



## Leading a session in a Secondary School Prayer Space Crib Sheet

The following is an example of how a session within the prayer space may look. Throughout the session always use the language of *'Many Christians believe'* or *'As a Christian I believe'* when talking to students.

### Welcome

- Meet and welcome the students as they arrive with their class teacher to the session.
- Guide the students to sit down with you somewhere suitable within the prayer space.

### Introduction (Approx. 1 - 2 minutes)

- Introduce yourself, and perhaps what church you attend.
- Ask the other volunteers to introduce themselves and the church they attend.

### Explanation (Approx. 6 - 8 minutes)

- Ask the students if they know what the room is called for this week and what they have been told by their teachers about it.
- Explain the prayer and reflection space is a place where they can have the opportunity to learn about Christian prayer and have the opportunity to pray or reflect **if** they would like to, using the activities to help them do so **if** they wish.
- **It is important that no-one feels forced to pray against their will.**

We would suggest that the introduction will touch on some, if not all, of the following points. As you can see, following each suggestion there is an example of something the Prayer Space Leader *might* say.

### **What is prayer and reflection?** (You may or may not feel it is appropriate to include the section in [])

*"Prayer is talking to God. But not only is it talking to God - what are all of you doing as I'm talking? That's right, listening. In the same way that when we pray to God, we do some talking and then we spend time listening to what we think God might be saying to us. [Sometimes, God might not answer a prayer in the way that you're expecting, sometimes it is a surprise. If you asked God for the latest PS4 or Xbox game, or for a new phone, God might not suddenly give you a new game! Many Christians believe that God answers prayers in lots of ways, providing them with what they need...they probably don't really need a new game!]*

*What about reflection? Yes, it can help us to be calm, to spend time thinking about our day and what went well or what we would like to make better tomorrow. Reflecting might help us think about how to solve a problem, distress, or think about what is important to us, such as special people or goals we want to achieve."*

### **Where do people pray or reflect?**

*"Where do people go to pray? That's right, Christians might pray in churches and yes, people from other religions might go to other buildings to pray. Do you know what? Christians believe that you can actually pray anywhere that you want to! As a Christian, I believe that God's always listening to what I have to say, so when I'm on holiday I might pray on the beach, or maybe I might pray when I go for a walk. People can also reflect in different places too, often people find places that help them think, where might you go to pray or reflect?"*

### **When do people pray or reflect?**

*"In the same way that I believe you can pray wherever, I also believe you can pray or reflect whenever you like! Over the next half an hour or so, you will all have the opportunity to pray or reflect if you would like to. It's good to remember, though, that being in a Prayer Space isn't the only time when you can pray or reflect, but that you can do it whenever you want!"*

### **How do people pray?**

*"If I asked you to draw a picture of someone praying, how would they look? Yeah, they might be kneeling, with the hands together and eyes closed. Now, that can be a really useful way to pray as it means people won't get distracted by what's going on around them. But do you know what? There are loads of ways people can communicate with God! It doesn't just have to be talking. It might be by drawing, or writing, or even making something! This is the same for reflecting, some people like to do something as they are reflecting, other people like to be still and calm as they reflect."*

### Explain the Activities (Approx. 2 - 3 minutes)

- Next explain each of the activities in the room; the type of prayer or opportunity to reflect (e.g. When many Christians pray they might say please, they ask God to help them with things etc.), and what the activity involves doing, (e.g. In this area you can think about anything you would like help with; if there is something, you can write or draw it as a prayer or reflective thought and stick it to the bubble tube).
- Explain if they forget anything there is a prompt card in each area that they can read or they can ask any adult in the room to explain the activity to them.
- **Remember to use language that states the students have the opportunity to respond as a reflective thought or as a prayer. It is up to the students how they respond to each activity.**

### Setting behaviour Expectations (Approx. 1 - 2 minutes)

- Nine times out of ten we have found behaviour is not an issue at all but it is very important to set expectations for the prayer space.
- Explain that in the prayer and reflection space everyone is going to be respectful of each other. This means using quiet, whispering voices so people get the chance to reflect and pray if they would like to. You could make mention to the music that is playing and if they cannot hear it then they are being too loud as a group and need to lower their voices- this is an easy way for them to judge if the volume level is getting too high.
- Explain that they need to move between the areas calmly and carefully, so that we are respecting one another in the space. They have plenty of time to complete the activities and don't need to rush. Emphasise that they can use the space as they feel comfortable- they may only want to do one activity or complete them all- it is up to them.
- Set any area restrictions that you need to (e.g. There are only 4 sand trays so only 4 people can be in this area at any one time). Encourage them to use good sense in not overcrowding an activity, doing something else and then coming back to that activity if lots of people are there.
- Invite them to calmly and quietly stand up and find an area where they would like to begin.

### Free flow (Approx. 40 minutes)

- The students will be able to choose which activity they visit first and throughout their time in the prayer and reflection space.
- You might find it useful to send the students off a few at a time, to help smooth the transition from the large group to the activities.
- As a leader, it would be helpful for you to float around the room, answering any questions, suggesting an activity to a student if they seem unsure where to go, engaging with students in different areas as you feel comfortable and as the students want to and reminding the students of any behaviour expectations they are not adhering to (e.g. volume level, overcrowding in an area etc.). It may be useful to station volunteers if some areas would benefit from adult support, otherwise ask them to float between activities also.
- The students are allowed to choose how long they spend on each activity, though do remind them about being sensitive to other people around them. They may need to move on to another activity if other people are waiting, especially if only two people can be in one area at a time (such as in the Forgiveness Stones area, using the mp3 players). Explain that there should only be up to 4 or 5 students per area at one time.
- Around 15 mins before the end of the session you should walk around the room and give the students a 5 minute warning that you will all be coming back together as a group to end the session.
- Once the 5 minutes is up, call the class back together again.

### Conclusion (Approx. 5 minutes)

Once the session time is almost over the students should be called back together as a group to end the session. This could be done by addressing the class as a whole or quietly, going around the room to each activity and asking them to come back as a group again.

- The whole group should then be given a chance to consider what they did or didn't like or how they felt about the Prayer and Reflection Space and why.
- The students can be given the opportunity to write down their thoughts anonymously on post it notes. If possible it is good to type up the comments and a selection of post it notes from some of the zones to give to the school, as this will provide evidence of spiritual development for OFSTED and SIAMS (an inspection for Church Schools). We have a template you can use for this.
- Finish off by reminding the students that they can **pray or reflect** anywhere and at any time and in lots of different ways, there is no right or wrong way, it is about finding the best way for them. You could challenge them to find some time each day to reflect on or pray about things in a way that would work for them.
- Before the students leave, the Prayer Space Leader should, if applicable, invite everyone to the Prayer and Reflection Space during lunch time and/or after school.
- Finally, as the group leave, the adults in the room should make sure that they say goodbye as the students go to ensure that even as they leave, they feel welcome in the space.