



Training Guide



Volunteering in a prayer and reflection space in a secondary school

Welcome

Thank you so much for giving your time to enable a prayer and reflection space to happen. It would not be possible without volunteers like you. This training guide will give you information on what your role as a volunteer will be in the space and what you can expect the prayer space session to look like. Hopefully it will address many of the questions you have around engaging with secondary school students in the prayer and reflection space. We hope you find it a helpful guide as you look forward to volunteering in the prayer and reflection space.

Who we are

BeSpace is a Christian charity that aims to support churches to create spaces for prayer and reflection in the community. Our vision is to see every child, young person and adult connect with God in their daily lives. Our core values are:

- Hospitality- we aim to always have a culture where people feel valued, safe and welcome.
- Unity- we encourage churches from different traditions to work together to accomplish our mission.
- Creativity- we seek to inspire creativity and innovation as we continually work toward our vision
- Respect- we show love to people of all beliefs and backgrounds

Become, Belong, Beyond

These 3 key words help to describe some of what we hope will be the impact of experiencing prayer and reflection spaces. We hope that people will **become** more of the person they were created to be, will know that they **belong** in a supportive community and have a purpose and that people will look **beyond** themselves.

What a prayer and reflection space session looks like

Typically, a whole class of students (30 students) will visit the prayer and reflection space for around 1 hour at a time for their timetabled RE lesson. The session will look something like this.



Introduction:

The students will enter and sit on the floor for the introduction which is led by the session leader. First the session leader will introduce themselves and the other volunteers and then they will ask the students to consider what reflection and prayer is, where people reflect or pray, when people reflect and pray and how people reflect and pray or questions similar to these. Following this the different activities in the room will be introduced. Finally, the students will be reminded of behaviour expectations in the prayer and reflection space and then allowed to stand up quietly and explore the space.

As the students enter the space please stop any conversations you may be having, smile and welcome them and then sit with them for the introduction.

Exploring the prayer and reflection space:

The students will have around 30 minutes to explore the activities in the room. They can choose which activities they will do and how long they spend in each activity area. Please float around the room answering student's questions, engaging in one area with students or suggesting activities students could try as you feel comfortable and as they want to engage with you.

There will typically be around 8 activities set up around the room. Some areas may have limitations on how many students can use that activity at one time (e.g. MP3 player areas) Please remind students about the number allowed in an area if you need to.

Please do not pray with the students at any point as when working in our educational system this is not appropriate in this context.

You will notice that the language on all of the activity cards is accessible for all. It includes a short sentence on what Christians believe and then invites the students to pray or reflect; to write a prayer or a thought. As you volunteer in the prayer and reflection space and answer questions please remember to use the language of "as a Christian I believe..." or "Many Christians believe..."



Conclusion:

When there is only 12-15 minutes remaining of the lesson the students will be given a 5-minute warning and then brought back together again as a group to give their feedback. They will usually be encouraged to write their thoughts on a post-it-note sharing what they particularly enjoyed, suggestions for improvements or how it made them feel to be in the prayer and reflection space.

Please ensure you say goodbye to the students as they leave and sit with them for the conclusion.

Top tips

- Teachers will always be present in the room and able to help with any particularly challenging behaviour but on the whole, we have found that students value their time in the prayer and reflection space and are respectful of the leaders
- If students are struggling to settle to an activity, offer suggestions of an activity that they might like to try
- If too many students are in an area remind them of the behaviour expectations and suggest a few of them to do a different activity and then come back to this one
- Give the students space and privacy to write their thoughts and prayers
- Please make sure to check written responses at the end of the session in case of any safeguarding concerns that need to be raised with the school. In case you have any concerns in your area please give the written response or chat through the conversation you had with the prayer space leader who will raise it with the appropriate member of staff. It is much easier to check written responses at the end of a session when you can be sure the response came from this group of students and the teacher can work out who it is by their handwriting. Put a dot on the corner of each note

you check and then when you glance at the responses for the next group you already know which notes have been checked.

Before your first prayer and reflection space session

Please remember to arrive 15 minutes before the start of your session so as a team you can pray together. Please do stay a few minutes at the end of your session to encourage others with a story or comment from the prayer and reflection space and pray for the classes that have just visited.

Risk assessment

You should have received a risk assessment document to read through- this is just to ensure that you are aware of any perceived risks in the prayer and reflection space and how you can help to keep students safe while they access the space.

Safeguarding

You will also have received a safeguarding document which gives you some guidelines to follow in this area. The school will have checked that these guidelines comply with their school policy.

Please use the following space to note any other requirements you need to do to comply with the schools safeguarding procedures (e.g. bringing a DBS certificate if you have one/ filling in a form etc.)

Please also note any other important info shared by the session leader here (e.g. refreshments arrangements etc.) so you are fully prepared for your session.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for users to write down any additional information shared by the session leader.

If you have any questions on anything shared in this guide or related to the upcoming prayer and reflection space please talk to the organiser of the prayer and reflection space. They will direct questions onto BeSpace if they cannot answer them.

For any further information please visit www.bespace.be or email info@bespace.be



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