SEEKING Shapes FOR LIVING

Collective Worship and Prayer Spaces Ideas Lent
Throughout the five weeks of Lent, the Diocese of Gloucester is exploring how faith influences every aspect of daily life, in an initiative called, ‘Seeking Shapes for Living’. As schools are members of our diocesan community, this resource pack invites you to take part.

‘Shapes for Living’ is an idea inspired by Benedict, a Christian living in Italy in the Dark Ages, who wrote some simple and practical guidelines to help people develop the nurturing, securing and sustaining shapes for living that the dark times sorely needed. Benedict’s Rule of Life has been used by communities and individuals around the world ever since. As the materials will show, Benedict’s Rule is associated with Benedictine Monks but was originally written for ordinary people seeking to be faithful disciples of Christ in the midst of the challenges and dilemmas of daily living.

This resource provides:

• One complete daily act of collective worship for each of the five weeks leading up to Easter, following the themes of: relating, praying, working, playing and growing.

• For each worship there is
  o a PowerPoint
  o accompanying notes and information (embedded in PowerPoint in ‘notes pages’ accessible via view option)
  o opening prayers
  o a drama script for children to deliver
  o a weekly themed prayer
  o opportunity to share the peace
  o blessing
  o explanation of each week’s prayer space

• For each week there is also a pack to support a linked prayer space activity. Included is a purple backdrop (purple is the colour of preparation that many churches use during Lent) and photos of suggested ideas for how the prayer space could be displayed.

The resource includes:

  o Week One: tray for sand, labels and pictures
  o Week Two: wooden teaspoon for every child to decorate and keep in their pocket, a large wooden spoon, labels and pictures
  o Week Three: paper chain templates (also available online), labels and pictures
  o Week Four: Spinner idea (also available online), windmill for display, labels and pictures
  o Week Five: Red, amber and green Lego™-style bricks for each child, labels and pictures.

We hope you enjoy this time of exploration in school. Please pass on any feedback to Debbie Helme, RE Advisor dhelme@glosdioc.org.uk or Jo Wetherall, Children and Families Officer jwetherall@glosdioc.org.uk
Every week, the worship will begin and end in the same way, with an opening prayer and the closing blessing

Welcome

Adult Worship Leader: It is very good to be here together with each other
All: Together with God
Student 1: God who is with us in each other (then places sand tray on table)
Student 2: God who listens to us in prayer (then places spoon on table)
Student 3: God whose playful creativity is good (then places kite on table)
Student 4: God whose spirit works through us (then places paper chains on table)
Student 5: God whose Son Jesus shows us how to grow in love (then places Lego/Duplo™ bricks on table)

Blessing

Adult worship leader This is another sort of prayer which is my prayer for you:

Go into this day as the welcome children of God
Valued by each other and by many people
In your growing and playing
Your working and praying
May the God of Love hold you,
Jesus walk beside you
And the Holy Spirit inspire you. AMEN
Can you think back to a time before you started school? How were things different? Who did you see? What did you do?

Now remember the time when you started school. Did people start to ask you ‘how is school’? Suddenly you belonged to a big community, full of people to get to know, to play with and hopefully to be friends with.

For the next few weeks we are going to hear how a different community used to work together and discover some things we can learn from them about how we can all get on together.
Every day the monks would meet together in this room for a special meeting. It was a time for everyone to talk about how things were going, apologise if anyone had done anything wrong and plan for the future.

The monk in charge, called the Abbot, would lead the meeting and everyone would sit in a circle so everyone could see everyone’s face and each monk felt included. The oldest, most experienced monk would sit on the Abbot’s right. But on his left side was the youngest, newest monk. This was so he could hear both the wisdom from the years past and fresh ideas for the years to come. It showed everyone was valued.

Here is Gloucester Cathedral. Who has been there?

When it was first built in 1089, it wasn’t a Cathedral. Instead, it was the Abbey Church for a group of men called Benedictine monks. They were men who decided to leave behind usual homes and jobs and instead discover a whole new shape for their lives. They gave their whole lives to God by praying, working and learning. Their home was in the monastery which was attached to the Abbey. This where they would study and pray and work. Altogether, all the time. They never left the monastery, not for a weekend or for a night off, so it was really, really important everyone got on well.

A group of monks continued to live in the Abbey until Henry VIII had it closed down in 1540. That is when it became a Cathedral.

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Back in the medieval times this was one of the main gateways into the Abbey.

At that time everyone knew that if they ran into problems and had nowhere to stay or nothing to eat, they could go to the monks at the monastery who would always give them food and shelter for a day and night. They wouldn’t turn anyone away and said, ‘let everyone be welcomed as Christ’.

They would bow their heads to people as a sign that they recognised the presence of God in them.
Child A & B enter, walking along, talking together:
Child A: Did you hear what …… (teacher's name) said in collective worship this morning?
Child B: Do you mean when we learnt about the monks?
Child A: Well, I was thinking about the part where the monks welcomed everyone as though they were special.
Child B: Oh yes, when they treated every visitor in the same way they would have treated Jesus if he had visited them. It must have been fantastic being one of their visitors.

Child C comes running on
Child C: Oh there you are – all the members of school council have to go to the school office to welcome a visitor to the school.
Child A: Do you know who is coming?
Child C: Well, I heard it’s a new child who is starting in reception.

Child D comes running in, looking very excited
Child D: Come on everyone, come to the gym quick. Ronaldo is here to open the new changing room…

Child D goes running off and child C follows eagerly
Child A: Hang on a minute, what about the new reception class child? Shouldn’t we be welcoming everyone as someone special, like the monks did when they said, ‘Let everyone be welcomed as Christ’.

Child A heads off in opposite direction to the school office. Child B stands for a moment struggling to decide which way to go…

Prayers

Now we will gather everything that we’ve thought and felt together in a prayer. If you would like to make this prayer your prayer, you can join me in saying AMEN.

God who is with us in each other
Thank you for the joy of our relationships
For our families and friends
For new opportunities to welcome people
Help us to remember all are welcome as Christ
Which means we are welcome too

Sharing the Peace

Worship leader (adult or student):
Let everyone be welcome as Christ. You are welcome
All:
You are welcome
Say quietly to each person either side of you – you are welcome
There will be a prayer space station in (describe place in school) for everyone to use during this week. This will help the school community continue to think about what we have explored.

Prayer Space

Relating

‘All are welcome as Christ’

Use the sand tray to create symbols that might help people feel welcome.

If you remember a time when you weren’t welcoming to someone, draw something to remind you of that time and then smooth the sand until the image disappears.

Prayer for this week

God who is with us in each other
Thank you for the joy of our relationships
For our families and friends
For new opportunities to welcome people
Help us to remember all are welcome as Christ
Which means we are welcome too.

Downloadable from gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living

Blessing

Adult worship leader  This is another sort of prayer which is my prayer for you:

Go into this day as the welcome children of God
Valued by each other and by many people
In your growing and playing
Your working and praying
May the God of Love hold you,
Jesus walk beside you
And the Holy Spirit inspire you. AMEN
Look at the picture.
What do you think they are all doing? Why?
Would it surprise you to know that they are all praying? Although today we often link praying to being still with our eyes closed and our hands together, for many, many centuries people have been praying in different ways. Praying is sharing our thoughts and feelings with God, sometimes Christians might speak and use words or sometimes they might be listening. Sometimes they might communicate through different gifts and skills; like playing music, running fast, walking slowly or painting and drawing.
Last week we learnt about the monks who lived in this abbey which is now Gloucester Cathedral. Monks would do three things – pray, learn and work. They were expected to attend special services in the Abbey where they would pray and sing, like this monk here. They went to seven services every day.

Between services, monks would often pray some more. As a sign that they were praying and in a special space and not to be disturbed they would put up their hoods. They would often walk and as they noticed things or people around them, they would pray for them.

People still go on ‘prayer walks’ today.

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**Drama**

Children B, C, D and E (all wearing hoodies but with hoods down) are spread out at the front, each child is/will do something significant at the appropriate moment, select children to match activity eg cartwheel, dancing, playing a musical instrument, painting, drawing, walking. Child A (in school uniform) enters and heads toward Child B who is painting.

**Child A:** What are you doing?

**Child B simply puts their hood up**

**Child A:** But you're painting.

**Child B:** Yes, but today I wanted to paint my prayer.

**Child A approaches Child C who is doing cartwheels and asks: What are you doing?**

**Child C puts up their hood and continues**

**Child A:** But you're cartwheeling.

**Child C:** Yes, but today I wanted to pray in cartwheels.

Repeat with other children praying in different ways.

**The last child is simply walking and saying:** Yes, but today I wanted to walk and pray.
Small things can make a big difference: a spoonful of medicine, a smile, a light in the dark, a prayer.

Christian prayer is often around – thanking God, Saying sorry to God and saying please to God. Thanks, Sorry, Please – TSP – just like a teaspoon.  
(Make sure the three letter link is explicit.)

Prayer Space

Explain that there will be a prayer spaces station in – describe place in school – for all children to use during this week. This will help the school community think about the themes we are exploring this week.

This week in the prayer space, everyone will be given a teaspoon to decorate with thanks, sorry and please pictures or words. You can then keep it in your coat pocket and when you walk it can remind you that it’s ok to pray and walk. Think about what and who you might spot that you could pray for:
Praying

Small things can make a big difference

1 tsp

Thanks
Sorry
Please

a spoonful of medicine, a smile, a light in the dark, a prayer.

Prayer

This week you will be given a teaspoon to decorate with thanks, sorry and please pictures or words.
You can then keep it in a pocket and it will remind you can pray wherever you are, whatever you are doing.

I wonder who or what you will pray for today?
i wonder how you will pray today?

Prayer for this week

God be in our minds
And in our wondering
God be in our eyes
And in our noticing
God be in our hands
And in our creating

God be in our mouths
And in our singing
God be in our hearts
And in our feelings
God be in our feet
And in our moving.

Blessing

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May the God of Love hold you,
Jesus walk beside you
And the Holy Spirit inspire you. AMEN

Downloadable from gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living
Today we’re thinking about working.
Talk to your neighbour about what kind of job you would like when you are old enough.
Are there any jobs you can see that you would like to do?

Work was important to monks. They understood that how they did the work was more significant than the actual work itself. If they were gardening or sweeping or cooking – they were doing it for God and for their brothers. Therefore they believed they should do it well and do it cheerfully.
All monks would have a special job within the community. The job was selected depending on what the monks were good at or enjoyed.

So if you liked being out of doors and working in the garden, you may have become the gardener.

Who likes cooking? You may have become the kitchener who did all the cooking.

Who likes helping people? You may have become the infirmer, who would have been a little like a doctor.

Who likes counting money? You may have become the cellarer who looked after all the money and did the shopping.

Even when the monks had jobs they didn’t particularly enjoy, possibly like sweeping the floor, they were still expected to work with a positive attitude and remember they were doing it for others and for God.

Explain to the children that the monks wanted to work with a positive attitude but probably even they had to remind themselves sometimes.

In the Bible in Colossians 3:17 it says: “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”
A line of five children create a conveyor belt through mime. Facing the front they all have an interconnected job to do.

Child 1 reaches to a high shelf behind them and gets down an imaginary box and passes it to child 2.

Child 2 places the box on a table in front of them and quickly wraps it and passes it to child 3.

Child 3 takes the box and writes an address and passes it to child 4.

Child 4 takes box and stamps it and passes it to child 5 who walks a little distance and places it in an imaginary container.

These actions are going to be repeated, each time there will be a change in attitude/challenge:

First time everyone looks very grumpy and ignores each other...

then they smile at each other...

then they smile and say thank you...

then child 3 clutches stomach feeling ill so children 2 and 5 help them off while the others cheerfully do all the jobs.

At the end, all workers hold out big paper chains reflecting a positive attitude.

One child says: “Sometimes it’s not about what you do, but how you do it.”
Prayer Space

Explain that this week, by writing words on some paper chains and joining them together, the children have an opportunity to consider how they would like to think and feel about the things they have to do.

Working

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

This week, by writing words on some paper chains and joining them together, you have an opportunity to consider how you would like to think and feel about the things you have to do,

kind, generous, positive, prayerful, collaborative, thoughtful, careful

Prayer for this week

God whose Spirit sparks in us,
in all we do and all we say.
God whose Spirit shines through us,
in our work and in our play.
Help us to do it all for God
And in a kind and a thankful way! AMEN

Downloadable from gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living
Explain that the paper chains the children make will be a reminder of working with a positive attitude. Go through the different meanings:

- Working positively
- Working generously
- Working carefully
- Working collaboratively
- Working kindly
- Working thoughtfully

Ask the children to add new positive ways of working too.

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**Blessing**

*Adult worship leader: This is another sort of prayer which is my prayer for you:

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May the God of Love hold you,
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Have you ever stopped to notice what everyone does at playtime?

Who likes to run as much as they can?
Who likes to find their friends and have a chance to chat and catch up?
Who likes to find a quiet space?
Who likes to find a ball?

Have you ever noticed what the teachers do at playtime? Often you will find teachers in the staff room, maybe sitting down with a cup of tea. If they can, often they will find a few minutes just simply to stop, to pause and to be. Everyone needs a time to play or to pause, not everyone will want to play in the same way but everyone needs a chance to feel free for a moment.

We have been learning about the monks who used to live in the abbey in Gloucester before it became a Cathedral. When they became monks they promised to spend their lives praying, learning and working.

They didn’t have much time they would have called ‘playing’ and yet they found a way of being free even when they were working or walking.
At the time of these monks everyone worked hard and they wouldn’t go away on holidays like we might now. But they did celebrate ‘holy-days’. These were usually on Christian festival days or saints days. All the people from the towns and villages around the Abbey would go there and there would be a special fair – to buy and sell things, to try tasty food, to play games and enter competitions, to dance, to laugh, to have fun.

Gradually these ‘holy-days’ became known as ‘holidays’. Some of these special fairs still happen today in Gloucestershire. Can you think of any near here?

Play has always been a very important part of life. In the Christian story of creation it mentions how important play or rest or holidays are when it talks of God resting on the seventh day. To play, to pause, is important.

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**Drama**

*At the font, two children sit at a table making spinners and windmills. After a few moments of concentration, they put them down flat on the table.*

**Child A:** Well, we’ve finished – but they’re not much fun are they?

**Child B:** This is so disappointing. Miss said they were great to play with but they’re so flat and boring. It looks like me after too much SPAG.

**Child A:** What do you think is missing?

**Child B:** (Picking up instructions) Well, I think we’ve done everything right.

**Child A:** Well, it’s not looking very free.

**Child B holds the windmill up.**

**Child B:** I think this windmill needs the wind coming from the right direction. Look if I blow on it.

**Child A:** I think it needs to let the wind blow past it – a bit like me running in the playground.

**Child A holds the spinner up.**

**Child B:** Look at the shapes I can make when it spins. This streamer is like me if I don’t get a chance to play – I stay flat.
You may want to read these verses from Isaiah several times, first by an adult then by a child and invite the children to look at the image of the eagle as they think about the words.

*Now we will gather everything that we’ve thought and felt together in a prayer. If you would like to make this prayer your prayer, you can join me in saying AMEN.*

God has said that…

those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

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This week we can all make spinners to play with to remind us of the importance of play and holidays for everyone – not just children. Play is important and we all need to play - even God needed to play.
Week 4 - Playing

Prayer Space

Explain that play is important and we all need to play – even God needed to play. This week the children will have an opportunity to make spinners to play with, to remind them of how important it is to play and let their heart, mind and body be free.

Blessing

Adult worship leader This is another sort of prayer which is my prayer for you:

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Your working and praying
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Playing

Everyone needs a time to play or to pause. Not everyone will want to play in the same way but everyone needs a chance to feel free for a moment.

Playing

Play is important and we all need to play - even God needed to play.

This week you will have an opportunity to make windmills, kites, streamers or spinners to play with, to remind you of how important it is to play and let your heart, mind and body be free.
When a monk joined the monastery he would have about a year to decide if he wanted to stay for the rest of his life. Once someone had made a decision to stay, they would take three vows. They promised to obey God and the leader of the monastery, they promised to stay in the monastery and they promised to grow a little more like Christ every day.

This window has come from one of the monks’ chapels.

The monks would have known how important light is for growth. Light was important in the abbey and they would have lit candles to remind them of Jesus saying that he was light of the world. They would have studied the Bible and be very familiar with the way Jesus behaved and tried to copy him in the way they lived their lives. For example, when Jesus met people he would stop, think about the person and then respond appropriately. Stop – think – respond.

Christians still try to follow Jesus’ example today and behave more like him.
Child A stands at the front to one side with three large signs – like traffic lights. The red circle has ‘stop’ clearly written on it, the amber sign has ‘pause’ and the green sign has ‘respond’. At the appropriate moments in the stories the child lifts up the appropriate sign.

For each story, a strong reader will need to narrate the story whilst it is acted out by other children. Allow time for pausing when a traffic light sign needs to be held up.

Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52)

They came to Jericho, and as Jesus was leaving with his disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus son of Timaeus was sitting by the road. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me!” Many of the people scolded him and told him to be quiet. But he shouted even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Jesus stopped (RED) and said, “Call him.”

So they called the blind man. “Cheer up!” they said. “Get up, he is calling you.” So he threw off his cloak, jumped up, and came to Jesus.

“What do you want me to do for you?” (AMBER) Jesus asked him.

“Teacher,” the blind man answered, “I want to see again.”

(GREEN) “Go,” Jesus told him, “your faith has made you well.”

At once he was able to see and followed Jesus on the road.

Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10 Good News Translation)

Jesus went on into Jericho and was passing through. There was a chief tax collector there named Zacchaeus, who was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was a little man and could not see Jesus because of the crowd. So he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus, who was going to pass that way.

When Jesus came to that place (RED), he looked up (AMBER) and said to Zacchaeus, (GREEN) “Hurry down, Zacchaeus, because I must stay in your house today.”

Zacchaeus hurried down and welcomed him with great joy. All the people who saw it started grumbling, “This man has gone as a guest to the home of a sinner!”

Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Listen, sir! I will give half my belongings to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay back four times as much.”

Jesus said to him, “Salvation has come to this house today, for this man, also, is a descendant of Abraham. The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

What difference did Jesus’ thoughtful actions make to Zacchaeus?
Now we will gather everything that we’ve thought and felt together in a prayer. If you would like to make this prayer your prayer, you can join me in saying AMEN.

**Pray space…**

**Prayer Space**

Explain that this week the children will be given three Lego™ style bricks – red, yellow and green, to create traffic lights. This can help us think about being more like Jesus.
Growing
...a little more like Christ every day

Use the different construction materials to make your own traffic lights and think about following the example of Jesus.

Prayer for this week
Imagine what the world would be like if everyone ignored traffic lights. Who might be hurt? What might go wrong?

Let us pray...
God, whose son Jesus shows us how to grow in love,
Remind us when to stop,
Help us to pause to think and prepare to support each other,
Inspire us to move forward with the right words or actions.
Amen

Growing
This week you will be given three Lego-style bricks - red, yellow and green, to create traffic lights. This can help you think about being more like Jesus.

- Stop
- Think about the person or situation and prepare
- Respond with the right words or actions

Blessing
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Downloads
The following templates, which could be used as an extension for each of the Prayer Space activities are available to download from gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living

WEEK 1
Instructions
1. Colour in your welcome sign
2. Cut it out along the dotted lines
3. Secure a piece of string or wool where the two black dots are to hang up your sign

WEEK 2

I tsp
Thank you
Sorry
Please
WEEK 3
Decorate and write on your paper chains about the kind of worker you would like to be, for example, I will try to work... thankfully, kindly, cooperatively, positively, generously, carefully... What other words can you think of?

Instructions
1. Decorate your spiral
2. Cut it out along the dotted lines
3. Secure a piece of string or wool where the centre point is