

## New Year 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) Looking Back (Joys and Sorrows)

Our lives are like journeys; sometimes they are easy and happy as we enjoy things and admire the view; other times they are hard and sad, like bumps in the road.

**Write or draw some of the joys, blessings or exciting times that you had last year on a yellow post it note. Stick this on the large sunshine, to remember and celebrate them, thinking of a thankful thought or prayer as you do so.**

**Write or draw some of the struggles, sad times or regrets you had last year on a pink post it note. Scrunch your pink post it note up and throw it in the bin, helping you to move on and start afresh this new year.**

### 2) Looking Forward (New Years Promises)

What do you want to achieve this year? Is there something that you would like to stop or start?

Christians believe that God always offers them a new day and a new beginning, no matter what has gone before.

**Take a moment to be thankful for last year. You could think about or say a prayer to say sorry for something and ask for help in the new year ahead. Draw around your hand on a piece of coloured paper and in the space of the palm of your hand, write down your new year's promise (something to stop or start). Then in the finger spaces, write down what steps you will take to keep this promise.**

### 3) Looking Around

How easy do you find it to keep the Golden Rules?

Rules can help us live and work well with each other at school. They can also help us with our friendships at school and our families outside of school. Christians believe that we need to be wise about our actions, trying to help people around us whenever we can.

**Sort the different pictures and sentences into things we need to stop and things we need to start doing more of. Have a think or say a prayer about one of the Golden Rules that you would like to do better at keeping this year. If you would like to, you can write or draw this on a post-it note and stick it on the bubble tube.**

OR

### 4) Looking Around (Helping Others)

Do you notice when other people need help?

How can you help other people more this year?

Christians believe that God asks them to 'shine like stars' in our universe, to help encourage and support people.

We can all make a difference to the people around us. If you're up for a challenge, you can spread some joy in school and at home.

**Take a challenge from the jar. Read it but keep it a secret. See if you can complete that challenge and help others. Keep the slip of paper as a reminder of how you can help others.**

### **5) Looking Inside (Take what you need)**

*(You will need a large paper with 'Take what you need' at the top and these qualities written going down the strips of paper for children to tear off: confidence, strength, perseverance, a smile, laughter, healing, passion, love, patience, understanding, hope, courage, gentleness, honesty, friendship, generosity and peace)*

What obstacles might get in the way of you keeping your new year's promise?

Once we have chosen goals to reach or promises to keep, we can find it hard to keep going. Sometimes we need help and encouragement to not give up.

Christians believe that they can help others by encouraging them to use their skills, talents and abilities and noticing when people need their help.

**Have a look at the encouragements on the slips of paper. Choose one to tear off and keep with you in your pocket. Read it and think about or say a prayer to have more of this in your life. Then think about someone who you could encourage. In your mind, choose something to say or do for them. You can write it on a post-it note to share your ideas. Try and do that today!**

OR

### **6) Looking Inside (Labyrinth)**

A labyrinth is a pathway with a destination. They can help us think about and pray along the journey in our minds.

**Choose a finger labyrinth, sit in a quiet place and take a moment to breathe deeply, in and out. Perhaps you'd like to say a prayer or think about something that is troubling you before you begin.**

**Take time to trace your finger along the path. Think about the movement, the shape you're tracing. When you reach the centre, take some time to just be, or you might like to pray to ask God for help. When you're ready, exit the labyrinth by tracing back from the centre.**

### **7) Looking Up (Lay Down your fears)**

Do you have any fears or worries? Do they stop you from trying something new or getting better at something?

Christians believe that once they truly give their worries to God, they can leave them behind, forget them and move on. He can hold their burdens for them.

**Kneel or sit calmly on the mat or cushion. Pray, or think about steps you could take to stop worrying, or trusted people you could talk to.**

**Choose a post-it note and draw or write your prayer or reflection, or you can simply leave it blank. Then place this on the large wooden cross, to show that you have left your worries behind. You could ask God to give you peace.**

### **Bible verse you might like to include:**

Matthew ch9 v2-8 'And behold, some people brought to him [Jesus] a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-he then said to the paralytic- "Rise, pick up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.'

### **8) Looking Further (Hopes & Dreams)**

What are your BIG dreams?

What would you like to do with your life?

What would you like to achieve?

Where would you like to go?

Sometimes, it's hard to dream BIG because we feel small and unimportant. But, BIG dreams can change the world. Christians believe that God has asked them to make the world a better place in different ways, with His help.

**If you want to, you can write or draw a BIG dream onto a cloud-shape and stick it onto the large cloud with everyone else's.**

### **9) Opportunity Keys**

Life offers lots of opportunities, and it also presents us with lots of challenges. Christians believe that God can help them to have the motivation and courage to try something new.

What opportunities and challenges are you facing? Maybe you've got an opportunity to do something new? Maybe a particular friendship is challenging? It could be at home, at school or something for you.

What key do you need to unlock the door?

**Imagine that these things are like a door into something new. If you would like to, place one of the keys in the bowl as a symbol of choosing to unlock your opportunity or challenge. You can also write a wish or a prayer onto a post-note about this, perhaps to help you have courage.**