

Looking Forward

ideas for finding hope for the future in the New Year



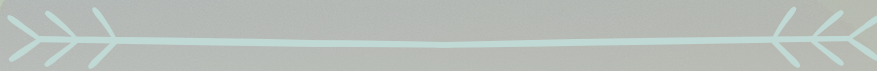
Praying in the Darkness

On/Offline: Online

Survey Respondent

Affordability: ££

During Halloween week we set up a gazebo and made it really dark and put a lot of glow sticks in there, and then downloaded a slow shutter photo app onto my phone. Then people could wave a glow stick around for 10 seconds and it takes a photo of the whole time, capturing all the patterns that you draw with your light. I would give a little introduction - "we're in church and we believe that Jesus is light in the darkness, He's with us when we're scared, and now we're going to go make beautiful patterns of light in the dark to remind us of that", and then the children and their parents would go in, each with a glow stick and wave it around. They would make a few fun crazy images - sometimes people would try to draw something or write something - and then the images will go up onto a big screen in the church, so they'd be able to see what they had made, and I would email it to them as well.



Calm Jars Prayer Station

On/Offline: Offline

Prayer Stations in Schools

Affordability: £

These Calm Jars from the Prayer Spaces in Schools team offer moments of stillness and reflection in the midst of what has been a stressful and chaotic year. It can involve a guided narration played over a speaker or headphones as participants are invited to reflect on what is on their mind at that moment. After shaking the pre-prepared Calm Jar they can watch the glitter settle as they reflect and pray. They have also produced a simplified version of the activity that can be done at home, which can be found here:

<https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/prayer-spaces-at-home/2/download>

Link: <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/resources/69>



Hope Rope

On/Offline: Online

Prayer Spaces in Schools

Affordability: Free

As we think ahead to 2021, it can be uplifting to release our anxieties and focus on hopes for the year to come. This simple activity from Prayer Spaces in Schools encourages us to do this in our home, by slowly untying knots in a rope, and with each one think about releasing our worries to God, asking Him for help, and to replace your worries with hope.

Link: <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/prayer-spaces-at-home/43/download>

Prayer Spaces at Home

On/Offline: Offline

Prayer Spaces in Schools

Affordability: £

The team behind Prayer Spaces at School have created dozens of very simple, free, 'Prayer Spaces at Home' ideas that are quick to organise and accessible for all ages. These cover a wide range of topics, including ideas around reducing anxiety and staying hopeful, that would be great for approaching the New Year.

Link: <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/prayer-spaces-at-home>

Hopeful Hopscotch

On/Offline: Offline

Prayer Spaces in Schools

Affordability: Free

This activity from Prayer Spaces in Schools can be done easily at home, and is perfect for children looking to remember the hope and promises of God in this time. The task involves drawing a hopscotch pattern on the ground, before finding some promises in the Bible and writing each one in a hopscotch square. As the individual plays hopscotch, they can then read aloud the promises that the stone lands on. As they think about what each of these promises means for them, you could also encourage them to thank God for those assurances.

Link: <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/prayer-spaces-at-home/42/download>



Socially Distanced Prayer Stations

On/Offline: Offline

The Diocese of Canterbury

Affordability: £

As the Diocese of Canterbury point out, using prayer stations within a church building can be particularly helpful for those who are new to prayer, but at a time of social distancing we need to be careful with how these are presented. This document offers some useful tips. For example, avoid drawing people together to a single point, but rather consider a series of "prayer prompts" around the church. Use large and bold visuals (posters, objects, artwork) that can be seen from at least 3m away, and potentially place them (for example) high up on a pillar so people have to stand further back to look at them. Avoid encouraging people to touch things - if you use objects to prompt prayer, ensure that they are out of reach in some way. You could plan out a (one-way) series of stopping points which may be connected to one another, so there is a sense of journey around the church, or are alternatively separate spaces expressing different ways into prayer. Place a laminated sheet of scripture near each symbol to prompt prayer or reflection. They have also suggested four types of prayer you could encourage in different spaces, with guides for each - contemplation; lectio divina; Intercession; and gratitude.

Link: <https://www.canterburydiocese.org/content/pages/documents/1592390108.pdf>

Church Grounds Prayer Walk

On/Offline: Offline

The Diocese of Canterbury

Affordability: £

While it may not be as appealing as in the height of summer, church gardens and grounds can still provide a powerful space for prayer and reflection in approaching a New Year - especially in situations where access to indoor spaces may be unsafe or regulated. The Diocese of Canterbury encourages church leaders to take a slow walk around the grounds and try and see the space anew, and how it may prompt invitations to prayer (for example, a tree with large roots encouraging people to consider where they put their roots in challenging times). These points of reflection can then be marked out, offering written invitations to pray and reflect at each point. These could be standalone or have a shared theme - for example, the 1 AM sayings of Jesus.

Link: <https://www.canterburydiocese.org/content/pages/documents/1592390108.pdf>



New Year Prayer and Reflection Spaces

On/Offline: Offline

BeSpace

Affordability: £

BeSpace have created a 3-page sheet of ideas and guidance for running New Year's themed prayer spaces, particularly in schools. These all centre around "Looking" - Looking Back over the year that has gone, Forward to the year to come, Around to help others, etc. While these are designed for schools, they would also work within a church setting and many are suitable for all ages.

Link: <https://bespace547587990.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/new-year-activities-outline.pdf>

Hope Spaces

On/Offline: Offline

HOPE Together and 24-7 Prayer

Affordability: £

HOPE Together and 24-7 Prayer are encouraging churches to invite their local communities to experience God in prayer through the use of creative prayer stations, whether in their own buildings or more neutral spaces. They have offered clear guidance on how to run prayer spaces in the local community (including how to find a shop as a location if you don't have a church space to use), as well as printable logos and posters for your Hope space. They have also provided ideas for six prayer spaces: Rest; Peace & Justice; Forgiveness; Directions; Hope; and Pray.

Link: https://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/328363/HOPE_Spaces.aspx

The Wellbeing Journey

On/Offline: Offline

Life Story Quest

Affordability: £

HOPE Together with KingsGate Church, Peterborough, have created a brand new series to help churches lead their communities on a journey to physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing. Presented by Simon Thomas and Joanna Abeyinka-Burford, and featuring contributions from leading experts in different fields, the 8 part video series and accompanying 50-day book guides participants through a wide range of different areas of wellbeing in life. They have offered everything a church would need to run the course, and are also developing a course specifically for young people.

Link: <https://wellbeingjourney.org/>