

Second Year of the Cycle

Autumn Term

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: **TALENTS**

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship reflects on talents and how well we use them.

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: be honest about themselves and their abilities.

Moral: be aware of the responsibility they have for their own development, as well as the development of others.

Social: accept differing abilities and promote equality of opportunity.

Cultural: explore situations beyond the immediacy of their personal experiences.

Theme for Week TALENTS

Day

Theme for Today Use of talents

1

Jesus told a story about a rich man who went away on a journey and entrusted some of his money and property to his servants. He gave one servant five talents, another two talents and the third one talent.

The servant who had received the five talents went and used it in business and managed to double his money. So also, the servant with two talents made two more. The third servant went and dug a hole in the ground and hid his one talent because he was afraid of using it in case he lost it.

When the rich man returned he wanted to know what had happened with his property. He called for the servants and he was very pleased with the ones who came in with double the money he had given them. He could see that these servants were prepared to take risks, and they had been successful. He rewarded them with good jobs in which they had responsibility. He knew he could trust them. But the master was very displeased with the third servant. He had wasted the opportunity he had been given and so he took the talent he had dug up away from him, and sent him away with nothing.

Reflection/Prayer

Let us make the most of our talents - for our own satisfaction and for the benefit of others.

7 Why did the rich man react the way he did? What would you have done?

8 How well do you use the talents which you have been given? Do you always put in the effort you should?

9 What do you bury that could be used more effectively?

10 What do you think you ought to put into life? How can you use your skills or talents to help you do this?

11 Why is it important to make the most of our talents?

Theme for Week **TALENTS**

Day

Theme for Today Everyone has something to offer

2

When it comes to sports day or a music competition not everyone can win - but everyone can do their best and take part.

Everyone in a competition is important. There can be no winner without the rest. There can be no enjoyment if nobody takes part and everyone has **something** to offer to life.

Do you try to offer the skills, talents or qualities that you have?

Are you thankful for the gifts you have or do you only want to take part if you know you'll win?

Reflection/Prayer

Let us remember that each one of us has something to offer and that we can all contribute something worthwhile to the world.

7 What do your closest friends think are your best talents?

8 What would you most like to be able to do?

9 Which of your talents do you use the least?

10 How important is it to you that you win?

11 When might winning actually be losing?

Theme for Week TALENTS	Day
Theme for Today Making the best of it	3

Joni was clever, musical, good at sport, popular, always laughing, but most of all, she loved singing. She had her whole life before her and the world was her oyster. Then, one day when she was swimming with her friends, she had a terrible accident. She dived into the sea and broke her neck. She was paralysed; her life was in ruins; her world collapsed.

For a long time she lay in hospital, unable to move at all. She felt angry at what had happened; angry with God for letting it happen. But she found she could still sing and gradually as the time passed, her faith began to heal. She began to see how she could use her gift of a beautiful voice to praise God once again.

She has become famous as a singer and as an example of courage and hope. She feels now that she has achieved more in her life than she ever would have done if she had not had her accident.

Reflection/Prayer

Let us develop patience in the things we can do and the willingness to keep on trying, whatever the cost may be.

7 What do you think Joni's greatest talent was?

8 What is your greatest gift?

9 Which of your talents could you not bear to lose?

10 When do you have to make the best of a bad situation?

11 How can you prepare for the unexpected?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: FRIENDSHIP

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship looks at the qualities of friendship, how friendship can go wrong and the ultimate risk of true friendship.

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: consider the value of friendship, and to reflect on the 'risk' and 'sacrificial nature' of friendship.

Moral: reflect on the qualities of a friendship and explore the balance between unquestioning loyalty and right and wrong.

Social: develop ideas connected with 'exclusive' friendship, the danger of cliques and the rejection of others.

Cultural: acknowledge an historical example of racial intolerance, and reflect on appropriate responses to it.

Theme for Week FRIENDSHIP	Day
Theme for Today Good Friends	1

Many people may know the story of David and Goliath. Goliath was supposedly a giant and the champion of the enemy army. David was just a shepherd boy, but he persuaded the king to let him fight Goliath, and he used his shepherd's skill with a sling and stone to kill the giant.

Not so well known, however, is the friendship which developed between David and the king's son, Jonathan. They did almost everything together and greatly respected one another, even though they came from very different homes.

However, their friendship was tested. It happened because the king became jealous of David's skill as a soldier. People used to compare David with the king and said that David was better.

The King became crazed about this, and tried to kill David many times. Even though the king was his father, Jonathan stood by David and helped him escape. When the king realised that Jonathan was standing by David, he tried to kill his own son as well.

The story of David and Jonathan is part of the Jewish holy book, and in the Old Testament section of the Bible. Although it is hundreds of years old, we still need this sort of friendship through good and bad times today as well.

Reflection/Prayer

When David was in trouble, Jonathan said, "I'll do anything you want".

7 What do you miss about friends you no longer see?

8 When have you been a really good friend?

9 What tests your friendships?

10 Do friends always respect each other's background? Do you judge a person by their friendship or by their background?

11 Why does jealousy take such a strong hold of people? How does jealousy damage friendships?

Theme for Week FRIENDSHIP	Day
Theme for Today Bad Friends	2

Not all friendships work. One of the saddest was between two men, called Henry and Thomas.

Henry was the King of England - and he asked Thomas, who was a priest, to help him look after some of the money. So Thomas became Henry's Chancellor. They spent a lot of time together and became very good friends. Some days they went hunting, others they enjoyed the extravagant ceremonies of the Royal Court. It would seem that they trusted each other completely.

The problems began when Henry decided to make Thomas the most important priest in England. He became the Archbishop of Canterbury. Thomas soon realised that he could not serve God and the King, because the King was not always honest in his dealings.

They grew further and further apart. The King became sure that Thomas was totally against him. In a temper, he said, "Who will get rid of this troublesome priest?" Some of his knights heard him and took him at his word. They went to Canterbury and, in the Cathedral in the late afternoon, they killed Thomas.

Reflection/Prayer

Help us to know when a friendship is going wrong - and what the right thing is to do.

7 Sometimes even friends quarrel. How do you feel when you have quarrelled with a friend?

8 What is your reaction when a friend disagrees with you?

9 People often like to get their own back. We call this 'revenge'. How does getting your own back make you feel?

10 What kills friendship?

11 Thomas was sure that the king was in the wrong. Can we always be sure that we are right?

Theme for Week FRIENDSHIP	Day
Theme for Today The risk of friendship	3

During World War II, there were many people who put their lives at risk for others. Some of these people were in Germany or countries taken over by the Nazis. They disagreed with Nazi ideas, especially the terrible way Jewish people were treated.

One such person was Oskar Schindler. He was a business person in Poland whose factories made many things which were used by the German army. He enjoyed the good life and the good things which money could buy.

But he became more and more convinced that the Nazis were wrong. His factories became a place of safety for Jewish men and women, even though he hardly knew many of them, and he used up nearly all his money to make sure that they were fed and clothed.

His story has been made into a world famous film called *Schindler's List*. Just outside Jerusalem, a tree has been planted in his honour at Yad Vashem - the memorial to the six million Jews who died in World War II.

Reflection/Prayer

We hope for courage in danger;
We work for peace in the world.

7 How should you treat people who have a different skin colour or different beliefs from yours?

8 Can you really be a friend to someone you do not know?

9 If the friendship we offer others was tested, would it stand firm?

10 Does friendship depend on what you get from or what you give to the other person?

11 How much would you risk for a friend?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: WHAT IS REAL?

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship explores the concept of reality.

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: consider the 'otherness' of existence and reflect on reality which is transcendent (above and beyond us) but simultaneously immanent (ie among us/in us).

Moral: consider the implications of recognising the right to personal reality and the freedom of others to enjoy their reality.

Social: ask whether personal notions of reality are too small - and should extend to family and community.

Cultural: acknowledge the diversity of perceived reality.

Theme for Week **WHAT IS REAL?**

Day

Theme for Today Tear apart the cinema screen ...
you'll find a bare brick wall

1

As the film comes to the end, the sun sets, the music rises to a crescendo and the two stars of the film look fondly into each other's eyes. They have been through so much during the film, so many adventures and misunderstandings, successes and failures. Now, as the film ends, everything is sorted.

Is it real? Tear apart the cinema screen, all you will find is a bare brick wall. Sometimes the images and ideas we get from a film give a false picture about life.

Even the film stars themselves - paid fabulous sums of money - are not gods but ordinary people. Even though their photos may be all over people's bedroom walls, the stars themselves still know the pain and disappointment which life can bring.

So a film can create a make believe world - but is it really real?

Reflection/Prayer

Help us to think about what is real and what matters.

And help us to make life real for those we love
and for those whose lives we touch.

7 Which film stars do you like? What do you think they are like in real life?

8 Why do we like happy endings? How often do we provide happy endings?

9 Why do film stars get paid so much? What are they worth?

10 How does 'make-believe' help us in our lives?

11 Why do some people prefer films to real life?

Theme for Week	WHAT IS REAL?	Day
Theme for Today	Tear apart the cinema screen ... can you find reality?	2

How do you know you are real? You could pinch yourself to prove it! But how can you really know? We might all be dreaming, a kind of mass hallucination. We might be a giant's playthings. We might be part of the universe which is just a small piece of dirt under a giant's fingernail.

Or ... if you look at your own hand, there might be a whole universe under your finger nails!

And if all this sounds far fetched, think about the daily things of life, like friendship, or loyalty, or love. Are they real? You can't see any of these. How do you know they are real? You hope they are. You hope your family loves you, you hope your friends like you.

Reality is a strange idea. So when someone says to you, "Get real!" - what do they really mean?

Reflection/Prayer

Let us think about what is real and what matters.

And let us make life real for those we love
and for those whose lives we touch.

7 Where do you think the world came from?

8 Years after you have died, will it matter that you were once 'real'?

9 Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

10 Why do love and friendship matter?

11 How real are you?

Theme for Week	WHAT IS REAL?	Day
Theme for Today	Tear apart the cinema screen ... reality and faith	3

People who don't believe in God call themselves 'atheists'. People who are not sure whether God exists call themselves 'agnostics'. Religious people are those who believe that there is a God.

Which of them is right?

That, of course, is an impossible question. The reason for this is that atheists, agnostics and believers are saying what they believe is true. The atheist says, "I believe there is no God"; the agnostic says, "I'm not sure what I believe about God"; the religious person says, "I believe there is a God".

And for all three types of person, their belief is real for them. Reality is a matter of belief, a matter of faith.

Reflection/Prayer

Let us think about what is real and what matters.

And let us make life real for those we love
and for those whose lives we touch.

7 If there is a God, who made him ... or her?

8 Do you believe in yourself? Why?

9 Why does 'reality' not get beyond the pub or the soap opera for some people?

10 How do you treat people with beliefs which are different from yours?

11 Does reality have to be 'proved' to be real?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: **WHAT IF THE HARVEST FAILS?**

Date:

Summary: The harvest hymn says *All is safely gathered in*. It's not always true. Collective Worship asks some hard questions about responsibility and the seeds which we sow.

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: consider the impact of the failure of harvest, and who might be blamed for it.

Moral: consider the appropriate responses to times of failure.

Social: recognise that community concern is closely linked to individual reactions.

Cultural: acknowledge that responsibility transcends cultures.

Theme for Week	WHAT IF THE HARVEST FAILS?	Day
Theme for Today	The Irish famine	1

Between 1847 and 1851, over 1,000,000 people died of starvation in Ireland because of a blight which ruined the potato crop. A further 1,000,000 emigrated, many to America, to escape from the famine.

In those few years, the country was devastated. The inability, and unwillingness, of the British Government to help, led to this terrible natural disaster becoming far worse.

Sometimes, it's not easy to sing Harvest hymns that say, *all is safely gathered in*.

Reflection/Prayer

We remember those who go hungry today.

7 How many times a week do you eat potatoes - not forgetting chips and crisps?

8 Why do we think that famine only happens in Africa?

9 Was it really a natural disaster? Why?

10 When is someone else's problem our problem too?

11 How often do we say we are unable to help, when really we are unwilling?

Theme for Week WHAT IF THE HARVEST FAILS?

Day

Theme for Today Famine in East Africa

2

It was described as the 'world's worst famine' by Britain's Disasters Emergency Committee. In 1980 over 10 million people were suffering the result of two years' drought and several local wars in East Africa. At one stage in Somalia, 500 people were dying each day in refugee camps ... **Five hundred.**

When the rains do not come, then the suffering can be impossible to understand, and it is difficult to know what help to give.

Reflection/Prayer

We remember those who go hungry.

7 What is the hungriest you have ever been?

8 What is the biggest problem in a drought in Britain?

9 What would you have said to a person your age in a Somalian refugee camp?

10 Whose problem is it really?

11 Would 'throwing money' at the problem solve it? Why?

Theme for Week

WHAT IF THE HARVEST FAILS?

Day

Theme for Today

What are we sowing for harvest?

3

A harvest is not just about growing crops. You and I plant seeds every day - our tiny acts of kindness, our unkind words, our offers of help are seeds which will grow into something. Acts of kindness may grow into a lifelong friendship; unkind words, on the other hand, can lead to a harvest of bitterness and fighting. Offers of help can grow into life-saving aid for people we may never meet. The Bible says you will harvest what you sow.

How can we make sure that our personal harvest does not fail? How can we ensure that we harvest good things rather than weeds?

Reflection/Prayer

We remember those hungry for our help and friendship.

7 What offers of help have you made in the last few days?

8 Why are unkind words so easy to say?

9 Do unkind people deserve our kindness? Why?

10 Are you sowing seeds for lifelong friendships? What would others say?

11 Why do some people ignore the fact that their actions will always have consequences?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: **PEACE**

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship considers different aspects of the realities of peace and asks pupils to consider their personal responsibility towards peace.

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: explore a fundamental concept in all religious traditions.

Moral: consider their own responsibilities and reflect on their values.

Social: consider the cost of good relationships among individuals and groups.

Cultural: recognise and challenge divisions and assumptions about national or cultural elitism.

Theme for Week PEACE

Day

Theme for Today: What does it take?

1

The dove and the pigeon perched high in the branches of a tree. They were discussing the weight of single snowflakes. The dove insisted they weighed nothing at all.

'Well' said the pigeon 'I really can't agree. I remember sitting in a tree when it snowed. The flakes fell gently, settling lightly at first on the ground and on the branches. I counted them. Exactly 4 million 2 hundred and forty one thousand, 6 hundred and 39 flakes fell. When the 4, 241, 640th flake settled on the branch, it broke away from the tree and fell to the ground. That one flake made all the difference.'

The dove sat alone in the tree long after the pigeon had flown away thinking about his story.

Perhaps it was the same with peace, she thought. Maybe it needed just one more voice to bring peace to the world. Maybe just one more voice would make all the difference.

Reflection/Prayer

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

7 Where could you speak up for peace?

8 What difference does one person make anyway?

9 How many voices does it take to secure peace?

10 Where in the world are people crying out for peace?

11 Why is peace so difficult to keep?

Theme for Week PEACE

Day

Theme for Today: An End to War

2

The United Nations Organisation was set up after the Second World War in an attempt to prevent another conflict like that war ever happening again. On the wall outside its headquarters in New York is an inscription:

They will hammer their swords into ploughs and their spears into pruning-knives. Nations will never again go to war, never prepare for battle again.

Everyone will live in peace among his own vineyards and fig trees and no-one will make him afraid.

The words were written thousands of years ago by the Old Testament Prophet, Micah. He wanted peace for his nation, too.

Reflection/Prayer

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

7 Why is there still conflict between people and between countries?

8 Where do you find peace?

9 What would you make from tanks and bombs?

10 Where is **your** vineyard and what is **your** fig tree?

11 Why does it seem that the search for peace must be a centuries-long struggle?

Theme for Week PEACE

Day

Theme for Today: What can I do?

3

*Lord, make us instruments of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let us sow love,
where there is injury, pardon,
where there is doubt, faith,
where there is despair, hope,
where there is sadness, joy.*

O Divine Master,

*Grant that we may not so much seek
to be consoled, as to console,
to be understood, as to understand,
to be loved, as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned
it is in dying that we are born again
to eternal life.*

This is a famous prayer traditionally attributed to St Francis of Assisi who was a religious man. It is asking God to use him, but not all of the ideas in this prayer are religious. They could apply to everyone whether they are religious or not.

Reflection/Prayer

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

7 What are you an 'instrument' of?

8 What do you bring to others' troubled situations?

9 How could you be an 'instrument' for peace in your school - or in your world?

10 Can you think of anyone you know personally who is an 'instrument' of peace?

11 What do you do 'with all your soul'?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: WHOSE WORLD IS IT ANYWAY?

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship considers various perspectives on environmental issues, and encourages us to reflect on our responsibility and on the value of the human race.

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: develop a sense of awe and wonder at creation.

Moral: promote discussion of ethical issues concerning the environment.

Social: handle controversial issues, especially the tension between collective and individual responsibility.

Cultural: consider the dangers of human and cultural elitism.

Theme for Week	WHOSE WORLD IS IT ANYWAY?	Day
Theme for Today	4600 Million Years	1

Planet Earth is 4,600 Million Years Old

If we condense this inconceivable time-span into an understandable concept, we can liken Earth to a person of 46 years of age.

Nothing is known about the first 7 years of this person's life, and whilst only scattered information exists about the middle span, we know that only at the age of 42 did the Earth begin to flower.

Dinosaurs and the great reptiles did not appear until one year ago, when the planet was 45. Mammals arrived only 8 months ago; in the middle of last week man-like apes evolved into ape-like men, and at the weekend the last ice age enveloped the Earth.

Modern man has been around for 4 hours. During the last hour man discovered agriculture. The industrial revolution began a minute ago.

During those sixty seconds of biological time, modern man has made a rubbish tip of Paradise.

He has multiplied his numbers to plague proportions, caused the extinction of 500 species of animals, ransacked the planet for fuels and now stands like a brutish infant, gloating over this meteoric rise to ascendancy, on the brink of war to end all wars and of effectively destroying this oasis of life in the solar system.

Greenpeace

Reflection/Prayer

We are already living amid the ruins of a still beautiful but severely damaged planet.

Thomas Berry

7 What do these words make you think about people?

8 In what ways has 'modern man made a rubbish tip of Paradise'?

9 What do you think the world would be like without humans at all?

10 What does it matter what the world is like, as long as humanity survives?

11 Does this extract make you want to do anything? If so, what can you do?

Theme for Week WHOSE WORLD IS IT ANYWAY?

Day

Theme for Today For whose benefit?

2

If you read the story of Creation, from the book of Genesis in the Bible, you will find the order in which the writers of the story thought the different parts of the world were created. Here it is:

1. Light and darkness;
2. sky, earth and sea;
3. plants;
4. sun, moon and stars;
5. sea-creatures and birds;
6. land animals and human beings

Think about that list. Imagine the changes each day brought. Listen to the order again.

Reflection/Prayer

*When I look at the sky, which you have made,
at the moon and the stars which
you set in their places -
What is man that you think of him;
Mere man, that you care for him?*

Psalm 8

7 How important do you think we are?

8 Of numbers 1 to 6, which is the least necessary?

9 Evolutionary theory says that the world with homo sapiens (humanity) in charge, is the latest stage in a very long process of development. What comes next in the process and how might it matter to us?

10 Some people say the world we live in is ours, to use as we wish - for food, shelter and enjoyment. How do you react to this?

11 What sort of responsibility do we have to the past and to the future? In what way should we look after or use what we have inherited? In what state should we pass it on to those who come after?

Theme for Week	WHOSE WORLD IS IT ANYWAY?	Day
Theme for Today	What are we doing?	3

During this century, humans have been able to explore the polar regions at the extreme north and south poles of our planet.

It has always been tough, but in the last ten years a new problem has emerged. It was first noticed by the team of explorers led by Robert Swann, who is the first person in history to have walked to both poles. They found that their faces felt as if they were burning, and for months afterwards their skin kept peeling.

This had never happened before to polar explorers; the reason was that they were walking underneath the hole in the ozone layer. They were not being protected from the damaging rays of the sun as earlier explorers had been.

Reflection/Prayer

We are already living amid the ruins of a still beautiful but severely damaged planet.

Thomas Berry

7 How much serious environmental damage has to be done before we do more about it?

8 Why has serious damage to the world been allowed to go on so long?

9 What is it about us that makes us seem to care so little about the environment?

10 How do you feel about the people who have allowed so much damage to be done?

11 How do you think future generations will feel about us? (If there are any future generations)

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: **DRUG AWARENESS**

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship considers Drug Awareness and looks at some of the issues in 'near to life' stories

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: consider issues of self-worth, and the strength of their concern for others.

Moral: reflect on whether attitudes to drug misuse are morally determined.

Social: consider how they as individuals and as a community relate to people at risk.

Cultural: consider the dangers of a 'drug-culture'.

Theme for Week DRUG AWARENESS

Day

Theme for Today Does a solvent solve anything?

1

Dave stood and watched. He wasn't sure. The others said it was OK, but then he knew they'd say that. They said a mate had brought the glue to the flats.

But it was Kristy. He liked Kristy and when she had joined the others, he felt torn in two. He knew, deep in his heart, that it was wrong. Yet Kristy was special ...

As he walked towards the flats, he heard a shout: "Dave!" His mum got off the bus and waved a shopping bag. He went across to help her.

Later, when it was dark, a woman police officer and her colleague knocked on the door of Kristy's house.

Reflection/Prayer

Let us be glad of those who are strong,
Let us not forget those who are weak.

7 What had Kristy been doing? Why did the police go to her home?

8 Sniffing glue is dangerous. It can cause brain damage - or worse. Is it worth the risk?

9 Was Dave lucky when the bus came along at the time it did? Do you need luck to keep you safe?

10 People can try anything to impress others. How do you cope with peer pressure?

11 Most young people never try sniffing. What would you do if you thought a friend had started?

Theme for Week DRUG AWARENESS	Day
Theme for Today Don't keep taking the tablets	2

Gavin and Jamie were not identical twins and in many ways were very different. Gavin was quite clever, quick with school work, whilst Jamie often struggled.

Gavin wanted new experiences. Jamie was simply happy with just plodding along. When he was down the shops, in Woolworths, he knew at once what he wanted to buy with the £20 he had had for his birthday. His uncle had said to them both, "Enjoy yourselves", so when Jamie spotted the double album CD, he bought it.

Sadly, when he took it home, there was a fault on the second CD. He took it back, and they gave him a new one.

Gavin spent his £20 at the back of the shops. The foil the tablet came in was grubby, just like the man with the expensive leather jacket. The £20 note disappeared into the jacket, and the jacket disappeared too.

What Gavin didn't know was that the tablet was not good rock. It had sugar and chalk mixed in it - and something more as well. Gavin didn't know - and he was unable to take it back when it didn't work properly.

Reflection/Prayer

Let us be glad of those who are strong,
Let us not forget those who are weak.

7 Why did Gavin think this was the best way to spend his £20?

8 Why did the man have an expensive leather jacket?

9 How would the twins' uncle feel about the way they spent their birthday money?

10 There is no guarantee about illegally bought drugs. Some tablets can have mix of drugs in them - a lethal cocktail. Is it worth the risk?

11 Did Gavin buy the tablet to prove that he was big or because he saw it as an answer to his problems? What other reasons might there have been?

Theme for Week DRUG AWARENESS

Day

Theme for Today Getting the needle

3

"I'm sorry, Jim," she said, and walked away. Inside she was crying, but she bit her lip.

Later, she stopped Mrs Collins by the Canteen on her way to Assembly. "Can I talk to you, sometime?" she asked. Mrs Collins was in a hurry. "Break?" she suggested.

"I was getting on really well with Jim," she told her later. "We weren't going out or anything, but he was good to talk to, especially when my dad walked out. But he's gone really weird. You're talking to him one minute and he's miles away the next. He's given up going to football training ..."

She wanted to say more. She wanted to say how he'd lost his temper and hit her. She wanted to describe how he'd sworn at her. She knew that she had to say more.

"Then this fell out of his bag." And she passed Mrs Collins a plastic bag with a broken syringe in it.

Reflection/Prayer

Let us be glad of those who are strong,
Let us not forget those who are weak.

7 Some problems are too big to handle on our own. Who can you talk to about serious things?

8 Sharing needles isn't just togetherness - what else could you be sharing?

9 If you were worried about someone, would it be disloyal to tell a teacher how you felt?

10 Injecting a drug is quick. The effect is quick, because it goes directly into the bloodstream and up to the brain. It is quick because diseases can enter straight into the bloodstream from a shared needle. Is quick always best?

11 What effects on friendships and relationships can drug abuse have?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: GOOD AND EVIL

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship explores some questions raised by the conflict between good and evil - was it, for example, morally acceptable to plot to kill Hitler?

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: develop the ability to reflect and express themselves concerning a matter of crucial importance in every religious tradition.

Moral: develop a sense of right and wrong.

Social: consider the negative effects of actions on others and on oneself.

Cultural: explore points of contact between different cultures.

Theme for Week GOOD AND EVIL

Day

Theme for Today Hallowe'en

1

Hallowe'en, or All Hallows' Eve, is celebrated on 31 October. Its origin lies in the pre-Christian Celtic Festival of Samhain, Summer's End, when the Celts lit great fires to thank and honour the summer sun, and also to scare off the evil spirits which they believed gathered strength with the approach of winter.

Many of the customs now popular at Hallowe'en are based on fear of the supernatural, and originate in an attempt to keep away the powers of darkness.

Christians now turn to love and prayer, rather than charms and bonfires, to fight against evil. A traditional prayer asks God to protect people 'from the trickery of the evil one'. But there are still many customs around which go back to the old Samhain traditions.

Reflection/Prayer

All that is needed for evil to thrive is that good people do nothing.

7 'Trick or Treat' is seen by many people as a bit of harmless fun. Yet 'trick or treaters' can be seen as very threatening. Why is this, and what do **you** think about it?

8 Why do you think the ancient Celts believed that evil spirits were stronger in winter?

9 What do you think is the best way of resisting evil?

10 Hallowe'en has much to do with ghosts, witches and goblins, because this was the way ancient people understood evil. What are your images of evil?

11 How appropriate do you think it is, in the modern world, to pray about the trickery of the Devil?

Theme for Week GOOD AND EVIL

Day

Theme for Today Divali

2

You may know one of the stories which lies behind the Hindu festival of Divali. The story is full of colourful characters, and celebrates the victory of good over evil.

It concerns the wise and brave Prince Rama, who was sent into exile by his father's new wife, who wanted her own son to be king instead of Rama when the old king died. Rama's wife, Sita, and his brother, went into exile too.

Rama had to fight many demons in order to protect them, and in the end he had to beat the demon King Ravanah in battle, before returning in triumph to his kingdom. It turned out in the end that Rama was the god Vishnu, who had been sent to earth to destroy Ravanah and free the world from his evil influence.

Reflection/Prayer

All that is needed for evil to thrive is that good people do nothing.

7 Think of a time when you have deliberately chosen to do wrong rather than right. Why did you make that choice?

8 Why do so many people so often choose evil rather than good, in spite of the consequences?

9 Where else have you heard about someone who came to earth to win a victory over evil?

10 If good is supposed to be stronger than evil, why is there still so much evil in the world?

11 Are there practical ways in which you can join the fight between good and evil? (And have you decided which side you are on?)

Theme for Week **GOOD AND EVIL**

Day

Theme for Today Hitler and Bonhoeffer

3

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was a pastor of the Lutheran Church in Germany, refused to co-operate with the Nazi regime. As the second world war went on, and the evil influence of Adolf Hitler became clear to him, Bonhoeffer became involved in a plot - which very nearly succeeded - to assassinate Hitler. He was put in prison for his part in the plot, and was executed in 1945.

He believed it was a good thing to try to murder Hitler, in order to bring his evil influence to an end.

Reflection/Prayer

All that is needed for evil to thrive is that good people do nothing.

7 Did Bonhoeffer's willingness to kill Hitler make him just as bad as his enemies?

8 Have you ever done anything bad for the sake of achieving something good? Did it seem worth it in the end?

9 As assassination is usually regarded as wrong. Could it really be seen as right in this case?

10 If Bonhoeffer's plot had succeeded and Hitler had been killed, would Bonhoeffer have been a murderer or a hero?

11 The dropping of the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima in 1945 is sometimes defended by the argument that it brought the war to an end and prevented more deaths. How good is this argument?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: COVENTRY CATHEDRAL

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship explores the symbolism of war and peace, sadness and hope shown in the Old and New Cathedrals at Coventry.

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: reflect upon an understanding of peace - and the qualities required in working for it.

Moral: consider the nature of revenge - and whether revenge is a useful way of directing anger.

Social: consider the positive nature of acceptance, rather than mere tolerance, of former enemies.

Cultural: acknowledge that their own sense of culture and history is vulnerable and that its survival is linked to accepting the culture and history of others.

Theme for Week COVENTRY CATHEDRAL	Day
Theme for Today The Phoenix	1

In stories from many years ago, it was said that the Phoenix was the bird which came back to life out of its own ashes. The City of Coventry has a phoenix on its coat of arms.

On Thursday 19 November 1940, Operation Moonlight Sonata went into action. The Nazi Luftwaffe flew across to Britain and bombed Coventry. The damage was so severe that the Nazis invented a new word. The word meant 'to destroy completely' and the actual word was to 'coventrate'.

Over five hundred people were killed in the air raid, and many hundreds more were injured. It was the first city in Britain to experience such a terrifying attack. Factories, schools and homes were wrecked. And at the centre of Coventry, the 800 year old church of St Michael - Coventry's Cathedral - was destroyed.

The bombs used were incendiaries. They burst into flames, rather than exploded, so the Cathedral was burnt out. The next morning, the walls and the tower were still standing, but the rest was a pile of blackened, smouldering rubble.

When one of the Cathedral leaders, Provost Dick Howard, went into the ruins, he looked round with sadness in his heart. But when he saw two huge beams from the roof which had fallen into the shape of a cross, he said "We will rise again from these ashes".

Reflection/Prayer

Remember those who feel destroyed by the sadness of life - may they find their own phoenix.

7 What do you think it was like during the bombing?

8 If our school had been destroyed during a bombing raid - it might mean an extra holiday. But how would you really feel to see damaged desks, rooms, hall and playground?

9 Provost Howard was a man with vision. How much of a 'visionary' are you, or do you expect other people to have all the ideas?

10 Cities throughout Britain, and across Germany, were also destroyed during World War II. The work of hundreds of years was destroyed overnight. Can bombing ever be justified?

11 How can people turn events like this into something worthwhile?

Theme for Week COVENTRY CATHEDRAL	Day
Theme for Today The Cross of Nails	2

During the first few days of the clearing up after Coventry Cathedral had been bombed, it would be tempting to think that the people of Coventry would be keen to 'get their own back'. It is probably true that this was part of the feeling.

But something very special was happening in the Cathedral which was to affect many people, both in Britain and in Germany.

It began when the charred cross made of old roof beams was set up in the burnt-out sanctuary of the Cathedral. Then, the Revd Arthur Wales came across three ancient nails from the roof of the destroyed Cathedral and wired them together in the form of a cross.

Both crosses became badges of Coventry Cathedral. The message of both was forgiveness and reconciliation: enemies learning to be friends.

One of the first places to receive a gift of the cross of nails after the war ended was Dresden, a city in Germany, whose history - like Coventry's - had been wiped out overnight in a bombing raid.

Reflection/Prayer

Father forgive ... the hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class.

from the Coventry Cathedral Litany

7 Do you have any real enemies? What do you think is the best way to deal with them?

8 Is there any person or any place in the world where you would like to send a Cross of Nails badge?

9 Why does revenge feel good? How long does the feeling last?

10 How well do you control your anger? Is anger always a bad emotion?

11 Jesus taught, "Love your enemies". Was he going too far?

Theme for Week **COVENTRY CATHEDRAL**

Day

Theme for Today Different moods

3

When it was decided to rebuild Coventry Cathedral, it was not as an act of defiance. Those who made the decision wanted to build something which was going to help people live with pain and give them hope. That was one reason why, when the new Cathedral was built, the old one was not knocked down.

The man who designed it, Sir Basil Spence, said he saw the old Cathedral as a picture of death and the new Cathedral as a picture of new life. The ruins of the old Cathedral were virtually untouched - the walls were simply made safe. Some broken glass can still be seen where the windows used to be. It is still a place of pain and sadness.

The new Cathedral is full of light and hope. The colourful tapestry of Christ, the biggest in the world, is the first thing which most people notice. As they turn round, the colours in the windows stand out.

Services are held in both Cathedrals - a reminder to those who worship there that suffering cannot be escaped - but that hope is always present.

Coventry Cathedral is a place which expresses different moods. It is a mixture of happiness and sadness - just like life itself.

Reflection/Prayer

Outside the Cathedral, in the grass, is the Peace Pole. It has a simple prayer on it, in four languages. In English, it says:

May peace prevail on earth.

7 How much of your life is happy? How much is sad? What about the people where you live? Is their life more in the Old Cathedral or the New?

8 Why do some people expect life to be happy all the time?

9 It has been said that some people are only happy if they are making others unhappy. How far do you agree?

10 How good are you at understanding how others feel? Are they just 'moody' or do they need the hope your friendship could offer?

11 Do you find it easy to express how you feel? How does sharing good and bad times affect your relationships with others?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: SOAP OPERAS

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship looks at Soap Operas - their history as soap powder adverts - and the messages they give. Is it brainwashing?

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: explore the effect of adverts, and the difference between want and need.

Moral: consider the notion of reality - and make-believe - and ask how important the values and lifestyles of soap operas really are.

Social: reflect on some of the stereotypes (eg racial/gender) seen in soap operas.

Cultural: develop their own ideas about whether soap opera life reflects and/or influences their own culture.

Theme for Week SOAP OPERAS	Day
Theme for Today The first Soap Operas	1

Many people in Britain follow the soaps on the television: *Brookside*, *Neighbours*, *Home and Away*, *Coronation Street*, *East Enders* and *The Archers* on the radio are times when people stop what they are doing and switch on.

The first soap operas were not really programmes. They were advertisements. It was decided that the best way to sell soap powders on American television was to show adverts with a family and a story. Over several weeks, a story unfolded - and of course, each thirty second long advert reminded people to buy the soap powder which really did - or so they said - clean the best.

So, soaps were born - and many advertisers still use the same idea. Coffee adverts, gravy adverts - even tissue paper adverts show a family, and leave the viewer wanting to know what happens next.

How good are these adverts? Do we buy things because a famous actor says they are good, because a super-model, male or female, says they could not manage without it; because a family 'just like ours' uses it? Or is it because a family 'just like ours' **might** be using it. If we use that car, toothpaste or floor shampoo, perhaps we could have a family like that too!

Do adverts tell you about something, or do they persuade you to buy it? Does an advert ever give the whole story?

Even worse, do we like to let ourselves believe what they say?

Reflection/Prayer

May we always remember the difference between want and need.

7 Does an advert make you need something, or want something?

8 What rules would you put on adverts for things which young children would like? What rules should there be on all adverts?

9 How well does advertising work? What do you think should not be advertised on television?

10 Adverts tell you about something - like a new car. If people don't buy the car, those who make it could lose their jobs. If adverts are important, what makes an advert a 'bad advert'?

11 How much are you influenced by adverts? Would your friend - or the people at home - give a different answer about you?

Theme for Week SOAP OPERAS	Day
Theme for Today The land of make believe	2

Some soap operas seem to lurch from disaster to disaster. In fact, soap operas which are shown every day of the week seem to have such a mega-fast lifestyle, it is difficult to keep up. Miss two or three episodes in a row and you'll find six new characters, a serious road accident, at least two changes of boy and girl friends and a predictable argument because of one character's personality.

Miss a week and you may find that a character who was last seen a year ago has re-appeared with a new face, and a new voice. You wonder if the others are a bit daft, because they don't seem to have noticed the change! You also wonder how it is that all the street knows each other's business so well. Do you know the full names of all the neighbours in your street?

So some soaps are a land of make-believe. The characters' lives are unreal, especially if the action takes place overseas. Strangely, some people don't realise it is make-believe. They don't see that these are actors simply playing the characters.

Even more strange: some people try and live their lives in the same way as they see their heroes and never quite live up to the image they see. It can all be very disappointing. Perhaps the saddest thing about these 'unreal soaps' is the effect that they have on a family. There are some addicts who will sulk all night if they have missed an episode because they were late in after helping with the shopping, or because the video recorder wasn't set properly.

Reflection/Prayer

Think about your neighbours. What could you do for them? What could they do for you?

7 What sort of mood are you in if you miss an episode of your favourite soap?

8 In many soap operas, a lot of care is shown. Do people care for each other around where you live?

9 Why do you think people watch soap operas? Is it the story or the actors? Or are soap operas more exciting than their own life?

10 Many of the characters in the soaps have a 'fixed' and predictable personality. You can guess how they will react in different situations. How fixed is your personality?

11 Why do soap operas have such a big following?

Theme for Week SOAP OPERAS

Day

Theme for Today Gritty reality

3

If many soap operas are unreal, some have been criticised for being too real, too depressing. In Britain, it has been said that a soap opera like *East Enders* is too depressing. Nothing seems to go right. We don't often see sun tanned bodies or surfers on the beaches in Albert Square like we do in *Home and Away* or *Neighbours*.

Perhaps we say it is too depressing because it is too near the truth. We prefer a 'happy ever-after' ending, and don't like to accept that there is still pain, still homework, still family arguments, still illness.

We prefer our soap operas to take us into another world, where we can escape the humdrum of our own lives for a few minutes.

Is a soap opera like *East Enders* a good reflection of real life? In some ways it is, because it shows people - real people - grappling with problems. It can raise issues which people will talk about later. Some people have said that some of life's problems were easier to discuss with parents because they had all seen them on an episode of the programme.

Of course, it is not a perfect programme - no soap opera can be when the actors are having to learn new scripts every day. It is a very demanding schedule.

But maybe the 'real life' soap operas can help you be a better friend, a better sister or brother - even a better neighbour.

Reflection/Prayer

Think of those who find every day a struggle.

7 How easy is it to talk to your mum and dad when you have problems in life? Who could you talk to?

8 Are some programmes too real and uncomfortable? How helpful is it to see how other people handle their problems?

9 Should a soap opera be just entertainment? Does it need to have a message?

10 Are there heroes in the more 'down to earth' soap operas? How are they different from the heroes in other soaps?

11 How far would you say that soap operas are a simple form of brain washing?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: **UTOPIA**

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship considers various visions of an ideal world, and wonders where it is and how well we might fit into it.

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: consider the nature of perfection.

Moral: reflect on how we deal with the tension between the unreal and reality.

Social: develop concern for the welfare of all people, even at a cost to themselves.

Cultural: engage in a critique of the development of their own culture.

Theme for Week UTOPIA

Day

Theme for Today Is it on your map?

1

Oscar Wilde said that a map of the world that did not include Utopia was not worth looking at.

'Utopia' is a Greek word meaning 'Nowhere'. In a book written by Sir Thomas More in the year 1516, it was the name given to an imaginary island where life was perfect in every way. The book became very popular.

Reflection/Prayer

An old Jewish proverb says:

Where there is no vision, the people die.

Book of Proverbs 29:18

7 What do you think Oscar Wilde meant?

8 What would you think of as the perfect life? What would be most important in your version of Utopia?

9 Where would you look for guidance on how to work towards a perfect society?

10 Could there ever be a perfect society? What would need to happen before it could exist?

11 Why would it matter if we had no vision of something better to aim at?

Theme for Week UTOPIA

Day

Theme for Today Brave new world

2

Here is a quotation from Shakespeare's *Tempest* - the words of Miranda, a girl who has lived a sheltered life on an island, when she suddenly meets a gathering of people like none she has ever met before:

O, Wonder!

How many goodly creatures are there here!

How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,

That has such people in it!

Reflection/Prayer

An old Jewish proverb says:

Where there is no vision, the people die.

Book of Proverbs 29:18

7 Where have you felt the kind of wonder and delight that Miranda feels here?

8 What would make the world 'brave' and 'new' for you?

9 Is what is new necessarily better than what is old?

10 What kind of people make you glad to know them and be with them?

11 What are you doing to build a 'brave new world' - or is it someone else's job?

Theme for Week UTOPIA

Day

Theme for Today A free world

3

Here is an extract from a speech by American President Franklin D Roosevelt in 1941, speaking of his vision of the kind of world he was working for:

... A world founded upon four essential freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression - everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way - everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want ... everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear ... anywhere in the world.

Reflection/Prayer

An old Jewish proverb says:

Where there is no vision, the people die.

Book of Proverbs 29:18

7 Do you believe that this kind of world is worth working for? Why?

8 What is it about human beings that makes it so difficult for us to live in the way this vision demands?

9 What limits your freedom?

10 In what ways are you prepared to limit your own freedom for the sake of others?

11 How well would you fit in to the world of Roosevelt's vision?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: WATER

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship looks at water, and asks - if clean water is so important, how is it that so few have it?

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: reflect on human experiences throughout the world.

Moral: consider the moral imperative posed by the needs of others.

Social: explore aspects of global citizenship.

Cultural: reflect on the common needs of humanity.

Theme for Week WATER	Day
Theme for Today What's it worth?	1

Imagine a long cool, refreshing glass of cola. It's a hot day and the condensation on the outside of the glass makes it slippery. The ice cubes chink as you lift it to your mouth and the bubbles tickle your nose. In your imagination, put a similar glass containing cold water from the tap next to the cola, and look at them both.

Which costs the most?

Which is more valuable?

Which could you not live without?

Which do you take for granted?

Reflection/Prayer

The best kind of goodness is like water. Water is good, it helps ten thousand creatures.

From Tao-te-Ching 42

7 In a time of drought, how much would you pay for the cola?
How much would you pay for the water?

8 How many ways is water used to keep people alive?

9 When is a rainy day a good day?

10 When does wasting water matter?

11 Where is water worth more than cola?

Theme for Week WATER	Day
Theme for Today The Drought	2

The giant frog, Tiddilick, was thirsty. He was so thirsty that he drank the river dry, then he drained the lake and even emptied the very dirty ponds. The other animals were also thirsty but there was no water for them because Tiddilick had drunk it all. The animals tried to make the frog open his mouth by tickling him but that only brought a trick of water down the frog's chin.

Eventually, the eel made himself into a loop, rolled around, got up on his tail and spun so fast that you couldn't see him for dust. This was funny. Even Tiddilick laughed and as the cascade of water rolled down his chin, the first raindrops began to fall.

Australian Aboriginal Legend

Reflection/Prayer

The best kind of goodness is like water. Water is good, it helps ten thousand creatures.

From Tao-te-Ching 42

7 Imagine not seeing a drop of rain for 10 months of the year; what would it do to the countryside?

8 What does it feel like to be **really** thirsty?

9 If you didn't know what makes rain, what would you imagine caused it?

10 Why did primitive people make up stories about the rain?

11 Who has the right to own water?

Theme for Week WATER	Day
Theme for Today Fresh Water	3

In some countries of the world there are severe problems because of polluted water or water shortages. Some organisations try to help. Here is one true story with a happy ending.

A family lived in a small mud house in a village in North East Zaire. Like most people in the area they farmed a small plot of land growing sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, beans, tomatoes and peanuts. The water supply, until a few years ago, was the stream in the valley which was used to provide their family's cooking, washing and drinking water. The same water was also where human and animal waste went and so it became a source of sickness and disease. The people suffered from worms and diarrhoea and diseases like malaria, polio and typhoid spread rapidly through this polluted water.

Over the years, people built up some resistance to the worst effects of polluted water, but young children were vulnerable to diseases and many of them in this family died. A Community Development Team began a water improvement programme in the area and helped local people to install a water filter system. It only cost around £100, but has improved the health of thousands of people in that area. The four children left in this family now have a much better chance of growing up.

Reflection/Prayer

The best kind of goodness is like water. Water is good, it helps ten thousand creatures.

From Tao-te-Ching 42

7 How would you feel about cleaning your teeth if the water wasn't clean?

8 When we say 'fresh water' what do we mean?

9 What is clean water worth?

10 What must we learn from this story's happy ending?

11 If it costs so little to clean the water why are so many people dying because of pollution?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship looks at the Countdown to Christmas - and considers what kinds of preparation really matter.

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: develop an understanding of the non-material dimensions of life.

Moral: consider how their actions and expectations reveal their attitude towards Christmas.

Social: reflect on what giving and receiving is all about.

Cultural: recognise how religious culture can be influenced by changing values.

Theme for Week GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS

Day

Theme for Today Countdown

1

The season of Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. This is when Christians have traditionally begun the 'countdown' to the celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

Nowadays, many people think of Advent as beginning at the start of December. This is when the Advent calendars begin, with their twenty-five windows to open. This too is a 'countdown', and in many homes the excitement grows as each window is opened, until the twenty-fifth one is opened, the preparations are over, and Christmas Day has arrived.

For many of us, the things that we really look forward to are the presents, the holiday, and the family time. But this is not all that Advent means to most Christians. Advent means 'coming', or 'arrival', and it is a time when Christians think about the coming of Jesus at Christmas, and try to make sure that they are in the right frame of mind to celebrate it. They also think about their belief that Jesus will come again one day and consider what they must do to be ready for that time.

Reflection/Prayer

A well-known Christian prayer asks God to help Christians to give, and not to count the cost.

7 What do you most look forward to during the 'countdown' to Christmas?

8 What are we really thinking about as we buy the presents and prepare for Christmas: is it about what we can get, or about what we can give and how we can bring happiness to others?

9 What do you think is 'the right frame of mind' for Christians to be in at Christmas? Why?

10 If Jesus were to come back soon, what would he think about the world as it is today?

11 How do you think Christians should prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus, and to make the world ready for him to come again?

Theme for Week	GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS	Day
Theme for Today	Sally's candle flame	2

This is a story about a girl called Sally who changed her Christmas plans after hearing a song in school. The song had been written for the Christian Aid charity - and the bit which made Sally think was this:-

*Light a candle in the darkness,
Flames will penetrate the night;
Pass the brightness to your neighbours
Till the world is full of light.*

Janet Nightingale for Christian Aid.

Most of the class thought no more of this; but it started Sally thinking. Could she give presents that would light a candle and help to drive away the darkness of bad feelings? She knew most presents were soon forgotten or taken for granted, and she wanted to do something different.

In the end she thought how to do it and for Christmas she gave presents that would last the whole year. For her Mum she gave a present to do all the clearing and dishwashing after tea on Wednesday and Fridays all through the year, so her Mum could rest. For her little four-year-old brother, she gave a daily story-reading time. And this was her Dad's present too, because it meant that he could have half an hour of peace when he got home tired from work, while she looked after her little brother. That way she gave a precious gift that would last to each member of the family, and did her little bit to make life better for everyone.

Reflection/Prayer

A well-known Christian prayer asks God to help Christians to give, and not to count the cost.

7 What did Sally's presents cost her?

8 How could you give a present like Sally's?

9 In what way can you really make life better for the people you spend Christmas with?

10 Why is it so much more difficult to think of, and give, Sally's kind of present, compared with the normal kind?

11 Since so many presents could be of the wrong kind, would it be better to abandon the custom of Christmas presents altogether?

Theme for Week GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS

Day

Theme for Today Preparing

3

Advent is a time of preparing. All sorts of things need to be done before Christmas - the presents, the invitations, the decorations, the tree, the food, the drink, the parties - all need arranging in good time. It is no good being caught on Christmas Eve with half of it not done, no batteries for the presents and no food in the kitchen. It is no good leaving it to the last minute. We need to plan ahead, list what needs doing, set targets, work out deadlines, and make sure we are on schedule all the time, if we are to be ready.

Common sense? Maybe, but we often ignore it. Not just with Christmas, but with **all** our planning and our preparation. It is a good idea to look beyond the Christmas period, and ask ourselves what is coming up afterwards.

Answer: the rest of our life is coming up fast - and it is time to start preparing. New Year is a good time to review, plan, and make changes - and it's coming up just after Christmas.

Reflection/Prayer

If it's worth doing at all, it's worth planning for.

7 What sort of person do you want to be?

8 How do you want other people to think of you? In what way do you need to prepare for that?

9 What changes do you want to make in the next twelve months?

10 What targets are you going to set yourself? How are you going to make sure you keep to your plan?

11 What are you putting off until 'after Christmas' which you should be doing now?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: LIGHT

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship looks at some ideas associated with Light and Darkness, and thinks about how we can bring light into the lives of others.

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: examine and discuss their own beliefs.

Moral: develop awareness of their own hopes and dreams.

Social: consider the effects of their own actions upon other people.

Cultural: reflect on the areas of darkness and light in their own culture.

Theme for Week LIGHT

Day

Theme for Today Give me a light

1

When we look at the world around us, it looks sometimes exciting, and sometimes bleak and harsh. Life is full of difficult times. Even if it does not affect us directly, we know that life for many people is full of sadness and uncertainty. Sometimes the news is full of tragedy and horror, and we are afraid of what the future may hold.

If we feel like this, it is good to remember that many others have felt the same. The future looked even worse for the British people in the winter of 1939, when the Second World War against Germany had been going badly, and seemed to be getting worse as time went on. The future was very grim - and when King George the Sixth gave his Christmas broadcast to the people of Britain and the Empire, people wondered how he would be able to find any words of hope in such bad times. He was inspired to finish his broadcast with these words:

*... and I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,
'Give me light, that I may tread safely into the unknown',
and he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand
into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light
and safer than a known way!'*

(Louise Minnie Haskins)

Reflection/Prayer

*The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never
overcome it.*

John 1:5

7 What gives you hope for the future?

8 What do you want from the future? How likely is it to happen?

9 How do you cope with going forward into the unknown? What helps you?

10 What is, for you, 'better than light and safer than a known way'?

11 What might it mean to say 'Put your hand into the hand of God'?

Theme for Week LIGHT	Day
Theme for Today The light of my life	2

There are certain people who are lights in our lives. At an early age, it is usually our parents or guardians who are the lights, leading us onward and showing us the way to live. As we grow, we may find other people as well, who help to guide us and serve as examples to us. For some it might even be teachers! They may help us understand things, or spark off important ideas, or cheer us up when we are feeling low. Often special friends can be like rays of hope for us.

As well as the people we know personally, there are the great people who are recognised as lights of the world - famous people who devote their lives to helping others, or artists, writers, and musicians, whose work has enriched the world for everyone.

The great religious leaders are seen by their followers, and often by others, as the lights of the world. They have brought new insights and inspiration to many; they have shone out in the world like beacon-fires lit on a hilltop, warning of disaster if we continue to live selfishly, and spreading the message that there is hope for the world in the ways of fairness, justice, and peace.

Reflection/Prayer

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the World".

John 8:12

7 Who has been a guiding light in your life - and why?

8 Whose ideas do you accept and follow? Why?

9 Why is it important to have role models? Whom do you model yourself on?

10 Who has brought new insights and inspiration to you? What impressed you about them?

11 Has the guiding light in your life changed since you first came to school? Why has this change (or no change) taken place?

Theme for Week LIGHT

Day

Theme for Today Light and darkness

3

Light is a part of many celebrations: usually it has a symbolic meaning, as light shines out in darkness, symbolising the victory of good over evil. As the Bible puts it, *The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never overcome it.* (John 1.5) There are many examples - candles on a cake; lights on a tree; fireworks in the night sky; coloured lights turning the High Street into a fairyland - all of these add to the happiness of celebrations.

What do these words say to you?

Darkness is to lose a friend,
all good things seem at an end;
darkness is when someone's sad,
all their hopes have turned out bad,
no one cares and everyone's alone.

Light is when our friends are there,
celebrations that we share,
happiness, and songs, and laughter,
no regrets the morning after,
warmth and love and no one is alone.

Reflection/Prayer

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never overcome it.

John 1:5

7 'There's a light at the end of the tunnel.' This is one everyday phrase which uses light. Can you think of any more? What does light symbolise in this phrase?

8 What things mean light and darkness to you? What would you include in your own poem?

9 Where do the things come from that mean light to you? Is there anyone you could thank for them?

10 What light do you bring to other people?

11 How might you be able to reduce the darkness, and increase the light for other people?

KEY THEME FOR THE WEEK: CHRISTMAS

Date:

Summary: Collective Worship looks at the different kinds of Christmas present we can give.

School Notes:

Checklist: ideas for large group Collective Worship

Music

Speakers

Drama

Visuals

Artefacts

Posters

Video

Slides

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-

Spiritual: think about religion and the meaning of life.

Moral: challenge hypocrisy.

Social: recognise links between religious belief and both positive and negative aspects of society.

Cultural: explore relationships between religion and popular culture.

Theme for Week CHRISTMAS

Day

Theme for Today Who was Santa anyway?

1

The story of Santa Claus, or Saint Nicolas, begins in the Roman city of Myra in Asia Minor, in the early centuries of Christianity. There was a nobleman in the city who had lost all his money, and could find no work that he could do. His family had less and less to eat, and as the winter got colder they could not afford heating. He had three daughters, who dreamed of solving their problems by finding rich husbands; but eventually things got so bad that the father decided the only thing he could do was to sell the girls as slaves. This plan caused a lot of gossip in the city, and obviously caused a lot of worry to the girls.

Nicolas, the Bishop of Myra, heard the gossip, and when he discovered it was true, he decided to help. He gathered together as many gold coins as he could find, and put the money into three bags. Then at night he secretly crept up to the girls' house, scrambled up the rough wall of the house, and dropped one of the bags down the chimney. Inside the family was woken by the sound of something falling down the chimney into the empty fireplace, and they could hardly believe their luck when they opened the bag and found the money.

The next night the same happened, and then on the third night the family were waiting. As the bag dropped in they rushed outside, and caught a glimpse of Bishop Nicolas legging it away as fast as he could run.

Reflection/Prayer

It is in giving that we receive most.

7 Why did Nicolas run away and try not to be seen?

8 What is most important about a present - the benefit to the person who receives it, or the glory you get for giving it?

9 How would the family have felt if the bishop had gone to the front door with his robes on to deliver the gold? What would have been different?

10 What does the Santa Claus idea mean today? What has changed between the original story and the modern myth?

11 What elements of the story have been forgotten? Are they important?

Theme for Week CHRISTMAS

Day

Theme for Today A double gift

2

This is a story about a small boy in an Australian country school, many years ago. His name was John, and he was very interested when his teacher told his class about the Christmas story, and about the way Christians give presents to one another at Christmas.

"The gifts are to spread happiness," she said. "They show joyfulness at the birth of Jesus and friendship with others."

John did not say anything at the time; but when Christmas day came, he appeared at the teacher's house with a large and beautiful seashell. She was amazed, and as she examined it gently, she asked, "Where did you find such a beautiful gift?"

John told her that there was only one place where such extraordinary shells could be found. When he named the place, which was a certain beach several miles away, she realised how much time and effort had gone into finding the gift.

"It's lovely, John", she said, "and I shall treasure it. But you shouldn't have walked all that way just to get me a gift."

The little boy's eyes brightened, and he answered, "The long walk is part of the gift."

Reflection/Prayer

It is in giving that we receive most.

7 How much trouble do you take over the gifts you give? For whom do you take most trouble? Why?

8 How do you think the teacher felt about the gift? Has anyone ever felt like that after receiving a gift from you?

9 Do you ever consider how much trouble has been taken over the gifts you receive?

10 John's teacher told him that Christmas gifts are to spread happiness. Will yours do that? What makes people happy?

11 If a lot of trouble has gone into a gift you receive - how can you show you appreciate it?

Theme for Week CHRISTMAS	Day
Theme for Today Bring us together	3

Has your family planned some kind of family gathering this Christmas? Most people are probably planning something because Christmas is one of those times when families do get together and remember the family ties and associations that bind them together as a family. Although it can be difficult coping with some of the more awkward members of the family, most of us feel that in some sense it is worth doing.

For Christians, of course, Christmas is also the time for celebrating the birth of Jesus, who brings all Christians together as his followers.

Reflection/Prayer

*We give thanks for those we call our family
We remember those whose family seems gone.*

7 What things bind you close to others? What holds your family or friendship group together?

8 Which are the most important relationships in your life? To what groups or individuals are you most closely tied?

9 Do we need other people at all? Would you prefer to be a 'free spirit', rather than being tied into a network of relationships?

10 An old saying goes: "The family that prays together stays together". How do you react to this?

11 Have the things that bind you close to others changed as you have grown older? If so, is it for the better or not?

