# 5 WAYS TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE IN PRAYING FOR THEIR SCHOOLS



Here are 5 different ways you can support young people in praying for their schools, either on the National Day of Prayer for Schools or at other times throughout the year. Prayer can take on many different forms, and we want to encourage young people that however they choose to pray for their schools, God hears and those prayers matter.

## 1. PRAYER SCAVENGER HUNT

Put the young people in your youth group into teams and give each team the task of completing a prayer scavenger hunt. The aim of the scavenger hunt is for each team to collect a photograph of them standing outside each of the local schools you have named (try and use schools within walking distance). When outside each school they should also record a video of one team member saying a prayer for that school, with the rest of the team joining in 'amen' at the end. The first team to return should receive the most points, and further points are to be allocated at your discretion based upon how well you feel the prayer task has been completed (and how creatively). The team with the most points is the winner.

#### 2. SOCIAL MEDIA PRAYERS

Post different prayers for local schools on your youth group or church social media page. Encourage young people to comment and to share or repost from their own social media accounts. Encourage them to add their own prayers for these schools, and particularly when it comes to sharing the prayer for their own school.

## 3. PRAYER GATHERING

Organise a prayer gathering for your church where young people can share the things they would like people to pray for and can play a role in leading that gathering. Support the young people in preparing and leading this. They may want to write their own prayers beforehand and to come up with a list of a few things, people and specific schools they would like those who attend to get into groups and pray for. The young people could also encourage people to share any encouraging words with the whole group if this is something your church tradition is used to.

## 4. PRAYER CHALLENGE

Challenge the young people in your youth group to find one or two other Christians in their school and to arrange to meet up with them at some point during the school day to pray together. Talk to them about different things they could pray for, and check in with them afterwards (and if they continue to do it, on an ongoing basis) to encourage them and to support them in reflecting upon any answers to prayer.

### 5. CREATIVE PRAYER SPACE

Plan and set up a space within which you have 4 or 5 different creative prayer 'stations' that young people, either from your youth group or the local community, can come and engage with. Advertise a time slot within which the young people can access the space and let them choose which stations they want to engage with and when during the time they are there. We would encourage playing some instrumental worship music in the background and for the young people to try and do each activity in silence.

Some creative prayer ideas that you are welcome to try are:

- Draw large outlines of the names of the local school(s) and place them around the room. Instruct the young people to write words on the different letters to describe what they would like to see God do in that school e.g. less bullying.
- Choose some verses from the Bible that you would like young people to pray over their schools, and search online for colouring in sheets of that verse. Encourage the young people to think of their schools as they colour in the sheets, and to ask God that those verses would be true for them.
- Tie a length of string so that it hangs like a washing line across a portion of the room. Get some pegs and pieces of card. Ask the young people to draw or write their prayers for their schools on the card and to peg those prayers along the length of string.
- Print or write lots of different prayer points on pieces of card or paper (these can be duplicated so that more than one person can engage with this activity at a time) e.g. exams, mental health, teachers, those with learning difficulties, those at risk of being excluded, those moving from primary to secondary school etc. Instruct the young people to choose one card at a time, and to walk around a designated space holding that card. Whilst they are doing so, they are to pray in their head for that thing. Once they have finished their walk, they are to swap their card for another one and repeat the process.
- Create a big cross out of cardboard or if you have access to a wooden one or similar then use this. Put a stack of post-it notes next to the cross. Encourage young people to write the names of people in their schools they want to pray for on a post-it e.g. their friends, peers, teachers etc. They are to then stick these on the cross.
- Write the names of local schools vertically down the left-hand side of a piece of paper.
   Ask the young people to write something they are thankful to God for about their school next to each letter of the school's name. Each one is to begin with a different letter of the school's name.