

# Sacred Prayer Space

The photograph shows a sacred prayer space that was created for **Section A, Communities of Faith**. Each of the five parts from Section A are represented, together with the liturgical and natural season.

## Colours:

**White cloth (1)** The white cloth represents the feasts of Our Lady that take place during the months of September and October. The white cloth is also a symbol for the new students in the school.

**Green plant (2)** This represents the liturgical colour of the season. Green is used in Ordinary Time (see page 332 of *Know The Way*).

**Autumnal background (3)**  
The autumnal shades reflect the essence of the natural season.

## Symbols of the Natural Season:

**Fruit and vegetables (4):** Some foods for the season.

**Bread and jar of grain (5):** Symbolise the harvest.

**Forest flowers (6):** Typical September flowers.

## Symbols: Part 1 Community

The school uniform, guitar and riding helmet (15) symbolise the various communities to which we belong.

## Symbols: Part 2 Communities at Work

The GAA jerseys and the hurling helmet (17) represent the local communities. The medals (18) represent the national community of Special Olympics Ireland. The two larger candles (19) that burn side by side represent the international community of Greenpeace.



## Religious Symbols:

The bottle of holy water (7) which can be used by students (if they wish) to call on the blessing of the Holy Trinity. The angels (8). The small lit candles (9) to represent the presence of the Lord (to be lit during prayer time).

## Symbols: Part 5 Organisation and Leadership in Communities of Faith

The chess set (16) is a symbol of leadership and the various roles people in positions of authority play.

## Symbols: Part 3 Communities of Faith

The wooden crosses (12) are a symbol of Christianity and the different denominations within it. The Bible (13) is present to show the sacred text of Christianity. The Trócaire box (14) represents the work of a Christian community of faith.

## Symbols: Part 4 Relationships between Communities of Faith

The sculpture of the hand holding the egg (10) is a symbol from Ghana. We are asked to hold our faith firmly and faithfully, but gently, as if holding an egg, not to crush it and destroy it. This is a wonderful symbol for interfaith dialogue and for showing respect for the faith of others. The red and yellow glass stones (11) symbolise the different communities of faith resting side by side in peace.

# Sacred Prayer Space

**Note:** You might like to review the suggestions for creating a sacred prayer space in the Introduction on p.5 above. (See example on inside back cover.)

## Creating a sacred prayer space for Section D – The Question of Faith

### Preparation

*You will need:*

- Candles
- Coloured cloths
- Branches, flowers, fruit or berries (whatever natural growth is in keeping with the season)
- A Bible to represent the Word of God
- Specially chosen symbols to represent the themes explored in class (see 'Guidelines' below)
- Other symbols to represent the different faiths in your class

### General Guidelines

- Divide the class into five groups, allocating *one* part of Section D to each group.
- Each group reviews the themes or topics that were explored in the relevant part and agrees on one that impressed them the most. The themes in summary:  
**Part 1 The Situation of Faith Today:** Influences on religious beliefs and practices among teenagers today; World Youth Day.  
**Part 2 The Beginnings of Faith:** Questions of meaning; experiences of awe and wonder; sources of meaning.  
**Part 3 The Growth of Faith:** Images of God; stages of faith.  
**Part 4 The Expression of Faith:** Prayer; worship; way of life; people of faith.  
**Part 5 Challenges to Faith:** Science and religion; religious and non-religious world views.
- The members of the group then spend some time discussing their ideas for one or more symbols to represent their chosen theme. The symbol(s) can relate to any of the topics covered.
- Having decided upon symbols, the group members work together to write out a statement explaining the significance of the symbols they have chosen.
- The five groups bring their symbols to a designated Religion class, and together they build their sacred prayer space.
- Once the space has been created, a representative from each group reads out the group's explanation of their symbol for the rest of the class. There is no need to leave this explanation in the sacred prayer space – allow each piece to speak for itself.
- Finally, with candles alight, the students gather around the sacred prayer space and say some of the prayers above, or they may choose/write their own prayers.

### Suggestion

As you work through each section of the syllabus, take a photograph of each sacred prayer space. In this way, when all the sections have been completed, you will have a colourful exhibit of the themes that you have studied and explored.