

## The Beatitudes prayer & reflection space activities

During your time within the Prayer and Reflection Space the chances are that you will, at some point, have to explain one or more of the prayer and reflection activities. At each activity, there will be a short instruction card which explains the purpose of the activity. The text for these instruction cards has been included below so that you will have an idea of the different activities before you arrive. Please do not feel that you have to learn these, though!

During each session, you will be stationed at a particular prayer and reflection zone. As each group is directed towards you by the Prayer and Reflection Space leader, you will need to welcome them (ask their names) and encourage them to explore the activity. Depending on the age and ability of the students you may need to explain the activity to them again or help them by scribing their response to an activity. We would always encourage the Prayer and Reflection Space volunteers to interact with students as much as they think is necessary. Some students may want to quietly explore the activity by themselves, whilst others may be happy to just chat with you for the whole time, it is important that they are made to feel welcome in doing either. When talking with the students please use the language '*Many Christians believe...*' or '*As a Christian I believe...*'. **Do not** pray with individual students or do any kind of corporate group prayer.

### 1) Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

Christians believe that they need God to be with them and help them in all that they do. And that they need to rely on God in their everyday lives.

*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9)*

**Sit around the inflatable lifeboat. Is there something that you need help with? Write or draw about it onto a luggage tag as a thought or prayer. As you tie it onto the lifeboat, you could ask God to help you.**

### 2) Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted

We are all connected with people who support us, people who shine light into our lives and light us up. Christians believe that God brings comfort and light to them during hard times and in dark places and that God calls them to 'shine like stars' in our world, to encourage and support people.

*Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. (Romans 12:15)*

**As you watch the lights and the rising bubbles in the bubble tube, think about something that is making you sad or worried at the moment. If there is something you would like to tell God, you can write or draw it onto a post-it note, or you can do this as a reflection. Think about how you can give that sadness to God or how you can leave that behind you as you stick your post-it note onto the bubble tube.**

### 3) Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth

Christians believe that Jesus tells us to be meek, by serving others and being humble, by putting others before ourselves.

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition, or vain conceit. Rather in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests, but each to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4)*

The whole human race needs to learn a new meekness and humility in relation to the earth. Human action is directly affecting our climate. We are depleting the earth's resources. How can we love and care for our earth?

**Look at the earth and the mound of plastic beneath it. How can we meekly and humble care for our earth? You might like to write or draw a prayer, wish or action onto a piece of plastic.**

### 4) Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied

Christians believe that Jesus came to establish and proclaim the kingdom of heaven. In the Lord's Prayer we pray: '*your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*'

Where do you see things that are unfair, unequal and where people are oppressed?

Are there opportunities for you to sow seeds of hope in these situations, or in your communities?

**Take a leaf and think about situations where there is injustice, suffering or where things are unfair. You could also think about how you personally could strive for justice and fairness in your everyday life. Write or draw about it onto the leaf and attach it to the tree as a prayer, thought or wish.**

**5) Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy**

Mercy in the Bible has two meanings: the first meaning is love and kindness; the specific meaning is mercy as forgiveness. Christians believe that God's love is constant for us, even when we mess things up or get stuff wrong.

*Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has any grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13)*

Is there anyone you need to forgive in your life? Is there anyone you need to say sorry to? Maybe you need to forgive yourself?

**If you would like to take a piece of paper and write 'I forgive you' or 'Sorry' onto it. As you dip this into the water and watch it disappearing, think or pray about how great it feels to be forgiven and ask for help to avoid doing this again. Then when you're ready, hang up your paper with everyone else's.**

**6) Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God**

Are you concerned about outward appearances, image and prestige? Or do you live from the inside out? Christians believe that there is only one way to a pure heart, by bringing our hearts to God, they can be cleansed and made new by his grace.

*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit in me. (Psalm 51:10)*

Is there anything that is challenging or difficult for you at the moment? Is there anything that is blocking your heart from being pure and true?

**If you would like to, draw or write on the scratch card about anything that is holding you back, or blocking your heart as a prayer or a reflection.**

**7) Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God**

What would the world be like if we all co-operated instead of fought? Peace or 'Shalom' is more than an absence of conflict. Shalom means wholeness and well-being and fulfilment and reconciliation. We live in an era of conflict, fragmentation and division.

*He (Jesus) came and preached peace to you who were far away and to you who were near. (Ephesians 2:17)*

How can you help people to work together instead of arguing? Or show people how to co-operate instead of fight in situations you know about?

**Make an origami dove, using the instructions provided. As you do you could say a thought prayer or wish about how these situations could be made better. If you would like to, you could ask God to help you show peace to others, even when they hurt you.**

**8) Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**

There are many people across our world who suffer and are persecuted because of their faith, as Jesus was.

Have you ever needed to stand up for someone? Was it easy?

Sometimes it can be hard to stand up for the right thing. Maybe you saw some of your friends being unkind to someone and you needed to tell them to stop. Christians believe that God gives them the strength and courage to do what is right, even when it is hard.

**As you decorate a slip of paper, think about when you were able to stand up for someone, or perhaps when you didn't. Write a prayer or thought, perhaps you would like to ask God to help you be brave when you need to do the right thing in the future. Then when you're ready, add your paper to the paper chain.**