



WG3: Immersive Realities of Prayer

Call for Videos



taging prayer: gesture and performance in prayer practice

Online workshop

April/May 2026

organiser: dr Lieke Smits
(Leiden University)

Immersive prayer practices of the past can be studied through the texts, images, and objects that have survived throughout the centuries. But these do not tell the entire story of how prayer was practiced. The performance of prayer involved bodily performances such as postures, gestures, and speech; the sensory experience of handling objects or leaving through books; and spatial settings that allowed for certain movements, acoustics, and other sensory impressions.

Aims and format of the workshop

In order to understand the role of gesture and performativity in premodern immersive prayer practices, this workshop invites participants to experiment with the performance of their sources. Handling objects, reading or singing texts out loud, or moving through a historical space can lead to new insight into the actions and experiences that these sources afford. The aim is not to reconstruct the historical prayer experience, but to experimentally enrich our perspective and to think about different ways of generating knowledge.



PRAYTICIPATE

Participation through Prayer in the Late
Medieval & Early Modern World

The workshop will consist of discussions on the basis of videos of max. 12 minutes, recorded by the participants and circulated and watched before the event. As theoretical underpinning, we will use the following publication during the workshop: Laura Weigert, “Performance,” *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012): 61–72.

Further literature may be circulated at a later point and participants are welcome to make suggestions.

Video instructions

If you would like to contribute with a video, you can, for example, think of showing your interaction with an object, making an acoustic performance, or moving through a space. Alternatively, you can film someone else engaged in such a performance, and/or interview someone with relevant performance experience.

Please make sure to include basic information about the source or space and its historical context in your video.

Videos will not only be shared among the workshop participants but will also be made public on the PRAYTICIPATE website, so please keep copyright issues in mind. A document with tips for creating a video is available.

Planning and timeline

March 1: Register for the workshop via the following [google form](#). Please indicate whether you want to participate with or without recording a video. In the former case, please give a brief description of the planned topic of your video.

April 15: Deadline for submitting videos.

April/May: Workshop ‘Staging Prayer’.