

A Christmas Prayer Space

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Prayer Spaces in Schools

The following Prayer Space was run by Anna Davis and Sharon Ross Ensor (with assistance from members at St John's in the City, Wellington) at Queen Margaret College in November 2014.

The format of our space drew heavily on suggestions from the Prayer Spaces in Schools website <http://prayerspacesinschools.com>.

It was offered to the Junior School year groups throughout the day, ranging from Year 1 (5 year olds) to year 6 (10 year olds). We had an adult helper at each space to guide the students through the theme of the space and to give assistance as needed.

To learn more about the concept of Prayer Spaces in Schools visit the web-site: <http://prayerspacesinschools.com>. This has everything you need to know about creating Prayer Spaces and using them.

A five minute movie of an Easter Prayer Space which Hannah Rowan (and friends) ran at Levin Primary School in 2013 can be found here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0oh41910e2dz7tl/Kia%20inoi%20tatou%20-%20%27Hark%27.mp4>

We would love to hear how you get on with your Prayer Space.

Feel free to contact Sharon with your feedback at ChurchSchools@presbyterian.org.nz or Jill Kayser at jill@kidsfriendly.org.nz

Christmas Prayer Space

Aims:

- To enable the students to hear the telling of the Christmas story.
- To encourage students to engage with the following themes within the Christmas story: hopes and dreams; saying sorry; thinking globally; gratitude; looking for guidance...i.e. finding their story within the bigger story of God.
- To enable students to have an experience of reflection, stillness and silence.

Materials needed:

Coloured paper for paper chains (hopes and dreams)

Stapler or cellotape (hopes and dreams)

String/rope to support paper chain (hopes and dreams)

Felt tip pens for two stations (hopes and dreams and asking for guidance)

Whiteboard markers fine tip (world map)

Large world map - laminated (world map)

Pictures of children and adults who are 'on the edge' (world map)

Small globe balls (world map)

Electronic tea light candles (feeling sorry)

Large candle and candle saucer and matches (feeling sorry)

Trestle tables x2 (being thankful and feeling sorry)

Plastic Sheet or corflute boards to protect table (being thankful)

Play dough (being thankful)

3 kings gifts (being thankful)

Star shaped post-it notes (asking for guidance)

Glow in the dark stars (asking for guidance)

Blutak

Corflute board for writing on









Table cloths etc

Process:

The class hear a retelling of the Christmas story (we used The Jesus Storybook Bible)

8.5 minutes

Explanation of the prayer spaces which are set up around the room...

-  The prayer spaces will help us to think more about the story and to explore its meaning for us.
-  Brief introduction to the prayer spaces, eg the name of each one, what they might think about there.
-  You can go to them in any order
-  You can stay there for as long as you like
-  Take your time...there's no rush, it won't matter if you don't get around them all.
-  Someone will be at each space to help you.
-  Work on your own...be as quiet as you can which will help you to think, and will help others to think.
-  Have fun!

5 minutes

Prayer Space work

20-25 minutes

Feedback

7 minutes

Total time

40-45 minutes

Prayer spaces: *CD of Christmas music playing as students arrive.*

Gabriel and Mary - Hopes and dreams

Setup: A3 Picture of Gabriel and Mary laminated...mounted on card.

Picture cards depicting hopes and dreams....scattered around the Gabriel and Mary picture.

Strips of coloured paper, felt tip pens, stapler/cellotape.

Instruction card reads:

In the story Mary was amazed at the news that she was going to have a baby, God's own Son, and the angel said 'Is anything too wonderful for God'

What do you hope and dream for in your life...for your family, your friends, for the world? Some of them might seem to be 'too wonderful' to ever imagine happening...impossible even!

Write or draw your hopes and dreams onto one of the strips of paper and we will add it to the others to make a colourful paper chain.

Is anything too wonderful for God?



Born in a manger - Feeling Sorry

Setup: A3 picture of innkeeper turning Mary and Joseph away OR a picture of Joseph and Mary travelling to Bethlehem.

Large candle on saucer, small candles (we used 'electronic' candles) placed around large candle, to be handed out to students.



Instruction card reads:

Mary and Joseph were very tired - they had travelled a very long way and then they were turned away by the innkeepers because there was just no room in any of their inns.

Jesus had to be born in a stable, the only place they could find room.

'Go away!' the innkeepers told them. 'There isn't any place for you'.

Sometimes we can feel disappointed when people say words that seem unkind or mean, or they do unkind things to us

And sometimes we can say or do unkind things to others.

These moments can feel DARK

Choose a candle and hold it in your hand

Think about that dark feeling... PAUSE

Remember the words in the story?

'This new baby (Jesus) would be like that bright star shining in the sky that night. A Light to light up the whole world. Chasing away darkness. Helping people to see. ...'"

Now 'light' your candle as a reminder that in Jesus' birth, God has shown us a new way to live.

Shepherds on the hill - World map

Setup: Large laminated world map with fine tip whiteboard markers.

Small globe 'stress' balls to be handed out.

A3 laminated picture of shepherds.

Other pictures of people who are 'on the edge' eg homeless, poor, hungry, refugee, in war-torn countries...



Instruction card reads:

In the story it said that 'people used to laugh at shepherds and say they were smelly and call them other rude names. You see, people thought shepherds were nobodies, just scruffy old riff-raff. But God must have thought shepherds were very important indeed because they're the ones he chose to tell the good news to first.'

As you sit around the world map, take a small globe and think about the stress and hardness of life for people who are thought of as nobodies in the world today.

When you're ready, write a thought or prayer for the nobodies in this world on the world map.



Wise Ones' Star - Asking for guidance

Setup: In an 'alcove' behind black curtain...

Glow in the dark stars, blu-tacked on the wall.

We turned off the lights so the students could see the 'glowing night sky'.

Star shaped post-it notes. Felt tip pens.

Table set up for students to write on.



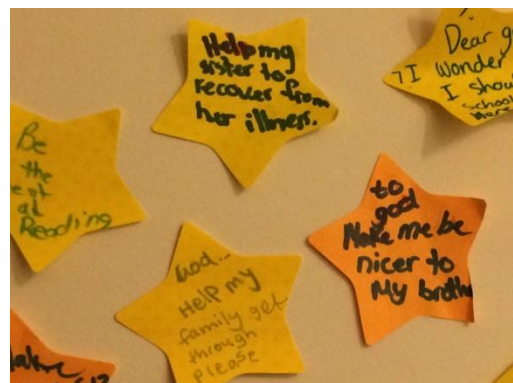
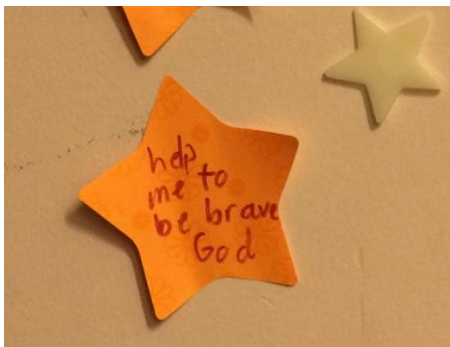
Instruction card reads:

Think about God's star, used to guide the Wise Ones to the baby Jesus.

Is there something you feel you would like guidance on, or help with?

Do you have a question you would like to ask God?

Write or draw a picture onto the star post-it note and then add it to the 'night sky'.



Jesus' gifts - Being grateful

Set-up:

A3 laminated picture of 3 kings with 3 gifts on table

Trestle table with black fabric. Play dough and corflute boards to work on.

Trays to display the work on

Instruction card reads:

Do you remember in the story how the Wise Ones brought gifts of frankincense, gold and myrrh for the baby Jesus?

It's lovely to receive gifts...some of the best gifts are ones we can't unwrap or hold in our hands...things like friends, family, holidays, our beautiful country...

Think about all the things you are grateful for.

Use some of the play dough to make one of those things.



Discussion with students after Prayer Space

My favourite part of the Prayer Space was...

I learnt...

After visiting the Prayer Space I felt...

Why the Prayer Space worked for me...

If I had to tell my friends/Mum or Dad about the Prayer Space I would say...

Kids Friendly thanks Sharon Ross Ensor and Anna Davis for their amazing passion for ministering with children and young people, their inspiring creativity and their generosity for sharing this resource with all our churches and schools.

For lots more Christmas resources see our Kids Friendly website
www.kidsfriendly.org.nz



 Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand