

Pray for School Pupils and Teachers in South Africa

This guide is to help you pray for pupils and teachers. You can use it to pray for pupils and teachers around the world, but we would suggest that you make it a bit more local and begin to intercede for the schools around you.

If you can, look up a map of your neighbourhood and search for the schools in your area. You might like to print out the map and circle the schools, writing prayers on the paper as you work through this guide.

The Situation

The South African education system is one of stark contrasts with majority of the population facing crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and relatively poor educational outcomes. This is perpetuating inequality and as a result failing too many of its children, with the poor hardest hit. According to the FW de Klerk Foundation's Annual Human Rights Report Card 2022, 1 423 public schools still only have pit latrines, 80.7% had no access to laboratories, 69.9% had no library and 35% had no sports facilities. In the Eastern Cape, there were still 436 mud schools. These situations feel far too complex and heart breaking to engage with but we encourage you to bring all these to God in prayer. Ask the Spirit to help you and guide you in what to focus on as you work through this guide.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesian 3: 20-21)

Pray for Teachers and Their Leaders

If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:11 NIVUK)

We'll start by praying for teachers. Teachers set the tone of a school, and their ability to thrive in their positions sets up the pupils for their own success.

You may want to look up the names of the headteachers at the schools that you are praying for, and spend some time praying for them by name.

As you pray for teachers, here are some areas to focus on:

- **Mental health and wellbeing:** pray that God protects teachers and their mental health –that they will be refreshed and restored, full of energy and joy.
- **Wisdom:** pray that each teacher has the wisdom they need to teach and mentor each student in the school. Pray for God's creativity and good ideas to fill them up.
- **Christian teachers:** pray for the teachers who know Jesus – that they will be encouraged in their jobs and their faith, that they will recognise opportunities to show the love of God to the people around them.
- **Safeguarding and support:** when there are pupils who are struggling and need more support, either at school or at home, pray that teachers would notice, care, and have the tools that they need to bring the right support to the situation.
- **Capacity:** as teachers are needing to teach in difficult circumstances often with more children than they can handle they are also needing to act more in a pastoral and parenting role than ever before. Pray for supernatural capacity to love and guide their pupils well and for the Spirit to fill them and sustain them.
- **Resources:** pray that teachers have the resources they need to do the best possible job.
- **Leadership:** pray for leaders and principals that feel called and who have a heart for education to step up and lead with a servant heart. Ask God to enable them and protect them.

Pray for Pupils

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it. (Proverbs 22:6 NIVUK)

Bring to mind the faces and names of all of the student that you personally know – you may want to write their names on a piece of paper to refer to as you pray for them.

As you pray for pupils, here are some areas to focus on:

- **Peace:** pray that school is a place of peace for all pupils. Pray for good relationships and a culture of kindness – that any bullying or inappropriate behaviour would be exposed and shut down, and that instead, strong friendships would grow. Pray for God's peace to surround and protect every part of the campus.
- **Passion:** pray that each pupil would find a subject or a topic that ignites their imagination and helps them to get excited about learning. Pray against apathy.
- **Mental health:** in an age where we are seeing high levels of anxiety and depression in young people, pray that pupils get the help and support they need to thrive. Pray that God connects each pupil with the people and the tools to build resilience and health.
- **Meeting with God:** pray that pupils have encounters with Jesus – through fellow pupils, through teachers, and through their lessons and activities.
- **Christian pupils:** in a time when being a Christian is almost offensive to some, pray for courage and boldness for these pupils to share their faith and shine their light.
- **Positive role models:** that pupils will have fathers and father figures and general positive role models to look up to and imitate.
- **Wisdom:** In a world where substance abuse and being sexually active is encouraged and normalised, pray for wisdom and discernment in the dangers of these as well as exposure to technologies. Pray too for the wisdom for parents as they navigate these issues with their children.
- **Matric results:** pray for matrics receiving their results. That they would know their worth is not in these numbers. That God is sovereign and in control and so, so trustworthy. Pray for healthy and encouraging opportunities to open up and for them to see Gods hand moving and working.
- **Potential:** pray that pupils can realise their full potential, and that God helps them overcome any of the barriers to development that they may face.

Pray for Access to Safe and Quality Education

Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me. (Mark 9:37 NIVUK)

Not everyone can access education, and for many people, education they do have access to are not safe or equipped to give them the support they need.

Let's pray for each child to have access to safe education with the resources they need to thrive. As you pray, here are some areas to focus on:

- **Gender-based discrimination:** around the world, girls face many challenges to accessing education. In some nations, only 36% of girls complete lower secondary school.¹ A UNESCO report estimates that one in ten girls in Sub-Saharan Africa misses school during their menstrual cycle. By some estimates, this equals as much as twenty percent of a given school year. (You can learn more about the challenges that some girls and women face in our guide to Praying for Gender Based Violence.) Pray for these barriers to be overcome.
- **Pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties:** pray that each pupil, no matter their accessibility needs, has all the support they need to grow. Pray for more resources to go into creating inclusive school environments where everyone can thrive.
- **Violence in school and communities:** there are many communities where it is not physically safe for pupils to go to school. This might be due to wars and conflicts in the area, violence in the school itself, or violent discrimination. Pray for an end to violence against pupils and teachers, and pray that schools would be safe for all.
- **Load shedding:** With over 200 days of rolling blackouts recorded in 2022 and 170 in 2023, many learners were studying for tests and examinations by candlelight. Pray for these circumstances to change and for it to not hinder the education of our children.

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation>

Pray for governments and policies

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
(Matthew 20:25-28 NIVUK)

In most nations, the government determines school funding and sets guidelines about what should and should not be taught to pupils. Let's spend some time praying for the people and the policies that deeply affect teachers and pupils. As you pray, here are some areas to focus on:

- **For good listening:** pray that the policy makers and people in power listen to teachers and experts who have first-hand expertise on how to run schools in the best way. Pray that policy around schools always has the pupils' best interest at heart.
- **For focus:** pray that your government gives education the focus and attention it needs to create change for the better. Pray that any issues that need to be brought to light will be highlighted and addressed.
- **For protection:** pray that the laws and policies around education would work to protect pupils and teachers.
- **For funding:** pray that finances and resources reach the schools in need.
- **Systems:** especially around the placement of Grade 1's and 8's to be improved to aid in anxiety and stress placed on these children and their families.

Pray the Lord's Prayer over teachers and pupils

Let's finish praying for teachers and pupils by praying the Lord's Prayer over the schools in your area:

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,

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your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.'

Matthew 6:9-13

Keep praying

Host a 24-7 Prayer Room centred around the Schools and Education System to rally your community to pray together – you can learn more about how to host a Prayer Room [here](#).

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This document was adapted from a 24-7 Prayer International Prayer Guide.