



Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

Series:

How do we Flourish Together?

Theme:

Why do we Belong Together?



KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

The Good Samaritan is a parable in the Bible told by Jesus when a man asks him how he can obtain eternal life. Jesus tells this story to make the man think about who his neighbour is. After listening to the story, the man has to accept that it is a Samaritan who takes care of the injured man, someone considered to be different, someone who didn't belong.

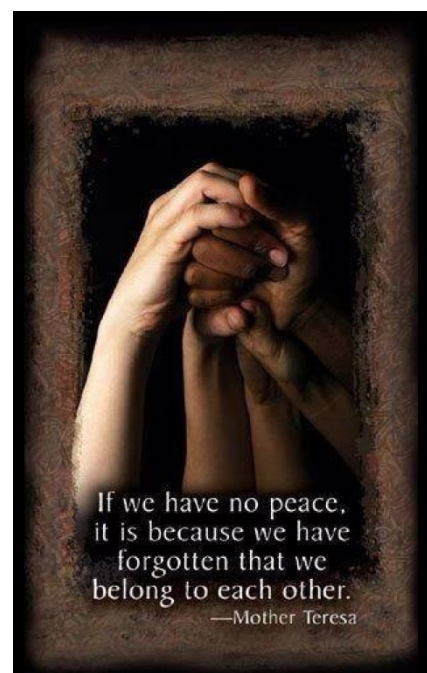
To follow Jesus' example means embracing difference and realising that everyone is worthy of belonging – not because we are alike, but because we are all of inherent value. It means including others, so no one is left alone.

'If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten we belong to each other.' Mother Teresa

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

The Story of the Good Samaritan

“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ Luke 10:27



Gathering

Close your eyes and think about a time you were hurt. Who came to help you? How did you feel in that moment? Now think about a time you helped somebody else who was hurt or struggling. How did that feel?

Think about your friends and your family. I am sure you are helping each other all the time!

Today we are going to think about how we can help people we don't know and extend our compassion and kindness so that it reaches out towards the people we come across who are hurt, sad, suffering and lonely. To show them that they belong and they matter.

Engagement

Read the story of The Good Samaritan in your Bible (Luke 10: 25-37), or if you prefer you can watch an animated version of the story here: [The Good Samaritan Story BBC Bitesize](#). If you are feeling particularly energetic and you have enough people, you could even act this story out!

In this story a man wants to know how he can get eternal life. Jesus asks him what the Law says and he answers that he must love God with all his heart and love his neighbour as himself. The confusion comes when he asks Jesus who is his neighbour, and so Jesus tries to show him through the telling of this story.

There are three things this story is designed to make us think about (Jesus is very clever with his stories! He always wants to get people thinking!):

- Who is my neighbour?
- What does it mean to love them?
- Do I really have to love everybody?

During the time of Jesus, people believed Samaritans were people to be avoided. They were seen as different and not as important and so people tried to stay away from them.

They didn't belong.

That is why it is so surprising that it is not the priest or the Levite that stops to help the injured man, but a Samaritan! His actions immediately show he is nothing like the idea people had about Samaritans. He is kind and caring, showing love for the injured Jewish man through his practical actions of caring for his wounds and taking him to safety. The first two men – the ones who did belong - could have done the same, but they let their prejudice get in the way of doing the right thing.

At the end of the story, Jesus asks the man which of the three was a 'neighbour' to the injured man? We think of neighbours as people who belong in our street, in our community, because they live near us.

But the 'neighbour' in this story was someone that would not have felt he belonged. His kindness, his actions were what made him a 'neighbour'.

Maybe we need to think again about what belonging really means.

Response

In the story the Good Samaritan helped the injured man, going out of his way to make sure he was comfortable, comforted and safe. It didn't matter that they were different. It mattered that they were both made in God's image and one of them was in need.

Think about the people who are different to you. Perhaps they look different or act differently. Maybe they weren't born in this country or they speak a different language to you. Perhaps they don't have a home or much food to eat. But we don't have to be the same to belong.

There are lots of opportunities to be kind and to show others that they belong.

You will be able to show kindness at school and there will be times you and your family can help those who are struggling together. It is a good thing to talk about and to look at the world with God's eyes – a world where we all belong together.

How easy do you find it to be kind to people who belong to your family, club, class or group of friends?

If we saw everyone in our community as belonging to us, would we be a bit kinder?

Sending

Remember Jesus' questions:

- Who is my neighbour?
- What does it mean to love them?
- Do I really have to love everybody?



Imagine yourself wearing some kindness glasses today. Can you start to see others as belonging to you?

Are they now easier to love? Are they easier to care for? Is there anyone you find it hard to see through your kindness glasses?

Say this prayer quietly and do the actions if you want to as you think about how you can be a Good Samaritan:

These hands were made for kindness (turn hands face up)

My heart was made for love (place hands over heart)

My words speak my compassion (touch lips with your finger)

My eyes see a chance for me to make a difference to someone (shape our fingers like glasses around your eyes)

So everyone knows they belong and no one feels alone (hug hands together)

Amen

If you see a chance to help someone in need, take it. You might be the only one who does. Remember – we all belong together. No one should be left all alone.



SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Listen to [Another Day in Paradise](#) by Phil Collins. The lyrics of this song make it obvious that some people in our world suffer while others have more than enough.

For example, how might it feel to not have a home to live in? Who would your neighbour be? Where would you belong?

Think about the people you might see in your village, town or city who are struggling to know they belong. If you want to, draw the place where you live, or just a typical street, showing these things. Can you write some solutions on post-it notes and stick them onto your picture?

Have a look at some books that might help you understand why life is difficult for some people and they need our help.



On Our Street: Our First Talk About Poverty by Dr Jillian Roberts and Jamie Casap shows us what being homeless is like and some of the reasons it can happen. There are many charities that can help people who have no homes. Search for some online with a grown up. Many of them have suggestions for small things you can do to help.

Books like *The Journey* by Francesca Sanna help us to understand how hard it is for people arriving here from other countries because they have had to flee violence, poverty or famine. How lonely it must be; how hard to know where I belong. The Prayer Spaces in Schools activity [Children Alone](#) focuses specifically on what it must be like to be a child fleeing from another country.



You might like to try out the activity from this week's video:

Write a friendly message on a post card and send it to someone who might be feeling lonely. It could be your actual neighbour -someone who actually lives next door – or it could be someone you've noticed who doesn't seem to feel they belong!

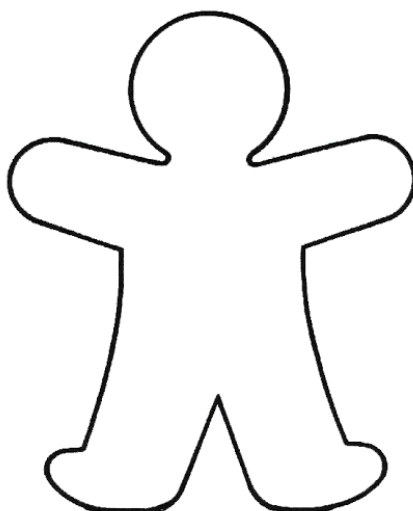
ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Of course, you can be kind to anyone you see who needs to feel they belong! It might be just a case of smiling at someone who looks sad, picking up something someone else has dropped or saying a kind word of encouragement to someone who feels lost or unsure. There are so many ways to be a Good Samaritan and a good neighbour!

Use the **EXAMEN** prayer to reflect on belonging. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for times you felt like you really belonged today.
2. ASK FOR HELP to help others know they belong too.
3. REFLECT on your day and think about the times when you felt you belonged ☺ and when you struggled to believe that you belonged ☹
4. SAY SORRY for the times you walk past someone when you could have helped them
5. DECIDE how you will be a good neighbour - showing others they belong through your kind actions.

Draw the outline of a person. Fill up the person with all the ways you can find to be kind and compassionate to people around you – showing you are a good neighbour and helping them to know they belong! How many can you add in one week?



Start each day with the prayer from 'Sending' above, to remind you to keep an eye out for opportunities to be kind and caring. Or write your own kindness prayer. Share it with your family.

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

The story of the Good Samaritan reminds us that we have a choice. When we see someone in need, we can walk right past as if we didn't see and it's not our problem. This can give people the idea that they don't really belong.

Or, we can really look and decide there is something we can do to help them feel included.

Does it matter if the person who needs help is different to you?

No. The story of the Good Samaritan shows us that when someone needs help they are sharing that part of being human that is the same for all of us. We all need help now and again. We all are given the chance to be a neighbour to someone and to let them become our neighbour. The Good Samaritan invites us to grow our understanding of who is our neighbour.

What if I see problems that are so big I can't help?

This can happen. You may not be able to do something to help on your own and you always need to remember the things you have been taught about keeping yourself safe. You can always talk to a grown up about the need you have seen. There are lots of charities that are there to help, so by helping them you can help others. Just taking the time to ask about it shows you care and are wanting others to belong.

Does doing a small thing to help someone still count?

Yes! All those small things make a big difference. People feel loved and wanted when you show kindness towards them. That is why Jesus told the story. We can all be the Good Samaritan and we can all be helped by a Good Samaritan too. We are all just walking each other home.

Do I belong, too?

Yes! The story of the Good Samaritan reminds us that we all have neighbours, and that we are all worthy of care and love. If you feel alone, it's important to reach out and talk to someone you can trust.

INVITATIONAL

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...'

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?



Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE LOVED?



KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

The story in the New Testament of the Woman at the Well describes an encounter between Jesus and a Samaritan woman. Not accepted within her own community, the woman is moved when she finds she is fully known, welcomed and loved by Jesus. This story is one example, among many in the Gospels, of Jesus inviting and loving all. How do we know we are loved? How can we help others know they are loved and known too?

‘There is only one happiness in life – to love and be loved’

George Sand

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

Woman at the Well (John 4: 1-26)

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” John 4: 13-14 (NIV)



Gathering

Close your eyes and think about a moment you felt really loved. Where were you? What happened? What led to you having this feeling?

Think about a moment where you have felt the opposite – perhaps you felt a little bit left out, unwelcome or unloved.

Today, we are going to explore an encounter in the Bible between Jesus and a woman at a well. It will help us to think about how we know we are loved, and also how we can help others feel known, accepted and loved.

Important Safeguarding Note for teachers:

It is really important in an act of worship about *knowing you are loved* to be clear about what healthy expressions of love look like.

For some children, sadly, love can be experienced or expressed in an inappropriate or harmful way. For others, they may not know or believe they are loved. We need to be alert to any signs of neglect or abuse that children might be experiencing or witnessing.

It is possible that within the context of a conversation about how we know and experience love, a child might start to disclose ways in which they have not been loved well. It is important for all children to know they are worthy of love, shown in healthy, appropriate ways.

If you suspect that a child might be at risk of harm in any way, you must report this according to your school's safeguarding arrangements.

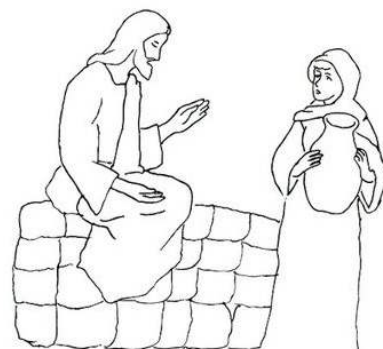
Engagement

You will need a glass (ideally a tall, high ball one), a jug of water and something to catch overflowing water. Start with the glass three-quarters full.

Watch the animated version Woman at the Well (John 4: 1-26): either <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Vf3rqnoG5c> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNxNWv6KZ7s>.

In this story, we meet a woman at a well whose name we're not told. To understand this story a little bit more, there are a few things we need to know about her (as you say each of these, tip a little water out until the glass is empty at the end):

- People didn't want to talk to her because of some mistakes she had made in the past. *She was lonely, as others in her community didn't welcome her.*
- Water was usually collected from the well at the cooler parts of the day, in the morning and evening. This woman probably went at midday to avoid others. *People were often mean to her and made her feel unloved.*
- She was a Samaritan - Jewish people at that time believed Samaritans should be avoided. *She was often ignored.*



Because of all of these things, the woman came to the well each day feeling empty (show the empty glass) – unloved, unknown and unwelcome.

This day, though, was different. This day, she met Jesus by the well, sitting there in the midday sun. For her, this encounter was full of surprises! (After mentioning each of these, fill the glass by a quarter):

- Jesus looked and spoke to her; nobody usually speaks to her! *She felt acknowledged.*
- This Jewish person was speaking to her – a Samaritan! *She felt welcomed.*
- Jesus knew the woman – who she was, all that she had been through, her past experiences and choices. *She felt known and accepted.*

Little by little, during the conversation at the well, the woman started to feel more whole (show the glass of water $\frac{3}{4}$ full). She felt welcomed, loved, accepted. But Jesus said something else when looking at the water in the well.

(Show on board) Jesus said to her, “Whoever drinks this water will be thirsty again. Whoever drinks the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give them will become a well of life that lasts forever.”

Jesus realised that this woman was looking for something deeper than water from the well this day. She was looking to be loved – not the soppy sort – but to experience kindness, acceptance, friendship and the feeling of being known. Jesus was offering her this ‘living water’ – the feeling and knowledge that whatever happened in life, He loved her and that love would never stop. This love is like a never-ending stream of water – one that continues and will never end (*pour water into the glass until it is full to the brim or overflowing*).

The never-ending love of God is something which is really important to Christians, and many try to follow the example of Jesus to help others feel know, welcomed and loved.

Response

Sit quietly, be still and think about all you have heard in this act of worship. I wonder what words or images have made you think today?

I wonder what you might do after watching and listening today?

I invite you to join with me in a prayer. For Christians, prayer is just talking to God, who they know listens and hears their prayers. If you agree with what I have said, then please join me in saying, ‘Amen’.

Dear God,

Thank you for knowing us, welcoming us and loving us.

We think of those who feel unloved or left out.

Please show us if any of our family, friends or school community are feeling this way, and help us to show them love and kindness as Jesus did at the well.

Amen.

Sending

Water played a big part in the story of the Woman at the Well. I wonder if, in the week ahead, you can think about two questions every time you use running water. ‘How do I know I am loved?’ and ‘How can I help others feel loved?’

Go in peace to share God’s love and kindness with all you meet.



SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Listen to the song 'I'll Stand by You' by The Pretenders

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLpmj059JfA>), and reflect on the lyrics.

How could you see yourself in the song – who is standing by you? Who could you stand with?

Read [All are welcome here](#) by Alexandra Penfold and Suzanne Kaufman. Reflect on how you as a class could welcome all and ensure all feel a part of, and loved within, the school community. Perhaps the class could create their own thoughtful poem in the style of this book?



ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the **EXAMEN** prayer to reflect on love. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for the times you have felt loved this week.
2. ASK FOR HELP to help others feel accepted, known and loved.
3. REFLECT on your day and think about the things you have done which have helped others feel welcomed and loved ☺, and the times you may have missed opportunities to do so ☹.
4. SAY SORRY for the times you may have made someone feel like an outsider – not welcomed or loved.
5. DECIDE how you will help others to know they are known and loved by you tomorrow.

To discover more about using the Ignatian Examen with children, listen to this [podcast](#).

Running water

The story of the Woman at the Well uses water as a symbol for love. Perhaps this week, every time you use running water (to wash your hands, to make a drink, to brush your teeth etc.), you could reflect on this story and consider how you are loved, accepted and known (as per the 'sending' aspect of the collective worship plan).



CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

The story of the Woman at the Well, as explored in our Faith at Home Primary video, draws attention to three themes.



First, the woman arrived at the well feeling unloved, unwanted and unwelcome. Others in her town didn't want to associate with or know her. In her encounter at the well, she finds that she is known and loved by Jesus; she has been looking for, and finds, this 'living water' of love that God can provide. Many Christians believe that Jesus' words 'living water' refers to the unending and life-giving love of God.

How do you know that you are loved? Who stands by you in your life? Whose love do you know is unconditional?

Second, Jesus actively sought out someone whose experiences in life left them feeling unworthy of love. Through past mistakes, the woman was avoided by those in her community and felt lonely. Jesus reached out to her, letting her know that she was dear to him.

How can we look for and support those in our communities who feel unknown, unloved and unwelcome at this time?

Thirdly, throughout the Gospels, Jesus is described as challenging ideas about 'us' and 'them' – such as the 'Jewish people' and 'Samaritans' – where people are not loved because they are seen as different. In this story, Jesus reaches out to the woman where others might have decided not to.

How might our community be better at including all and helping all feel loved and welcomed?



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Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

HOW DO WE GET BACK ON TRACK?



KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

The story of Zacchaeus in the New Testament is a message for us all with regards to reconciliation. We all make mistakes, but it's what we do after that makes the biggest difference. We can get back on track and put it right if we choose to.

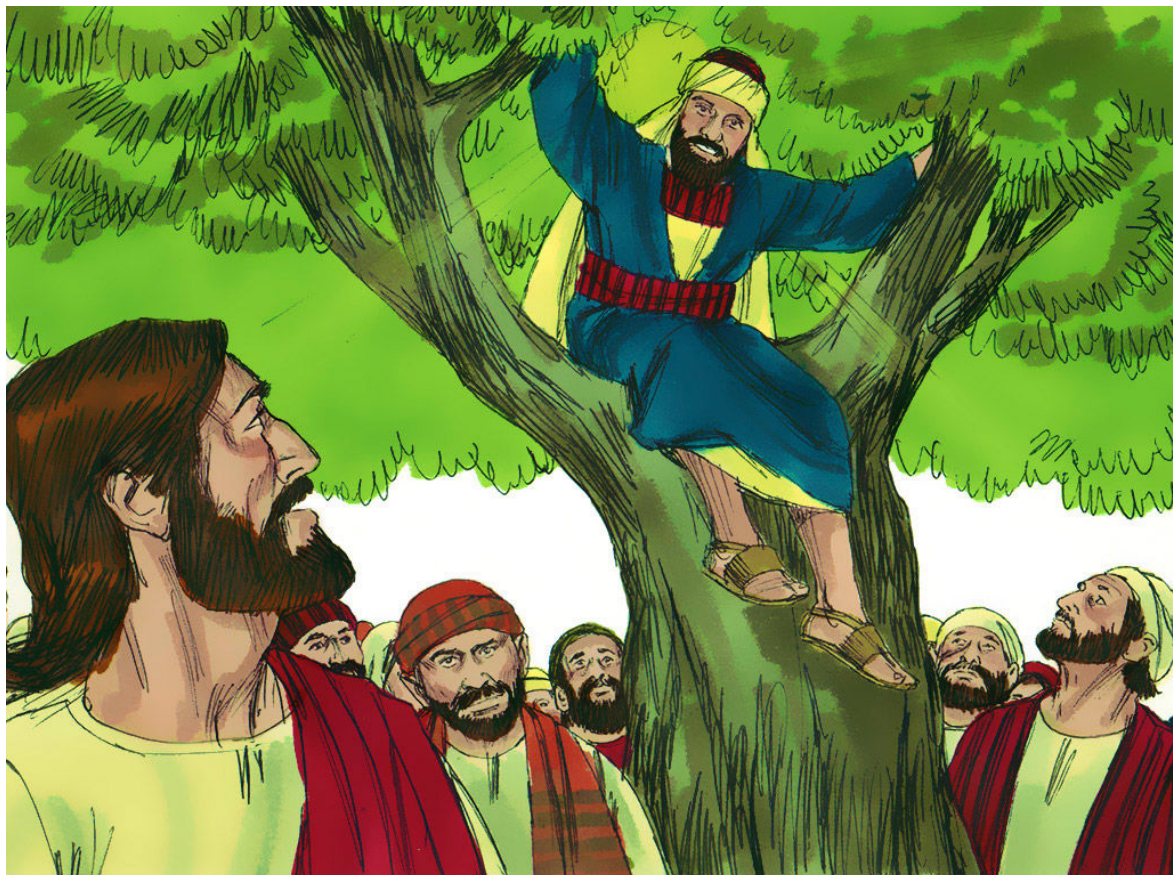
Even Zacchaeus, a rich tax collector who was deceiving people into overpaying, had good inside him, something that sought out Jesus when he arrived in his town – climbing up a tree to catch a glimpse! Inspired by Jesus' words, Zacchaeus sought to repair what he had damaged through his heavy taxation and to rebuild his relationships with the people he had hurt. Even though he had made a lot of mistakes he still wanted to put them right. How can we put things right when we make a mistake?

'Tomorrow is always another day to make things right' - Lauryn Hill

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

The Story of Zacchaeus – [Luke 19:1-10](#)

"If I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."



Gathering

Think about a time when you made a mistake. It's often painful to do isn't it? We all make mistakes. We hurt people when we didn't mean to. Sometimes we knowingly do something wrong because in that split second, we choose badly or forget what our true values are. Adults and children do this.

If you would like to, you might like to join in this gathering prayer. Christians believe that as we consider our mistakes, we do so within the safety and comfort of a loving God:

I come before God the Father who has made me in His image,

Jesus the Son who loves me without question,

And Holy Spirit who gives me the strength to make my wrongs, right.

Amen.

Engagement

Read the story of Zacchaeus in your Bible (Luke 19:1-10). There are some great photographs showing a retelling of the story here: <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/lumo-zacchaeus/> Perhaps you could read the story and then retell it using the photographs. A video retelling can be found [here](#).

Which of the photographs do you think shows the most significant moment in the story and why?

This is the story of a man who has done wrong things and treated people badly, even though they were his fellow citizens. Instead of helping the people of Jericho, he chose to oppress them alongside the Romans, taking more money than he should in taxes. He made this wrong choice over and over and over again. Because of this, Zacchaeus was not at all liked by his fellow Jews and they thought of him as a 'sinner'. When Jesus came to Jericho, Zacchaeus was interested to see what he looked like and to hear what he had to say. He climbed a sycamore tree because he was too small to glimpse Jesus over the crowd. What he lacked in height he had made up for with a large amount of bad deeds! But still, he wanted to see and he wanted to listen. He didn't dream that Jesus would stop and talk to him, but He did! In fact, He asked him to come down from the tree because he wanted to be a guest in the home of Zacchaeus.

How do you think the crowd felt at that point?

Jesus wanted to eat with a known sinner who had treated them all very badly! The crowd was shocked and Zacchaeus was shocked too. Sometimes Jesus really surprised people.

Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house and Zacchaeus was so moved by Jesus and his words that he **repented** (that's an important word meaning that he changed his mind and said sorry). He knew just being sorry was not enough. He needed to repair the damage. So, he told Jesus that he would give half of his possessions to the poor and if he had cheated anybody out of taxes he would pay them back four times the amount. He was not just making it right, he was making it better!

This story is very important for Christians. It not only tells us not to cheat or trick people or to do them harm, it also tells us what we should do if we do hurt someone and we want to repent (turn around and get back on track):

- **Change your mind and say sorry** (this is repentance)
- **Make it right** (return what was taken, repair what was broken, soothe what was injured)
- **Make it better** (if you can, do something that really communicates that you understand you did wrong and now you want to show the opposite and do good, generous things)

Jesus was pleased. He told Zacchaeus that salvation had come to his house. That meant he had chosen the right things and could follow Jesus with peace in his heart that he had repented and repaired his mistakes. Sometimes we have to 'climb a tree' and look at what we have been doing, even if we have been doing it a lot, and ask for help to find a way to make it right again.

Response

Have you ever sat and listened to Jesus' words? It could be someone reading them from the Bible, or singing them in a song, or some people even think that Jesus has things he wants to say to straight into our hearts.

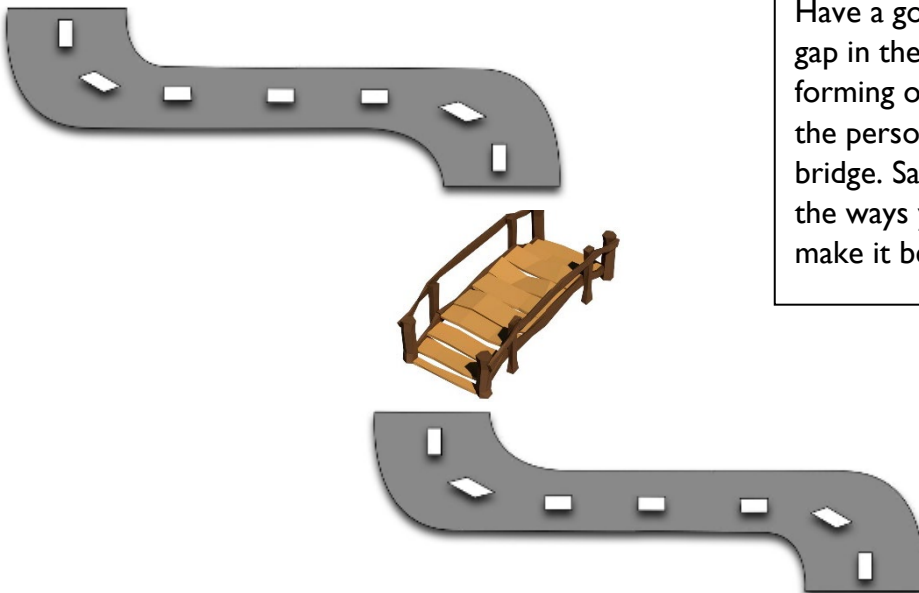
When Zacchaeus listened to Jesus' words something amazing happened. They made him want to change! He was on a long, ongoing path towards harm and bad treatment of others and his encounter with Jesus switched him onto a new path! Suddenly, he did not want to harm people anymore. In fact, he wanted to put it right!

This is the 'Reconciliation' statue in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral:



This statue represents two people coming back together after the Second World War. Some people say it reminds them of a bridge. It is a good visual example of repenting and repairing. The two figures are leaning on each other from a distance, showing they depend on each other. Without the other accepting the apology they would collapse. They have their hands holding each other's heads, showing they are ready to listen to each other, to hear the other's thoughts and feelings. This is what Zacchaeus did. He asked the people to forgive him. He wanted to repair his wrongs.

Repenting and repairing is like a bridge. When you take a wrong path and end up facing a big gap caused by your mistakes, you can build a bridge.



Have a go: Picture your mistake like a gap in the road. Now imagine a bridge forming over the gap. Picture you and the person you harmed making a bridge. Say you are sorry. Think about the ways you can make it right and make it better.

Do you need to get back on track?

Making a mistake doesn't mean we are bad people and it does not change how much God loves us. Jesus was going to Zacchaeus's house anyway, even before he had changed his mind! Did you know 'Zacchaeus' actually means 'pure or innocent'? Zacchaeus had been making choices that didn't match who he was. Jesus' words made him want to change.

In the Lord's Prayer it says:

'Forgive us our trespasses (sins) as we forgive those who trespass (sin) against us.'

It is a constant rhythm of forgiving and being forgiven that gets us back on track.

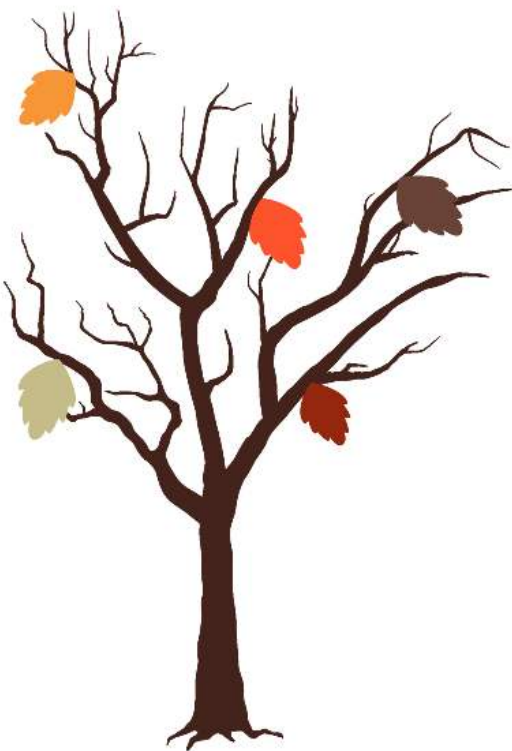
Now you have imagined your bridge forming over your mistake, why don't you go and do the things you need to do to make things right and make things better? You can get yourself back on track!

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Find a tree. Can you imagine what you could see from the top? What might you be able to see from up there that you can't see from the ground? [Don't climb the tree, which might not be safe. Use your imagination!]. When Zacchaeus had a problem, he climbed a tree so he could see further and clearer. Do you have a problem that needs some clearer thinking? Draw a tree, label your problem, imagine possible ways of fixing it and write these on the leaves.



Talking to grown-ups can really help us with our problems. They often have experience that can help us and wisdom that can lead us. Talk to an adult about how they build bridges when they make mistakes and hurt people. What tips do they have for you on making it right and making it better?

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

St Ignatius' **EXAMEN** prayer was designed to help people 'get back on track'! It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for who you are; that you are wonderful and full of potential!
2. ASK FOR HELP to look back on where you might have gone wrong today.
3. REFLECT on your day and think about the things that brought you joy and peace 😊, and the things that didn't feel quite as good ☹.
4. SAY SORRY for the things you did today which hurt others or made them feel sad.
5. DECIDE how you will make it right and try and do better tomorrow.

To discover more about using the Ignatian Examen with children, listen to this [podcast](#).

Bible Paving Stones

Did you know the Bible is described as being like a lamp for our feet?

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

Psalm 119:105 *New Living Translation*

Reading the Bible can really help with finding the right path and building bridges when we make mistakes. Try reading some each day. Here are some verses to get you started:

Philippians 4:8

Galatians 1:10

John 15: 12

Colossians 3:23-24

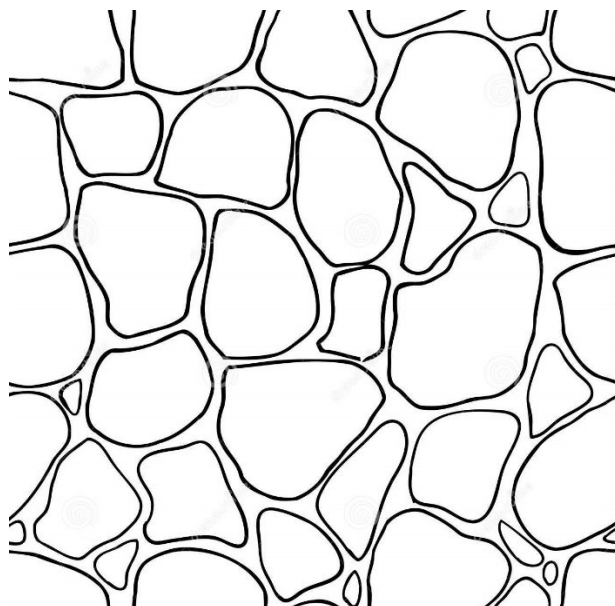
Matthew 6:6

Micah 6:8

1 Corinthians 13:4-7



You could write these down to help you remember them. Perhaps even write them on shapes like paving stones and build up your path to follow when things are tricky.



CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

The story of Zacchaeus reminds us that we sometimes need to make a change so that we are back on track. It doesn't matter how far down the road we go. We can repent (change our minds) and repair (make it right, make it better).

Can we say sorry without making it right?

Yes, you can change your mind and choose another direction, but if you want to build healthy relationships with others and be known as someone of good character, you also need to make it right and try to make it better. That makes it much more likely you are going to travel onwards on your path surrounded by friends.

Why do we try to make it better if we have already made it right?

We can all imagine a better world, can't we? When we try to make it better we use our generosity and our kindness to inch just a little bit closer to that better world. Jesus called this the Kingdom of God.

Does Jesus change people's minds?

Christians believe that Jesus' actions and words are very inspiring for people. They believe that Jesus shows us how to live and he shows us that we are loved, which helps us to love ourselves and want to be the best version of ourselves. However, Christians also believe that we have 'free will', which means it is up to us if we want to change our minds or not. It is our choice. If we have made mistakes and lost our way, Christians think that turning to Jesus can help us to get back on track.



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INCLUSIVE

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Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

How do we Flourish Together?

**THEME: How do we make
sense of our feelings?**





KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Emotions – particularly the ones that we consider to be “negative” or difficult – can often be hard to understand. Look at these words from Psalm 139:

‘You know all about me... you know my thoughts before I think them’ and ‘I am wonderfully and mysteriously made’

We might often agree with David the Psalmist when he says that we are ‘mysteriously made’! Christians believe that Jesus was fully human and experienced the full range of human emotions – and that means he understands all that they are feeling, too.

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

Jesus raises Lazarus, his friend, from the dead

[John 11:1-16](#)



JESUS MAFA. Jesus raises Lazarus to life, from Art in the Christian Tradition, [a project](#) of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. This is a painting of how a community in Cameroon acted out the story.

To prepare:

The video material that accompanies this resource references the story of Jesus and Lazarus, which we expand on in this resource. The pictures we use here are from stories about Jesus that children will probably have encountered already, but if not, you can find the stories in most Children's Bibles using the references included. The stories encourage children to talk about both positive and "negative" (difficult, challenging or painful) emotions that Jesus displayed – and consider why it is so important to Christians that Jesus felt 'like them'. There will not be the time to share each story completely during one collective worship session, so you might want to select a different emotion for each day of the week, or the ones that you think children in your class might benefit from at this time.

Gathering



Some questions to think about:

How are you feeling today?

What emotions have you felt already today?

What emotions do you bring to this worship time today?

Which emotions do we like feeling? Which are challenging to experience?

Some further options to explore as you begin your time together are:

- 'Quick-fire' emotions – 'Show me a sad / happy / amazed / angry face.' etc.
- 'Play' with your school greeting – can you greet each other happily, sadly, excitedly etc. or express emotions just with your hands.
- Show children a range of emojis and ask them to identify which emotions they think the emojis are displaying, and think of a time when they might have felt that way.
- Or if you are in your class bubble, create statues that show a particular emotion – either specified by the teacher, or by children for others to guess. You could extend this activity into a 'Sculptor / Sculpture' pairing, where one child is the sculptor, giving instructions to the other child, the sculpture, as to how to place hands, what emotions to show on their face etc. with the sculptor giving instructions to help 'refine' the sculpture. This is a **strictly no physical contact** activity, to encourage the verbalising process, so perhaps better for older children. What works really well when you have more time is to 'sculpt' the emotions in contrasting pairs e.g. someone who's feeling left out, turned into someone who is feeling included.

Engagement

Today's act of worship is going to consider some of the vast array of emotions that we experience – sometimes on an hourly basis! Christians believe that because Jesus was human, like them, he experienced human emotions – just like we do.

We're going to visit some stories from Jesus' life and talk about the emotions he showed....[use the pictures and questions here to help you. You can also find them as a PowerPoint in the additional resource, using images from www.freebibleimages.org]

Jesus weeps at Lazarus' tomb – John 11:28-35



Retell the story very briefly – asking children to identify the emotion Jesus shows here.

It's not difficult to imagine why Jesus was **sad**, when his friend Lazarus died.

When you look at the words in the Bible, it also says that Jesus was sad because Lazarus' family were sad.

Sensitively talk about times when sadness has seemed overwhelming – and how we are affected when others are sad. How might it help Christians to know that Jesus experienced this emotion?

Jesus feels compassion for crowds (& feeds them!) – Luke 9:10-17



When Jesus saw the needs of the people, he had **compassion** on them.

Why do you think people came to Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus wanted to heal them?

He also performed a miracle and fed them with 5 loaves & 2 fish because they were hungry.

What difference do you think it makes to Christians to know that Jesus showed compassion?

(Remember, the word 'compassion' means to suffer with others)

Jesus feels angry in the temple – Luke 19:45



What emotion do you think Jesus is showing here?

Does it surprise you to know that Jesus could be **angry**?

What do you think made Jesus feel this way?

Was Jesus right to do what he did? [He said that the Temple was a place for prayer, not selling things. The sellers were also stopping people from coming into the Temple to pray.]

Can being angry sometimes be a **good** thing? How might Christians learn from Jesus' example here? Talk about how it's important to be allowed to express anger – but not to act in a way that hurts others.

Jesus feels lonely in the Garden of Gethsemane – Mark 14: 35&37



Jesus was facing the hardest choice of his life – to go and suffer on the cross.

He needed his friends to keep him company, but they fell asleep.

How do you think Jesus felt?

Have you ever felt like this?

We can all identify with how it feels when friends aren't there for us or let us down in some way.

How might it help Christians to know that Jesus understands this emotion too?

Jesus is amazed at the centurion's faith – Luke 7:1-10



What have you experienced recently that has made you say 'Wow!'?

Why do you think that Jesus was so surprised in this story?

Do you think that there were other things about being a human being that surprised Jesus? (who Christians believe is God **incarnate** – in human form)

If Jesus could be surprised by people, what do you think this teaches Christians, the people who follow him?

Now think about the emotion(s) you've explored through the eyes of Jesus in this worship. Which have left you with questions to ask? Which have taught you something about yourself? How might these stories help you to understand and accept the emotions that you feel?

Response

Christians would say that Jesus being so sad gives *them* permission to feel sad when hard things happen and when others are sad, angry at things that they know would make God angry, comfort knowing that Jesus understands how it feels to be abandoned and a commitment to live compassionately, feeling for other people, as Jesus did. This means that no matter what, they can bring all the confusion, hurt and pain – as well as joy and wonder – that they feel to Jesus, believing that he understands.

Spend some time in quiet, bringing all your emotions – the more difficult ones as well as the easier ones – before God, or holding them in your heart if you prefer. Think about the people around you who support you when you need them and give thanks for them.

Use your hands to express this response – if your children know the BSL or Makaton signs, you could use these instead of our suggestions.

When I am angry [close fists tightly]..... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

When I am sad [use fingers to draw tears on your face].... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

When I am worried or afraid [hide behind your hands]... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

When I am happy [clap hands].... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

Whatever I feel [go freestyle!!]..... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

Amen

Sending

Read these words together from Romans 12:15&16:

Be happy with those who are happy. Be sad with those who are sad. Live together in peace with each other. Do not be proud, but make friends with those who seem unimportant. Do not think how smart you are.

How might these words inspire you to help others this week?

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

1. **Make a set of emotion stones** for your classroom – or children could make individual sets from smaller stones. Draw a different emotion on each stone – you could look at [emojis](#) to help you decide what works best. At times when you need to, hold a specific stone in your hand and bring how you are feeling to God.
2. **Set up a sand tray** in your reflective area. Encourage children to use the sand to draw a face that expresses how they are feeling: it's especially good as a way of 'stalling' any negative outward expressions of anger and gives adults in the room the chance to come alongside children and help them to talk. There are some [ideas](#) that you could adapt on the Prayer Spaces in Schools website.
3. **Play the Emotions Game:** One player thinks of an emotion and writes it down secretly on a piece of paper. With younger children, you may need to focus on very simple emotions such as angry, sad, happy etc. Older children could use more complex emotions such as distraught, overjoyed, exasperated etc – think about the vocabulary levels of those playing. The other players now ask the first one to do or say something e.g. mime baking a cake, say 'I really love you', walk into a room etc and that person has to do what they say but try to convey the emotion as they do it. They need to use body language and tone of voice and facial expression to make their emotion clear. The challenge is for the other players to identify what the emotion is within ten guesses. This is a good game for helping children learn to recognise how body language, tone of voice and facial expressions can give a clue as to how someone is feeling.
4. **There are some excellent resources to help children connect with the emotions that they might feel as we return to lockdown, from Together at Home:** they could easily be used to set up some prayer stations in your reflective area. Click [here](#) for the complete set of cards, covering a range of differing emotions, both positive and negative.

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the EXAMEN prayer to reflect on your emotions. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

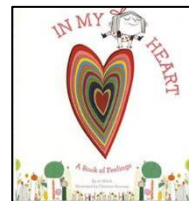
1. GIVE THANKS for the vast range of emotions that we as human beings can display.
2. ASK FOR HELP with the more difficult emotions, the ones that cause us pain.
3. REFLECT on your day and think about how you have felt at different times. Be curious about why you may have felt that way.
4. SAY SORRY for the times your feelings have hurt others, or when you have ignored others' feelings.
5. DECIDE how you will support others when they are happy / sad / anxious / angry etc.

Umbrella Prayer activity – Put up a large umbrella in your reflective classroom space. Cut out shapes that identify with a specific emotion and help children to think about their feelings e.g. spikey for angry, clouds for confusion, raindrops for sadness etc. Hang threads from the spokes within the umbrella and attach your 'emotions' to them. Spend time sitting under the umbrella, thinking or talking to God about how you are feeling. It might help you to imagine that God is like the umbrella, covering you and protecting you.

There are so many picture books available, especially for younger pupils, that help them to think and talk about their emotions. Here are some suggestions:

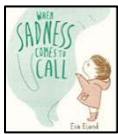


The Colour Monster by Anna Llenas (left)



In My Heart by Jo Witek (right)

Both these stories try to put into words how emotions can have physical manifestations, which can be very confusing for younger pupils.



When Sadness Comes To Call and **Where Happiness Begins** by Eva Eland

Two contrasting books about two contrasting emotions. You might need tissues for the first one!



The Rabbit Listened by Cori Doerrfeld, a story about the animals' response to a little boy's sadness and how sometimes, a listening ear is the most important thing of all.

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

There is a brand new set of resources produced by Engage Worship called '**Jesus and Emotions**' – whilst this is aimed at families, there would be elements that could be used in school collective worship or as part of family support at home, helping children to talk about and process their emotions, using stories and passages from the Bible. Find out more [here](#).

Explore the BSL or Makaton signs for differing emotions with your class. You can find many videos readily on the internet, or your SENDCO might have a good resource for you to use. This is a really good way of helping younger pupils to express their emotions. Being able to sign is a useful skill, and includes anyone who communicates non-verbally.

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Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

HOW DO WE FACE OUR FEARS?





KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Fear can be both a helpful and unhelpful feeling. It shows us when something is dangerous (helpful) but can also obscure our view of reality if we fear something that is actually safe (unhelpful).

Christians believe that God can provide comfort when we feel helpful fear and can take away unhelpful fear altogether.

The Apostle John wrote:

*'There is no fear in love, but **perfect love** casts out fear, because fear is by suspicion, but he who fears is not grown up in love. No fear exists where his love is. Rather, perfect love gets rid of fear, because fear involves punishment.'* 1 John 4:18

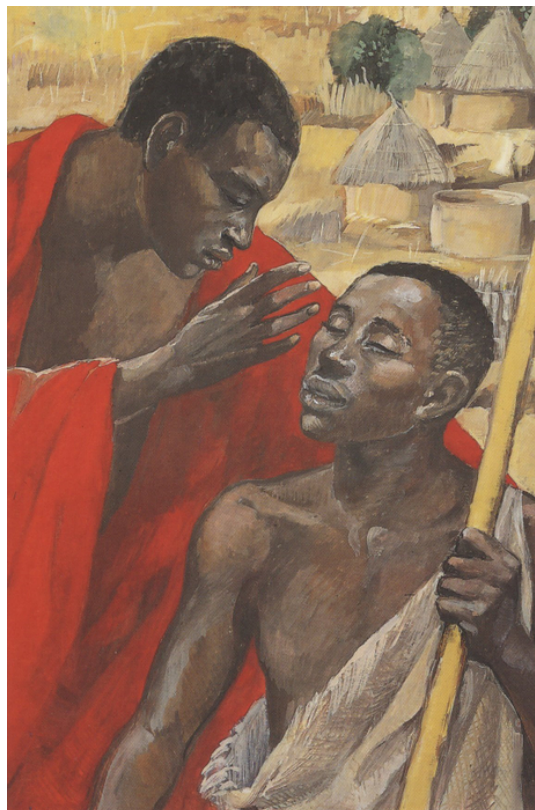
Christians pray to God to ask him for help when they feel afraid. For example, if they fear being alone, they can ask God to be with them. If they fear the dark, they can ask God to be their light.

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

Jesus heals a man who was born blind

[John Chapter 9](#)

"What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." John 9:17



JESUS MAFA. Jesus cures the man born blind, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48383> [retrieved November 30, 2020]. Original source: <http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr> (contact page: <https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact>).

Gathering

To prepare: This resource looks at ways for children to think about overcoming fear. Some of their fears may be small, some may be more substantial and based in potential danger or harm. Throughout the session, care needs to be taken to handle such fears with sensitivity as well as following safeguarding procedures where necessary.

If you have some stones or small waterproof items (e.g. Lego brick, marble), hand these out to the children at the start. Please follow your school protocols for sanitising equipment. You will also need a large bowl of water.

The children will also need paper or whiteboards for this Gathering.

As we gather for worship today, we are going to begin by reflecting on love.

How does love feel to you? Who do you love? Who loves you?

You might like to draw a heart and write around it all the people who show you love.

Christians believe that God IS love, and that his love is so huge it can swallow up all our fears.

I wonder – what are you afraid of at the moment?

It might be sickness, an upcoming situation that you feel worried about, a friendship that seems to be going wrong.

Take a moment to think about this as we light our candle and begin our worship. As you see the light appear, try to imagine this light driving away any darkness you feel today.

Engaging

Hold onto the object you've been given (stone, Lego piece or similar) and think about the thing you are most afraid of right now. You don't need to tell anyone what it is.

We are all afraid of something. We don't need to be embarrassed about being afraid – it is a part of being human! But we don't need to live afraid.

Christians believe that Jesus came to help us with the things that frighten us. That his love is big enough to overcome fear. Why don't you now place your item inside the heart you drew to remind you that love is bigger than fear?

The problem with fear is that it stops us seeing the good in life. If we are afraid of fire or we are careful with strangers, that helps us live well. But if we are afraid of what might happen when that thing hasn't actually happened, fear is stopping us from seeing 'life in all its fullness'. It stops us from being joyful and peaceful.

Today, we are going to read a Bible story today about Jesus wanting someone to be able to see and live life to the full.

Why don't we read the story together? (There is a version in the Faith at Home video you could use, too)

[John Chapter 9](#)

We see from the Bible reading that this man's life was not going well. He had to sit all day and beg for food. He had no one to help him – his life must have been quite frightening.

When Jesus sees him, he wants to help him. So, he puts mud on the man's eyes and heals him.

I wonder what the man felt about a stranger putting mud on his eyes?!

In that moment, he had no way of knowing what would happen next. Yet Jesus' actions enabled him to be able to see clearly.

He had been born blind, so I wonder what it was like for him to be able to see for the first time?

The rulers ask the man himself what happened. He is so full of joy and of the love that Jesus showed him, he can only say: *"One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"* (v25)

When we feel loved, we are not so afraid to say things as they are. We can see more clearly and live more joyfully.

Responding

Let's return to that object in your hand, representing the thing you are most afraid of.

Why don't you place it inside the heart you drew? What would it look like for love to swallow up your fear? Can you see how much bigger your heart is than your fear object?

Christians believe that God's love is much, much bigger than our fears. In fact, they believe God's love is infinite – that it goes on forever and ever. Whereas our fears become smaller and smaller the more we surround them with love.

Look back at the names you drew around your heart.

When you feel afraid, which of these people could you go to?

When we talk about our fears with someone we love, it is like putting mud on our eyes so we can see things clearly! It enables us to live life in all its fullness.

Who could you talk to?

Possible extension:

Later on in the Bible story, we see an example of people being afraid. The healed man's parents are questioned by the religious rulers and they don't want to get into trouble.

Have you ever felt like that?

What has helped you when you have been afraid of getting into trouble? Who can you talk to about it?

How might it help to remember this Bible verse?

*'There is no fear in love, but **perfect love** casts out fear... perfect love gets rid of fear, because fear involves punishment.'* 1 John 4:18

Sending

Some people find this acronym helpful to remember where their unhelpful fears comes from:

False

Evidence

Appearing as

Read

This week, if you feel afraid of anything, try to ask if the thing you are afraid of is real. Remember that having conversations with people we love can help make our fears feel much smaller.

Some of you might like to pray to God – asking him to take away unhelpful fears and to bring comfort when the things we fear are real.



Finally, as you finish worship today, let go of your small fear object into a bowl of water.

As it leaves your hand, imagine yourself really letting go of that fear.

You might like to say a prayer together and ask God to protect you from these fears and to fill you all with his infinite love.

The hymn 'Amazing Grace' uses some of the words from today's Bible story: 'I once was blind, but now I see'. As you go out from today's worship, you might like to play this version:

[Songs of Praise virtual choir \(inclusive\)](#)

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Create a Self-soothe box

Whilst it is important to be able to share with a trusted person how we feel and to seek help in that way, often we will need to be able to deal with strong emotions on our own, even if it is just for a short time. One way of doing this is to create a self-soothe box. See the below link from the amazing charity Young Minds for ideas.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/how-to-make-a-self-soothe-box/>

[Here](#), young people explain how to make one.

Name that Feeling



Prayer Spaces in Schools have a few ideas for reflection activities which help let go of worries and deal with anxiety.

It's important to know how we feel in order to make sense of the emotion and deal with it well.

['Name that feeling'](#) develops emotional literacy and is a way of processing our own feelings, using emotion cards and Scrabble letters.

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Emotion Journaling

Why don't you try keeping a journal for a few days or weeks?

On a piece of paper, in a book, on the notes on your phone – each time you feel something strongly (happiness, disgust, emotional pain, anger) write down the date and time, what you felt, what had happened to bring on that emotion (don't worry if you don't know), and what you did as a result.

It is good to do both school days and weekend days. After a few days, look back upon your journal either on your own or with a trusted adult. Look for patterns.

What situations bring you joy?

Which cause anxiety or make you feel afraid?

What activities or people help you?

How can you invite in love so your fears feel smaller?

Journaling can help us to understand ourselves and our relationships better, by helping us reflect on how we felt and why.

Don't forget to celebrate the good things too!

Anchoring



Anchoring can help us when we feel fearful or anxious about the situations we are facing.

Anchoring is about bringing ourselves back into the present and acknowledging that we are safe, even when we emotionally feel like we are like a boat tossed around in a storm.

Use the 5 digits of your hand to actively think about the five senses as below.

Find **FIVE** things you see around you.

Find **FOUR** things you can touch

Listen for **THREE** things.

Find **TWO** things you can smell.

Acknowledge **ONE** thing you can taste.

Anything will do – a window, the cat, your hairbrush

Anything nearby – grass, a woolly jumper, your hair

Anything outside your body – birds, sirens, people talking

A flower, a wooden pencil, a flavoured cordial

Either already in your mouth, or something you can drink or eat

After doing this, notice if your anxiety has calmed down and whether you feel more in control.

Do you know of other anchors in your life that settle you in a similar way?

Use the **EXAMEN** prayer to reflect on our feeling anxious and afraid. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for the people who love you and whom you love.
2. ASK FOR HELP with the times where you feel frightened or worried.
3. REFLECT on your day – when did you feel loved and at peace, when did you feel anxious or afraid?
4. SAY SORRY for the times that you let fear drive you to do the wrong thing.
5. DECIDE how you will choose love over fear tomorrow.

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

These questions from the Faith at Home video can get you started in talking about fear:

Can you name a time when your fear got too big?
Who has helped you when you're feeling scared?
How can you help others when are feeling scared?

Worry Box

Do you have a worry box in your class?
How do you deal with the worries children raise?
Are there opportunities to talk through imaginary scenarios that help children develop strategies for managing their worries?



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH

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Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

**How can we have hope for
tomorrow?**





KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

The biblical story of the Road to Emmaus describes the experience of two disciples as they were walking from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. Focussing on their problems and disappointments after recent events, the disciples fail to realise that Jesus has met them on their journey. Through offering insight and perspective, Jesus leaves the disciples now hopeful for the future. What can we learn from this narrative? How can we have hope for tomorrow?

'As the day ends, put your worries to rest. Tomorrow is another day, filled with hope, potential and promise'

Sue Krebs

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

Road to Emmaus ([Luke 24: 13-35](#))

'Jesus came up and walked along with them'



Gathering

Follow the school's normal gathering routines for class-based/bubble worship.

Either:

Ask: I wonder what words or images come into you mind when you hear the word 'hope'? or

Place the sentence starter, 'Hope is...' on the board. I wonder how you might finish this sentence?

Share some thoughts as a class.



In our collective worship today, we are going to think about an encounter in the Bible between Jesus and two of his disciples. It will help us to think more deeply about the question 'How can we have hope for tomorrow?'.

Engagement

Watch the 'Road to Emmaus' video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndtnZV-5QTo>.

In what follows, the story will be explored through three images and the acronym 'DAOR' ('road' backwards). You might wish to copy or print the three images to show pupils. The letters (and subsequent words) can be written on a whiteboard.

In this story, we meet two disciples as they are journeying from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. When we look back at this biblical story, there are some things that stand out:



At the start of this story, we find the disciples **disappointed** and **disheartened** (add to the 'D' on the board). The disciples had lost hope because of what had happened in Jerusalem a few days before. Jesus had died and his body had gone missing; they were expecting things to turn out a little bit differently... Wasn't Jesus the promised Messiah who would overthrow the Romans and bring peace to all? That dream seemed a little lost...



As a result, the disciples were a little **anxious** (add to the 'A' on the board). 'What did the future hold now? What could we now hope for?' The disciples were so worried that they could only focus on their troubles and disappointments. They were so worried they didn't recognise that the person, who was now walking alongside them, was Jesus.



As they travelled, Jesus asked what was troubling them. The disciples explained the events of the last few days – how Jesus had died and how there were now reports that his body had gone missing. Jesus listened very carefully, and then started to **open up new possibilities** (add to the 'O' on the board). He explained that the messengers and prophets of old had all pointed to these things happening; do not worry, all of these things will turn out well. And, as they ate together, their eyes were opened too – they finally recognised that this person was Jesus himself!

The disciples **realised** that they had lots of **reasons to be hopeful** (add words in bold to the 'R' on the board). Through walking with and meeting Jesus, they were no longer disappointed or disheartened; they now thought that Jesus' death and missing body had actually pointed to the greatest hope possible. They ran back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples what they had seen and heard.

If those disciples were asked the question, 'How can you have hope for tomorrow?', I wonder what they would have answered? Perhaps they would have replied, 'we have hope because Jesus is alive and joined us on our journey!'.

Many Christians today take hope from this belief – that Jesus is with them, knows about their disappointments and worries, and points forwards to a more hopeful tomorrow. There is a popular phrase for many Christians of ‘Let go and let God’; don’t worry about tomorrow, God will take care of it.

Response

I wonder if sometimes you feel a little like the disciples on the Road to Emmaus did – **disheartened**, **disappointed**, perhaps **anxious** about the future?

I wonder what this story makes you think about hope?



Perhaps it makes you think that you are supported by others as you travel through life? For some, perhaps it’s your belief that God is with you each day.



Perhaps the story makes you think about worries. Sometimes, like the disciples in this story, we can focus so much on our worries that we miss important and bigger things that we can celebrate. Perhaps you have ways of putting worries aside or sharing them, which help you to think more about a better today and tomorrow. ‘Each day is a brand-new day’.

Perhaps the story makes you think about something else?

Take a moment to reflect.



The disciples left their encounter with Jesus changed, more hopeful for the future. Take a moment to think about the question, ‘What gives you hope for the future?’. If you’d like to, perhaps you could trace your answer with your finger on the top of your shoe as a reminder to take this message of hope with you as you travel this week. You could even reflect using this [‘Hope Rope’](#) activity.

Listen and reflect on the words of [‘Lord of all Hopefulness’](#) or [‘One more step along the world I go’](#).

Sending

Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for walking with us as we journey together through life. Thank you for walking with us through good times, as well as times when we might feel worried. Help us to be thankful for all good things, and to have hope each and every day. Amen.

Sending challenge:

Every time you take your shoes on or off this week, perhaps you might want to think about the Road to Emmaus story and the question ‘What makes me hopeful for the future?’

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Listen to the song '[You've Got a Friend in Me](#)' by Randy Newman and reflect on the lyrics.

I wonder what the lyrics make you think about – do you see yourself hearing these words or saying them to others? I wonder how the lyrics might link to the Road to Emmaus story? How might these words give someone hope for the future?

Reflect on Banksy's 'Girl and Heart Balloon'. What does this artwork make you think about hope? What do you think the girl is thinking? What do you think the balloon might represent?

Do you agree with the words on the wall 'there is always hope'? If so, why?



ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the **EXAMEN** prayer to reflect on hope. It has five steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for something that was good today and for those that help and support you
2. ASK FOR HELP with something you have lost hope for
3. REFLECT on your day and think about the things that made you feel hopeful 😊 and the things that felt unhelpful 😞
4. SAY SORRY for the times you gave up hope or focussed too much on the problems of today, or took away someone else's hope
5. DECIDE how you will keep hold of hope tomorrow

To discover more about using the Ignatian Examen with children, listen to this [podcast](#).

Shoe reflection

In the Road to Emmaus collective worship plan this week, we reflected on how Jesus encountered the disciples on their journey, turning their feelings of anxiety for the future towards feelings of hope.



Invite pupils to reflect on the Road to Emmaus story each time they put on or take off their shoes each week. *What gives you hope for the future?*

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

The story of the Road to Emmaus, as explored in this Faith at Home, draws attention to three themes.

First, we meet the disciples travelling from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. We find them disappointed and disheartened; they had lost hope because of what had happened in Jerusalem a few days before. Jesus had died and his body had gone missing; the disciples were expecting things to turn out a little bit differently. Wasn't Jesus the promised Messiah who would overthrow the Romans and bring peace to all? In focussing too much on their worries and concerns, they failed to notice who had joined them.

Do we sometimes focus too much on our worries that we miss the hope and good things right in front of our eyes?

Second, the story tells of Jesus joining the disciples on their journey; he walks alongside them and listens to their fears for the future. In putting things into perspective, Jesus helps the disciples realise that there is a lot to be hopeful for. Many Christians feel that life is a bit like the 'Road to Emmaus' – Jesus walks with them and points to a more hopeful future.

Who supports us on our life journeys? Who do we turn to when we are worried about the future?

Thirdly, following their encounter with Jesus, the disciples were able to reflect back on their journey. Their eyes were opened to a more hopeful future as they had discovered new things about God and themselves.

What have you learnt about yourself, God or life over the past year which gives you hope?

How can you have hope for the future? Where does that hope come from?

INVITATIONAL

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INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

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INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?



Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

FESTIVALS THEME: HARVEST





KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Harvest is a time for celebrating abundance, giving thanks for all the good gifts we have received. Yet we know that many people do not have enough. In the Bible, God frequently reminds His people of the importance of taking care of those who are in need. The story of Ruth and Boaz is an example from the Old Testament where they both put other people first. How can we also look to the needs of others?

‘When we give generously, with an abundance mentality, what we give away will multiply.’

Henri Nouwen

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

The Story of Ruth and Boaz

“GOD bless whoever it was who took such good care of you!” Ruth 2:19 (The Message Bible)



Gathering

Close your eyes and think about your favourite food.

Think about the people who cooked that food for you....and give thanks for them.

Think about the ingredients that are needed to make that food....do you know where they are grown or come from?

Think about how that food got to you...give thanks for all those who were involved...the farmer...the delivery driver...the shop or supermarket workers.

Today we are going to think about the harvest we share and how we care for those whose harvest is not so good.

Engagement

Here is a story from the Bible about two poor widows: Naomi and Ruth. It shows us something about how those of us with plenty should help those in need. Beware it has a happy ending and a footwear theme!

[Sealed with a Sandal](#)

In this story Ruth takes advantage of the Law of Gleaning which was a form of welfare. If you owned a field, your reapers (the people who worked for you gathering the crop) could go through the field once, and only once. Whatever they missed had to be left for widows, orphans and the poor – for those in need.

People believed that the existence of the Law of Gleaning was proof that God cared for the poor and expected those who had enough to share.



The Law of Gleaning decreed that landowners were not to harvest the full extent of their fields, but were to leave produce in the hard-to-reach areas for the poor and foreigners who might be in the land.

Response

In the story Boaz had a plentiful harvest so he was able to give some to those in need. How could you do the same today? Could you consider asking your parents or carers to add a few items into the food bank box when you next go shopping?

Ruth was not wealthy like Boaz, but she also gave something very important – she showed kindness to Naomi and stayed with her through a difficult time. How could you support someone having a hard time?

Sending

Why not 'send' with some prayers taken from this [prayer guide](#) produced by the Trussell Trust? They can be easily adapted to suit your community.

This [Bible Mat](#) from Bath and Wells Diocese is a great way to start a conversation within families about what Harvest means to them, especially for younger children.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

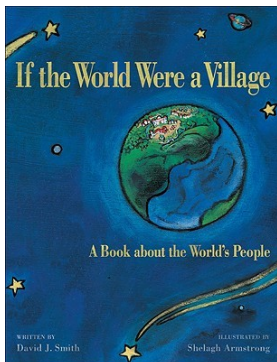
EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Listen to the song '[Harvest for the world](#)' originally written by the Isley Brothers but many other versions are available including this version by pop band The Christians.

Reflect on the words to this song and produce an artistic response to the powerful lyrics.

Harvest Festival looks very different this year but consider holding a 'Brew and Bake' event to raise money for Christian Aid or other charity that you would normally support at Harvest Festival time. You can either do this in your bubble or virtually across the schools. There are some great ideas about how to do this [here](#).

To find out more about Christian Aid's harvest appeal why not look at Ariana's story in this [PowerPoint resource](#).



Look at the book '[If the world were a village](#)' By David J Smith and Shelagh Armstrong. As a class illustrate the pages for a display. Reflect on what it means to live in a global village.

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the **EXAMEN** prayer to reflect on Harvest. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for something you had to eat today that was good
2. ASK FOR HELP with your attitude toward those who are hungry
3. REFLECT on your day and think about the things you have done which have helped share what you have 😊, and the times you may have kept things to yourself too much ☹️
4. SAY SORRY for the times you may have been selfish and hoarded things for yourself.
5. DECIDE how you will be more generous, sharing what you have, tomorrow.

To discover more about using the Ignatian Examen with children, listen to this [podcast](#).

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:

The story of Ruth and Boaz offers many wonderful insights for people today.

Firstly, Christians believe this story teaches that God often works through those who have endured tragic situations to change the lives of others. Both Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi had lost their husbands, yet Ruth was able to make a real difference to the people she met.

How have people you know managed difficult or sad situations? What or who has helped them?

Can you think of an example of someone who experienced something tragic themselves, then went on to help others?

Second, that God will work through unlikely means. Ruth was a poor widow and a foreigner who was willing to show kindness to Naomi by accompanying her back to her hometown. Boaz was a wealthy, well-respected man in his community who was willing to welcome and provide for Ruth (a poor foreigner).

Why do you think some people have more than others?

Do we need to be wealthy ourselves to help people who are poor, hungry or homeless?

Third, some Christians see this story as an example of God's sovereign power – that we can trust him, even when we do not understand the situation.

Have you ever been in a situation which was confusing or difficult to understand? Who could you trust to help you?

Ruth eventually ended up becoming part of the family line of both King David and Jesus. Although a big part of her story was very sad, she also had a lot to be thankful for. Harvest is a time both of giving thanks and thinking of others.

What do you have to be thankful for? How can you share what you have with others?

You can explore more of the story of Ruth through the [Giants of Faith resources](#) from Big Start Assemblies.

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Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

THEME: Advent



KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Advent – a time of waiting.

The Old Testament book of Isaiah has a special place in the heart of many Christians, as the prophecies in this book, more than any other, seem to point to the coming of Jesus. The words of Isaiah are the Old Testament scriptures most often quoted by the writers of the New Testament. The book contains many important promises for Christians and sections of its poetry have been turned into well-known songs and hymns.

Isaiah was a prophet in the eighth century BC, working in the south of Israel. Through his writings he brings a message of warning to the people of God, because they are not living in the way they should, but he then has a message of comfort for his readers as they go through difficult times. The third part of Isaiah looks forward to the distant future when there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

These different voices of the prophet correspond to three different sections of the book, but it is the message of hope that Christians turn to during the season of Advent, as they get ready for the mystery of Christmas.

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

[Isaiah 9: verses 2,6&7](#)

The Bible passage this week is a prophecy about the Messiah written by Isaiah. It includes some special names, that Christians now use to describe Jesus.



Gathering

Some questions to think about:

What are you looking forward to today?

How did you feel when you were waiting for a special day, your birthday, or a wedding?

Show some pictures of familiar cartoon characters, famous people or even wild animals. With talk-partners, choose some **adjectives** that you would use to describe the character e.g. **gentle** dolphin; **fierce** tiger; **greedy** Homer; **brave** Florence [Nightingale] etc. If you have more than one adjective, choose which is the 'best'.

As you gather, you could use the Nick & Becky Drake song '[I am a city on a hill](#)' (learn the actions [here](#), from about 2:39 onwards) – or others that you know e.g. '[This little light of mine](#)' – making up your own actions instead of singing.

Engagement



Show the picture, or better still, darken the room and bring in a lit birthday cake. You may have a class version that children are already familiar with.

Talk about the anticipation of those moments before the cake appears.

Is this an experience just for the person with the birthday, or something that everyone at the party shares?

In Advent, Christians prepare for Jesus – who comes to bring light in the darkness.

Long before Jesus was born, some prophets brought messages from God about what the 'Messiah' would be like. Christians believe Jesus is the one they were talking about.

In this collective worship we will look at some of the names that the prophet Isaiah used to describe Jesus. You could read the text together and pick out the key names, talking about the adjectives.



His name will be Wonderful Counsellor.

A counsellor gives advice, helps people to make choices.

Talk about the choices we make.

Not just what fruit at snack time, but more difficult choices.

What we say to people... If we will help someone....

Sensitively explore some of the more difficult choices the children have made. (Be aware, for example, that where parents live apart children may feel that they have to choose between parents)

Many Christians believe that Jesus will help them to make good choices.

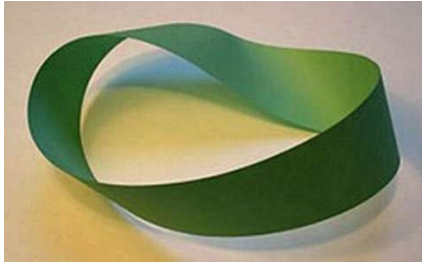


His name will be ... Powerful God,

Christians believe that God is a mighty, powerful God. He can do things that seem impossible to humans. He made the universe, including the stars millions of light years away.

How did Jesus show God's power?

What have you seen that might explain why Christians believe God is powerful? Are there times when you wish God would show his power more in our world?



His name will be ... Father Who Lives Forever

Christians believe that God is with them for ever; he loves like a good parent loves their child.

(You will need to be sensitive to the fact that not all children will have a father in their lives, and some may have negative experiences of fathers.)

This picture is a of mobius strip. If you run your finger round it, it never ends.

Take a long strip of paper, half twist it and stick the ends together with tape. Invite a child to come and run their finger around the strip showing that it never ends.

How might it help Christians to know that God is 'everlasting'?



His name will be ... Prince of Peace

There is so much war and conflict in our world. People find it difficult to make and keep peace.

Our own hearts are often not at peace, but anxious and worried.

Christians believe that Jesus brings peace – for them, and for our world.



***He will rule as king on David's throne and over David's kingdom.
He will make it strong, by ruling with goodness and fair judgment.
He will rule it forever and ever.***

Christians believe that in God's kingdom, everything is good and fair.

I wonder what that might look like?

Christians are called to bring God's Kingdom to earth here and now, in the way that they love and treat others. At Advent, they will continue to pray 'Your Kingdom come....'

If you haven't already done so, light a candle for children to see.



In Isaiah 9: 2, it says:

*Now those people live in darkness.
But they will see a great light.
They live in a place that is very dark.
But a light will shine on them.*

Look at this little candle. Even a little bit of light lights up the darkness.

Have you ever been in a dark place when someone has lit a candle or a torch?

How did it make you feel?

In John 1: 9-11, Christians read that this prophecy is about Jesus:

The true light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. The Word was in the world, but no one knew him, though God had made the world with his Word.

Christians believe that Jesus is the Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace and Fair King. Jesus came to be a light in the darkness – and His names bring light and hope into a dark world. But it doesn't stop there, because followers of Jesus can be a part of God's Kingdom on earth, and shine God's light wherever they go.

Response

Now think about the names of Jesus that we have looked at in this worship time.

Which name do you think is the most important?

Why?

Which do you think might be most important to Christians this Advent time?

Why?

Which one do you think our world needs most?

Why?

Spend some time thinking in the stillness, watching the flame of the candle flicker – and considering places where light needs to shine.

Now, if you want to pray with me, use your hands to express this response:

Light a candle in our world, O God (Thumbs-up symbol and wiggle thumb)

let it brighten our faces (Hands at side of the face and wiggle fingers)

that we may tell this world (Hands moving away from mouth)

the time is arriving (Point to watch on wrist)

when you will put on flesh (Mime putting on a coat)

and walk among us. (Draw a circle in front of you with both index fingers)

Amen

Taken from Roots Prayer and Prayer Activities

Read these words from Isaiah 9: 2

Read them with an emphasis on different words as you read them four times.

“But a **light** will shine on them.”

“But a light **will** shine on them.”

“But a light will **shine** on them.”

“But a light will shine on **them**.”

As we go into our day, if you are feeling worried or anxious remember this promise of light.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

1. [Barnabas in Schools](#) have an idea for using percussion to explore the idea of waiting for Jesus, the light of the world. This could be a good idea for a performance that doesn't involve singing this year!



2. [Engage Worship](#) have created a set of 24 Tiny Advent Poems, written for adults; some will resonate with children. Free to download files of words and images that express the feeling of anticipation that goes with Advent. They can be used as an Advent calendar or individually. There are lots more engaging ideas, free to download from their website. You could also ask older children to create their own 'Tiny Advent Poems' like these.
3. [Advent Family Creative Journal](#): Also from Engage Worship, there are pages to download for free. These encourage children to reflect, write, draw and create on the themes of hope, peace, love and joy for their local community and the world.
4. [Create your own online Advent Calendar](#): On this website you can upload, text, a picture and a video for each day of Advent. Put the link onto your school website and everyone in your community can enjoy your work.
5. **Advent Books**: An idea from one primary school - the RE leader wraps up 4 of their special nativity books at the start of Advent. They open one each week during collective worship in Advent and read it together.
6. [Messy Church](#) There are 10 suggestions for Messy Church activities based on a wider portion of Isaiah than just the part included in this assembly.

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the EXAMEN prayer to reflect on light in the darkness. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for the times when someone has been a 'light' for you.
2. ASK FOR HELP with the places in your life, or in our world, that need light.
3. REFLECT on your day and think about times when you have been a light for others.
4. SAY SORRY for the times that you have stopped someone else shining their light.
5. DECIDE how you will be a light for others today, this week or during the time of Advent.

Use an **Advent wreath** with your class during Advent, focusing on the traditional themes of Hope, Love, Joy and Peace – and encouraging each other to show and share hope, love, joy and peace during Advent.

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

The Reverse Advent Calendar: This is a simple idea that contrasts with the advent calendars that are full of goodies. You start with an empty box or basket and each day put in something to give to someone else. Many people fill them with items for their local foodbank, homeless shelter or refuge.

Random Acts of Christmas Kindness: This is like the 40 Acts of Kindness that many schools do in lent. There is no official website as such but there are various calendars online. Many are American and the ideas wouldn't work here. So how about getting your pupils to suggest the acts of kindness for each day during Advent?

Advent angels: This is an idea to cheer up your staff during these challenging last few weeks of term. Quite a few schools have done it and say that it has been good for morale!

The idea and a poster for your staff room are here:

<https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/education/christian-distinctiveness/advent-and-christmas>

Advent Window: How about creating an advent calendar in your window for people walking past your school, changing the picture each day? You could use the themes of hope, peace, love and joy or the names of Jesus from Isaiah.

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Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

THEME: Christmas
Comfort and Joy



KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Christmas – a time of Comfort and Joy

Christmas can be a time of real joy for many people – a chance to see family, give gifts, sing, rest and eat together. However, for some people it can be a time of sadness, being reminded of what's missing.

For Christians, Christmas is a time of many different emotions. Joy comes not from what they have, but from celebrating the birth of Jesus. In fact, as it says in the video, they believe it is still possible to be joyful without all the trimmings of Christmas. It is also a time for comfort; Jesus, whom Christians believe is God in human form, entered the world in a humble condition. Therefore, he is able to empathise with difficult circumstances. He was born in a dirty stable and his family became refugees – fleeing from King Herod. Yet even so, there were reasons to celebrate his birth.

Both lowly shepherds and lofty Magi brought gifts for the Christ-child. Christians similarly give gifts, remembering that God has given the greatest gift of all – his son. In response to God's generosity, Christians believe they should be generous too – especially to those in need – bringing comfort and doing so joyfully.

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

The Birth of Jesus

[Luke 1:26 – 56; 2:1-20](#)

[Matthew 1:18 – 2:23](#)

'I bring good news of great JOY that will be for all the people.' Luke 2:10



Gathering

To prepare:

Use a wooden crib set or printed-out pictures of the different characters in the Christmas story. Or you could simply write the names of those characters on post-it notes, ready to distribute.

Let's begin

(You may light a candle – or at this time of year, your Advent wreath - and have a special welcoming prayer or response you use as you start worship)

Today, we are thinking about what makes Christmas so joyful! I wonder, what makes Christmas joyful to you? (be sensitive here to the circumstances of families – where Christmas may be a stressful time)

Share some examples of the sorts of things people might say when asked this question (eg. Christmas trees and decorations, Christmas presents, Christmas songs, Christmas food).

I wonder whether it would still feel joyful if we didn't have those things? Is a Christmas without presents, decorations and food still Christmas?

Why don't you take a moment to talk about this together?

Optional: Watch this [clip of The Grinch](#), where the people of Whoville, whose presents and Christmas trimmings have been stolen away, sing joyfully anyway leading the Grinch to wonder: 'maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store?'

Today, we are going to think about what the Christmas story can show us about what JOY really is. And how it can bring COMFORT to those who are having a hard time.

Engagement

We are now going to think about the different ways people in the Nativity story must have felt.

Distribute the crib characters, printed pictures of post-it notes to the class. As well as the 'main parts' you could include the animals, innkeepers, King Herod and Mary and Joseph's family.

Throughout the story of the first Christmas, people will have felt all kinds of emotions. So many strange, challenging and wonderful things happened!

How do you think the character you've been given felt about what happened to them in the story?

As we read through the story, think about the different characters and how they would have felt. When we get to the part where your character features, I'm going to ask for your reflections on that person/ animal's emotions.

For example – I wonder how the innkeepers who had no room felt, turning Mary and Joseph away?

I wonder how the sheep felt, who were disturbed by a very bright light (angels) and then were taken (or left behind) to go and see a new baby?

I wonder how Mary and Joseph's family felt if they heard about Herod's anger, but had to wait several years before Mary and Joseph returned?

Either retell the story in your own words or use a children's Nativity storybook.

Which characters in the story felt JOY? What was it that made them feel that way?

Try to focus in on how concepts like HOPE, GOOD NEWS, ENCOURAGEMENT, GOD'S WORD might have enabled that joy.

Christians believe that Jesus' birth is a reason to be **JOYFUL** because it shows that **God** came to live among his people, to bring them freedom and new life. It is a sign of **HOPE**.

'I bring good news of great JOY that will be for all the people.' Luke 2:10



Which characters felt sad, anxious, frightened, angry or bereft? Which messages from the Christmas story might help them with their feelings? How would you **COMFORT** that character? What might you say?

Refer back to the worship on 'How do we make sense of our feelings' to talk about how all emotions are important and some healthy ways we can express and process those emotions.

Christians believe that because of Jesus, they can trust God and don't need to live in fear.

'Do not be afraid' the angels said. Luke 2:10

They find COMFORT in knowing that God is with them, and that he knows what it's like to live on earth in a difficult, dangerous (and smelly) situation!

Response

Let's look at Mary through this story.

At some moments, she is full of joy and excitement. At other moments, she must have been really worried and anxious.

Mary shows us that it is completely human to feel lots of different emotions.

I wonder how Christmas makes you feel? It's unlikely you will feel the same about every aspect of the Christmas season – some of it may feel joyful, some of it may feel harder. For example, remembering someone who used to be with us who isn't now, feeling disappointed about missing out on something you wished for or getting excited about a special Christmas activity.

Can you plot your emotions on a zigzag like this?

(Or use a character from the story if it's too hard to show personal feelings)

Perhaps use your finger to draw the ups and downs over your other hand.



What helps you in the 'down' moments? What brings you COMFORT? How might you bring comfort to others in their down times?

Remember, it is healthy to have both up and down times in our life (this [clip](#) from Inside Out is a reminder of the need for all emotions).

Christians believe they can come to Jesus with their worries, fears and sadness knowing that he empathises with them. He has felt all those feelings too – right from when he was a baby.

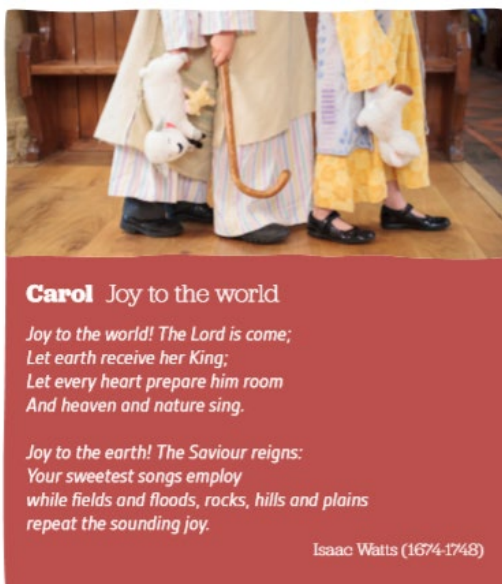
His birth was not in a clean, safe hospital but a noisy stable. His family had to run away from a jealous king and he began his life in hiding, as a refugee. But he also experienced love, the excitement of visitors who thought he was special and the joy of angel choirs!

What does it feel like when you hear someone else understands how you feel?

Who can you talk to this Christmas about the different feelings you have?

Sending

'Do not be afraid, I bring good news of great JOY that will be for all the people.'



Who might need some joy in their lives at the moment? What 'good news' might you be able to bring?

Perhaps someone in your class? In your family? Or in your community?

Find out, through the charities your school supports, who around our country and our world needs COMFORT and JOY today.

How might we demonstrate comfort and joy to those around us, this Christmas?

Heavenly Father

We thank you for sending Jesus into the world to live like us. We are so grateful that he knows what it's like to feel sadness, pain, fear but also excitement and joy.

Please help us with all the different emotions we feel over the Christmas season – with anticipation, gratitude, disappointment and grief. Help us to know your comfort when we feel down, and to delight in your joy as we remember Jesus' birth.

May we show understanding to those who struggle during this time, looking to bring them comfort and to share our joy.

Amen

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

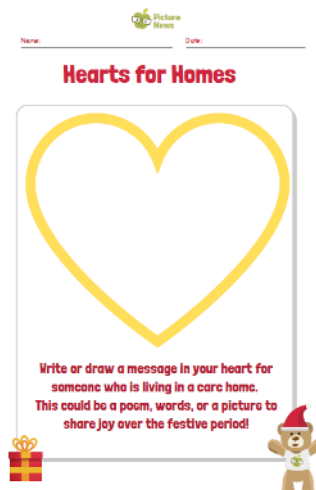
Reflect on COMFORT by listening to this famous solo from [Handel's Messiah](#)

Reflect on JOY by listening to this *acapella* version of the carol [Joy to the World](#)

What's your favourite Christmas carol? Could you record a special version to share with your community?

Explore the #heartsforhomes campaign – to give some comfort and joy to people living in care homes this Christmas:

<https://www.picture-news.co.uk/blog/hearts-for-homes-picture-news-christmas-campaign/>



Here, we can see the pupils from Holy Trinity Gee Cross School bringing some comfort and joy to residents of their local care home. Their idea, sparked the Hearts for Homes project – which any school can now get involved in! Who could you bring comfort and joy to this Christmas?

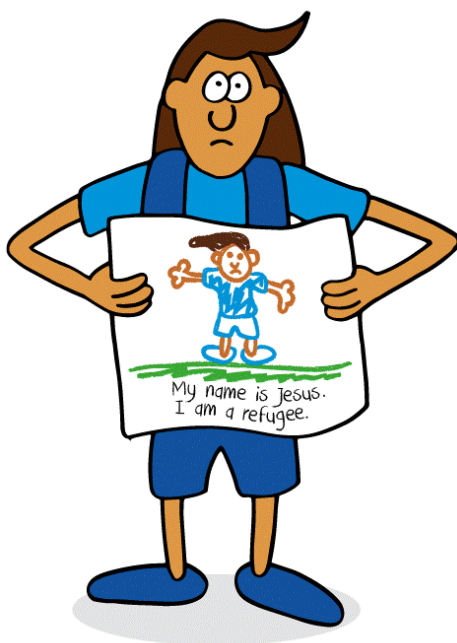


Image taken from '[Jesus was a Refugee](#)' book

The Bible tells us that Jesus and his family had to flee from Bethlehem because King Herod was angry and jealous. They had to run away to Egypt, as refugees.

Why don't you find out about what it's like to be a refugee this Christmas?

This [Prayer Spaces in Schools](#) activity, focusing on children travelling alone as refugees, gives practical ways to reflect and act.



Use the Church of England's COMFORT and JOY Advent Calendar to reflect on what brings us JOY and who might need COMFORT over the next few weeks:

<https://churchsupporthub.org/download/comfort-and-joy-advent-calendar/>

Or perhaps make your own...

Date	What brings joy today?	Who needs comfort today?
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ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Christmas Stars



Cut out star shapes and punch a hole in the top, ready to hang.

On each, ask the children to write their wish for Christmas – for themselves one on side and for other people (in their community or around the world) on the flip side.

How might they wish to experience COMFORT and JOY this year?
How might they bring COMFORT and JOY this year?

Use the **EXAMEN** prayer to reflect on our CHRISTMAS emotions. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for people, experiences and situations that have brought you joy.
2. ASK FOR HELP with the times where I actually needed to be comforted.
3. REFLECT on the Christmas season – which parts are you excited about, which parts feel more worrying?
4. SAY SORRY for the times that you expected something from others that they couldn't give.
5. DECIDE how you will seek out COMFORT and JOY this Christmas, for yourself and others.

Here is a family [EXAMEN](#) – about the Christian belief that everyone can be part of God's family

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

Which part of the Christmas story do you find most JOYFUL? Why is that? In what way is this part 'good news' for humankind?

Who might need to hear 'good news' today?

What do we need in order to feel JOY? Is it possible to feel joyful without having very much?

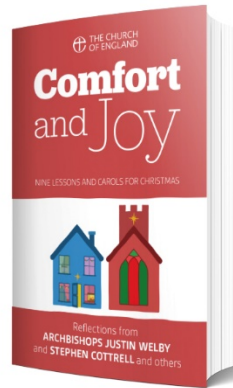
Is it possible to have everything one might want, and still not experience JOY?

Which characters in the Christmas story need COMFORT? Why is that? Which emotion were they feeling?

Have you ever felt like that? What brought you COMFORT?

How might you bring COMFORT to others today?

Find out more about 'Comfort and Joy' from the Church of England by clicking on this image:



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH

INVITATIONAL

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...'

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?