

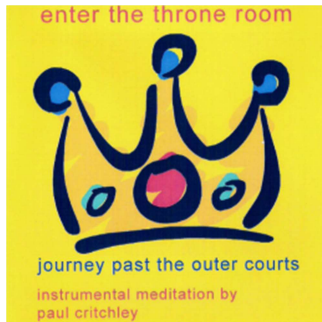
Spiritual Encounters

Bible Based Meditation for Schools



Acknowledgements

Thanks go to Paul Critchley of Presence Worship who has kindly gifted the music for this project. Each track can be found on the 'Enter the Throne Room' CD or on digital platforms. *'This album is a journey, from the outer courts into the Holy of Holies. The place we are now, through Jesus death and resurrection, free to enter into. No veil, no restriction.'* The music came from Paul's vision that God was calling Him to be an usher of His presence.



To download the complete album or to find out more about Presence Worship, visit the website <http://www.presenceworship.com/> or open the hyper link by clicking on the album cover.



Introduction

Meditation has recently experienced resurgence in popularity —yet it can be quite difficult to really define meditation, understand its purpose, or appreciate what meditation is good for. The word “meditate” simply means to think deeply about something and is a practice that has been used by people of many faiths and beliefs since the earliest of times. In Christianity, meditation can be seen as creating the space and the time to think about who God is, our relationship with Him and how this can impact on how we live. The Bible teaches about the importance of meditation and the positive impact it can have on our lives – as long as we are focused on the right things.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – meditate on these things.

Philippians 4:8

The world can be an extremely busy and sometimes even a daunting place for many people, including our children and young people. Christian meditation can be a wonderful way to get that extra help and strength needed to make real sense of the world and to develop the tools needed to live life to the full. It is a way of engaging with stillness in a meaningful way whilst discovering a real sense of peace and self-control.

Children today are exposed to adult pressures... at very early ages. Meditation simply and immediately helps them to cope and survive these forces. Teachers notice the benefits very quickly in classes and schools where meditation becomes part of the regular experience of the children.

Meditatio

Through this resource we aim to provide teachers and pupils with the means to create the space and time for stillness and reflection whilst reducing anxiety and stress. It is designed to be used either as part of whole school and class worship or as a stand-alone resource to be used within the school day.



Time for Meditation

Before you begin:

- Preparing for meditation is very important.
- Create a calm and comfortable atmosphere. It maybe that some children want to keep their eyes closed throughout all of this.
- If not being used as part of a set worship, purposely timetable meditation into the day. Schools have often found that directly after lunch break is good as, amongst other things, it helps to establish a positive atmosphere for the afternoon.
- If the pupils have been busy just before you are due to start encourage them now to pause and sit quietly, stilling themselves ready to begin. Take this time to still yourself as well. Ideas can be found on <https://childhood101.com/fun-breathing-exercises-for-kids/> - see appendix.
- It is recommended that pupils:
 - Sit comfortable
 - Be still and are relaxed
 - Breathe normally
 - Be relaxed but aware of their own thoughts
- Be clear with the pupils that there are no set expectations for the outcome of meditation. Meditation and responses should in no way be evaluated.
- We recommend that you choose one activity from each of the following sections – windows, mirror and door.





Windows – look at God’s word

Windows are for looking out onto God’s world and being inspired by its wonders. Begin by looking together at an inspirational Bible reading, Christian poem or worship song. One of the following could be used:

Meditation focus - the Psalms

Psalm 104 (extracts)

All that I am praises the Lord.
Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with glory and majesty.
You wear light like a robe.
You stretch out the skies like a tent.
You build your room above the clouds.
You make the clouds your chariot.
You ride on the wings of the wind.
You make the winds your messengers.
Flames of fire are your servants.
You built the earth on its foundations.
So it can never be moved.
You covered the earth with oceans.
The water was above the mountains.
But at your command, the water rushed away.
When you gave your orders like thunder, it hurried away.

You made the moon to mark the seasons.
And the sun always knows when to set.
You make it dark, and it becomes night.
Then all the wild animals creep around.
The lions roar as they hunt.
They look to God for food.
When the sun rises, they leave.
They go back to their dens to lie down.
Then people go to work.
And they work until evening.
Lord, you have made many things.
With your wisdom you made them all.
The earth is full of your riches.
Look at the sea, so big and wide.
Its creatures large and small cannot be counted.

My whole being, praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord.



Psalm 121

I look up to the hills.
But where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord.
He made heaven and earth.

He will not let you be defeated.
He who guards you never sleeps.
He who guards the nations never rests
or sleeps.
The Lord guards you.
The Lord protects you as the shade
protects you from the sun.
The sun cannot hurt you during the day.
And the moon cannot hurt you at night.
The Lord will guard you from all
dangers.
He will guard your life.
The Lord will guard you as you come and
go, both now and forever.

Psalm 18 extracts

I love you, Lord. You are my strength.
The Lord is my rock, my protection, my
Savior.
My God is my rock.
I can run to him for safety.
He is my shield and my saving strength, my
high tower.
I will call to the Lord.
He is worthy of praise.
The ways of God are without fault.
The Lord's words are pure.
He is a shield to those who trust him.
Who is God? Only the Lord.
Who is the Rock? Only our God.
God is my protection.

Psalm 147 extracts

It is good to sing praises to our God.
It is good and pleasant to praise him.
The Lord heals the broken hearted.
He bandages their wounds.

He counts the stars and names each one.
Our Lord is great and very powerful.
There is no limit to what he knows.
The Lord defends those who are not proud.

Sing praises to the Lord.
Praise our God with harps.
He fills the sky with clouds.
He sends rain to the earth.
He makes grass grow on the hills.
He gives food to cattle and to the little birds that
call.

He is not pleased by the strength of a horse or the
power of a man.
The Lord is pleased with those who fear him, with
those who trust his love.

He gives a command to the earth, and it quickly
obeys him.
He spreads the snow like wool.
He scatters the frost like ashes.
He throws down hail like rocks.
No one can stand the cold he sends.
Then he gives a command, and it melts.
He sends the breezes, and the waters flow.



Psalm 139 extracts

Lord You know when I sit down and when I get up.
You know my thoughts before I think them.
You know where I go and where I lie down.
You know well everything I do.
Lord, even before I say a word,
You already know what I am going to say.
You are all around me—in front and in back.
You have put your hand on me.
Your knowledge is amazing to me.
It is more than I can understand.

Where can I go to get away from your Spirit?
Where can I run from you?
If I go up to the skies, you are there.
If I lie down where the dead are, you are there.
If I rise with the sun in the east,
and settle in the west beyond the sea,
even there you would guide me.
With your right hand you would hold me.

I could say, "The darkness will hide me.
The light around me will turn into night."
But even the darkness is not dark to you.
The night is as light as the day.
Darkness and light are the same to you.

You made my whole being.
You formed me in my mother's body.
I praise you because you made me in an amazing and wonderful way.
What you have done is wonderful.
I know this very well.
You saw my bones being formed
as I took shape in my mother's body.
When I was put together there,
you saw my body as it was formed.
All the days planned for me were written in your book before I was a day old.

God, your thoughts are precious to me.
They are so many! If I could count them,
they would be more than all the grains of sand.

When I wake up, you are still there.

Psalm 96 extract

Sing it out!
Sing the Lord a new song.
Sing it out!
Sing out, all the earth.
Sing it out!
Bless his name forever
Sing it out!

For day by day, he saves.
Tell every nation his glorious deeds,
every people his marvellous works.
Praise him, for praise his greatness deserves,
his greatness above all gods.
For the gods of the peoples are idols. They're idle!

And nothing can come from their hands.
But the Lord made the heavens, he reigns as our king,
and in power and beauty he stands.
So write it down!
Every nation, every people.

Write it down!
God is glorious and strong.
Write it down!
For his name deserves all glory.
Write it down!
Bring him offerings and praise.

Then worship the Lord, in his splendour and holiness,
and tremble before him, earth.
And tell every nation, "The Lord is king,
justice firm as the earth he formed."
And heavens, be happy. Rocks rejoice.
Seas shout, and sea creatures, too.
Fields wave, and field mice join in the song,
as the forests find voice and sing.

Then sing it out!
For the Lord is coming.
Sing it out!
Coming to judge the earth.
Sing it out!
His judgements will be righteous.

Sing it out!



Meditation focus – bible based poems

Mindful of Us – Dave Hopwood

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
When I see the moon and the stars that you have established,

**What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
ordinary people that you care for them?**

When I look at the snow-smearred mountains, massive and imposing,
When I see the raging oceans and the depths still waiting to be discovered,

**What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
ordinary people that you care for them?**

When I realise that I still have so much to learn,
When I find again that I do not have all the answers,

**What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
ordinary people that you care for them?**

When I remember Jesus, his humility and compassion,
When I look again on that darkened cross,

**What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
ordinary people that you care for them?**

When I look at the moon and the stars, the work of your fingers,
The glory of your presence, writ large in the heavens,

**What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
ordinary people that you care for them?**

Footsteps in the Sand

One night I dreamed a dream.
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in
the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times along the path of my
life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest and most
troublesome times of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most,
You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will
never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you."



In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

We think about the wonderful gift of light.

We think of the wonderful gift of water. I thank God who made light and water

Seeing the wonders of the heavens I thank God who made all things
Seeing the beauty of the earth I thank God who made the dry land, the mountains and the valleys

Thankful for the flowers and fruits and all kinds of plants I praise God who made them all.

Thankful for the sun and the moon in the sky above, I praise God, who lights up the earth.

I am amazed at the swimming of fish and flight of birds. Thank you God!
I am amazed at the animals and insects in the trees, on and under the ground.
Thank you God for creating so many amazing things, bringing life and colour into our lives.

Remembering that humans are made in the image of God, I thank you for my own life and for my friends and family
Remembering that God saw everything He had made and called it 'very good,' I thank you for your creation.

Prayer of St Francis

Lord, make me instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is hurt, forgiveness;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O God help me to think of others before myself;
grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in forgiving that we are forgiven and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life

Sung version

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihhvm6eLWZI>

Good Enough

God wants me to be myself
For He created me this way,
And since God made me who I am,
Myself I'm quite content to stay.

In His eyes I'm good enough –
It matters not what others say;
I need not act as if I'm tough
Or copy other children's ways.

God doesn't care if I'm not cool –
If I'm not stronger; or an athlete;
In His hands I am a tool
To reach out to others is what matters.

So when people look at me
May it be God's own Son they see.

Belinda van Rensburgs



Meditation focus – Fruit and Gifts of the Spirit

Galatians 5: 22&23 – The Fruit of the Spirit

The Spirit gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These things are always good and right.

May I be loving, peaceful and joyful.
May I always be patient even with the people who annoy me.
May I learn to look at myself and others with kindness and gentleness.
May I never bully or use unkind words.
May I always try to make good choices,
May I always be a faithful friend and learn how to have more self-control.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud. Love is not rude, is not selfish, and does not become angry easily. Love does not remember wrongs done against it. Love takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices over the truth. Love patiently accepts all things. It always trusts, always hopes, and always continues strong. Love never ends

Now may this be true for me:

I am patient and kind. I am not jealous, I do not brag, and I am not proud. I am not rude, I am not selfish, and I do not easily anger. I do not remember wrongs done against me...

Love

Love is the greatest gift
Love is the start, it is also the end.
Love helps others to grow
Love draws people into friendship and wants the best for them

Joy

Joy is a gift to share
The quiet joy of knowing that all will be well
The noisy joy of a party with friends
The joy of neighbours becoming friends

Peace

Peace reconciles all differences
May I have peace within myself
May I live in peace with others
May peace rule in this world

Patience

Patience can sometimes be a hard gift to receive
Patience doesn't rush in to cause trouble
Patience waits, thinks and considers the best way to act
Patience doesn't judge others too quickly

Kindness

Kindness is a generous gift
Kindness offers the right word at the right time
Kindness sees the best in all people
Kindness wants the best for all people

Goodness

The goodness of creation is plain to see
It can be seen in a gift from a friend
In the kindness of a stranger
In a smile from another when you feel low

Faithfulness

Oh Lord, make us faithful;
faithful to how you want us to live;
faithful to one another;
faithful to seeking out truth and justice.

Gentleness

Gentleness brings out the beauty in us all
The greatest strength we can have is a gentle spirit
That cares for others with gentle words
And gentle actions

Self-control

Self-control shows an inner strength
Self-control knows when to be silent
And when to speak out
Self-control knows when to act and when to stay still.



Other possible readings:

- Jesus at Prayer: Mk 1:35, Lk 5: 16, Lk 6:12
- Prayer: Mt 6:6-7, Lk 11:5-13,
- Do Not Worry: Mt 6:25-34
- Jesus Stills a Storm: Mk 4:35-41
- Three Parables: Mt 13: 44-50
- Jesus at Nazareth: Lk 4:16-21
- The Man with a Withered Hand: Mt 3:1-6
- Judging Others: Lk6:37-42
- Martha and Mary: Lk 10: 38-42
- The Temptation of Jesus: Lk 4: 1-13
- Jesus the True Vine: Jn 15:1-17
- Jesus Appears to the Disciples: Jn 20: 19 – 23
- The Lost Sheep: Lk 15:3–6
- The Good Shepherd: Jn 10:11–15,
- Jesus at Prayer: Mk 1:35, Lk 5: 16, Lk 6:12
- Prayer: Mt 6:6-7, Lk 11:5–13
- Do Not Worry: Mt 6:25-34
- Jesus Stills a Storm: Mk 4:35–41
- Parable of Growing Seed & Mustard Seed: Mk 4:26–32
- Jesus Blesses Little Children: Mk 10:13–16
- Jesus Thanks his Father: Mt 11:25–30
- The Man with a Withered Hand: Mt 3:1–6

- Engage worship - <https://engageworship.org/>





Mirror – meditate on God’s word

Mirrors are for looking into and reflecting upon things, either alone or together. Mirrors often help us to see things more clearly. For this time the aim of the ‘mirror’ is to reflect and think more clearly about God’s word through meditation and listening to our own and each other’s ideas.

As you come into a time of meditation we recommend that you use one of the clips that can be found at <http://www.ldbe.co.uk/about/guidance-resources/worship-and-meditation/> to help keep a focus. As the class watch the film clips and listen to the music encourage them to meditate on what they have just heard or read; you may find it helpful to use one of the following, or similar, questions to help with this.

What part of the reading spoke to you most clearly?

Meditate on this now

What do you think the reading is saying to you?

Meditate on this now

What do you think was the key phrase in this reading?

Meditate on this now

What picture comes to mind after listening to this reading?

Meditate on this now

What image of God do we get from this reading?

Meditate on this now

What do you think the reading is saying to the world?

Meditate on this now

What emotions are you feeling?

Can you name them?

Meditate on this now

How have you responded to the reading?

Meditate on this now

Is there something that needs to change?

Meditate on this now





Door – act on God’s word

Doors are for walking through in order to then act or respond in some way; it might mean moving on, making choices, doing something creative or purposeful in response. This can simply be done through a change in attitude or behaviour or thinking. It can also be expressed powerfully through music or art or drama or dance and through some form of social action or specific acts of giving. Meditation should lead to action:

‘The practice of Christian meditation is not an escape from this everyday life but in fact meditation compels us to love, service and compassion for others.’ Paul Harris

Possible responses to the meditation (pupils may or may not want to share their response)	
Art	Painting, drawing or even dancing has often been a response to prayer and meditation. You may want to give some opportunity for pupils to express their thoughts in this way
Writing a prayer	Set up a place within the classroom where pupils can place their own prayers – this may be a box, or a tree or even a prayer wall
Spoken prayer	As pupils become more comfortable with meditation it may well follow that they become more comfortable with praying out aloud
Courageous Advocacy	Prayer and meditation often convicts people to act; consider ways that your pupils could engage with the local or wider communities that they belong to
Leading a worship	Encourage pupils who feel inspired to lead worship to plan and deliver either class or whole school worship based on the meditation
Journal	There will be some pupils who will find keeping a prayer journal useful – they may want this to be a private thing between themselves and God

Sending prayers:

Give us eyes of faith and willing hands to see your Kingdom grow in us.
 May we feed the hungry with food and the bread of life,
 welcome the homeless into your family,
 and gather the harvest you love has provided.
 In Christ's name and the power of the Spirit we commit our lives to you again.

Amen.

"You are the light of the world."
 Uncover the radiance that is within us, God,
 to shine the truth of your love wherever we go.
"Let your light shine before others"
 that everyone we meet may see our lives of worship and glorify you,
our Father in heaven.

Amen.



Appendix

BACK TO BACK BREATHING



Find a partner and sit on the floor back to back. Sit tall and close your eyes if you want to. Decide who will start - that person begins by inhaling deeply and then exhaling slowly, and then continues to breathe slowly and deeply. Their partner should feel the expansion in their partner's back each time they breathe in and then try to sync their own breathing so that both partners are breathing in time together.

TUMMY BREATHING



Lie on the floor and place a small stuffed animal on your stomach. Breathe in deeply through your nose and feel the stuffed animal rise, and then feel it lower as you slowly exhale through your mouth. Rock the stuffed animal to sleep using the rise and fall of your stomach.

ELEPHANT BREATHING



Stand with your feet wide apart and your arms dangling in front of your body like an elephant's trunk. As you breathe in deeply through your nose, raise your arms up high above your head. Then slowly swing your arms down again as you breathe out through your mouth.

BUBBLE BREATHING



Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Begin by imagining you are holding a bubble wand. Breathe in deeply and then, as you breathe out slowly and gently, imagine you are blowing bubbles into the room. Imagine the bubbles are filled with peace or love or happiness and that you are filling the whole room with a peaceful, happy feeling. As you keep breathing slowly and blowing your imaginary bubbles, feel your body become calm and relaxed.



BALLOON BREATHING



Sitting in a comfortable position, place your hands around your mouth as if you were about to blow up a balloon. Take a deep breath in through the nose and, as you slowly exhale through your mouth, start to spread your hands out as if you are blowing up a great big balloon. Hold your hand position as you inhale again and then spread your hands further as you exhale. Once your balloon is as big as it can be, gently sway from side to side as you release your balloon up into the sky.

SHOULDER ROLL BREATHING



Choose a comfortable sitting position. As you take a slow deep breath in through your nose raise your shoulders up towards your ears. Breathe slowly out through your mouth, lowering your shoulders as you exhale. Repeat slowly, rolling your shoulders up and down in time with your breath.

TAKE 5 BREATHING



Sit comfortably, resting one hand in front of you with fingers outstretched like a star and the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand. Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your pointer finger up to the top of your thumb. Breathe out slowly and slide your pointer finger down the inside of your thumb. Breathe in as you slide your finger up the next finger and out as you slide down. Continue breathing in and out as you trace your whole hand.

BUMBLEBEE BREATHING



Sitting comfortably, gently place the tips of your pointer fingers in your ears and close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose and then hum quietly as you slowly breathe out.

