

The Breathing Prayer Station

Beforehand

Suitable for; Older teenagers who are able to focus for some length of time and maintain silence.

Purpose/aim; To help young people reflect on forgiveness. It is a reflection on reconciliation.

Ideal use; At night time, on a residential retreat, for a group who know each other well and are comfortable in each others company.

Resources;

- CD player with CD of relaxing music
- Some cushions set out in the room, so people can relax
- A candle to read with
- Bible

The prayer

- **Welcome** and sign of the cross
- **Introduction**

This is a prayer which concentrates on your breathing to help you pray. We breathe all the time but never notice the air coming in or going out.

Ask them to sit in a comfortable position and get everyone to take slow, deep breaths to help them relax. Wait until everyone is sensibly lying down taking slow deep breaths.

- **Reflection**

As you breathe in, imagine that you are breathing in calmness and peace and as you do, they cause you to feel calm, relaxed and peaceful.

Also imagine breathing in calm, soft colours, for example blues, greens and purples. Try to imagine that you can feel these colours circulating around your body. And whenever they reach a part of your body, that part feels relaxed and heavy.

Pause

Now you feel totally relaxed.

It is at times like these which mean that it is easier to focus on your thoughts, like it's easy to focus when you're in bed just before you go to sleep. These are the moments when you can consider what is happening in your life. A lot of our thoughts are made clearer when we are alone.

Breath is also used as an important sign in the bible, for example in this piece of scripture it's used as a sign of the power of the Holy Spirit given for the forgiveness of sins.

- **Scripture;** John 20:21-23

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

- **Reflection**

This piece of scripture shows us the importance of forgiveness, so we are going to try to experience the constant forgiveness shown to us by God.

But first we need to think of a time we need to be forgiven for, a time that we are not very proud of, just a time we feel you need forgiveness for.

pause

Once you have looked at this time, take in a deep breath and hold it.

Now you need to mix the time you have in your head with your breathe. Once this is done, breathe this time out completely. Take a few moments now to do this with.

Remember that God doesn't hold on to sins, he forgives, he forgets and he breathes them out by the power of his Holy Spirit, the breath of God.

When you are ready, bring yourself back to the room slowly, by breathing deeply again.

This time though, you are breathing in and thinking about the good moments in life, when you have felt loved, safe, happy; and you feel free with God's forgiveness.

Allow some time for the young people to complete this last stage.

(tip) how you use your voice will determine how this prayer goes; give good pauses and use a soft tone so that they are lulled into the relaxed state)