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-BEGINS-

Church Schools Star In National Assembly

Two Secondary Schools in the Diocese of Durham have been featured in the Oak National Academy's Assembly through the Church of England's Faith@Home programme.

The Venerable Bede Church of England Academy in Sunderland and the Ian Ramsey Church of England Academy in Stockton-on-Tees, part of the Dayspring Trust, were approached by The Church of England Faith@Home team to take part in the national assembly following their pioneering work with Prayer Spaces in the Diocese and their contributes to Faith@Home.

The Archbishop of Canterbury led the first Oak National Academy 'collective worship' Assembly. Now in episode five, students from the two schools talk about the importance of developing patience in our everyday lives. The Assembly video is focused on secondary school-age children and uses a blend of young presenters, topical video and youth culture to gets its messages across to the audience.

The Oak National Academy was set up in response to the COVID-19 crisis to provide high-quality online materials for students, parents and teachers. Some of the assembly content comes from the Church of England's Faith at Home programme which supports the faith development and pastoral care of children and young people.

Mrs Gill Booth, Executive Head for the Dayspring Trust said: "We are thrilled to have been

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asked to contribute to the Faith@home resources and the national assembly. This week's theme is Patience – a timely topic in the current environment!

“Preparing the production was quite a challenge as we had to do all the filming ourselves, carefully considering the rules around social-distancing. However, 10 of our pupils jumped at the challenge and volunteered to come into school to be filmed, each taking a key role in the production.

We were asked to write and present the closing prayer. As a trust, we wanted to show how we work together so each pupil presented one line, alternating between each academy. For the prayer activities, pupils demonstrated 3 different tasks that can be used at home to develop patience, using gardening, timepieces and pebbles as inspiration.

“I am extremely proud of our pupils and their achievement, especially their confidence and the way they demonstrate our Christian values, putting others before themselves and giving up their time to inspire others. We all need to develop patience at the moment and we hope that the activities show young people a way to do this.”

Both schools are part of the leadership team for the Faith@Home programme, contributing specifically on the theme of Wisdom and producing resources for teachers and pupils to use at home during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Andy Wolfe the CofE lead for the Faith@Home programme said: “We’re thrilled that student leaders from Sunderland and Stockton-on-Tees could play such a great role in this week’s films – they’ve done a wonderful job of leading, and will be an inspiration to other students and families across the country as part of our national Faith at Home campaign.”

The Rt Revd Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham and the CofE’s lead bishop on Education said: “I am delighted to see these two schools from my diocese take part in the Oak National Academy’s collective worship assembly this week. It is great to see young people engaging in this way and helping to deliver such vital messages of patience not only in this time of COVID-19 but also for us all hear and reflect upon. They can be very proud of the work they have done on the assembly and in helping lead the Wisdom strand of the Faith@Home programme.”

-ENDS-

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LINKS

The video can be viewed here: **Patience (Secondary)**

<https://www.thenational.academy/oak-activity-club/faith-at-home> and here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-action/faith-home/faith-home-videos>

FREE ISSUE PICTURES

Clips from the Video:



Ian Ramsey CE Academy Prayer Spaces

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Venerable Bede CE Academy Students

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: For additional quotes and to arrange Interviews, please contact Keith Blundy in the first instance. Media are respectfully asked not to directly contact anyone quoted or mentioned in this News Release prior to contacting Keith Blundy. This request is to ensure a coordinated and timely response to any enquiries.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **FURTHER INFORMATION** - Diocese of Durham

The Diocese of Durham is the Church of England from the River Tyne in the North;

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to the River Tees in the South; the Durham Dales in the West; and to the Sea in the East.

The Diocese of Durham is centred in historic City and County Durham, the City of Sunderland, the Metropolitan Districts of Gateshead & South Tyneside and also the boroughs of Darlington, Hartlepool, and of Stockton-on-Tees, north of the River Tees. The Diocese covers a geographic area of 2,530 square kilometres and serves a population of nearly 1.5 million.

The mission of the Diocese of Durham is to bless our communities in Jesus' name for the transformation of us all. The priorities of the Diocese are children & young people; poverty and Church growth.

The mother church of the Diocese is Durham Cathedral which is a Unesco World Heritage site and is the Cathedra seat into which the Bishops of Durham are installed.

The Church of England from the Tyne to the Tees and the Dales to the Sea, blessing our communities in Jesus' name for the transformation of us all.

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