

Primary School Retreat Days

Tutor notes notes by SC

'My place in God's world – a day of reflection and retreat'

Aims

Within a Christian context, pupils on this quiet day will

- Look in at themselves
- Look out at the world and others
- Consider 'Who am I as a spiritual being?'

Key questions will be

- Who am I & why am I special?
- How do I listen to and talk with God?
- How do I respond to others?

Tutors need to:

- keep *naming* praying for others and the world;
- emphasising *retreat as time out from the everyday and quiet*

Notes / things to remember:

- Prepare for the break – eg make squash up beforehand and get biscuits and beakers at the ready for break
- Prepare for lunch and lunchtime activities
- Prepare prayer stations – resource list p36-37
- Allocate tutors to tasks
- Make sure your venue is secure during the day
- Children need somewhere to put coats and bags on arrival
- Ask teachers to list the children into 3 groups before the day gets going so that there are no problems splitting for the carousel activities

On arrival

May require comfort break (hopefully only a few!). Leave bags and coats ?where. Go through to Hall/large room, where pupils will sit around the edges of the parachute that has been laid out. Tell them beforehand that a space is to be left in front of them so that they don't fiddle with the parachute!

Timings for the day

nb be prepared to vary these depending on start time

- 9.00 Tutors meet/set up
- 9.30 Schools arrive
- 9.45 Welcome and introduction *see p4*
 Introduction to the day/overview/aims/a retreat as a day away to reflect
 Parachute games
 Learn 'Father we adore you' – sing it through/prayer [who I am, thanks for who we are & for each other]/1-2mins quiet/sing
- 10.00 Carousel activities session 1 - children in 3 small groups [teachers to decide the groups] *see p5-10*
- Being a unique and special individual - button activity
 - Learning to peacefully relax - guided fantasy
 - Problem solving and working together – magic stick, dragon
- 10.30 Refreshments
- 10.45 Activities session 2 - in 3 small groups
- 11.15 Activities session 3 - in 3 small groups
- 11.45 The Hall/large room: Share what we have learnt re others/self [go round the circle – each person to share one thing they have learnt or experienced during the morning]; sing/pray 'Father we adore you' before & after 1-3mins of quiet.
- 12.00 Lunch brought from home
- teach 'Father we adore you' as a round once finished eating
- 12.20 Lunchtime activities eg football, table tennis, watch a recording
*NB all lunchtime care is responsibility of teachers
 give teachers feedback sheets*
- 12.45 Prayer stations includes paint a stone [essential]; adult in each zone; prepare for final session with music/prayers *see p11ff*
- 1.25 Conclude stations/mention cairn/ intro to final session & walk to it in silence
- 1.30 Final session in different room/place – candles already lit , sit in a circle
- music 3mins + time to think with stone in hand
 - build cairn from painted stones and offer quiet prayer [tutor puts first stone to start] – mention a cairn as a pile of stones to guide people on their journey
 - hold rope & go round verbally re what learnt/what take away/part of one another & all creation/mention the 3 groups to remind from morning; can use ALF [acceptance, love, forgiveness] for this bit if needed
 - recap about retreat/experiencing creation/ learning how to pray [focus on something, sit quietly, eyes shut]; tutor to read out pupils' post-it prayers from prayer station; sing 'father we adore you'; silence 2-5min with centring & stilling self, relaxing; sing again; final prayer of blessing
- 2.15 depart *don't forget to collect feedback sheets from teachers p39
 send follow up activity ideas to teachers by email p40*

Timings for the day – sheet for teachers *Please give this to teachers on arrival.*

'My place in God's world – a day of reflection and retreat' - aims of the day:

Within a Christian context, pupils on this day will

- Look in at themselves
- Look out at the world and others
- Consider 'Who am I as a spiritual being?'

Key questions will be

- Who am I & why am I special?
- How do I listen to and talk with God?
- How do I respond to others?

All timings are likely to vary - those shown are an idealized example. The structure of the day will stay the same.

- 9.30 Schools arrive - welcome and introduction and parachute activity
- 10.00 Carousel activities session 1 - children divided into 3 small groups by teachers
- Being a unique and special individual - button activity
 - Learning to peacefully relax - guided fantasy
 - Problem solving and working together – magic stick, dragon
- 10.30 Refreshments
- 10.45 Carousel activities session 2 - in 3 small groups
- 11.15 Carousel activities session 3 - in 3 small groups
- 11.45 The Hall/large room: sit in a large circle and share what we have learnt/experienced. Finish with singing/prayer
- 12.00 Lunch brought from home
- Teachers to please supervise lunch break
- 12.20 Lunchtime activities eg football, table tennis, chill out on bean bags
NB all lunchtime care is responsibility of teachers please
- 12.45 Prayer stations set up around the venue
Children in twos or threes work their way round them – there's no rush!
They all need to paint a stone which they will take home [essential]
An adult needs to be in each zone
- 1.30 Final session in different room/place – battery candles already lit
Music/reflection/prayer/singing/blessing
- 2.15 Depart

*Please don't forget to give in your feedback sheets
Don't forget the sheet of follow up activity ideas for teachers*

Send the children off in small groups to the *Carousel activities*.

Ask the teachers to divide them into the groups.

Suggest teachers observe different or follow a group round [depending on numbers].

Plenary debrief after the *Carousel activities*.

All groups meet in the main room and sit in a circle.

Give a brief reminder of the work done during the morning – journeying; arriving; parachute game; singing and praying; teamwork activity; relaxation; buttons and why each person is special and loved.

Go round each person asking them to name one thing they have learnt/experienced during the morning – start by feeding back yourself, as the lead tutor for the de-briefing.

Introduce *Father we adore you* – sing through all together, have a time of quiet to thank God for the morning together [1-2mins], sing *Father we adore you* again.

Break for lunch.

Carousel Activities - 1

1 Problem solving and working together

Explain that this activity looks at how we work together. Emphasise that although we are unique and sometimes do things on our own, Christians believe that we were created to live and work together, to support and love one another. How we are, how we interact with others and what gifts and skills we can bring to our relationships are all important.

A Magic Stick *Needs 2 garden canes*

(For the “Magic Stick” activity you will need to split the group in to two if there are more than 7 pupils, otherwise they can do this in one group.)

Pick up the bamboo cane(s). Tell the children that this cane is magic, and that it really wants to float away!

Explain that their task is to use gravity and team work to lower the stick and place it on the floor.

Key points:

- Have a quick, quiet chat with the adult accompanying the group to explain what happens during the task before setting the scene for the children – asking for their assistance with one of the groups
- Children stand close together facing inwards, alternatively, with their elbows bent at waist height, hands as if clapping, only index finger out (Eg 3 pupils may face 2 other pupils alternating so that the stick can be placed on everyone’s index fingers – they may need positioning!)
- The stick must stay in contact with every team members’ index fingers or the attempt is void
- Get everyone in position before you place the stick on their fingers
- You will need to hold the stick in place as you say start (ask the other adult to do the same – make sure the other adult knows that they need to keep an eye on safety)
- When the activity has started the stick will go up or become lopsided. This is because some are lowering it too quickly and others simply trying to keep their fingers in contact. Let the groups try a few times to lower the stick, by starting them off again.
- Stop activity and ask them to reflect on what has been happening – why they can’t lower the stick, who has made some good suggestions but not been listened to, how they might be able to work better together.
- Give them a minute to discuss how best to lower the stick together.
- Try again. Hopefully they will succeed, although it doesn’t matter if they don’t. You could help guide them if need be.
- EMPHASISE: how and why the activity was failing, and how and why they managed to solve the problem.

1 **Problem Solving/ Working together contd**

B **Dragon Design** (A large group can be split in 2.)

The task: The children have to form a human chain, where everyone in the chain is in contact with the next person. They are making themselves into a dragon or a monster, so one end is the head and the other end is the tail.

The only rules are that the only contact the dragon / monster can have with the floor must be [no more, no less – see page 6]:

- One head
- Two bottoms
- One back
- 4 feet
- 4 hands

Tell them they have 5 minutes, and that there will be a photo opportunity at the end [*school camera/ipad only - safeguarding!*]. Build up the competition if they are in 2 groups.

Give them warning of the time – every minute.

Observe how they are working so that you can have a conversation with them about how successful they were / weren't and why, afterwards.

If they aren't making any progress in sorting themselves out remind them of the task and time limit – push them to get sorted!!

Count down so that they get in position, they must be able to hold the position for a photo!

*Check time – if only 5 minutes left sit down in a circle and reflect on the task they have just completed.

Follow this up by have a discussion with them about what we can bring as individuals to group tasks and situations. You could get each pupil to think about something they consider is their strength / skill and also get them to think about a skill or quality that the person sitting on their right has.

Share, going round the circle something about the person on their right that is a quality or skill. (This is easier than putting forward their own skill or quality.)

Go round the circle a second time asking the children to say what they can bring to relationships and situations with others.

C **Shapes** *If there is time introduce the third task: Needs rope and a blind fold*

- Ask for a volunteer who thinks they are good at communicating
- All other group members are blindfolded and hold the rope circle in their hands, standing
- The “communicator” must create a shape by directing the other children in to position – eg “*name*, move two steps to the right”
- When the communicator is happy, you could ask the other adult to say what shape has been created.
- Shapes could be: square, rectangle, triangle, house, cross

ONE HEAD

2 BOTTOMS

ONE BACK

4 FEET

4 HANDS

Carousel Activities - 2

2 Being a unique and special individual

Button activity

Needs a button collection, pens, paper

Introduce this activity with everyone sitting in a circle on the floor. Tell them it is about each of us being unique individuals even when we are part of different groups/teams [sports, school, form etc] - God knows all of us; we are all different but God has a plan for us all.

Spread out the buttons in the centre of the circle. Ask the children to choose a button that is special for something special about them [eg a turquoise button for a special holiday and swimming]. Tell them to take their time and look carefully as all the buttons are unique and different. Choose one yourself.

Ask each child in turn why they chose their button, how it is distinctive and why they chose it from all the others - ask for a little more explanation – eg how does it feel when you are walking your dog, why is it so special?

When you have gone round, give out paper and pens – ask them to write or draw something about what they talked about - their special activity or person or people.

Names on back of sheets.

There may not be time to finish their drawings – tell them that is fine and they can be finished off back at school.

With 1-2 minutes to go, ask them to say one word about what had arisen for them doing this activity [eg peacefulness].

Collect drawings/writings for teachers to take back to school.

Carousel Activities - 3

3 *Practising relaxation techniques through a guided visualisation*

Needs pens, paper, bean bags or equivalent relaxing space

Preparation

Have places set out for the children to sit or lie in a relaxed position with cushions or bean bags if possible – make sure each child has enough room and is not touching another child. Subdued lighting is helpful.

The exercise works well if you just read out the tutor notes below, allowing some time for each bullet point with pauses/silence. Feel free to adapt/personalize this material.

Introduction 3-5mins

Ask about the things that ‘stress’ them [‘What stresses you?']. Then ask, ‘when this happens, what do you do?’ Responses might include eg walk the dog, go to my room and listen to music.

Explain that in this exercise, you re going to teach a way of relaxing/de-stressing through a guided imaginary journey to a safe place – this place is for each child individually and is not about anyone else in the room.

Exercise 15mins

- Quieten the children down and ask them to get as relaxed as possible.
- Ask them to close their eyes and focus on their breathing - breathing in warm light air and breathing out any worries or tension. In, out, in, out. Let go of any tension – keep the breathing going and feel yourself relaxing.
- Let your eyes gently close. Let your feet and legs feel heavy. Let your feet drop into a comfortable position. Let your hands fall to the floor and your shoulders drop.
- Be aware of your own slow, regular breathing. Take a breath in through your mouth and slowly let it out of your nose. And again. Now keep on breathing in this way.
- You are going on a journey to a very special place - a very comfortable and safe place in the countryside. It may be a place you have visited in real life or it may be an imaginary one - it’s your special place - you choose.
- Now imagine that you are in a field. A beautiful field. The most beautiful field you have ever seen. Picture the field in your mind – does it have a wall or a fence round it? Are there any animals in your field?
- You begin to slowly walk across the field. It is a lovely warm day and the sun is shining. You decide to take off your shoes and socks. Feel how soft the grass is beneath your feet. Feel the blades of grass between your toes. Take a few steps.
- Now raise your face up towards the sky and close your eyes. Feel the warmth of the sun against your skin. Feel how the warm breeze brushes against your cheeks. Stand for a moment and enjoy this feeling.

- As you continue to walk across the field you notice some trees. How many trees are there in your special place. How big are they? You can decide because this is *your* special place.
- Listen. What can you hear? Maybe the branches of the trees are moving in the breeze high up above you and the leaves are rustling. See how the leaves create pretty patterns against the blue sky.
- Listen again. You can hear water somewhere nearby. Take a few more steps past the trees. You find a stream. The sun is reflecting on the surface. Walk over and take a closer look. It looks beautiful and very inviting. As it is a warm day and you are already barefoot you can't resist having a paddle.
- Slowly lift one foot and lower it gently towards the water. Let your big toe break the surface. How does it feel? Let the rest of your toes under the water. Feel the water raise up over your ankle. Now drop your other foot into the water. Feel the sand at the bottom of the stream. So soft.
- Just stand for a moment. Close your eyes. Raise your face to the sun. There are so many different sensations. The warmth of the sun and the coldness of the water. The sound of the water rushing by and the leaves moving in the breeze.
- You slowly walk to the edge of the stream and step out of the water. You decide to take a rest so you lie down on the grass. Rest here for a while. You feel relaxed here. You feel peaceful here. You feel safe here.
- Now that you feel rested it is time to leave your imaginary place and return to the room. When you feel ready, open your eyes and maybe sit up. There is no rush and you can stay lying down a little longer if you would like.

Drawing or writing *5mins*

Tell the children that they're going to talk about their experience, but first, *without talking* they're going to draw something of where they have been in their imagination or to write down how they feel about where they have been – this may be a poem or a series of words and will be a reminder of today.

NB names on papers – collect up at the end and give back to teachers.

Concluding discussion *5-7mins* Try to draw everyone into the conversation.

- How did you find the imagination? Easy, difficult?
- Was your field real or made up? Tell us about it. What was it like?
- What did you have in your field – any animals?
- Did anyone take a pet or a friend with them? What or who?
- What was your stream like? Waterfall, colour, glistening, warmth?
- What did you hear?

Tell the children that this safe and special place will always be there for them to return to in the future. If there are times when they are becoming stressed, they can create a safe space like this to go and be alone, to think or relax or escape from any worries they might have: relax [perhaps with music]; settle their body and their breathing; go to their safe space.

Prayer stations

Sixteen possible prayer stations are included below. There is no need to use all of them but a minimum of 12 is suggested for 30-45 minute session.

These stations need to be set up at several locations around the space available.

Tutors will need to supervise two or three stations each and keep the children moving. The children move round in twos or threes.

There is plenty for them to do in the time available [about 40-45 minutes] provided they take it seriously and don't rush – it's not a race.

Each child needs to write a prayer and decorate a stone as these will be used in the final activity of the day. The stones will be taken back to school or home.

The following sheets can be printed off for the stations – they are best laminated – the sheets show what is needed for each station.

See *Resource sheet* at the back of these notes for key items needed, which include: lots of pens, some smarties, lots of paper, scissors, large and small post its, bubbles, a bowl with stones in, a map of the world, some small mirrors...

There are photographs of each prayer station which can be forwarded if needed.

Introduction to prayer stations - 5mins or so – children sitting in a circle

Explain a little about prayer, how we all pray at times and in different ways especially if difficult things are happening in our lives. Ask the children what they think prayer is ['talking to/with God' is the most common answer]. Ask them what different ways we can pray. This leads into talking about ACTS [adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication] and 'My place in God's world'.

Explain that the stations are interactive and provide the opportunity to read things, write things, be still, watch things, taste things, use your hands, think. They also offer a chance to pray for yourself [including saying sorry for things if you need to]; to pray for other people; to pray for our world; to thank and praise God for God's goodness; to write your own prayers; to say your own prayers.

Send the children off in 2s or 3s to the different stations. Keep them moving round after a few minutes at each station. They may need encouraging to spend more time at some stations and to move on from others! There may not be time for each child to do every station.

Bring everyone together before going to the closing session with their stones. Tutor to take the children's prayers on post-its and the cut out people prayers.

Final session

In different room/place with candles already lit [battery ones best]

- music player and soft appropriate music
- the painted stones from the prayer station to build a cairn with
- a rope if possible [not essential] to hold when sitting in a circle
- post its from the prayer station - these prayers to be read out by one of the tutors
- people-chains made earlier – to put on the floor at the start as part of the prayers
- a prayer of blessing and a leader to give the blessing

Introduce the final session as a time of prayer and reflection on the whole day.

- play music for 2-3mins + offer time to think/pray with stone in hand
- build cairn from painted stones and offer quiet prayer [tutor puts first stone to start] – ask who knows what a cairn is – talk about a cairn as a pile of stones to guide people on their journey when the weather is bad or the journey difficult
- hold rope & go round verbally re what learnt/what take away/part of one another & all creation/mention the 3 groups to remind from morning
- recap about retreat/experiencing creation/ learning how to pray [focus on something, sit quietly, eyes shut];
- tutor to read out pupils' post-it prayers from prayer station;
- sing '*Father we adore you*' all together; silence 2-5min with centring & stilling self, relaxing, sitting still with feet flat on the floor and not fidgeting, thanking God for the day and all that we have learnt; sing *Father we adore you* again
- final prayer of blessing

After final session

don't forget to collect feedback sheets from teachers

debrief tutors

give follow up activity ideas sheet to teachers

Adoration: Scrabble Tiles

“God is awesome!” There are so many things we could say about God, different ways we can describe him and words to use to praise him. Sit for a moment and think about a word you might use to say how great God is, or a word you might use to describe him.

Find the letters and place the word on the scrabble board.

Saying Sorry/ Forgiveness: *Bubbles*

Before you blow the bubbles think about some things that you have done or said which have been unkind or hurt someone in your family. Say sorry to God for this as you blow the bubbles.

Watch the bubbles forming and floating away, and as the bubbles burst know that God will forgive you.

Blow some more bubbles and try to make a decision that you will be kinder and more thoughtful.

Saying Sorry/ Forgiveness:

Quiet Waters

Sit quietly looking at the still, calm water. See the shells and the gems beneath the surface. Look at their shape and colours.

Think about the beautiful world we live in and how we often mistreat it – maybe by dropping litter, by wasting food, by thoughtlessly hurting small creatures and damaging plants.

Put your hand in the water and disturb it: Make a vortex – spin the water round and round – or just shake your fingers across the surface.

Watch as the still water is disrupted and the smooth shapes and colours are less easy to see.

Say sorry to God – for something you have done or for something humankind has done to the world. Dry your hand, and watch as the water settles.

Feel God's love for the world and his forgiveness as the water becomes still again.

Saying Sorry/ Forgiveness: *Thumbprint*

Jesus died on the cross so that our sins can be forgiven. God wants us to know when we have got things wrong and to say sorry for them. He wants us to try to start getting things right.

But this is all GOOD NEWS!

Press your thumb firmly on to the ink pad, and as you do so think about something you really want to say sorry for.

Say sorry to God as you add your thumb print to the cross. Know that Jesus died for you and loves you: That you are forgiven.

Saying Sorry / Forgiveness: *Shredding*

Have you done anything over the last few weeks that no one knows about and that you are ashamed of?

In private write it on a piece of paper, and then shred your paper. Put all the pieces into the bowl and say a private prayer to God, saying sorry.

Later we will burn the paper, as a symbol of God's forgiveness and cleansing love.

Thanksgiving: *Playdoh*

God's world is such an amazing place and there is so much to be thankful for. What or who would you like to thank God for?

Take some playdoh and sit quietly as you mould it to represent something or someone you are thankful for. Think about why this person or thing is worth thanking God for!

Asking God: Play-doh

Think for a moment of something or someone that you would like to ask God to look after or help.

Take some play-doh and mould it into something that represents your person, situation or thing.

As you quietly mould your play-doh offer your thoughts and concerns up to God.

Omit this one if you have enough

Thanksgiving: *Scripture*

You will find lots of passages from the Bible written on strips of paper. They talk about God's special creation - that's us & his world!

Take a look at the verses and choose one which you'd like to thank God for. Place it on the collage of images above and thank God for this.

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...and be thankful.” Colossians 3:15

“Give thanks to God for he is good; his love endures forever.” 1 Chronicles 16: 34

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.” Psalm 28:7

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” John 14:27

“Cast all your worries on him because he cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:7

“The Lord says, 'I have called you by name, you are mine.’” Isaiah 43.1

“O LORD, you know me completely.” Psalm 139. 1

“Be still, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46.10

“So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.” Matthew 10. 31

"O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" Psalm 8:9

"For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139: 13-14

"The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;" Psalm 24:1

"You are worthy, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power: for you created all things, and because of your will they exist and were created." Revelations 4:11

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another." 1 John 1:7

"For God loved the world so much, that he gave his only Son, the whoever believes in him will have eternal life." John 3:16

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."
Matthew 7:7

"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are." 1 John 3:1-3

Asking God: *God's Hands*

Look at the image of God's hands. God loves and wants to look after each one of us.

Write the name of someone you would like to ask God to take care of – maybe they are ill, or sad. It might even be you.

Stick the name on to the image so that it is sitting in God's hands.

Asking God: *Heal the World*

Look at the map of the world.

Find somewhere that you have heard about or learnt about where there is pain, war, poverty or another kind of problem.

Take a gem and place it on the map on your chosen place. Sit back and tell God how you feel about this place, why you are sad and ask God to help or heal the problem.

Adore, Say Sorry, Thank, Ask: *Smarties*

The colour of the smarties links to a prayer below. Either choose a prayer and take the colour smartie that matches, or take a smartie and find the prayer that matches it.

Place the smartie on your tongue. As the smartie dissolves in your mouth, say the prayer to God. You might have time to say it twice, or think about it for yourself.

NOTE – there are enough smarties for TWO each...
that's TWO prayers to really think about!



Dear God, (GREEN)

We thank you for the world we live in;

For this beautiful creation.

We thank you for our families and friends

For those who love us and care about us

We thank you that you love each one of us

And that we are your children.

Amen

Lord Jesus, (BLUE)

Please be with all those in need today

The homeless, the poor, those who
live where there is war, those struggling with
disease

Help these people find hope, even in
the darkness and pain Amen

Dear Father God,

(YELLOW)

I am sorry for the times that I open my mouth
without thinking

That I don't always tell the truth.

Father forgive me and help think before I open
my mouth.

Amen

Dear Jesus, (RED)
Thank you for showing us a better way to live,
and for your endless love.
Amen

Dear God, (PURPLE)

I am sorry for the times that I don't think about
others
For the times I am greedy, or selfish.

Help me to be a good friend to others, even to
those
I sometimes find it difficult to get on with.

Amen

Father in Heaven, (ORANGE)

Please take care of my family and my friends.
Be with us when we are sad and when we are
happy.

Help us to listen to each other and to be
supportive.

Help us find the best way to show we care.
Amen

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Adore, Say Sorry, Thank, Ask: *Stones*

Choose a stone. You will be taking this stone home with you today. Write your name on the back of the stone. Now turn it over.

This is going to be a special prayer. Something that you think you would want to pray about again and again.

There might be something that makes you sad, something that makes you happy, something that you want to thank God for, or ask God for or say sorry for.

Using the permanent pens, draw an image or write a word and decorate your stone,

thinking about the “thing” or the people quietly as you write and draw on your stone.

Thanksgiving: *Mirrors*

Today you have thought about yourself as special and unique. You have also thought about how you are part of other people’s lives.

Carefully pick up a mirror and look at your reflection. Say thank you to God for some of the things that are special about you.

Thank God that you are wonderfully and fearfully made.

Thanksgiving: *Paper people chain*

Take one of the folded strips of paper and, keeping it folded, cut along the outline of half a person.

As you open out your people-chain, think about the people who are important in your life & thank God for them. Write their names on the people-chain. Use the pens to decorate the people if you have time – remember to include yourself in the chain!

Thanksgiving: *Cross tiles*

Jesus Christ died on the cross so that we can have a relationship with God, and so that we can, and should, enjoy life in all its fullness.

Take a moment to think about some of the things that bring you happiness and joy.

Using the chalks / crayons, make a picture or pattern on the white paper to show this.

When you have finished gently peel off the masking tape and thank God for sending his Son, and for the gifts we have. (Leave your tile to add to the display)

Omit this one if you have enough

Saying Sorry: *Sand*

God loves us all so much that he will forgive anything we ask, all we have to do is really mean it. Sit quietly for a moment and think about something that you want to say sorry for.

Using your finger, write a word, draw an image or simply put your finger print in the sand, thinking about what you want to say sorry for.

Offer it up to God, and then simply smooth away what you have put in the sand, as a symbol of God's forgiveness.

Reflection Station:

Post It Prayers

Today you have been thinking about

- Who you are and why you are special

- How you listen to God
- How you respond to and work alongside others

Take a post it and write a thought you have had today linked to any of these, something you may have learnt, or a prayer to do with this.

Resource list for Primary School Retreat Days

Parachute games: *needs parachute/ball/large room for full class*

Carousel activities:

1 *Problem Solving/ Working together*

A *Magic Stick* *Needs 2 garden canes*

B *Dragon Design* *Copy of page 6 tutor note saying:*

- *One head Two bottoms One back 4 feet 4 hands*

C *Shapes* *Needs rope and a blind fold*

2 *Being a unique and special individual*

Button activity *Needs a button collection, pens, paper*

3 *Practising relaxation techniques through a guided visualisation*

Needs pens, paper, bean bags or equivalent relaxing space

Lunchtime

*Needs feedback sheets for teachers [given out at lunchtime, collected at end of day];
lunchtime activities eg football, table tennis, watching a video, drawing, reading etc*

Final session

Needs a different room/place with candles already lit [battery ones best]

- music player and soft appropriate music
- the painted stones from the prayer station to build a cairn with
- a rope if possible to hold when sitting in a circle
- post its from the prayer station - these prayers to be read out by one of the tutors
- people-chains made earlier – to put on the floor as part of the prayers
- a prayer of blessing and a leader to give the blessing

After final session

don't forget to collect feedback sheets from teachers

debrief tutors

give follow up activity ideas sheet to teachers

Prayer stations

Precise requirements depend on which stations you choose – see photos of each station and notes below:

Adoration:

Scrabble tiles instructions; scrabble tiles; board

Confession/forgiveness:

Bubbles instructions; 3 or 4 lots of bubbles

Ripples instructions; large stainless steel bowl; stones and gems to bottom; towels/paper for hand drying

Thumbprint instructions; wet-wipes; inking pad multicolour; cross; paper to cover cross

Shredding instructions; stainless steel bowl; paper; pens

Sand instructions; sand pit

Thanksgiving:

Playdoh instructions; pack of playdoh varying colours; tray

Scripture instructions; pictures [laminated]; scripture quotes

Paper Chains instructions; pens; scissors [3-4]; A4 paper

Mirrors instructions; mirror tiles [four]

Cross tiles instructions; pens; A4 white paper; masking tape

Supplication:

Post it prayers instructions; post-its; coloured pens

God's hands instructions; hand pictures; post-its; pens

Heal the world instructions; map of the world; clear gems

ACTS – using all types of prayer:

Smarties instructions; smarties [two per child]; prayers to match; small bowls [2]

Stones instructions; stones [about 5cm dia – one per child]; indelible pens

Primary School Retreat Days – teacher feedback sheet

'My place in God's world – a day of reflection and retreat'

We would appreciate your feedback to inform future courses

The aims of this day were:

Within a Christian context, pupils on this quiet day would

- Look in at themselves
- Look out at the world and others
- Consider 'Who am I as a spiritual being?'

Key questions were:

- Who am I and why am I special?
- How do I listen to and talk with God?
- How do I respond to others?

Date attended:

School name:

What did you find most useful or helpful today?

Were the aims clear and were they achieved? If not, why not?

How could we have made this day more helpful for your pupils?

Please can you identify any specific curriculum areas that were covered?

Please add any other comments or feedback [feel free to continue over].

Thanks very much.

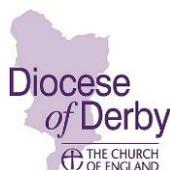
Primary School Retreat Days

Follow up possibilities – some ideas for teachers

We hope you and your pupils enjoyed the retreat day at the Peak Centre. Listed below are a few follow up ideas which we hope you may find useful for the children. If you think of any others, please let us know so that we can add them to this resource list [send to: cocksedge@doctors.org.uk].

- Write a report/diary of the day with key learning points and reflection on how they might be used in the future
- Make a leaflet advertising the Peak Centre and the Retreat days
- Write about ‘special places’
- Do a collective worship on different ways of praying
- Use teamwork as a theme including the different roles needed within a good team [cf Belbin]
- Make a booklet/leaflet reflecting on individual activities [relaxation, The Fold, buttons, problem solving, parachute etc]
- Develop prayer stations or a prayer corner or a prayer board – perhaps use your local vicar or church team to help with this – write your own prayers for this
- Try having times of quiet/prayer/mindfulness as part of assemblies with clear direction to pupils about how to sit and what to think about [or not think about!]
- Create regular relaxation within the school day or week [consider using mindfulness material for this – lots of internet resources available]

Embed regular meditation within the school [consider using the WCCM website for information on this – it has a great timer with a lovely bell noise to start and finish a quiet time. <http://wccm.org/content/how-meditate>

EXAMPLE INVITATION LETTER

Primary School Retreat Days
at The Peak Centre

You are invited to attend a Retreat with your Year 6s (or Year 5 and 6s), at ?? (maximum numbers = 33).

The Retreat, which is free of charge, is run by ??

The Retreat Days were first run in 2015, and we have ?? dates in ?? on offer.

If you are a small school, or only planning on bringing a fairly small group, we will match you up with another small group to join you on your Retreat Day.

Below you can find the dates available and a brief summary of the aims and format of the day.

Dates available:*Aims*

Within a Christian context, pupils on this quiet day will

- Look in at themselves
- Look out at the world and others
- Consider 'Who am I as a spiritual being?'

Key questions will be

- Who am I and why am I special?
- How do I listen to and talk with God?
- How do I respond to others?

Timings of the day

Please arrive for a **9.45am** start

9.45 Introductions – people, place, day. Short interactive prayer and reflection

From 10 – 12 am Activity Carousel in 3 small groups

10.00 Activity 1

10.30 Refreshments – provided by The Peak Centre

10.45 Activity 2 and 3

11.45 Reflection in The Fold (Woodland Cabin)

12.00 Lunch – *Please bring a packed lunch – although water / squash will be provided.*

Please note, adults accompanying your group will be responsible for supervising the children during lunchtime - there will be the opportunity for football in the hall or some quiet activities eg colouring/ board games in the dining room

12.45 Exploring ways to pray

1.30 A time together in The Fold – time to share, reflect and worship

2.00 / 2.15 Depart

For more information don't hesitate to contact ??tel or email

EXAMPLE OF FLYER FOR ADVERTISING

Primary School Retreat Days

at ??

for Year 6 pupils at Derby Diocese Church of England Primary Schools.

What: activities, games, singing, prayer stations, worship, exercise.

Why: the events of this day will cover several PHSE curriculum topics including knowing yourself, teambuilding, relaxation, prayer, respecting others.

Who: we can take one class of Year 6 pupils each day. Groups from small schools can be combined if needed to make up numbers & small schools occasionally send some Year 5 pupils [please ask us].

Outcomes: we have been running these days since 2015 and they always receive excellent evaluations from pupils and teachers. The material covered can be followed up and further developed at your school – we provide teachers with a sheet of ideas for this.

When: we are planning ? days in 20?? at

Costs: there is no charge for the day but you need to provide transport to the centre. Children will need to bring a packed lunch.

Staffing: staff will need to accompany the children and supervise at lunchtime. Otherwise, they will be able to observe the day.

Contact: enquiries and bookings to Sam at the Peak Centre office@peakcentre.org.uk or 01433 670254