

Prayer Spaces in Schools

Learning from a prayer space

KS3 – Lesson 4 of 4

A serious discussion of some big issues about prayer

Learning opportunities for 7-11s on themes about prayer and reflection.

Prayer Spaces in Schools create extraordinary opportunities for children and young people to think about prayer and to consider spirituality in open-minded experiential ways.

This lesson is one of a series written by Lat Blaylock of RE Today and provided free to schools to enable learners to use critical and reflective thinking skills to learn about spirituality, prayer and reflection.



Since 2010 [Prayer Spaces in Schools](#) has been helping people to create space in schools where pupils can pause to reflect or pray.

A prayer space provides a safe place for children to be still, to think and feel, to ask questions, to reflect and to explore prayer for themselves using simple activities that are creative and interactive. Every prayer space is rooted in a Christian understanding of prayer whilst being accessible to people of any faith or belief.

These spaces make a valuable contribution to the wellbeing of pupils, and to the pastoral and spiritual life of whole school communities.

Prayer Spaces in Schools GB is an initiative of 24-7 Prayer, an international movement that helps people to pray.



[RE Today Services](#) supports teachers, schools and others involved in Religious Education by equipping and empowering them to teach about religious and non-religious worldviews with confidence. They offer training courses, professional development, consultancy and a wide range of resources to teachers in thousands of schools of every kind.



We are grateful to the [Westhill Endowment](#) for their generous support which has enabled us to create these resources and to make them available for free.

KS3 Lesson 4 of 4

A serious discussion of some big issues about prayer
Learning opportunities for 11-14s on themes about prayer and reflection.

Purpose

This lesson plan is written for use after students have experienced a Prayer Space. There is one lesson plan for use before a Prayer Space and two others for use after to help students draw out further learning from their experience.

Learning objectives

- For students to engage with the views of others about prayer.
 - To consider some Christian people's views about prayer and the reasons why it matters to them.
 - To discuss one of Jesus' parables about a good and a bad attitude to praying.
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Learning outcomes

By the end of this lesson students will have:

- Discussed their ideas about a sequence of views on prayer with other students.
 - Considered the value and significance of prayer for three Christians.
 - Explored the meaning of one of Jesus' parables about prayer.
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You will need...

- The accompanying presentation.
- Slide 13** – Students will need printed copies of the worksheet 'Does prayer work?' (© RE Today)
- Slide 14** – Students will need printed copies of the resource 'What is prayer for Christians?' (© RE Today)
- You may wish to give students large sheets of paper and pens to be able to record any group discussions.

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Slide notes

Most slides have presenter notes offering supporting information.

Slide 1 – Aims

Aims of these lessons:

-  To provide excellent and respected classroom resources for teachers of RVE / RME / RE to use in lessons when a Prayer Spaces visit is coming, taking place or has happened,
 -  To enable teachers and Prayer Spaces volunteers to deliver quality RVE / RME / RE about prayer which connects to the experiences of the Prayer Spaces provision.
 -  To enable students to think for themselves about prayer and its meanings, and access opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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Slide 2 – The learning package

This lesson is part of a larger 'Prayer Spaces in Schools' learning package and can be used by teachers and school visitors, especially if they are involved in supporting the school by running a Prayer Space or reflection space.

The lessons:

- Can be taught - with preparation - 'off the shelf' using the 4 presentation sequences provided
- Will be understood better by teachers and school visitors if you watch our training recorded webinars from Lat Blaylock of RE today
- Include examples of students' work, art, writing and responses
- Are suitable for use across the UK, recognising what is distinctive about RME / RVE / RE in each of the four nations
- Reference law, guidance and inspection requirements for RE / SMSCD / School Worship
- Use some Prayer Spaces in Schools case studies

Slide 3 – For classroom use, start here.

This slide introduces the themes of this lesson:

- expressing their own views about prayer
- Finding out what three Christians say about what prayer means to them
- Thinking about what Jesus says about prayer through a parable in the Bible

Slide 4 – Thinking about praying

This describes the first discussion activity – it might help to have this on screen as you explain to students.

Slides 5 to 11 – Wheels within wheels discussion questions

Ask students to move on one chair in the outside circle each time, and settle them before you move the slide. Then read out the quote slowly, clearly, twice and let them all talk!

Slide 12 – Expressing your own viewpoints 1

The three questions here could be used in class to help students record their experience of the discussion activity.

Or it could form a homework task.

Slide 13 – Expressing your own viewpoints 2

This activity uses the accompanying thought capture sheet ‘Does prayer work?’ which lists all seven questions.

This could form a class activity or homework task.

Slide 14 – Investigating prayer with social science methods

Use the accompanying information source ‘What is prayer for Christians?’ to investigate personal accounts of prayer from three Christians.

Class activity –

What value and significance does each one find in prayer?

If you wrote a piece answering similar questions yourself, what would yours say?

Slide 15 – What does the Bible offer to help us understand Christian prayer?

Jesus tells a parable about a Pharisee and a tax collector.

These lessons enable students to learn a lot specifically about Christian prayer, and use Biblical quotations, examples and texts to enrich students’ understanding.

You might want to move this part of the lesson up higher and do it first. This is a third part to the lesson, but could be used first or second depending on the teaching sequence you need.

There is a good section on BBC GCSE RS Bitesize about the meanings of this parable:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zkw2vk7/revision/3>

Slide 16 – What does the Bible offer to help us understand Christian prayer?

Some questions to help students investigate the meaning of Jesus' parable.

Slides 17 – Artwork

'The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector' by artist Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld.

This is an extension activity which can open up new ways of thinking about the parable.

The questions on screen invite opinion - carefully managed this exercise can invite new insights into how students understand prayer.

Slide 18 – Concluding discussion

A recap exercise to help embed understanding and learning.

What did this lesson make you think about?

What ideas of your own have come into clearer focus?

Has your own position on the value or pointlessness of praying changed or developed?