



Information for Teachers

Our theme for the year is 'Journeys through Space, Light and Time.' Everyone is excited about the 50th anniversary of the first landing on the moon in July 1969 by a spacecraft from Earth and the historic 'small step' taken by the astronaut Neil Armstrong.

Here at the cathedral we want to celebrate the spirit of exploration and discovery that pushed back the boundaries of human travel and our knowledge of the universe. Seeing our wonderful home planet, Earth, from the darkness of space helped awaken us to humanity's urgent responsibility to look after our 'blue planet' and realise our inter-dependence.

'The best poetry says something that lasts. It leaves a footprint deep in the earth of what it means to be human.'

*Morag Styles, Emeritus Fellow and Professor of Children's Poetry,
University of Cambridge*

In the beginning was the Word... join us this summer and make these words echo with your own. Poetry can help us understand the world around us, shine new light in dark corners, and express ourselves in fresh ways.

Here at Lichfield Cathedral, we are inviting your students to write new poems inspired by the awe and wonder of the anniversary of the Moon landing and that one small step for humanity. We want poems that reflect on the origins of the universe and the vastness of space, light and time. We invite poetry that explores our fragile earth through the themes of creation and cosmology, space travel and astronomical discovery.

This competition will give students, across the age groups, the opportunity to use their creativity and imagination to write a poem that explores what it means to be fully alive by being fully perceptive, aware and excited by what they feel, see and know. It will also give them a chance to develop their writing skills and, hopefully, stir a life-long passion for poetry.

The themes for The Word this year are '**Awe and Wonder**' for students aged 7-11 and 12-16 and '**Light in Our Darkness**' for students aged 17 and over. We would like your students to be as creative as possible when interpreting these themes. We are looking for poems which go beyond simple rhyming couplets and limericks; we are looking for original, contemporary poems. This is an invitation for students to tackle new and exciting poetic forms!

Poetry is immensely valuable to children and young people, its importance is reflected throughout the national curriculum and in examination syllabuses. The Cathedral hopes to stimulate thoughtful and original contributions from primary and secondary schools and colleges in order to provide a valuable opportunity to engage with the important anniversary of the Moon landing but also the profoundly theological and ethical questions about creation, cosmology and care for the Earth that space travel and astronomical discoveries have stimulated.

'Throughout generations, it's hard to argue that, on an emotional level, or a level of sensitivity, there is a more important medium of literary expression than poetry. It can be life-altering, heart-breaking, heart-mending, or world-shattering. But the importance of poetry doesn't live forever in past voices and traditions. The power of poetry is, in its very core, a changing voice, a movement, an honesty of thought and intention that refuses to be ignored.'

Emily Rose Galvin, Staffordshire Poet Laureate

The final submission date for entries is National Poetry Day, **Thursday 3rd October**. 40 poems from across all of the categories will be selected to be displayed in the Cathedral from the end of November until the start of term in January 2020. A special prize-giving will be held as part of The Word Poetry Festival. The Word Poetry Festival will be taking place at Lichfield Cathedral from Sunday November 24th – Thursday 28th November and some celebrity poets have been invited. That week starts with an evening's presentation from Benjamin Zephaniah. We'll issue a reminder and a further invitation in September, but please note the dates. You will be very welcome.

We invite teachers, students and families to join us this summer for our special programme of activities and events: you can walk on the Moon floor in the Cathedral, enjoy family activity days, watch a spectacular light show, marvel at the universe and its origins, reflect on faith and its joy in a creator God, come and see space movies, and listen to a national authority on astronomy give an eloquent account of how it all began. There is music, worship, activity and event woven into our summer schedule!

Please find enclosed a copy of our What's On and explore our website for more information:

www.lichfield-cathedral.org

Find your words. The Word @LichfieldCathedral

The conditions of entry outline the full rules for the competition. Schools should particularly note the following submission guidelines:

- For the two lower age categories (7-11 and 12-16) the poems must be written on the theme of 'Awe and Wonder'. For Secondary School students who are 17 and over, they should respond to the theme of 'Light in Our Darkness';
- Students aged 17 and over will need to submit individually using the entry form available on the Cathedral website;
- Each poem must be given a title, be typed in black, 12pt, Times New Roman and printed on a single side of A4;
- The maximum length of an entry is 24 lines (including line breaks);
- The entries cannot be emailed and must all be posted to the address on the entry form. However, teachers with questions about the poetry competition are welcome to contact the Cathedral by emailing **cathy.fellows@lichfield-cathedral.org**