

## Leading a Session in a Primary & Secondary Prayer Space

### Lesson Plan Outline: *Pentecost*

The following is an example of how a session within the themed 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/teaching assistant to the session.
- Guide 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/your connection to the school.
- Ask the other volunteers to introduce themselves and the church they attend/their connection to the school.

#### Explanation (Approx. 5 - 6 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. If the school has had a Prayer Space before, find out what activities they took part in last time.
- Explain that 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 do so **if** they wish. **It is important that no-one feels forced to pray against their will.**
- Explain that this time, there is a theme, to link the ideas together, which is a story from the Bible. *"Actually, stories are all around us. **What's your favourite story? Where might we find a story?** Yes, that's right, in the news, on the radio, in a book or a magazine, on the internet...there are lots of places to find fictional and real stories. All stories tell us about events and how these affect the people within them. So, we are going to focus on a set of events that Christians believe actually happened."*

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. These, however, are only suggestions. *(If this prayer space is happening in a community school, you may need to focus more on the key aspects of prayer, explained in the '1<sup>st</sup> Prayer Space' lesson plan, or at least recap these)*

#### **What** is Pentecost?

Find out what the students know about Pentecost.

[The disciples were celebrating the Jewish festival of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit, the helper whom Jesus had promised, came upon them.]

For younger students, you might like to use simpler questions about what they've heard about Pentecost.

For older students, you could probe deeper, asking how the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost affected the disciples and why Christians still celebrate the events at Pentecost

**"When I say the word 'Pentecost', what does this make you think of? What happened at Pentecost? Can you think of some words that we associate with Pentecost or the Holy Spirit? (Wind, fire, dove, oil)**

#### **What symbols** do we associate with Pentecost and the Holy Spirit?

*The Bible, in the Book of Acts, says that a sound of a very strong wind came into the house where the disciples were sitting. Then they saw what seemed like tongues of fire, which separated and came to rest on all of them.*

*Pentecost is regarded as the Christian Churches birthday and the start of the church's mission to the world as the Holy Spirit made the disciples speak in different languages so that the disciples could speak to people from other countries about Jesus.*

*The Holy Spirit is the third part of the Trinity of God: the Father, the son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit.*

*The Holy Spirit is sometimes represented as a dove, because when Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove and lightening.*

*Another symbol is oil, as later on in the book of Acts Peter says: 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and ... he went around doing good and healing ... because God was with Him.' Christians' use oil to symbolise this anointing and being blessed to do the work of Jesus.*

**What do you do when you feel worried or really happy? Is there something you can do or a place you can go to or a person you can speak to?** *After Pentecost. Many new Christians joined the disciples. In the Bible it says that: 'They devoted themselves to the disciples teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.'*

**Where/how do you think the disciples prayed?** *Yes, they prayed in lots of different places, at different times. Today's activities will help us think about our responses to these feelings through praying or thinking."*

#### Explain the themed activities (Approx. 2 - 3 minutes)

- Next, explain each of the activities in the room, the type of prayer or opportunities to reflect (e.g. When many Christians pray they can ask God to help them and say sorry to God for wrong things they've done) and what the activity involves (e.g. In this area you can think about something you could need help for and write a note to stick on the bubble tube, or you might want to write about something that you regret or would like to say sorry for on an acetate sheet and wash it away to symbolise having a fresh start.) Explain that if they forget anything there is an adult in each area to help them (for Primary) or adults around the room (Secondary) that they can talk to.
- **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 them how they respond and they don't have to share their thoughts or prayer with the volunteers.**

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

#### Primary Prayer Space

- Nine times out of ten we have found behaviour is not an issue at all. However, it is good to set expectations.
- One way that this can be done is by asking them if Christians *have* to use quiet voices to pray. Once you have clarified that sometimes prayer can be loud and noisy, or it can be totally silent as people pray in their heads, or quietly when Christians pray in small groups, make it clear that we will use quiet indoor voices so that everyone has a chance to pray or reflect if they wish to, showing respect to all.
- This should also affect how we move around the space, so therefore we all need to walk between the prayer and reflection areas, not running, so that we are taking care of the prayer and reflection space and each other.

#### Secondary Prayer Space

- Explain that in the Prayer and Reflection Space everyone is going to be respectful of each other, using quiet voices so that people get the chance to reflect and pray if they would like to. You could mention that the music 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, to respect one another in the space and that there's plenty of time to complete the activities so no need to rush. If they see others waiting to use the area they're in and they've been there for a while, they need to think about moving on to allow others to use it, especially if only two people can be in one area at a time (such as in the Calm Jar area, using the mp3 players). Explain that there should only be up to 4 or 5 students per area at one time.
- Emphasise that they can use the space as they feel comfortable- they could do a few activities or all of them. 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. 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.

### Groups

#### Primary Prayer Space (Approx. 25 minutes)

- The students will then need to be split into groups of three or four and be sent to different activities where the volunteers will greet them and, if necessary, again explain the activity. Each group will spend about five minutes at each activity.
- As you approach the fourth minute of the activity, go around to each group and give a minute warning, this will help them get ready to move onto the next activity.
- Just before 5 minutes is up, go back to each group and ask them to quietly move onto the next activity. We tend to do this instead of announcing this to the whole class in a louder voice as this is a more seamless and quiet way to move the students around the prayer space.

#### Secondary Prayer Space (Approx. 40 minutes)

- The students will be able to choose which activity they visit first and throughout their time in the space.
- 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.
- 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, quietly go around the room to each activity and asking them to come back as a group again.

### Conclusion (Approx. 5 minutes)

Once the class is back as a whole group...

- The students should 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. They don't have to write something if they don't wish to.
- Older children (from Year 3 and older) can write down their thoughts anonymously on post it notes, noting what they have enjoyed and why, what they've learnt about prayer/reflection or God, how it made them feel and why or an idea to improve the prayer space. Younger children might prefer to discuss their thoughts with you. 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. We have a report template that 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 works 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.

**Suggested 'Pentecost' themed activities**

Choose 4 activities for Primary School prayer spaces and 7-8 for Secondary School prayer spaces

**1) Fire (Scratch Cards)**

*In the Bible it says that when the Holy Spirit came all of the disciples had tongues of fire on top of their heads!*

*One of the reasons the Holy Spirit came down was to help the disciples tell everyone in the whole world about Jesus.*

*Maybe you know someone that lives in the world that you would like to pray for or think about?*

**Take one of the scratch card flames and scratch out either a prayer or thought for that person, or scratch out a picture of them.**

**2) Water (Paper)**

*Just like water brings life to plants that are dying, The Holy Spirit can make us feel more alive when we are feeling sad about things.*

*Is there something that you feel sad about in life and would like to feel happy about? All of us have done things we regret, or wish we could change.*

*"I wish I hadn't...", "I'm sorry I...", "I didn't mean to..." How would you finish these sentences?*

**Write or draw the things you want to say sorry for on the special paper and then put the paper in the water and wipe away what you have written.**

*God can take all the things you have done wrong and forgive you.*

**As you wipe it away, say that you are sorry – out loud or quietly in your head – and ask the God to forgive you and smile knowing that the Holy Spirit loves you.**

**3) Oil (Calm Jars)**

*In the Bible oil is used to anoint a person, which basically means to show that they are chosen to do something.*

*Sometimes you might feel that you want to do something, but can't because you get worried about things getting in the way.*

**Take a calm jar and an MP3 player and listen to the track. As you watch the glitters swirl around and begin to settle, think about your worries settling. You might want to ask God to help you.**

**4) Fire (World Map)**

*The Holy Spirit brings fire, energy and passion to places and people all over our world. Pray for people and places around you, by writing a prayer on the flame and putting it on the place or places you would like God's spirit to help. You could pray for: 1. Friends and Family near where you live and in other countries. 2. Your school 3. Teachers 4. Local places like the shops or your local church. 5. The people in Japan recovering from the Earthquake and Tsunami. 6. The trouble in Egypt and other countries in North Africa. 7. The people in New Zealand recovering from the Earthquake.*

**5) Dove (Play dough)**

*In the Bible, it says that the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove.*

*It also says in the Bible that the Holy Spirit is a gift, a gift that Christians are thankful for.*

**Take some of the play dough and make something that you'd like to say thank you for. Or, if you'd prefer, you might like to make a dove out of the play dough, as a way of saying thank you to God for the Holy Spirit.**

## **6) Wind (Bubble Tube)**

*God's Spirit can give hope to something that seems difficult or hope when you feel sad.*

*What's on your mind? What are you worried about?*

**Write or draw the things you would like to ask God for on post it notes and stick them on the bubble tube.**

*The bubbles going up the tube in the middle here represent all our prayers going to God, who hears all of them.*

## **7) Wind (Spiral circles)**

*The Holy Spirit is sometimes symbolised with wind - we can't see it, but we can feel it and we can see the effect it has.*

*When the Holy Spirit came down on the disciples at Pentecost it helped them to overcome their fears and be brave.*

*Is there something you would like to ask God to help you with?*

**Take one of the paper circles and write something that you would like God to help you with and then cut out a spiral mobile that can be hanged from the ceiling.**

## **8) Oil (Perfumed)**

*God is with us all the time.*

*Take a seat on a cushion or stand if you prefer, make yourself comfortable and close you eyes if you would like to.*

**Wait for the scent of the perfumed oil to reach you. It is invisible but we sense its presence with us.**

*Thank God that he is always with us through his spirit, even though we can't see him with our eyes.*

## **9) Water (Acetate)**

*The Holy Spirit is sometimes symbolised by water, reflecting how Christians believe the Holy Spirit washes away the bad stuff that they've done.*

*Maybe you've done something you regret?*

*Whether you're a Christian or not, it might help to acknowledge some of those things that you've done to try and help you move on from it.*

**Either as a prayer or a reflection, write down something that you're sorry for onto some acetate paper, wash it off in the water and then hang it on the cross.**

## **10) Pentecost (1)**

*After Jesus had gone up to heaven, the disciples were left wondering what to do next, where to go and who to talk to. But Jesus kept his promise and sent a helper, known as the Holy Spirit, who gave the disciples comfort and power to boldly talk to people about God's love for all.*

*Starting something new can be scary but we don't have to do things alone.*

*Is there something that you need the courage to do?*

**Think about something that you would like to start doing: this could be something to help improve your life or something helping someone else. As you think about some small steps you could take to achieve this, write or draw a reflection or prayer on one of the feet shapes. You ask God for courage to help you start and keep going.**

## **11) Pentecost (2)**

*(Could have 1 large Olympic flame or individual flames to use)*

After he rose from the dead, Jesus went back up to heaven but he didn't want to leave his friends alone and helpless. So, he sent a helper, known as the Holy Spirit, who appeared as a flame above their heads. Rather than giving them a fright, it gave them power and comfort to try something new... to boldly talk to people about God's love for all.

Like the holy fire gave the disciples hope, today, the Olympic torch can be seen as a symbol of hope, talent and perseverance to those who compete in the Olympic games.

Is there something that you wish you could do really well? It could be a sport, something musical or artistic, a school subject, or to be more helpful and generous.

**If you want to, you can write a prayer or a thought on a flame about how you would like to do better and add it the Olympic torch.**