



Weekly Resources for Schools

**PHASE: SECONDARY**

# **WHY DO WE BELONG TOGETHER?**





## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

*The English poet John Donne famously wrote the line:*

***‘No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main’.***

***When the world currently feels more distanced than ever – people isolated in their homes, socially distanced, and increasingly meeting virtually instead of physically – maintaining community may be more difficult but is even more important! The bible has much to say about the value, power and beauty of healthy communities but these require hard work, patience and a mind-set towards the ‘other’ rather than ourselves.***

## BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:

**I Corinthians 12:15-27 (NIV): The parts of the body**



*Now you are the body of Christ,  
and each one of you is a part of it.*

*1 Corinthians 12:27*

*Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact, God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*

*The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.*

*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

## Gathering

Begin by encouraging the class to wave at each other. Ask the class to wave at particular students that would be comfortable with this. How does this make them feel? Why do we wave at people?

### The Wednesday Wave

Take a look at this brilliant national campaign called The Wednesday Wave to support those who are or feel isolated. There are downloadable posters that could be coloured in as a meditative exercise in form time and then given out to friends, relatives and care homes

Find out more: [The Wednesday Wave](#)



## Engagement

Read the passage about the parts of the body from 1 Corinthians 12:15-27.

Here is one way you could help your students engage with the text: Then split your group up into groups of six

- Narrator (speaking role)
- Foot (speaking role)
- Eye (speaking role)
- Head (speaking role)
- Hands (non-speaking role)
- Feet (non-speaking role)

Print out copies of the bible text and give the group time to highlight their parts. Then read through at least twice as groups, with those on non-speaking roles being included as they are being spoken to but not responding verbally. Get the whole large group back together and ask the Hands and the Feet how they felt about what was said about them.

Draw out of discussion the need for each of the body parts individually, as well as for the corporate benefit and read again verse 26 – 27

*<sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. <sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

## Response

Watch this video without explaining the theme or the meaning. [One Body: Many Parts](#) After the video ask your students to reflect individually or corporately upon the meaning. Draw out of discussion the wonder of a diverse community functioning together as one united creation.

## Sending

### Coventry Litany of Reconciliation

ICON (International Cross of Nails) community and work of Coventry Cathedral around the world serves to promote peace and reconciliation. Read about the Coventry Litany of Reconciliation here which serves to inform and challenge people around the importance of community, reconciliation of broken relationships and of the amplification of the voices and rights of the vulnerable in our communities.

<http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccn/the-coventry-litany-of-reconciliation/>

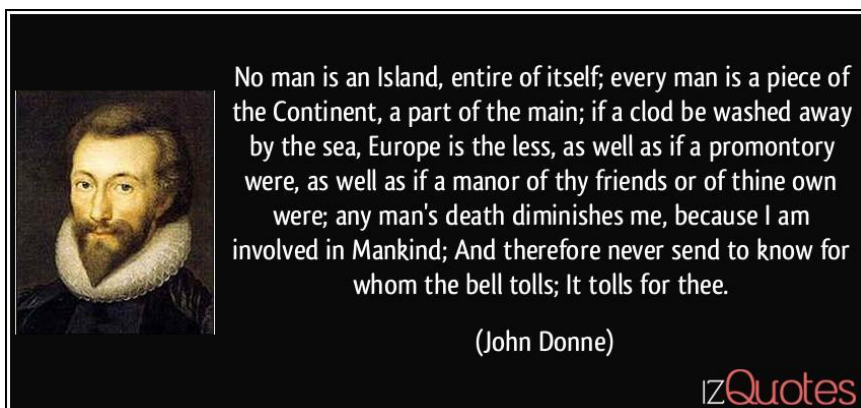
Make the litany into a PowerPoint to use as a one off or regularly to keep healthy community as a school priority. You may need to edit this slightly for the context of your class and school.

PS: If you are not an ICON School, consider joining this!

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:



Carefully read through this famous quote written by the 17<sup>th</sup> Century metaphysical poet John Donne.

What point do you think he is trying to make?

What does it say to you?

Watch this video [When I was injured](#)

What must have it been like it was like to have a part of their body not working well and how it impacted the rest of their body and everyday life.

How did other parts of the marine's family 'step up' when he was injured or not functioning?

How does this show that when one-part hurts, the rest of the body is impacted too?

### ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

#### Examen Prayer

Use the Examen prayer to reflect on being connected together as a community. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

- I. GIVE THANKS ... for 3 communities that you are part of (for example a family, a scout pack, a tutor group)

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 2. ASK FOR HELP | ... to understand your special and unique part to play in your school community                                 |
| 3. REFLECT      | ... on your day as part of the school community. What did you bring to that community and how were you blessed? |
| 4. SAY SORRY    | ... for the times you may have had a poor attitude toward those in the community you do not like or understand  |
| 5. DECIDE       | ... an action you will take tomorrow to uplift the most vulnerable in your community                            |

## **CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:**

### **My Unique place in the school/tutor group/community family**

Encourage young people to write a sentence which starts:

I bring .....

I'm great at.....

I like.....

Share these with the group to learn about each other and to celebrate the diversity of the body and to shift focus from what we 'get' to what we 'offer'.

### **Where do I fit? Activity**

Each small group of 6 students needs pens, pencils and a piece of wallpaper lining paper the length of a student head to toe!

Ask the group to nominate a student to lie on the paper and to draw around their body. Then task the group to write down all over the body the names of the jobs of their family members e.g. 'Shop worker', 'Fireman', 'Receptionist', 'being a Mum', 'Policeman', 'teacher' etc. Give them 2 minutes to write down as many as they can, and then a further minute to draw connecting lines between the jobs that work together e.g. Policeman and fireman.

Finally ask them to write 'Student' to represent themselves, and again draw connecting lines with the professions they may like to join or have current connections with.

Finish by placing all the 'bodies' on the floor to form a circle and look at the incredible network that is formed. Exhort the students to look at the scene and to reflect upon their value and place within all of society.

### 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: SECONDARY**

# **HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE LOVED?**





## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

***“My great hope is ....(to) try to love somebody and have the courage to accept the love in return.”***

***— Maya Angelou***

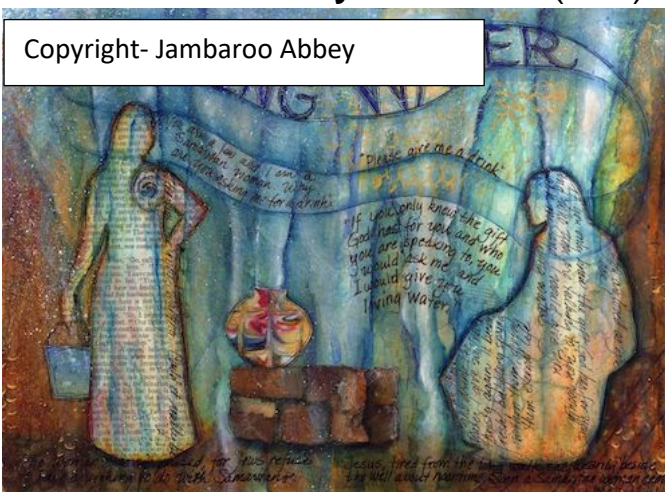
***Research suggests\* the perception of brief feelings of love throughout the day appear to be associated with an individual’s psychological well-being. Yet sometimes we can doubt whether we are loved or are worthy of love. In the Bible, Jesus commands his followers to love one another and says it will be one of the ways people can recognise those who are his disciples.***

\* 27 Nov 2019

Published on Psych Central.com

## BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:

### John 4 4-26 (NIV): The woman at the well



Copyright- Jambaroo Abbey

Now he (Jesus) had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a

drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw

with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?” 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.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.” “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”



## Gathering

### What makes people feel loved?

Try showing some pictures or film clips of cute dogs and babies and see what response they bring out in our students! Students may have some of their own they would like to share. Studies that show that simply making eye contact with dogs increases their owners' levels of oxytocin, also known as the 'love hormone'!



A study by Heshmati and Oravec identified some behaviours that all participants agreed would make people feel loved; these were the kind of scenarios agreed on

1. When someone shows compassion toward them in difficult times
2. When a small child or toddler snuggles up to them
3. When their pets are happy to see them
4. When someone tells them "I love you"



**Consider-**What would you add to the list about things that help you feel loved?

None of the 4 above are associated exclusively with romantic partners and the authors concluded that "people feel loved in a range of settings, including momentary interactions and experiences with friends, pets and family.

## Engagement

Read the passage about the woman at the well from John 4: 4-26. Then watch this video which is a modern-day monologue version of our Bible passage. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q49Bbfglbto>

After the video ask your students to reflect individually or corporately upon the meaning.

If needed the posts on YouTube under the video could be considered and students could be asked to consider why this passage and this version of it seems to have such an impact on people today.

### **Questions for Reflection**

'To be known is to be loved and to be loved is to be known' What does this mean to you?  
How many people know us? How many people love us?

## Response

### For Reflection

Our human tendency is to judge others because of stereotypes, customs, or prejudices.

Our culture and society judges' people on the job we have and the amount of money we have, the friends we have, the car we drive, the way we look and smell, our life choices.

In the Bible passage about the woman at the well, Jesus treats her as an individual, accepting her with love and compassion.

**Pose some questions for personal reflection not discussion: Leave pauses after each question.**

- Have you ever stereotyped and dismissed someone a lost cause because of their background?
- Has this ever happened to you?
- How hard is it to see the good in everyone?
- What can you do to break down your prejudices?

## Sending



Some may have heard of the 'Random acts of kindness' campaign or the 40 Acts challenge some use at lent, in the time leading up to Easter.

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

These focus on small actions that will show care and love for others and help them to know they are cared for and important.

Some schools or tutor groups have given themselves a challenge to carry out random acts of kindness. Try the links above for ideas or why not work together to generate 10 random acts of kindness that you think others in your school would value.

Kindness boomerang Watch this video

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

What will you do today?

***"The greatest love you can give is to those who don't deserve it."***

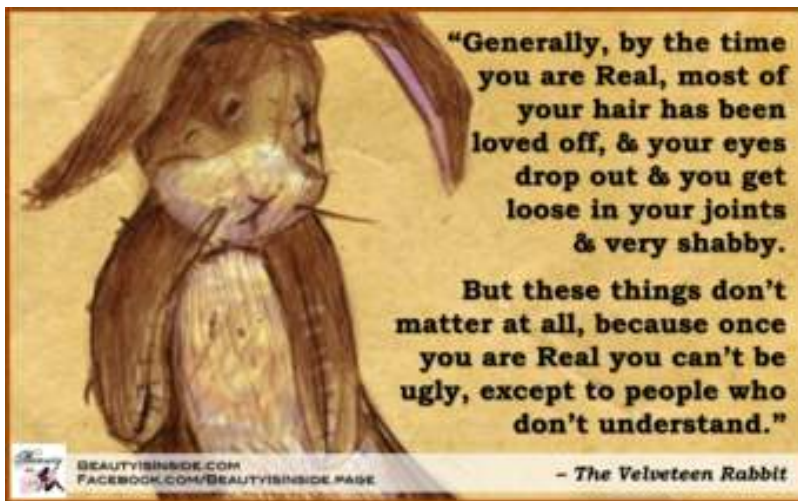
***- Brian Vaszily***

www.IntenseExperiences.com

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:



The Velveteen Rabbit is a well-known story book aimed at young children written by Margery Williams Bianco.

Carefully read through this extract from the book.

What point do you think this extract is making?

What does it say to you?

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

'Does it hurt?' asked the Rabbit.

'Sometimes,' said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. 'When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.'

'Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,' he asked, 'or bit by bit?'

'It doesn't happen all at once,' said the Skin Horse. 'You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.'

— **Margery Williams Bianco, The Velveteen Rabbit**

### ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS: Using poetry to aid reflection

#### *A Well Reflection by Macrina Wiederkehr*

What makes this world so lovely  
is that somewhere it hides a well.  
Something lovely there is about a well  
so deep  
un-piped and real  
filled  
with buckets and buckets  
of that life-giving drink.  
A faucet (tap) will do in a hurry,  
but what makes the world so lovely



is that somewhere  
it hides a well!

Sometimes  
people are like wells  
deep and real  
natural (un-piped)  
life-giving,  
calm and cool,  
refreshing.  
They bring out what is best in you  
They are like fountains of pure joy  
They make you want to sing or maybe, dance.  
They encourage you to laugh  
even, when things get rough.  
And maybe that's why  
things never stay rough  
once you've found a well.

Some experiences are like wells too.  
People create them  
They are life-giving happenings  
They are redeeming experiences  
They are wells,  
Wells of wonder,  
Wells of hope.  
When you find a well  
and, you will someday,  
Drink deeply of the gift within.  
And then, maybe soon

you'll discover  
that you've become  
what you've received,  
And then you will be a well  
for others to find.

So, lift up your eyes and look around you:  
Over the mountains, down in the valley  
out in the ocean, over the runways  
into the cities, into the country  
sidewalks and highways  
paths in the forest  
into the hearts of a thirsty people.

Look!  
And I beg you  
don't ever stop looking  
because what makes this world so lovely  
is that *somewhere*  
it hides a well,  
a well that hasn't been found yet.

And if YOU don't find it  
maybe no one will!  
And if you don't be one  
maybe  
nobody will find you!

### **Some reflection questions on this reading from Jamberoo Benedictine Abbey, Australia.**

- Where do I need a well in my life at present?
- What kind of a well am I to others?
- Am I selective in my well giving?
- Am I open to finding the well deep within others?

### **CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:**



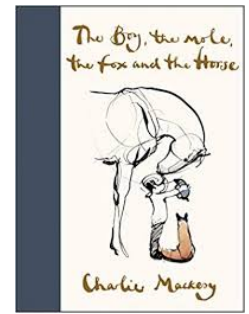
In his New York Times bestseller, *The 5 Love Languages*, Dr. Gary Chapman presents the idea that relationships grow better when we understand each other. He highlights that everyone gives and receives love differently. The link below goes to a website where there is an option to complete a quiz to identify how we each express love and this can help us understand what makes us feel loved;  
<https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/>

This could be used when gathering to help begin further reflection on what makes people feel loved.



\*Discuss ideas to put into place that will help students staying connected with each other, whether they can physically see each other or not.  
Ideas could include- Sharing a joke a day/ Hold a 'virtual' lunch/ All read the same book and then 'meet' to share your thoughts on the book/ Have a theme day and post pictures in a group chat.

\*'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse.' By Charlie Mackesy – is a book that could be read together, sharing the pictures and the pages that made you think.



\*Could you raise money for something together? Or gift something to someone else – often we feel love when we show it to others...

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH

### INVITATIONAL

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

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Weekly Resources for Schools

**PHASE: SECONDARY**

**How do we  
get back on track?**







## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

*Inventor and businessman Thomas A. Edison said:*

*“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up.*

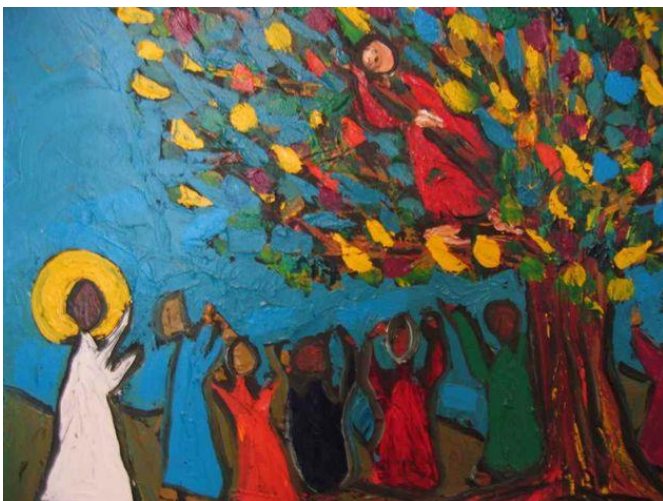
*The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”*

***The Bible is full of Second Chances or third or fourth...for God’s people: Moses, Rahab, Elijah, Mary Magdalene, Zacchaeus, a Woman at a well, a man that couldn’t walk, Peter, Paul and many more. A chance to get back on track, a chance to be forgiven.***

***Christians believe in a loving God that supports people to get back on track, offers them forgiveness and calls them to find a new direction.***

***We too can have a second chance or a fresh start and get back on track if we are ready to look for it.***

## BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:



Luke 19:1-9 - New Revised Standard Version

### **Jesus and Zacchaeus**

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone

to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.

## Gathering

(You may want to try this as each student or any adult arrives to model how they can do it for each other)

Start your time together by saying something positive to each other as a greeting:

I like the way you...You are really good at...I always enjoy it when...It's good to see you today...

What difference does it make to our day when we start with something positive?

How does it make you feel? Does it make you wonder how you can do this more often?

Sometimes our first start goes well because we had a good start.

Our second try needs a positive start to keep us being positive.

Take a few moments to think about how positivity can help us get back on track or even how negativity can leave us feeling weakened or angry.

## Engagement

Print out or project some photos of a selection of celebrities or characters (for example):

*King David, St Paul, St Peter, Mary Magdalene. Britney Spears, Hugh Grant, Kanye West, Simon Cowell.*

*Kermit the Frog, Darth Vader, Moana...*

Who would you give a second start to? Who would you allow to get back on track and who would you not trust to try again?

Reflect/think about a time how we lose our way or forget our focus. How do we judge others who we think are not on the right track? How might others judge you?

How might we ask for help to get back on track? What words or phrases would we need to help us with our thinking?

In the Bible reading, Jesus meets with Zacchaeus and has a meal with him. In response to this love and compassion, Zacchaeus gets a second chance and redeems himself to the community and shows accountability.

## Response

Give each person (or pair) a character/celebrity. Ask them to plead their case for a second start to the class. What characteristics or personality traits will they pick up on to prove that they are worthy of another chance?

Listen to the song 'Beautiful things' By Gungor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ispkhp4Iig4>

How can you help make those around you 'Beautiful things' How could they get back on track and show the values you most want to develop?

or

Genelle Guzman-McMillan saw her rescue from the Twin Towers attack as a second chance-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqovmfZV3V4> what question does this raise about being given a second chance when all seems lost?

## Sending

Read the words of the Aaronic Blessing:

**The LORD bless you and keep you:**

**The LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you:**

**The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)**

Take a few moments to consider each line and what it would feel like for you if you could feel these things today...even if you are not on track...even if you have made mistakes...even if you need a boost...

Now listen to this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtl3mNj5U> and imagine that these people are singing this for you and calling you to get back on track before your day starts or before your week continues. ( you might not need to show the whole track)

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

How might these examples of forgiveness and second chances give us ways of us chances to get back on track or ways of us giving others a second start?

Watch this video. Quietly watch someone who needed to get back on track and how he was welcomed.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X\\_QCQ5i7NKs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_QCQ5i7NKs)

Project this picture of The Prodigal Son by Rembrandt.

Reflect on the love in his father's eyes. The warmth of his welcome.

Think about what the son goes on to achieve.



Read aloud John 21:1-19 – When Jesus talks to Peter about when Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. Slowly read through the verses 15-17.

- As you read out Jesus' question and Peter's answer and Jesus' response – stop after each one.
- Consider the times you have gone off track, made mistakes or needed forgiveness:
- Consider yourself forgiven.
- As you hear Jesus say feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep:
- Believe that God has a purpose for your life.
- Repeat for the three times Jesus and Peter talk.

### ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Think of the things you want to do or the things you want to achieve.

- Write the goal, the target or the dream at the top of a page.
- Now draw a road towards them from the bottom to the top.
- Mark off the things you need to achieve along the way in order to reach your goal (the courses you might need, the experiences you want to have, the qualifications you will require).
- Use this as a way to talk to a trusted adult about the stages you need to complete and how they can help, resources they can show you, the opportunities they can help you find.

## **PRAYERS that can help us REFLECT and GET BACK ON TRACK:**

Use the Examen prayer to reflect on finding a direction and the stamina to stay on track:

It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS ... for the skills and talents you have been blessed with, for the things that bring you a sense of achievement and the things that bring you positive energy.
2. ASK FOR HELP ... when you feel like you don't know which way to go, which decisions to take or when life-choices feel too overwhelming.
3. REFLECT ... on those people who help you with big choices to make, on how your life choices might benefit you but also bless others.
4. SAY SORRY ... for the times when you have made selfish choices that have brought sadness to you and to others and for when you feel you've gone off track.
4. DECIDE ... who you will talk to about your dreams and hopes for the future, ask them to support you and pray for you and to help you to seek a way forward.

Or, using your fingers, pray like this:

1. Your little finger: Pray for those who are smallest and weakest: young children who need care to grow, those who are left out, those without a say in decisions about them.
2. Ring finger – where people wear wedding rings – Pray for those we love and those who love us.
3. Middle Finger – the tallest – Pray for those with authority over you, for wisdom in their decisions.
4. Index finger – the one we point with – Pray for those who put us back on track, those who point us in the right direction – teachers, parents, mentors, pastors.
5. Thumb – isolated and separate – Pray for those who are far away from us, those who are isolated and alone, and then you could pray for those who encourage us (thumbs up!).

## **CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:**

### Discussion starters for groups:

How common is it that we know what we want to do with our life?

What can we do to help each other find ways of exploring the path we are on?

How can we tell if someone – a friend or classmate – has gone off track?

What could we say to help them reflect on what they are doing?

Are we ready to hear those words said to us? Would we be defensive if we were challenged?

How would you know if you felt supported in the things you are achieving?

What could others do to encourage you more? Who are the best encouragers?

Would you know where to go if you needed to get back on track?

Do you know the people you could be vulnerable with to say – please can you help me?

Who can you see in the Bible who had second chances, who were put back on track by God?

How does God get people back on track – does this give us clues of how to help others?

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Weekly Resources for Schools

**PHASE: SECONDARY**

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





## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Emotions – particularly the ones that we consider to be ‘negative’ – can often be hard to understand. Look at the words of Psalm 139:1,2 & 14 ‘You know all about me....you know my thoughts before I think them’ and ‘I am wonderfully and mysteriously made’ [our translation!] 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. Jesus also being God, means that God does too!

## BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

The video material that accompanies this resource is based on the story of Jesus and Lazarus. This is a complex story that raises many issues deeply significant issues: Can miracles happen? What is the evidence for this? As a follow up exercise, it would be good to explore these questions with your students.

But for many Christians what matters here is that Jesus was with them in this and showed real compassion. It is summed up in the famously shortest verse in the Bible, John 11 verse 35

‘Jesus wept’

The bible passages should be used to encourage students to talk about both positive and ‘negative’ emotions that Jesus displayed – and consider why it is so important to Christians that Jesus felt ‘like them’

## Gathering



If it is practical light a candle and invite the group to focus on the flame.

Ask the group to think about situations, feelings and thoughts they are experiencing that need light!

Use this quote from the Bible ‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it’ John 1 v 5



## Engagement

In this act of worship, we are going to consider two 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 us.

**Jesus experiences sadness at the death of his friend**

**John 11 v 17-37**

Recall from the video and retell the story very briefly – ask students 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 angry in the temple – Luke 19:45



Retell the story briefly 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 we 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.

**Now think about the emotions you've explored through the eyes of Jesus. 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?**

This well known religious poem is special to many Christians as it reassures them that whatever situations they are facing and whatever emotions they are experiencing Jesus is with them and is carrying them through. It has given hope to many facing testing times. Read the poem and pose the question who do you have to carry you?

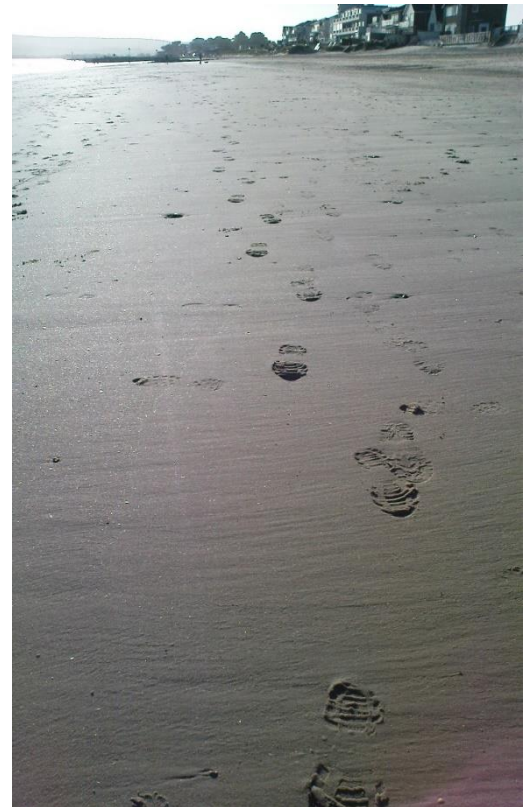
*One night I dreamed a dream.  
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.  
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.  
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,  
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.*

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

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

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

**(Mary Stevenson)**



## 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, knowing that he understands.

Spend some time in quiet, bringing all your emotions – the more difficult ones as well as the good 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 students 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]

## Sending

Read these words 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?

To conclude

*Each day the tide comes in and goes out, everything on the beach is washed away and completely cleared.*

# 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 students 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. **Draw a Feelings Graph** for the last week or so in your life. On the horizontal axis write down the things that have happened to you. On the vertical axis of good to bad draw emojis to express how you felt.

## ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

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

1. GIVE THANKS for the times when you have felt good or positive emotions.
2. ASK FOR HELP with the more difficult emotions.
3. REFLECT on your day and think about the people that have helped you through the day
4. SAY SORRY for the times your feelings have hurt others, or you have ignored others' feelings.
5. DECIDE how you will support others when they are happy / sad / anxious / angry etc.

## CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

Revisit the story of Jesus and Lazarus. This version covers the whole chapter which places this in its theological context, it explores some deep emotions and complex ideas. Use this as a conversation starter.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cONM7poWcXc>

What questions does this story raise for you?

Listen to the well know song Everybody Hurts' by REM or Watch this video (from 1990's)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rOiW\\_xY-kc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rOiW_xY-kc)

Who or what helps you hold on?

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Weekly Resources for Schools

**PHASE: SECONDARY**

# **HOW DO WE FACE OUR FEARS?**







## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi:

***“I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).***

When we are scared, when we are fearful, when we feel that the ground is shaking beneath our feet and we can't see the way out... it is understandably hard to manage our anxiety. The Apostle Paul was physically injured, shipwrecked, in danger, sleepless, hungry and cold and yet he could say he could do everything through God who gave him strength.

## BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

### Elijah Gives Up.

Background – the prophet Elijah had just had one of the most amazing experiences of his life where God had shown up in a powerful way, encouraging Elijah and showing him to be a real hero and man of God in a world where lots of false Gods were being worshipped. However, his ecstasy was short lived when he found that his life was in danger from an angry evil King who didn't like what had happened.

[1 Kings 19:3-9 \(NIV\)](#)



Painting – Revd Ally Barrett

1 Kings 19: When Elijah couldn't even, God gave him permission to rest by providing a tree for shelter, some water and a cake. <https://reverendally.org/art/>

## Engagement

Explain that sometimes, we have a false view of characters from the Bible. Because they are in the Bible we think that they are somehow perfect - like they are in a film. With them all having great hair, being brave and bold and heroic, never doubting or struggling. If they were anything less, surely they wouldn't be remembered for thousands of years afterwards? Don't we want our heroes to have it 'all together'?

Yet the Bible is really the opposite. Full of normal people - empowered and loved by a supernatural and powerful God of love and grace - yet still only humans! With their worries, their fears, their egos, their dark sides. One such character is Elijah – his story has stood the test of time and features in the Bible – yet he struggled too.

Read through the text of 1 Kings 19:3-9 twice, perhaps reading a verse at a time around the class or around a circle. On the third reading, an adult reads through very slowly and asks at the correct points -

- What was Elijah feeling?
- In the story what did God provide?
- What did Elijah do that helped himself?

Point out that whilst an angel appearing would be an incredible, amazing and supernatural thing, actually the things that helped Elijah's mental state and ability to go on were very simple... Food and sleep!

Ask the group if anyone ever loses perspective, confidence or gets angry when they are tired or hungry.

Despite his recent triumphs, Elijah is now experiencing the very real fear of his life being in danger. What a rollercoaster!

Take a moment for individual reflection, with individual pieces of paper one per student.

Consider a time when they might have felt scared, anxious or despondent. On one side of the paper, have them write down all the things that might be provided to help us. On the other side, write down all the things that we can do to help ourselves. What do they find works best for them? Is it the same for everyone?

Invite your students to share something from their piece of paper to encourage and inspire one another. Discuss how we deal with fear and anxiety in different ways.

## Response

### Strong Wall Activity

Gather large plain cardboard boxes (or paint them a neutral colour) and give the students black marker pens or black paint and paintbrushes. Or print out some 'bricks' to build into a wall display

Explain that we are going to build a wall of things that are helpful to emotionally strengthen us. Giving each student initially one sealed empty box, invite them to write on the sides some things that strengthen us.

Give some examples e.g. 'Advice from a Teacher' 'having a good cry'

After a few minutes, everyone is invited to read out their brick as they are able. You may like to have some spare boxes for keen students, or to add some of your own e.g. 'realising that I am enough' and 'Being who I am made me to be'

Invite the students to build a wall from all their boxes to signify that we do not need to despair – there are so many things that we can do to help ourselves and each other and we are better together than separately.

Discuss how being in community can help us overcome our fears. How might this help us in the current situation? What might we do to support one another with our fears and anxieties?

## Sending

### Take-home challenge.

Remembering this acronym can help some people to remember where their fear really comes from:

**F**alse

**E**vidence

**A**ppearing as

**R**eal

Optional Prayer: Watch out this week for where your fear or anxiety is coming from. Perhaps this week when you feel worried, try immediately giving those feelings to God and asking Him to bring you perspective and comfort.

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### **EXPERIENCES** that can help us **ENCOUNTER**:

#### Come As You Are

Watch the lyric video for 'Come as you are' by Crowder and let the words sink in.

<https://youtu.be/yjgioXrnEME>

The chorus says:

*So lay down your burdens*

*Lay down your shame*

*All who are broken*

*Lift up your face*

*Oh wanderer come home*

*You're not too far*

*Lay down your hurt lay down your heart*

*Come as you are*

Reflect upon these words.

There are lots of ways of responding - quietly in your heart, or by speaking with a trusted person, or using drawing, writing, prayer and poetry.

## Linvoy's Story

Linvoy Primus the former professional footballer (you may need to explain that Portsmouth were once in the premiership and won the FA Cup in 2008) has an amazing story and testimony of how God accepted and uses him, for who he was and the gifts he had been given. As you watch this video, ponder upon these questions.

1. What were the feelings that Linvoy described in his early career? (Anxiety, emptiness, what is his purpose)
2. What did Linvoy wrongly think he had to do once he came into a relationship with God? (Become a vicar)
3. How has Linvoy used his God-given gifts?

<https://youthvids.com/linvoy-primus-my-story/>

Linvoy believes God gave him gifts to be used to enjoy, to build others up and to glorify God. He didn't have to be something he was not to do this. God wanted him to be a footballer, not a vicar! Often when we feel anxious and sad it is because we have unreasonable expectations of ourselves or we are comparing ourselves to others. We try to be something or someone who we are not.

Optional prayer: If you have things in your life that you feel like this about, why not ask God to help you to let them go. He wants you to be exactly who He made you to be. You!

## **ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:**

### Emotion Journaling

Journaling is a great practice and discipline to help us to understand relationships – with ourselves, those around us and, for those of faith, with God. It is often only when we look back upon a journal that we can understand patterns, triggers for stress, the things that make us truly happy and through all of this.

It doesn't have to be an expensive leather-bound journal, and if you don't do it for a few days that is fine.

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?

What things help you?

Don't forget to celebrate good things and also celebrate healthy responses to harder things too.

### Anchoring

Also known as grounding, anchoring is a helpful technique that can be done at any time when we feel fearful, anxious or distant from situations we are facing. Anchoring is about bringing ourselves back into the present and acknowledging that we are safe and grounded when sometimes 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 how much if your anxiety has calmed down and how much more in control you feel. Do you know of other anchors in your life that settle you in a similar way?

### 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.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH

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Weekly Resources for Schools  
**PHASE: SECONDARY**

# How can we have hope for tomorrow?





## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

*Theoretical physicist Albert Einstein said:*

*“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.”*

*In the Bible the word hope appears over 160 times depending on the translation. Hope means to cherish a desire with anticipation and for Christians hope is rooted in God in the person of Jesus Christ. It is the confident affirmation that God is faithful, that He will complete what He has begun. The salvation of His people. We too can have hopes, hopes for ourselves for our families and friends and a confidence in a belief that we can work towards a better future.*

## BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:

Luke 24:28-35 - New Revised Standard Version

### The Road to Emmaus



<sup>28</sup> As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us<sup>[1]</sup> while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” <sup>33</sup> That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup> They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” <sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

## Gathering

Start your time together by saying something positive to each other as a greeting:  
I hope you have a great day today..... or you can use 'Peace be with you')

What difference does it make, to our day when someone, we know wishes us well and shares their hopes for us?

How does it make you feel?

Does it make you wonder how you can do this more often?

Take a few moments to think about how a sense of expectation and hope impacts on you and the belief that you will achieve all you need to do today.

## Engagement

Print out or project some photos everyday objects seen from unusual angles (for example):

<https://www.insider.com/close-up-photos-everyday-objects-2018-11#can-you-tell-what-this-is-19>

*Honey Combe, Cork, Lime, Flame, Cornflakes, Pepper, Cheese Grater, .....*

Which ones were easy to recognise? Why? What clues and previous knowledge helped you identify them?

Reflective questions:

- Is it always easy to see things and totally believe you have the whole picture?
- Are our assessments of people, situations and objects always based on prior knowledge?
- How might hope impact at times of doubt, challenge, and uncertainty?

In the Bible reading, two friends and followers of Jesus are travelling back from Jerusalem along the road to a town called Emmaus on their way home. They are talking about the events around the death of Jesus and they cannot quite believe he has died. Another person suddenly appears next to them and joins in the conversation. The two friends just don't recognise this stranger, yet such is the impact of the conversation that they invite the man to come to their home and have supper. The stranger is suddenly revealed as Jesus when he blesses and breaks the bread when he is at the table with them. The impact of their sudden recognition of Jesus changes their plans. In response to this encounter with Jesus their faith is strengthened, and it gives them confidence to return to Jerusalem to tell the 11 disciples of their experience... "our hearts burning within us" they say.

## Response

Try to convince the class that you once met a famous person? How easy do they find it to believe you ?

Watch this sudden encounter with a famous person <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3iZb6eP73rk>

Imagine you were one of the people the President Obama met on his walk. How would you convince your family and friends that this happened to you? Even if you had a selfie would how would you convince people that the president wasn't made of wax?

How confident are you around explaining things you have experienced but others haven't seen?

What key words would you need to use?

How could you help others develop questions to enable them to believe in what they haven't seen or experienced and what role would 'hope' and 'faith' play in your strategy?

## Sending

How might these examples of hope, faith and confidence help us in times of need?

Watch this video.

Quietly watch how someone explains what it feels like to keep faith and have confidence that their hopes will be fulfilled <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muvdda-LTGg>

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Watch this extract from the Polar Express: Does seeing someone support a person's belief-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNByy5-wlsc> what question does this raise about seeing and is believing and the role of faith?

Project this picture of 'The Raising of Lazarus' by Duccio di Buoninsegna

Reflect on the faces and the expressions.

Think about impact of this event on all who are there.

Read aloud John 11:17-44: Jesus hears about the death of Lazarus

Slowly read through the verses 32 - 36.

As you read out Mary's response to Jesus after her brother has died

- Consider Mary's strength of belief in Jesus
- Consider the times you have had your faith tested in someone:
- Consider yourself forgiven.

Read again verse 40 and consider Jesus words: Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God.

- o Repeat the phrase 'if you believed, you would see' at the end, how could you apply this phrase to a situation you face?

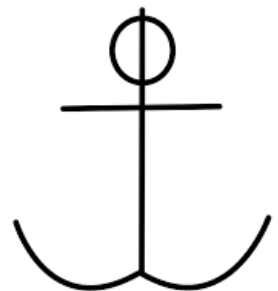


**ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:** The anchor is a Christian symbol for hope and steadfastness. The source for this symbol is Hebrews 6:19, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."

Anchors are found in many inscriptions in the catacombs of Rome. Think of the things that anchor you and give you confidence to have hope and faith.

Draw an anchor shape.

- Write in the names of people who support and help you.
- place around your anchor the names of the places where you have experienced a sense of hope and faith
- Use this as a way to remind yourself of times of hope, faith, confidence or as an opportunity talk to a trusted adult about how they can help you find a renewed sense of faith and hope.



## PRAYERS that can help us REFLECT, FOCUS and SPOTLIGHT hopes

The following prayer can be used as a focus on hope and strength for yourself family and friends and to create a prayer chain. Taking a sheet of paper write each sentence out so that you can cut into strips, to create your chain. Using a strip for each sentence, write out the sentence line as below and fill in the name of a person. Then glue or staple the ends of the strips so they inter link.



Our Heavenly Father, we are gathered here today to pray for \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ is facing a difficult situation right now

Lord, we ask that you bless \_\_\_\_\_ with your peace and hope.

Give \_\_\_\_\_ strength to face their challenges

Help \_\_\_\_\_ to overcome the obstacles in their way.

Lord, give \_\_\_\_\_ hope for the future.  
Amen.

Read the words of the St Columba:

or this Irish Blessing

Be thou a bright flame before me,  
Be thou a guiding star above me,  
Be thou a smooth path below me,  
Be thou a kindly shepherd behind me,  
Today – tonight – and for ever

May you see God's light on the path ahead  
When the road you walk is dark.  
May you always hear,  
Even in your hour of sorrow,  
The gentle singing of the lark.  
When times are hard may hardness  
Never turn your heart to stone,  
May you always remember  
when the shadows fall—  
You do not walk alone.

Take a few moments to consider each line...

I wonder .....

how these words impact on you?

what questions are raised or answered by them?

if you would feel encourage?

a sense of confidence?

supported in your faith?

I

wonder if they ignite a sense of hope in you today...in the future?

Now take time to listen to St Columba's prayer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooPz-mMonNE> and imagine that Jeff Johnson is singing this track standing next to you



## **CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:**

### Discussion starters for groups:

How easy is it to believe an account of events if we haven't witnessed them?  
What can we do to nurture an understanding of hope and confidence in each other?

How can we tell if something we witness is real or imaginary?  
What could we say to help them reflect on what they are seeing to truly understand the impact and implications?  
Are you ready to stand up for your beliefs and hopes for the future?

Have you ever been lost for the answer to a question?  
A time when you couldn't figure something out?  
Did you hope someone would help you? How did you feel?

Who can you see in the Bible who had shared a message of hope and faith, who helped people understand how God was always with them?  
How can we have hope for tomorrow?

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Weekly Resources for Schools

**PHASE: SECONDARY**

# **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

2020 has been unbelievably challenging but we're not the only people to face difficulties.

There are many in this world who face even greater hardships on a day to day basis than we do. How do you react to that?

In challenging times – are we thankful for what we do have, or do we grieve what we don't have?



How has the pandemic effected your attitude to towards others? Do you feel the same about donating to charity as you did before?

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

*God has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6 verse 8*

## Engagement

We would like you and your students to engage with the story of Ruth and Boaz in the Book of Ruth, which is found in the Bible but is also part of the Jewish Ketuvim and is traditionally read at the Jewish holiday of Shavuot. In particular Chapter 2. Present the story in a way that is suitable for your school context. We have included here a rough script but please take this and make it your own.

*'One of the best stories in the Bible you won't have heard of is the story of Ruth and Boaz. It is a story of loss and love and redemption. Set against the background of harvest in an agricultural community it's almost like a biblical Poldark!'*

**Key to understanding the story is knowing the significance the Jewish Law of Gleaning which was a form of welfare system.** If you owned a field, your reapers could go through the field once, and only once. Whatever they missed was left for widows, the destitute and orphans – for those who had no one else to care for them.

People believed that the existence of the Gleaning Law was proof of God's concern for the poor among the people.

Let's concentrate on chapter 2. Ruth was a foreign widow looking after her Jewish mother-in-law Naomi. In her gleaning, Ruth happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, one of the wealthiest landowners in the area. Boaz was introduced to Ruth by an unnamed servant. She obviously caught his eye because he instructed his supervisors not to let the young men bother her, and



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.

he gave her protection. He also instructed them to drop handfuls of grain on purpose. As a woman, a poor widow, and a foreigner, Ruth could have no claims on anyone. She was at the lowest rung of the social ladder. But Boaz ensured she was looked after and provided for. **The Old Testament teaches that Ruth received the grace (undeserved favour) of God and the channel of that grace was Boaz.**

**Could you in some way be a channel of grace to someone today?**

**Perhaps someone whom others might look down on, or see as unworthy?**

*In the next chapter of the story, Ruth and Boaz get together on the threshing room floor, but you can look that up later. The story has a happy ending as they get married, live happily ever after and among their descendants you find both King David and Jesus! Pretty astonishing for a poor, foreign widow!*

## Response

**Reflect:** In the story Boaz had a plentiful harvest in his fields so he was able to give some to those in need. Ruth, who in some ways was the exact opposite of Boaz – a woman, a person without any wealth or resources, an immigrant without a husband – is also generous in her own way. She has no material wealth to offer, but she leaves behind her family and follows her mother-in-law to a foreign land where she has no guarantee she will be accepted or cared for.

**Is generosity only in the gift of the wealthy?**

**Who, in fact, in our world demonstrates the greatest generosity to others?**

**Action:** The [Trussell Trust](#) runs foodbanks across the UK Harvest festival is an important time for food banks but this year things are a bit different with churches closed and traditional harvest festivals not taking place. This is just at the time when the need is greater. Could your school safely help out in some way? There is a guide to doing this [here](#).

## 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 and age group.

Here are some ideas from the guide of what we might want to pray for:

- People experiencing acute poverty: that they would receive the support they need and be able to find positive pathways forwards.
- Food banks: that they would receive sufficient food donations, and that they would be able to respond to every person who needs their support with sensitivity and kindness.
- Our society: for justice and compassion to prevail in political and economic decision-making, so that everyone is protected from poverty and has the chance to flourish.



## 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. The PowerPoint is designed for Primary, but it is adaptable and it might be worthwhile to focus on Ariana's older sister Johaira and her role in sustainable development.

### ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the **EXAMEN** prayer to reflect on harvest. The Examen is a 500-year old prayer, designed to help people in their every day lives. It was written originally by St Ignatius of Loyola, who started his young adult life as a soldier who wanted to save everyone. However, he was injured in war and when he started reading the only books available in hospital – Bible stories – he realised he wanted to help people in a different way. Not as a hero, but as someone who served others. He set up a group of people, now known as the Jesuits, who helped the poorest in society. The current Pope is a Jesuit.

Since St Ignatius' time, people have used the Examen in lots of ways. It starts with gratitude and ends with thinking of how to serve others.

1. GIVE THANKS – what can you be grateful for today? It might be something very small – it might be that you had enough to eat today.
2. ASK FOR HELP with your attitude toward those who are in need – for whatever reason.
3. REFLECT on your day and think about the times you felt generous and loving towards others, and also on the times you felt resentful and unwilling to share what you have.
4. SAY SORRY for the times you may have been selfish and hoarded things only for yourself.
5. DECIDE how you will be more generous, sharing what you have, tomorrow.

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

## CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:

Christians believe that the story of Ruth and Boaz can offer many insights for people today.

Firstly, they believe that God often works through those who have endured tragic situations to change the lives of others.

**How have people you know coped and managed through tragic situations? Has the situation caused them to become more turned in on themselves, or to look outward at others?**

**Do you think that it is possible to sustain belief in God if a person encounters tragedy and loss?**

**What attitudes do you believe we should show to the poor and to foreigners, particularly those that have experienced tragic situations?**

Second, they believe that God can work through unlikely means. Ruth, a poor widow and a foreigner, was welcomed and provided for by the wealthy and respected Boaz, and consequently became part of the family line of both King David and Jesus.

**What impact can kindness and generosity have on others?**

**Is it ever possible to transform or turn around another person's life by helping them?**

Third, some Christians see evidence of God's sovereign power in this story – that is, they believe that God is in control of everything that happens, even when we do not understand the situation.

**How do you react to the statement 'God is in control of everything that happens, even when we do not understand the situation'?**

**How do you make sense of the suffering of billions of people around the world without homes, food or safety? Who do you think is responsible?**

**What about those in my own community who are struggling? Do we have a responsibility to help, serve and care for them?**

**What is the modern-day equivalent of the Law of Gleaning?**





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Weekly Resources for Schools

**PHASE: SECONDARY**

**ADVENT**





## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

***Is there a danger in the rush of life that we miss out on important things?***

***The word Advent comes from the Latin word — “adventus” which means arrival.***

***“The most significant achievement of our age is not that man stood on the moon, but rather that God in Christ stood on the earth.” James Irwin.***

## A POSSIBLE BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:

The people walking in darkness see a bright light, light shines  
on those who live in a land of deep darkness....

...For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us.

He shoulders responsibility and is called Wonderful Adviser,

Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. *Isaiah 9:2,6 New English Translation*

## Gathering

### Are you prepared?

Ask students -FOMO- Do you suffer from “Fear of missing out”? Is this making life over busy? Share this quote “I wanted to figure out why I was so busy, but I couldn't find the time to do it.” — Todd Stocker

Give an opportunity to reflect and pause from being busy, raising awareness that busyness can sometimes mean we miss things that are important.

Here is a YouTube link to some quiet music and some awesome views of nature:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OEL4PIRz04&t=4636s>

### Or Listen

Some of the Natasha Bedingfield lyrics from “Wake up and smell the roses” could be used or listen to an extract from the song-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKWgdXF66T4>

“I've been livin' in a room without windows

Away from the sun, no oxygen I couldn't tell if it was day or night

Away from the sun, growing nowhere fast

Rushing along on the pavement

Don't even look at the people's faces, going places

When an old man said stop, You nearly stepped on a flower, Growing through the cracks

And you didn't even notice.

[Chorus:] Wake up smell the roses Life is happening and you don't know it Wake up, take a moment Grab it in your hands... and own it “

## Engagement

What does the season of Advent challenge us to pause for? Read the Bible verses Isaiah 9:2,6 New English Translation

*“The people walking in darkness see a bright light, light shines on those who live in a land of deep darkness. For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us. He shoulders responsibility and is called Wonderful Adviser, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

### Reflect/discuss –

- In what ways might the world today seem like it is in darkness?
- How might the story of Jesus’ birth bring hope and light to people today?

Explore other religious traditions at this time of year. Are there similar themes?

In 2020, the Jewish festival of Hanukkah falls on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Find out more about how this is celebrated.

Or explore the tradition of the Nativity Fast from Orthodox Christianity, which begins in 2020 on November 15<sup>th</sup>.



## Response

Consider when you last paused and had an experience that made you feel a sense of awe and wonder?

PsychologyToday.com says that “Researchers describe awe as “that sense of wonder we feel in the presence of something vast that transcends our understanding of the world.” They point out that people commonly experience awe in nature, but also feel a sense of awe in response to religion, art, music, etc.

For many awesomeness is something they describe as wow! Moment – a way of describing a point that makes us stop and say wow!

The Greater Good Magazine says that “Research suggests that awe can make you happier, healthier, more humble, and more connected to the people around you.”

How could we increase the opportunities for more awe in our lives?

A series of pictures could be shared that inspire a sense of awe and wonder, or students may have their own suggestions to share. A picture showing the intricate and unique detail of a snowflake could be used.

## Sending

Previously we have shared examples of ‘Random acts of kindness’ like this one from [Twinkl](https://www.twinkl.com) or the image to the right:

These focus on small actions that may help bring some extra light and encouragement into the lives of others. Perhaps students could contribute ideas to design a class or year group one and then carry out their acts during the Advent season?



# SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

## EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

This [link](#) provides the basis for this four-part model of readings and prayers, that could be used during the time of Advent.

### **Theme 1: Expectancy**      Reading: Micah 5:2-5; Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 7:14

**Conversation Starters:** Talk about a time when you've had to wait expectantly for something. What was it like to feel in your heart that you knew something big was going to happen and yet to also know that you needed to wait for it? How might the idea of waiting for God to provide the answers enable people to trust him more?

**Prayer:** *Dear Jesus, we start this Advent season waiting for you. Like the Israelites who wearily longed—hoping against hope—that you would bring your promised Messiah, we desperately wait for you to fill our hearts with your glorious presence this Advent season. Please allow us to see the beauty and refining that comes when we stop our striving and choose to boldly trust that your promises will prove true.*

### **Theme 2: Hope**      Reading: Luke 1:26-38; Luke 1:47-55

**Conversation Starters:** Discuss this together (there's no right or wrong answer): What do you think Mary was more surprised by—the appearance of the angel, or the angel's message itself? Would you want an angel to give you a message about something that was to happen in your life? This could be an opportunity to share a time when you believed God miraculously “showed up” in life to offer either physical or emotional provision in a way that you never could have imagined.

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord, for many of us, we admit that the story of the virgin birth has become so familiar that it's easy for us to lose sight of how utterly spectacular and astonishing this event was. After years of waiting, your promised Messiah was to be born in the most unlikely of places to the most unlikely of people in the most unlikely of ways. Only You can plan such awe-inspiring works! You are perfect in your ways, and your plans are magnificent! May we trust you with every aspect of our lives, remembering that Mary's story assures us that you are able to show up and do the miraculous.*

### **Theme 3: Joy**      Reading: Luke 2:8-20; Luke 2:25-32

**Conversation Starters:** How do you imagine the all-consuming celebration of joy that the shepherds witnessed? In terms of your life, how do you celebrate both the big and little victories? Even if you're going through something difficult in your life right now, what can you choose to consider with joy today? Christians believe, like Simeon in the Bible passage, that God will fulfil His promises.

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord, it's hard to imagine what it would have been like to see the armies of heaven lighting up the shepherd's fields as they praised your name! We praise you today that you chose to personally enter our world as the promised Messiah, humbling yourself to become human so that you could truly live among your people. With your birth, people can be made whole! You offer salvation to those that call out to you, and that makes our hearts sing with joy!*

### **Theme 4: Peace**      Reading: Isaiah 26:3; John 14:27; Psalm 23:1-2

**Conversation Starters:** Describe the circumstances that Mary and Joseph found themselves in after Jesus' birth. Did the reality around them look like they had a reason for peace? How do you think the miracles surrounding Jesus' birth (prophecies fulfilled, angels' appearances, etc.) built up the faith of the young Mary and Joseph for their future life as the earthly parents of Jesus?

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, you were born into a restless world looking for answers and desperate for peace. Our world today may not look like that of ancient Bethlehem, but it can also be a broken place filled with anxious hearts eager to discover purpose and lasting hope. This Advent season may the world see your son's birth as an olive branch of peace. No matter what their circumstances, may they know that you can give us an incredible peace that cannot be shaken or taken away. Thank you for being the path to peace.

## ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

For many Advent is a time of preparation. You could choose some of the activities below to carry out in Advent. What else could you add that is special to you or your family?

Make Christmas cards

Make shapes with the cookie cutters and playdough

Make paper snowflakes

Go or listen to a Carol Service

Colour in some Christmas pictures

Make some Christmas fairy cakes

Make paper chains

Read about the nativity

String popcorn to go on the tree

Make a bird feeder

Sing and dance to Christmas songs

Make some Christmas cookies

Watch a Christmas movie

Take a walk to look at the Christmas lights

Make mince pies

Make hot chocolate and marshmallows

Make and put up a wreath

Decorate a gingerbread house

Sing Christmas carols

Donate canned food to a food bank

Make an angel for the top of the Christmas tree.

Choose three of your toys and give them away to a charity shop.

Make homemade wrapping paper

Help wrap presents

## CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:

What could you do this Advent that is more environmentally friendly? This link may give some ideas-

<https://www.everchange productions.co/25-eco-friendly-advent-calendar-activities/>



For example, try a reverse advent calendar- many local foodbanks are encouraging the idea this Christmas. Why don't you see if your family/ community can get involved?

Starting on December 1st, collect an item every day to donate to a shelter or a charity or some other non-profit organisation where it's needed.

 <b>Reverse ADVENT CALENDAR</b>					
<small>Please check with us to find out our opening times around Christmas and to check if there is anything in particular we're running short of. Email address: <a href="mailto:norwoodfoodbank@btinternet.com">norwoodfoodbank@btinternet.com</a> Telephone Number: 07722121108</small>					
<b>1</b> Tinned fruit	<b>2</b> Cooking oil	<b>3</b> Washing up liquid	<b>4</b> Shower gel	<b>5</b> Cereal	<b>6</b> Rice pudding
<b>7</b> Shampoo	<b>8</b> Chocolates	<b>9</b> Sponge pudding	<b>10</b> Hand wash	<b>11</b> Washing powder	<b>12</b> Toothpaste
<b>13</b> Themed cakes	<b>14</b> Biscuits	<b>15</b> Tinned fish	<b>16</b> Pasta sauce	<b>17</b> UHT milk	<b>18</b> Coffee
<b>19</b> Hot chocolate	<b>20</b> Jam & peanut butter	<b>21</b> Fruit juice	<b>22</b> Rice pudding	<b>23</b> UHT custard	<b>24</b> Tinned Meat



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Weekly Resources for Schools

## **PHASE: SECONDARY**

**THEME: Christmas -  
Comfort & Joy**



## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

**"God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If He gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we all have the ability to understand and receive it." Pope Francis**

**"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving." Mother Teresa**

Shops start stacking shelves in September. The adverts start in October. The music starts in November. The places where we live seem to change in December. All because of Christmas.

Christians have two major festivals, Easter and Christmas, both are times of celebration and wonder.

Children in school prepare for plays, learn carols and songs and focus on it.

But - Do we focus on the right things? Do we remember the right parts of the story?

How can we focus on the right things? Should we focus more on Christ at Christmas?

## BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:

### The Birth of Jesus

**2** In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he



was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

### The Shepherds and the Angels

<sup>8</sup> In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around

them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah,<sup>[a]</sup> the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,<sup>[b]</sup> praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!"<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

## Gathering

Encourage everyone to share something about Christmas that they are looking forward to...gifts, family time, sweets, trips, decorations.

Encourage everyone to think about the things in the story that they don't understand or that they found confusing or complicated...decrees, place names, why shepherds, angels.

We think we know the story but when we really look into the meaning behind the story, it becomes more amazing. Christmas is all about surprises and amazement. Now let's engage with the amazing story.

## Engagement

Look at the story from each character's point of view:

The journey meant walking 90 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem, whilst Mary was pregnant, maybe even walking in the night to avoid the heat of the day. How long would it take? Unable to plan ahead.

The destination: Joseph's hometown – with no relatives prepared to take them in, no stranger able to give them a room, only a place set aside for animals, only a manger for the baby they had been told would save the world.

Ask some of these questions: What do they have to be afraid of? What do they have to be joyful about? What might their future hold after the birth of Jesus?

- Mary – unmarried, very young mother who is in danger of becoming an outcast because she is pregnant early. The mother of the long-awaited Messiah (Messiah meaning Saviour of the people, God's chosen leader).
- Joseph – engaged to an unmarried mother, thinking it might be easier to break off the engagement than to endure the hardship of being seen at this time as an outcast.
- Shepherds – often the outcasts of the community, unable to wash and therefore attend the synagogue as everyone else could, eating, sleeping and walking through the hills with the sheep for weeks at a time, financially responsible for other people's sheep that they safeguarded from predators.

## Response

Watch some of these Christmas adverts from the last few years:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n73lCQ6k3CA>

*(The whole clip is more than 11 mins but maybe choose specific ones to show, or search for this year's adverts or your all-time favourite if you would like. The last one needs to be handled with particular sensitivity in the current circumstances.)*

What is their focus? What is it making us think about or learn? Is it a good focus?

Does it matter that it doesn't remind us of Jesus? Can you have Christmas without Christ?

Now watch this to finish watch this clip included in the Advent Faith at Home episode:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOByXwK-g94&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOByXwK-g94&feature=emb_logo)

## Sending

Think about what makes Christmas special.

What wishes would you make for everyone?

A wish for happiness, for good health, for fun times together, family visits, rest and relaxation, for warm homes, for safe spaces...

Why not give an opportunity to share Christmas wishes – if it is something they would wish for themselves, they might respond “Amen” or “Let it be” or “So be it” – they all mean the same. This could be done with post-it notes to help those who may not want to share their ideas out loud but would be happy for them to be read by others.

(If you would like to finish by listening to some (non-Christmas) music why not play Let it Be by The Beatles)

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

**EXPERIENCES** that can help us **ENCOUNTER**:

**The Gift of Love.**



Write on a piece of paper 'The Greatest Gift' and on the reverse 'Is Love'. Put it into an envelope and seal it. Put the envelope in a bigger envelope or small box. Seal it.

Place that box or large envelope in a larger box (shoe box?) and wrap it like a Christmas gift.

Show the class the gift. Ask them what they think is in it?

What are the best gifts they've ever had? Would they fit in a box this size?

Choose one person to unwrap the first layer and open the box.

What does it feel like to still not know? Have they ever had to wait for something – how did that feel? Was it worth the wait in the end?

Choose a different person to unwrap the next layer. They will be left with an envelope. Have your hopes gone down now that you have seen it's an envelope? Why is that?

What could it be do you think? Money? Would it be worth it if it was money? How much is worth it?

Get a different person to open the last envelope. It's not money. It's the greatest gift.

How much is love worth? Can you buy it? Can you wrap it? Can you give it? Can you tell if you haven't been given it? Is it really the greatest? Is there anything greater do you think?

For Christians, Jesus is the embodiment of Love. He is the incarnation of a God of Love.

For Christians, Jesus is the greatest gift the world has ever received.

Christmas represents the moment when the greatest gift was given by God.

## **ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:**

Set up a Christmas tree in your classroom or create a display showing a Christmas tree.

- Cut out card shapes to make tree decorations or baubles.
- Write Christmas wishes for the world on them.
- Decorate your tree with characters from the nativity story.

Write Christmas Cards to local organisations that care at Christmas:

- Are there local foodbanks, homeless shelters, refugee charities, care homes, churches?
- Send Christmas messages of hope, love, peace and joy to these groups.

If you would like to connect your message to those in the story Christmas story. You could end with a blessing like this: *'May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas;'*

## **PRAYERS that can help us REFLECT:**

Use the Examen prayer to reflect on the meaning of Christmas:

It has 5 steps:

**GIVE THANKS** ...for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, for the celebrations we have in our homes and communities, for the gifts given and the love that goes into them.

**ASK FOR HELP** ...for those who find Christmas a hard time, for the anxious times and the stressful times. For those who will have no home, no safety, no food, no idea what next year brings.

**REFLECT** ...on the hope, love, joy and peace that Christians understand Jesus brought. The hope for all people, the love for this world, the joy of heaven and the peace that the world cannot offer.

**SAY SORRY** ...for the times when presents have been your focus, for the time not spent with those whom you love but on devices that take your time and focus.

**DECIDE** ...what you will focus on this Christmas, how you will be a bringer of hope, joy, love and peace in your home, school or community, and what makes Christmas for you.

If you have the ability to light 4 candles one at a time –

Light the first and think about our hopes – for ourselves and the world.

Light the second and think about the ways the ways we might spread peace.

Light the third and remember those we love and those who love us.

And light the fourth and think of how we could bring joy to others.

Spend a moment in silence before ending your time of prayer.



Alternatively – Watch this film and think of how important it is to keep the flames of love, peace, faith and hope alight in our lives and in our communities: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jclpM8cVXQU>

Or - Here are some sites where virtual candles can be lit or where students could see the candles lit by others. These could be shared for those who may want to do this again later:

e.g. <https://gratefulness.org/light-a-candle/>

Coventry Cathedral have a link to light a virtual candle and add a prayer to their virtual prayer wall: <http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/candle/>

Some hospices hold events at Christmas where people come together to light a candle to remember a loved one who has died, to help bring comfort and good memories in focus. The Church of England website provides a place where this can be done virtually:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/light-candle-remember-someone>

## **CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:**

### Discussion starters for groups:

What are the different things that take our focus away from the Christian meaning of Christmas?

Receiving gifts, buying food, having new and expensive things...are these shops or businesses trying to make money from our happiness? How easy is for you to keep focussed on non-material things?

Some Nativity Story books for small children tell the story of Mary and Joseph but omit the part about the baby being God's son. How important is it that we know that Christians believe it is God's son being born and not just a special baby that has angels in the story?

How can people who do not believe in God celebrate Christmas? What does it mean to them?

During the First World War soldiers in the trenches laid down their weapons on Christmas day, climbed out of their trenches and swapped possessions with 'the enemy'. Although they were different, they still found Christmas united them. What unites us at Christmas?

Explore ideas about the kind of Christmas advert you would film if you were reminding people of the birth of Jesus and its significance for Christians.

What do you want Christmas 2021 to be like?

**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?