

Prayer stations

Kinnecting with God and children and young people in the UK

Use these kinaesthetic prayer stations to help people engage with general prayer for children and young people in the UK. Each one details what if any equipment you need to get together in advance, instructions for setting up, and the text for the instruction signs you will need to display – (simply copy and paste these into a word document, enlarging the font so that the instructions are clear enough to read).

Used together, the stations should take 50-60 minutes to work round, but if you have less time you can obviously leave out a couple. You can use them within an intercessions slot, have them set up as an installation for a special service or day of prayer where people can come and go independently and/or use them individually as prayer or intercession responses.

Most of them can be worked round in any order, but 'Made and shaped' needs to come first.

You might also like to use mp3 worship tracks of songs celebrating God's love for people in general and/or those which focus in specifically on his Father heart to create a playlist or CD to play in the background as people are moving round the stations.

1. Made and shaped

Equipment needed: playdough, (optional) a sonogram picture and a range of pictures of babies and young children such as enlarged versions of the ones below (©Microsoft), and a print out of the sign you have made using the text below.



Instructions for setting up:

1. In advance: Get together all the items that you will need.
2. On the day: Lay out the items and display a copy of the sign you have made.

For display:

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Made and shaped

“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; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” Psalm 139: 13-16

- Think about these words and what they say about the Father’s incredible love, purpose and intricate work for each person he creates.
- Thank God for each child’s life – especially those known to you closely.
- Using the playdough, form a simple child figure. Pray that children and young people would be made and shaped as God intended, and that each one would know his love and live the lives that express his purpose for them.
- Take your playdough sculpture with you when you leave this station to all the subsequent ones – reminding you to continue to pray for each child and young person’s life to reflect the design God intended as you consider different aspects influencing their lives and futures.

2. Building blocks

Equipment needed: Seven wooden or plastic building blocks, sticky name labels (enough for each block to have one), (optional) representatives pictures of key figures/groups of people of influence on children and young people’s lives, and a print out of the sign you have made using the text below.

Instructions for setting up:

1. In advance: Get together all the items that you will need.
2. On the day: Using the sticky name labels, write out and label each block with one of the following categories – parents and guardians; siblings; grandparents and extended family members; teachers; friends and peers; children’s/youth workers; other influencers. Lay out the items and display a copy of the sign you have made.

For display:

Building blocks

“Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” Proverbs 6:22

- Take one block at a time, praying for each influencer or group of influencers in children and young people’s lives – that they would build up identity and teach and model in a positive way. Pray too for the strength, energy and wisdom each group needs for the task set before them.
- As you move through praying for each group of influencers, place the block down, building up a simple structure as you do.
- When you have finished, give thanks for the way that God surrounds each one of us with family, friends and community. Pray for the growth of strong young people with their hearts founded on the truth – confident in who they are and compassionate towards others.

3. Up the ladder

Equipment needed: a print out of the Up the ladder sheet provided at the end of this document, one or more small plastic figures, dolls or play people and a print out of the sign you have made.

Instructions for setting up:

1. In advance: Get together all the items that you will need.
2. On the day: Lay out the items and display a copy of the sign you have made using the text below.

For display:

Up the ladder

- Take one or more of the child dolls and move it up one rung of the ladder at a time.
- At each rung, pray a blessing for children and young people at each stage of the education ladder – and particularly for those in transition between different stages.
- Pray particularly for any children or young people close to you that are at any of these stages.
- Ask God that the lessons he wants children to learn, and the development of their identities and character, would start to be prized in our society as much as achievement and excellence in academic standards.

4. Feeling the squeeze

Equipment needed: a rolling pin with a label stuck on it that says 'expectation and pressure' and a print out of the sign you have made using the text below.

Instructions for setting up:

1. In advance: Get together all the items that you will need.
2. On the day: Lay out the items and display a copy of the sign you have made.

For display:

Feeling the squeeze

- Children and young people in the UK come under a lot of pressure and expectation. In 2011, a survey conducted by UNICEF in Europe found well-being levels to be at their lowest level here. Depression amongst the young is rising dramatically with varied contributing factors including excessive exam and academic pressure, peer pressure and bullying, body image issues amongst the very young caused by early sexualisation and media pressure, and family breakdown.
- Lie your playdough person down on the surface in front of you, and gently put them under pressure by moving the rolling pin over them. How does it make you feel to see their intended image and shape distorted in this way?
- Offer your feelings, concerns and outrage to God, knowing that the heavenly Father who designed each one is grieving over this mis-shaping of his precious children.

- Pray for pressure to be lifted from young people – for specific individuals you know and for our systems and society as a whole.
- Pick up your young person, and begin to reshape them to how they were before they came under pressure. Thank God for his compassionate and powerful redemptive plans and pray his continued work and blessing in restoring children's identities and lives.

5. School map

Equipment needed: a map of your local area, a print out of a list of all your local schools, a highlighter pen and/or stickers, pens, post it notes, (optional) a laptop, ipad or other means to show the short film clip available at <http://www.prayforschools.org/1303-2/> and a print out of the sign you have made using the text below.

Instructions for setting up:

1. In advance: Get together all the items that you will need, including researching the list of schools in the area. Spend some time finding each of the schools on the map and marking them with a highlighter pen and/or stickers... you might like to number them too and then write the corresponding number against the name of the school on the list.
2. On the day: Lay out the items and display a copy of the sign you have made.

For display:

School map

- Watch the film and reflect on the importance of school in children and young people's lives... and the impact of covering each one in prayer.
- Look at the list of your local schools and thank God for them, and all who attend them, teach at them, or work in a supporting role – especially those that are Christians seeking to be salt and light in each one.
- Using the post-it notes, write short blessing prayers for some of the schools in your local area, and stick them on to the map in the appropriate places.
- Before you move on, ask God to help you choose one or two of the schools to continue covering in prayer. Write down their names on a post-it note to take away and stick up somewhere at home... ask God to bring to mind if there's anything else you can do to support this school, or individuals known to you who are attending it or working there. If anything comes to mind, jot this down too.

6. Writing the wrongs

Equipment needed: Really large sheet of paper – preferably a roll of wallpaper rolled out reverse side up, marker pens, print outs of case-studies and information from organisations such as The Children's Society who work with some of the most vulnerable children and young people in our society, and a print out of the sign you have made using the text below.

Instructions for setting up:

1. In advance: Get together all the items that you will need.
2. On the day: Lay out the items and display a copy of the sign you have made.

For display:**Writing the wrongs**

“But the LORD says, “I will now rise up, because the poor are being hurt. Because of the moans of the helpless, I will give them the help they want.” Psalm 12:5-6

- Read the information available and reflect on this and your own knowledge of children and young people living on the margins of society or facing very adult problems.
- Write your prayers or heart-cries of frustration, prayer and anger onto the ‘graffiti wall’ made available here.
- Consciously offer them to God in prayer, knowing his heart breaks for every situation and every child.
- Pray for the Lord to ‘rise up’ – for the poor, vulnerable and oppressed to be helped and given a voice.
- Pray for God’s blessing on all organisations, public sector services, and individuals who are trying to help children and young people living on the margins or struggling with particular issues. Ask him to bring to mind anything he wants you to be more actively involved with praying for or serving through.

7. Virtually living

Equipment needed: pens, paper and a print out of the sign you have made using the text below

Instructions for setting up:

1. In advance: Get together all the items that you will need.
2. On the day: Lay out the items and display a copy of the sign you have made.

For display:**Virtually living**

- Read the statistics below which point to some of the benefits and challenges facing children and young people with technology and the internet being such a huge part of their lives:
 - Technology so dominates children and young people’s lives that technical skills are often mastered before life skills. More 2-5 year olds can play computer games than ride a bike; open a web browser than swim; and use smartphone applications than tie their shoelaces.*
 - 51% of 6-9 year olds use some kind of children’s social networking site, although 58% of their parents say they don’t know much about what this involves. Across all countries, children reach so called ‘social media maturity’ at 11.**
 - The many different types of computer software available are brilliant learning tools for children and young people have access to amazing educational resources because of the internet. In addition, they are empowered by being able to find things out for themselves. Computer games improve hand eye co-ordination and many require critical and strategic thinking.

*Dr. Jim Taylor, The Huffington Post citing AVG Internet Security Research in *Children’s Immersion in Technology is Shocking* (2012)

**AVG Internet Security Research across eleven different countries (2009)

- Offer your reactions to God in prayer.
- Take a pen and a piece of paper. Fold the paper in half: on one side write down things you want to give thanks for, and on the other things that concern you.

- Offer both lists to God in praise and petition.
- Pray for wisdom for parents, teachers, industries as they make decisions – and the government as they create policies – relating to these issues.

8. Twitturgy

Equipment needed: pens and paper, (optional) and a print out of the sign you have made using the text below.

Instructions for setting up:

1. In advance: Get together all the items that you will need.
2. On the day: Lay out the items and display a copy of the sign you have made.

For display:

Twitturgy

- Our children and young people need to hear and receive the message of hope and freedom that is the gospel in ways they can relate to. But in the midst of information overload and mass marketing, it can be hard for them to hear and absorb life-giving truth.
- Read the twitturgy below – twitter limits users to just 140 characters (including spaces) to a message...
 - The Jesus revolution –**
 - Given for you –**
 - To know you are loved,**
 - Forgiven, free**
 - And can live for him**
 - And the others he so loves.**
- Pray for children and youth worker's, youth mission organisations such as Soul Survivor and resourcing organisations such as Scripture Union... ask God to help them to find new and creative ways to effectively communicate the whole truth of the gospel.
- If you want to, have a go at writing your own 'twitturgy' gospel message using the pens and paper provided. Take this away with you to remind you to continue to pray for the gospel to reach children and young people.

9. Snail mail wisdom

Equipment needed: pens and paper or – if you're leaving the station up as an installation and less people will be using it – a laptop, a print out of the letter provided at the end of this document and of the sign you have made using the text below.

Instructions for setting up:

1. In advance: Get together all the items that you will need.
2. On the day: Lay out the items and display a copy of the sign you have made.

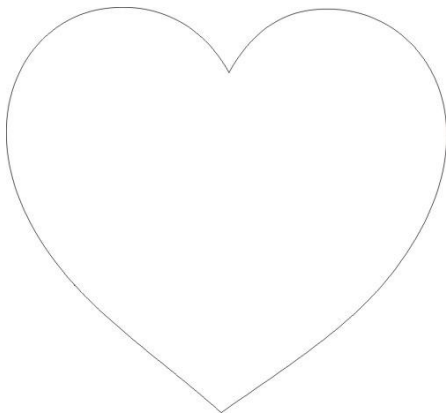
For display:

Snail mail wisdom

- Read the letter... It is from Darrel Hofland, a South African youth worker to the young people he ministers to.
- Offer to God in prayer any response you have to this.
- Pray for all youth workers and all teenagers.
- If you would like to, write your own letter to young people you know, or to youth more generally. When you have finished, pray about who if anyone you should send it to.
- Ask God for more opportunities to speak love, truth and wisdom into young people's lives.

10. Young at heart

Equipment needed: pens, cut out heart shapes such as an enlarged version of the one below or the means to make them, and a printout of the sign you have made using the text below.

**Instructions for setting up:**

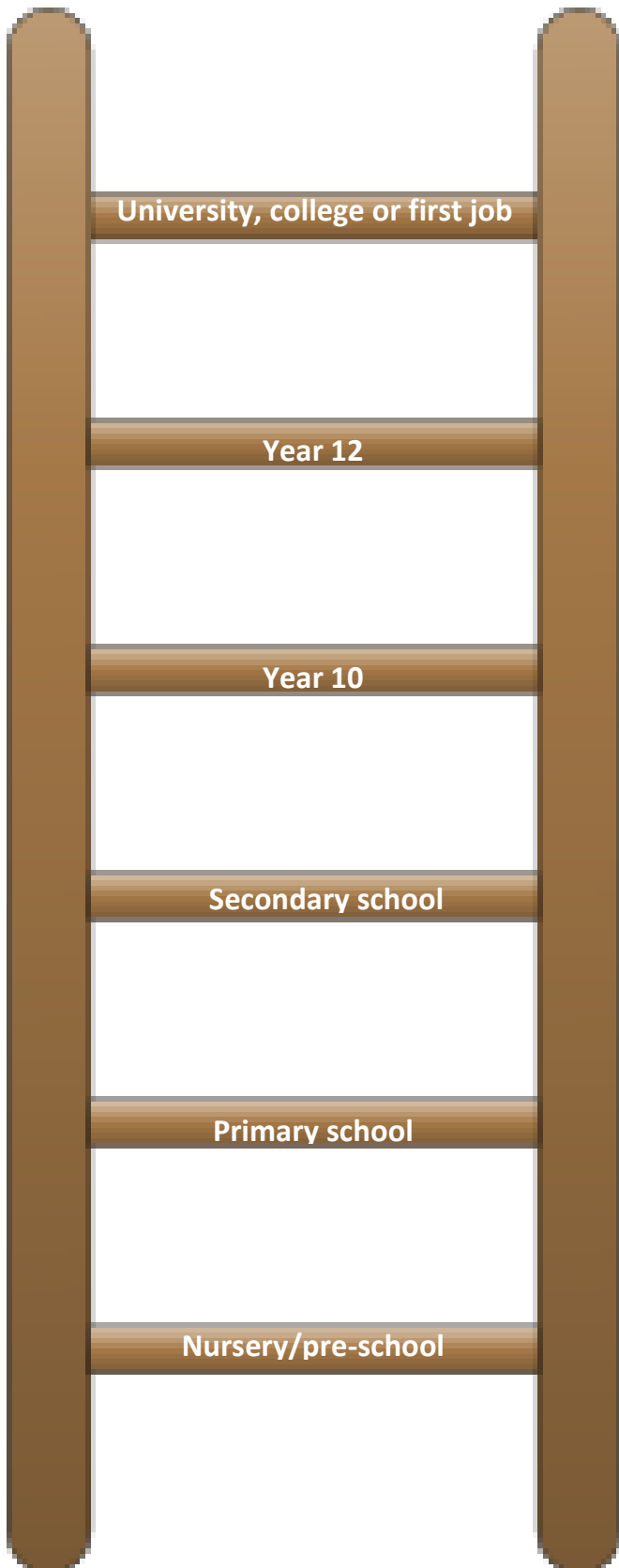
1. In advance: Get together all the items that you will need.
2. On the day: Lay out the items and display a copy of the sign you have made.

For display:**Building blocks**

- Reflect on all that has struck your heart while you've been praying for children and young people at the various stations today.
- Make or take a heart shape and write down reflections, prayer points and thoughts that you want to take away and remember for further prayer or action beyond this time.
- Offer the things on your heart in prayer, and ask God to keep children and young people on your heart – as they are on his.
- (Leave your playdough person at this station before you go.)

Additional print-outs (as referenced in the relevant instructions above for each station)

Up the Ladder:



Snail mail:

Dear Teenager,

I really do enjoy writing. I write at least two blogs a week. And yet I find that I am at a loss of words now, to capture the truth of how much God loves you; and yet I will humbly type on, hoping that you hear and more than that: you would feel the love of God; that is my intention behind these words.

God loves you.

I looked out at you during our usual Friday night and Sunday morning gatherings this past week and my heart just broke. Well, it more yearned and longed for you to know more of the God I have to know over my years of following Jesus. I realise a lot of you are half my age, even younger than that. I realise too that as a teenager now days, there is a lot more in your world that you have to deal with. I realise you are busy, and I hope that you will have a bit of time to read this.

I want to tell you, that you don't need to be what schools and society are trying to mould you into. Yes, education is good. Yes, reputation is a good thing to keep in check. But seriously it's okay to not have life figured out. By the time you reach 17 or 18, do you seriously really need to know what you're going to do with your life or what you need to study?

I want to tell you, that sometimes churches may push and tell you, that you have to "be good." Rubbish! Jesus has other ideas. In one of the books in the bible it says that he/ she who believes in Jesus, has the right to be called a child of God.

I want to ask you, have you thought about that? What does it mean to be a child of God? Not just a product of your school. Not just a member in society. Not just a cog in some larger wheel. You are noticed. You have a purpose. You are loved so much more than you understand. You have a profound creativity in your core. Your heart is made to collide with grace. Your life is in the hands and mind of a Creator.

At this point I want to beg you: Please slow down! Success is not about being super busy. I fear that in being so busy, you won't have time to listen to the depths of your heart. What does that mean, you may ask? Well your heart beats. Who started that beat? Our loving God did. Life begins from His breath. Life, fun, giving love away is God's idea. Don't forget that!

I would love you to stop and listen to God; hear what He says. Notice what He is doing in the world. Not just your world; but the world around you too.

I was born into a Christian home; I took my faith seriously at aged 16. Do ask me, about my experiences of God. We could do that over coffee. We could do that at youth, we could do that on Sundays at church. My life is packed with stories of how I have seen God move in my life. I really genuinely (yes, those words have the same meaning) felt God's love.

Don't get me wrong, I have had times when God has confused me. I have felt very lonely. I don't understand some things in life. Yet, I am utterly convinced of God's love and hand in my life. And I know you can experience and know
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that too. I promise. You won't be excluded by Him.

I have been on a church camp where I felt a gentle breeze on me and just knew God was touching my life. I have felt my heart burst in gratitude and worship when I have seen God's beauty in creation. I have seen how God has set free many people that I have met in my life so far.

I want you to see yourself in the eyes of God. I could write a lot more; however that's not the point. I vow here with these words that I will remind you and show you the love of God. My simple prayer for you often will be: "God, show them your love."

Love Came Down, and rescued us...

Love Darrel