

Candle Prayer (For Friends of All Ages)

Adapted by Adria Gulizia (NYYM) from *Faithful Families* by Traci Smith

Since the beginning of the Religious Society of Friends, we have found “the Light” to be a helpful way of talking about the Divine. Today, we often speak about “the Light within” and “holding each other in the Light,” but not all Friends know that the image of the Light comes from the Bible, especially the Gospel of John. From the Gospel of John, early Friends learned two important things.

They learned first that Christ is the true Light, who shines in the heart of every single person in the world - whether or not they are Christians (John 1:9). This made Quakers more open to being respectful of other spiritual paths and religions, although that respect has never been perfect. Today, not all Friends believe that the Light is Christ, but we still believe that God may speak to anyone, of any religious faith - or of no religious faith at all.

Early Friends also learned from the book of John that even when the Light is surrounded by darkness, the darkness cannot overpower it (John 1:5). The Light - the Spirit - the Divine - the Inward Christ - fills us up the way that a candle fills up a dark room. Even when we don’t know what to do or how to speak to God about what we are feeling, the Light is shining within us. We are never alone.

Materials: Candle and matches, or battery-operated candles (helpful for accommodating dorm or hotel living, pets, little children, certain disabilities)

Time Investment: 30 seconds - 2 minutes

How To

1. Parent and child (or the whole family) gather in a dim or dark room and light a candle.
2. Say, *“This candle burning is our prayer. Just as the light fills up the dark room, we know that our prayers are lifted up to God. Let’s sit here for a minute and watch the candle and know that our prayers are known by God, even if we don’t know what we want to say or how to say it.”*
3. At the end of a minute (or longer!), say, *“Now we are going to end our candle prayer. I will blow out the candle and we will all say, ‘Amen.’ We will know that God heard our prayer.”*

Notes and Suggestions

- Feel free to adapt the language to make this practice resonant for your family. Maybe “worship” makes more sense than “prayer,” or “Holy One” feels better than “God.” Experiment with what brings you and your family closer to the Source and closer to each other.
- Instead of blowing the candle out, you can let it burn in a visible part of the house for many hours. Remind the family that it is a visible sign of God’s presence.
- This practice can be used for a specific need. Say, *“Let’s light a candle and know that God hears our prayer. Tonight we light a candle for [name].”*