

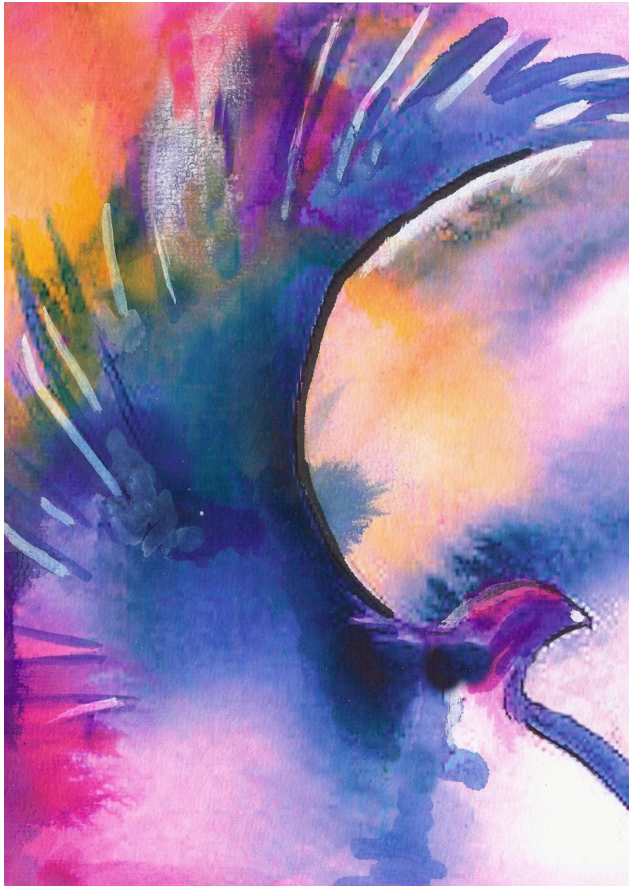


Freedom

Pray for Schools
Fortnight
8th-22nd May
2016

For the Lord is the Spirit, and
wherever the Spirit of the Lord is
there is freedom!

2 Corinthians 3:17 (NLT)



This year's theme for Pray for Schools fortnight is 'Freedom'.

Lesley Hollingworth's beautiful image of a bird soaring through the sky reminds us of the wonderful liberty we have in knowing Jesus.

Freedom from sin

Freedom to be ourselves and fulfil His wonderful plans for us

Freedom to pray to the Father with confidence

What an awesome King we serve!

He is beyond anything we could imagine; the eternal, all-powerful Spirit by whom everything was created.

And yet He chose to become a human being;

to live amongst us and show us what God is really like.

Christ gave Himself to die on the cross so that we can be forgiven, set free and be transformed to be like Him.

Christians are called to share this freedom with others, especially to those who are not in a place of liberty – whether that's physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually.

There are so many ways we can pray for God's freedom to become a reality in our schools, so over the next two weeks let's shape our prayers around this theme.

May we have faith that the Holy Spirit will work in many lives, bringing the peace of Jesus to transform situations and opening doors for the Father's love to bring freedom and hope where there is brokenness and sadness.

Resources

- Practical ideas for local events
- Prayer Stations
- Prayers
- Prayer Diary
- Suggested Programme: 1½ hour event
- Template invitation letter to event
- PFS Resources Booklet from <http://www.prayforschools.org/?p=514>

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PRAY FOR SCHOOLS FORTNIGHT 8-22 MAY 2016



Practical ideas for local Pray for Schools Fortnight events

In your church:

5-minute slot during a Sunday service giving an opportunity to pray specifically for nearby schools and the children, young people and adults in the church connected with them.

With other Christians in your neighbourhood:

An evening of worship and prayer for teachers and other staff, schools workers, parents and anyone else with a heart for young people.

As a group of parents and staff connected to a particular school.

Children and young people

Encouraging them to bless their school through their prayers.

On our own

Using the prayer diary each day.



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PRAY FOR SCHOOLS FORTNIGHT 8-22 MAY 2016

Prayer Stations

PRAY FOR
SCHOOLS

Praying with pictures

Why not take some photos of the schools near you and display the pictures around the room or on a table to encourage others to pray for each school? This could also be done using a local map and pins.



Rainbow Tealights

Use a pack of different coloured tealights. Each colour could represent a group of children in your school.

For example:

- **Red** those taking exams
- **Blue** those struggling with bullying green those with upsets at home
- **Yellow** those who are ill
- **Purple** those with special needs
- **White** all children in your area



Choose one colour from the tea lights and pray for those children. Take it in turns to choose and pray. When all are lit it is like a rainbow effect—praying God's promises on every child. Take care with tealights and extinguish all tealights after this activity

Praying with Sweets

Take a bag of Jelly babies to church and pray through these Scripture Union Scotland ideas:

https://www.suscotland.org.uk/media/5251/jelly_baby_prayer_cards.pdf

or if you prefer M and M s

https://www.suscotland.org.uk/media/5258/m_m_prayer_card



Music Suggestions

Songs – Amazing Grace

played from 0.46 minutes to 3.11.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxVadCcRfoI>



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PRAY FOR SCHOOLS FORTNIGHT 8-22 MAY 2016

Prayers



For the Lord is the Spirit,
and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is,
there is freedom!

2 Corinthians 3v 17 (New Living Translation)

Loving Father in heaven, thank You that Jesus died on the cross to save us from sin - then rose again from the dead to set us free! Help each us to discover more and more about the wonderful liberty that is ours because Your Spirit lives in us.

'It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.' Galatians 5; 1 (NIV)

We pray that children and young people in our schools will be free to be themselves; to grow into their unique God-given personalities, to develop their gifts and abilities and to explore paths towards their self-fulfilment and *to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.* Ephesians 2; 10 (NIV)

Lord, we'd love our schools to be places with an atmosphere of encouragement where students and staff are not restricted by negative attitudes but free to flourish and fly. Please help those in leadership to create a 'can do' ethos within wise boundaries that inspire self-discipline and excellence. Amen.

'I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.' Philipians 3; 14 (Message)

Gentle Saviour, we think of children and young adults in our schools whose lives are restricted and painful: because of home circumstances, their special needs, emotional problems, others' unkindness and misunderstanding or other trials. Please comfort and strengthen them. Amen.

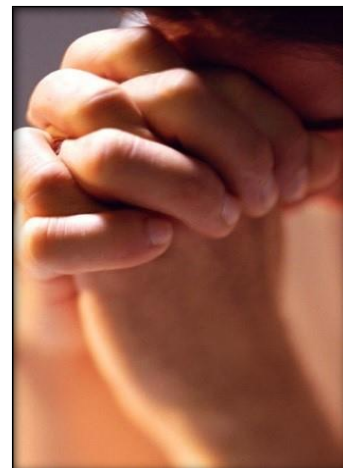
'Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am calling on you constantly. Give me happiness, O Lord, for I give myself to you. O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help.' Psalm 86 (NLT)

God of truth, we are so grateful for our freedom in UK schools to teach children about faith and provide opportunities for them to experience the reality of prayer, praise and practical Christian living. Help us to protect these freedoms. Amen.

'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.' Proverbs 22;6 (NIV)

Finally, we are so thankful for our education system, freely available to all of our children and providing for their intellectual, social, physical, emotional and spiritual growth. Please bless every teacher and other members of staff as they work so hard to help those in their care. Amen.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philipians 4:6 (NIV)



FREEDOM

PRAY FOR SCHOOLS FORTNIGHT 8-22 MAY 2016

Prayer Diary



May 8th-20th

- 8 Thank You Lord for the thousands of schools that are being prayed for by Christian groups or individuals throughout the UK week by week. Please encourage each person involved not to give up but keep trusting You for the answers to their prayers.
- 9 Ask God to inspire and unite everyone coming to Pray for Schools Fortnight events. Pray for significant conversations and connections between Christians that will inspire them to have faith for specific answers to their requests for local schools.
- 10 Pray for renewed encouragement and spiritual unity among Christian parents, teachers and other school staff, youth and schools workers, students and others in the weeks and months ahead.
- 11 Ask God to help all who are preparing for important exams at this time. Pray they will be able to concentrate on revision, retain the information they need, stay healthy and alert so they can do their best and gain the results they deserve.
- 12 Pray for Head Teachers and others in senior leadership roles in schools; that God would grant them wisdom and discernment when they need to make important decisions and undertake challenging tasks.
- 13 Intercede that the children will be taught more about the truth and grace of the gospel – in Assemblies, RE lessons, from visiting local church ministers, schools workers and others. Ask the Holy Spirit to open their hearts and minds to understand and accept what they are hearing.
- 14 Give thanks for the contribution church and other independent Christian schools make to the education of so many children in the UK. Pray that they will not lose their freedom to teach biblical truth and values in the light of Government concerns about 'extremism'.
- 15 Ask God to raise up many Christians who can be a positive influence through serving as School Governors, joining fundraising and other committees, volunteering in the classroom and blessing their local schools in other practical ways.
- 16 Remember everyone who works in schools especially the teachers but also those looking after the building and grounds, providing administrative support, supervising children at lunchtimes and giving support in other ways.
- 17 Pray for Education Secretary Nicky Morgan MP and her team - that God would grant them insight and wisdom about their huge responsibilities and their dealings with teachers, parents, local authorities and other agencies concerned with the nation's children.
- 18 Intercede for the growing numbers of children and young people affected by bullying; whether that is face to face or online. Pray for those seeking to help them to escape from this and cope with the mental health and other problems caused by this abuse.
- 19 Remember teachers and other support staff who help children with various kinds of special needs. Pray that they will receive grace and patience from God and find a real joy in all they do.
- 20 Praise God for the gift of prayer and ask Him to inspire many individuals, groups and churches to remember their local school communities regularly in their prayers and to forge positive relationships that will encourage and bless teachers, pupils and others working in education.



Programme ideas for 1½ hour event

1. **Refreshments before you start:** gives opportunity to mingle and look at resources.
2. **Welcome.** (5 mins)
3. **Worship:** ideally led by young people and as inclusive and varied as possible. (15 mins)
4. **Film clip** to set the scene. (3 mins)
5. **Testimonies:** (10-15 mins)
 - young person describing how they are making a Christian difference in school
 - local Head teacher
 - Youth for Christ/School Pastor/Prayer Spaces/Scripture Union/Open the Book or other Christian worker or church leader involved in local schools.
6. **Inspirational talk:** on the 2016 theme of Freedom. (10 mins)
7. **Prayer:** this should be the main focus of the evening (25 mins)
Use creative ideas such as:
Prayer stations around the room focusing on various aspects of interest such as:
 - Local map marking schools
 - Sheets describing and illustrating individual schools
 - Photographs of young people
 - Specific prayer requests
 - Information about the Local Education Authority
 - Details about Government Departments and other bodies concerned with UK schools**Liturgical prayers** – for personal use or spoken out together
Opportunity to write prayer requests on Post-it notes to then be prayed for by others
Presentations (eg. power point) of issues like bullying/curriculum content/behaviour issues/ staff/ encouraging Christian pupils /organisations and agencies working in schools
8. **Encouragement** for people to consider setting up prayer groups for individual schools and register with Pray for Schools on www.prayforschools.org/groups/register-a-group/ (5 mins)
9. **Announcements** about future events and other follow up activities (5 mins)
10. **Closing song and prayer** (6 mins)

Points to keep in mind

1. Choose a comfortable neutral venue, convenient for public transport and parking.
2. Rather than just one or two people doing everything, try to include contributors from different churches and groups so everyone can 'own' the event
3. Adopt a style of worship that ensures Christians from different traditions feel included.
4. Avoid negative comments about local schools or young people – it is right to identify concerns but there is much to encourage us. Remember confidentiality.
5. Include opportunities for response: asking people to sign up for future involvement, announcing dates and details of any follow-up activities.



DRAFT INVITATION LETTER/EMAIL

Date

<<Dear Mrs Smith/Sally >> (handwritten)

<<name of your area>> Pray for Schools evening <<date>>
<<time>><<venue>>

I am writing to invite you to a special event we are planning which will bring together Christians with a heart for young people to pray for our local schools. So many of us have links as parents, pupils, teachers or other staff, Governors or simply concerned church members and neighbours. The vision behind 'Pray for Schools' – which is a network of prayer groups all over the UK - is for every school to be a prayed-for school and during the first fortnight in May local events like ours will be held around the country to encourage and mobilise churches and individual Christians to pray strategically for the education establishments in their area.

Our <<name of your area>> event is being planned by <<planning group names and who they represent (churches/schools/organisations)>> and we hope to focus on specific local schools and important education issues. Our theme is 'Freedom'.

The programme will include a range of contributions from our different churches, schools and other connected organisations. There will be time to share ideas, pray together and meet informally over light refreshments. To find out more please get in touch with me (contact details are at the top of this letter).

I really hope you will be able to attend the <<name of area>> Pray for Schools event.

Yours in Christ (or similar sign-off)

<<handwritten signature>>

Mary Jones

