently that would have helped the companion.* * *Offers the companion any additional suggestions or feedback.*   *No reflective discernment: Do not ask the person who prayed what their prayer experience was like; and do not allow the companion to ask the person what their prayer experience was like. (Reflective discernment occurs only in the first two meetings.) Sharing of prayer experiences will be in the large group.* |
|  | 10 |  | 1. **Group sharing/discussion**   *Try to maintain silence until group sharing begins*  When everyone rejoins the large group:   1. Individual sharing of their prayer experiences   ▪ Ask participants to close their eyes, settle in, and recall what their prayer experience felt like, bringing to mind what came during their prayer and where they were at when their prayer ended. *[pause about 20 seconds]*  ▪ Invite participants to open their eyes, and to share or to remain silent. *[Remain silent until someone begins to speak, which can take a minute. Allow plenty of time for sharing (do not rush it).]*   1. Invite individual sharing of what it was like to companion. 2. Invite any other questions or comments. Respond as appropriate, including any instructional feedback as necessary. Share a relevant personal Companioned Prayer story or experience. (if needed, other mentors may also share a question, principle, or pointer.) 3. Refer to or quote a scripture passage appropriate to the group’s shared experience or to the topic being discussed. |
|  | 5 |  | 1. **Closing** 2. Hand out the “Guidelines for the Companion.” 3. Begin talking about the available Companioned Prayer circles (or forming of new circles). This topic will continue next time. 4. Remind everyone of the date and time of the next session, and remind them to bring their prayer form and journals. 5. Closing prayer |

**Fourth Session** (date, time & location)

Mentors: (List the names of the mentors for this session)

Participants: (List the names of the participants for this session)

Handouts: The *Summary of Companioned Prayer*, to be handed out at the end of the session. (Bring large print versions as needed.)

Notes: (Provide any additional notes or instructions for the mentors of this session)

| **Start Time** | **Est. Min.** | **Led by** | **Activity** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 5 |  | 1. **Opening** 2. Welcome 3. Opening prayer 4. Brief check-in    * Any questions from last time? |
|  | 15 |  | 1. **Introduce Lectio divina** 2. Explain:    * what it is;    * why we do it (often practiced in Companioned Prayer circles);    * how we benefit from having learned in Companioned Prayer to be open, to notice, and to let go into; and,    * how sharing works. 3. Read a scripture passage three times: e.g., a reading from the upcoming Sunday, or Luke 24:32-36  * Invite everyone to settle in, and listen, with their eyes closed. * Read the passage three times with a pause of about 45-60 seconds after each reading. * After the last pause, say a concluding phrase, such as “In the name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”  1. Reflections on the reading:  * Invite responses to the reading. |
|  | 50 | Mentor A  Mentor B  Mentor C  All:  All: | 1. **Participants companion each other**  * Let participants know that we will now break into pairs and they will take turns companioning each other. But a mentor will be with them to assist the companion as needed. * Remind people to bring their journals and prayer forms with them when they break into small groups. * Separate into small groups throughout the church nave:  1. Mentor A is with persons 1 and 2 (Mentor A observes, and provides support as needed) 2. Mentor B is with persons 3 and 4 (Mentor B observes, and provides support as needed) 3. Mentor C is with persons 5 and 6 (Mentor C observes, and provides support as needed)   *Immediately after each person is companioned, the mentor:*   * *Encourages the companion to say a prayer for the person.* * *Encourages the companion to invite the person to briefly write in their journal.* * *Asks the companion what companioning was like.* * *Asks the person who prayed if they have any suggestions that might help the companion next time.* * *Asks the companion if there was anything that the person who prayed could have done differently that would have helped the companion.* * *Offers the companion any additional suggestions or feedback.*   *No reflective discernment: Do not ask the person who prayed what their prayer experience was like; and do not allow the companion to ask the person what their prayer experience was like. (Reflective discernment occurs only in the first two meetings.) Sharing of prayer experiences will be in the large group.* |
|  | 10 |  | 1. **Group sharing/discussion**   *Try to maintain silence until group sharing begins*  When everyone rejoins the large group:   1. Individual sharing of their prayer experiences   ▪ Ask participants to close their eyes, settle in, and recall what their prayer experience felt like, bringing to mind what came during their prayer and where they were at when their prayer ended. *[pause about 20 seconds]*  ▪ Invite participants to open their eyes, and to share or to remain silent. *[Remain silent until someone begins to speak, which can take a minute. Allow plenty of time for sharing (do not rush it).]*   1. Invite individual sharing of what it was like to companion 2. Invite any other questions or comments. Respond as appropriate, including any instructional feedback as necessary. Share a relevant personal Companioned Prayer story or experience. (if needed, other mentors may also share a question, principle, or pointer.) 3. Refer to or quote a scripture passage appropriate to the group’s shared experience or to the topic being discussed. |
|  | 10 |  | 1. **Encourage Continuing** 2. Read Bishop Quinn’s quotes 3. Consider not only your own response to the prayer, but also those of everyone else who has shared during all these sessions. 4. Discuss follow-on weekly prayer meetings:  * Usually includes lectio divina. * It is within this ongoing prayer group experience that the Companioned Prayer experience deepens.   + Share your own personal story or experience with this. * Invite and encourage their continuing personal participation, confirming meeting times, etc.  1. Discuss attending a Companioned Prayer retreat. 2. Invite them to consider how they may use the prayer in ministry after a little more experience with the prayer. 3. Discuss inviting other parishioners to a Companioned Prayer ministry presentation or series (hand out any flyers.) |
|  | 10 |  | 1. **Closing** 2. Invite closing comments or reflections from all participants and mentors. Also offer to talk with them privately if they prefer. 3. Hand out the “Summary of Companioned Prayer.” 4. Thank them for sharing, and thank them for participating and contributing in these sessions in faith. 5. Confirm their attendance at the next ongoing (or new) prayer circle. 6. Closing prayer |