

Bishops Cannings Prayer Space

June 2020

Our 6th Annual Prayer Space at Bishops Cannings School was always going to be a bit different but we didn't know quite how different until COVID19 struck!

We felt that actually it was more important than ever at this time to give our children the chance to share their thoughts, feelings and anxieties and explore their naturally spiritual nature. So, determined not to let social distancing stop us, we kept the dates in the diary and re-planned our prayer stations to make full use of our beautiful school field.

Armed with hand-sanitiser at each station and anti-bac spray for a deep clean between each 'bubble' we began our Prayer Space week on the gloriously sunny morning of Monday 22nd June.

We launched and ended the week with a live zoom assembly led by our local minister Rev. Joanna. Children joined in from their bubbles at school and we were delighted that 20 families were also able to join us from home. The sung worship may have all been a little out of sync but the warmth and community spirit generated was really moving.

Fizzy forgiveness is a perennial favourite of ours and worked well as ever to give children the time to contemplate forgiveness and 'let their bad feelings float away'.

Our thankfulness ribbons hung in the trees and danced beautifully in the breeze. It was poignant to note some of the things that the children were thankful for this year – a real shift from the more common material and familial things to 'Thanking God for our health, for being able to see our friends, for school and even for being able to go out'.

We used two of Prayer Spaces' specially designed prayer stations for COVID19 (Get Well Soon and Keep Others Safe) and we focussed on loving one another on a prayer station where each bubble made a piece of elastic band art to spell out the word LOVE which will remain on display in school as a reminder of this time and our school's key Bible verse.

The highlight of the week was our prayer labyrinth which we pegged out in a corner of the field and invited children to slowly walk to the middle thinking of things that they were concerned about along the way and placing them in an imaginary bag. They were then invited to place their 'bag' at the foot of the cross in the centre of the labyrinth and trust God to look after those worries. The children enjoyed the peace of the centre and many spent some time there asking to be filled with God's spirit and breathing in His peace before journeying out by a different route with God alongside them, ready to share God's love with the world.

Our home-learning children were all given Prayer Space week packs with labyrinths to make and journey through at home, and ideas for their own home prayer stations to run in parallel with those in school at this time.

We are very fortunate that our school field is also a community field and so we were delighted to be able to invite families who are not back in school with us yet and members of our village church congregation to come and walk our prayer labyrinth and hang a thankfulness ribbon in the evenings.

Catherine Wallace

Bishops Cannings School