



# Training Guide



**Running a small group activity in a  
Primary School prayer and reflection  
space**

## 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 prayer and reflection space and what you can expect the session to look like. Hopefully it will address many of the questions you have around leading an activity and engaging with a small group of children. 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, half a class of students (16 students) will visit the prayer and reflection space for 45 minutes at a time. 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 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 and 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 put into groups to explore the space.

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

## **Exploring the prayer and reflection space:**

The students will have about 5 minutes to explore each activity station and the small groups will be rotated around by the session leader. The children must stay with their small group until they are asked to move on. You will remain in your activity area for the whole session.

## **Conclusion:**



Once all the children have rotated around all the activities in the room the group will come together again to give their feedback. Younger children will just give verbal feedback while older children may write their thoughts down 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.

*You may be asked to scribe the responses of the younger children so a record of their thoughts is kept from the space to share with staff and volunteers.*

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

## **The activities**

The prayer space leader will share the activities within the space with you and there will be instruction cards in each activity area. The language on the activity cards is standardised and accessible for all. It includes a short sentence on what Christians believe and then invites the children to pray or reflect; to write a prayer or a thought. As you volunteer in the prayer space and answer children's questions please remember to use the language of "as a Christian I believe..." or "many Christians believe..."

## **Structuring your time well**

When your small group arrives at your activity welcome them and ask their names. Remind them of your name. This should take no more than a minute or so. Remember you only have 5 minutes to complete the activity before the children move on to the next area. Take the next minute to explain the activity to the students or ask them to remind you what they can remember from the introduction about what they will be doing in this area. You could read the instruction card or ask one of the older students to read the card. For younger children simplify the information on the card as much as you need to. For the remaining 3 minutes let the students complete the activity, giving support as required.

The session leader will give you a 1-minute warning to prepare your group for moving to the next activity- encourage them to complete their activity in this time so they are ready to move on to the next area when it is time.

After a couple of groups have gone through you will get very good at fitting the welcome, explanation and activity into the 5 minutes.

You may have some groups that are very chatty and some very quiet groups. Don't feel like you need to be talking lots if the children are quiet, they may just value some space to reflect on the activity.

**Do not pray with the children in your small group at any point. When working in our educational system this is not appropriate in this context**

### **Tips for running your group well**

You may find as you run your group that some groups of children lose focus towards the end of an activity or your activity doesn't seem to take as long as some of the other activities in the room. Here are a few things you can do to help your group in these situations

- Extend your explanation of the activity and read the card and all the questions and check understanding before beginning the activity.
- Ask the children to sit quietly and think for a moment before they start writing and consider their thought or prayer carefully.
- Ask them some questions about themselves and get to know the students a bit more.
- If children are using post it notes they could write more than one thought or prayer. They could also decorate their paper or draw a picture on their post it notes once they have finished writing/ completing an activity if appropriate.
- Ask them to sit quietly (or recline on the cushions if applicable) and think about the activity they have done and the people or situations they were thinking or praying about
- Ask them if they would like to share what they were thinking or how they were feeling as they completed the activity but don't force them to do this if they do not want to.

- Ask them if they have any questions for you.
- The sand area often doesn't take as long as other areas in a first prayer space- you could ask the children here to let the sand run through their fingers and think about letting go of any worries or forgiving someone or themselves as an extension to this activity.
- If children are struggling with writing or engaging with an activity you could ask them if they would like you to scribe their response for them.



### Extra notes

- Be subtle when you are looking at children's thoughts and prayers. Don't peer over the children, respect their space and give them privacy.
- 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 session 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 children 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 and you can decide which activity you will be facilitating. 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 space and how you can help to keep children safe while they access the prayer and reflection 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 note any other important info shared by the prayer space 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 the user to write down any additional information shared by the prayer space leader.

If you have any questions on anything shared in this guide or related to the upcoming prayer and reflection space please talk to your session leader who is helping to organise 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](http://www.bespace.be) or email [info@bespace.be](mailto:info@bespace.be)



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