



Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Promoting Pupils' Spiritual, Moral,
Social and Cultural Development through
Collective Worship
in the Primary School



***Promoting Pupils' Spiritual,
Moral, Social and
Cultural Development through
Collective Worship
in the Primary School***

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Foreword

The most important duty that schools have been charged with in the 1998 Education Reform Act is the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Collective worship is one of the many opportunities schools have, alongside every curriculum area and other whole school policies, to contribute to pupils' development. This book aims to show how each weekly collective worship theme might contribute to pupils' SMSC development.

The material has been extensively tried and tested in pilot studies in schools both in and out of the borough where it has been evaluated on behalf of SACRE.

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I commend this book to you and hope you and your children enjoy what comes from it.

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Chairman of SACRE.

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Introduction

This book is yet another resource for primary collective worship! Like so many other books, it offers specific suggestions for material, some of which is so detailed, it can be ‘taken off the shelf’. However, the real focus of this book is on promoting pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, using collective worship as the vehicle. This publication does answer the question: **What can we do in our collective worship?** More importantly, however, it also tries to address the more challenging questions: **What do our children need and how can we meet those needs through collective worship?**

To do this, the book sets out two years’ worth of material which is intended to be used flexibly by schools. All the suggested content is supported with a clear description of its potential benefit to pupils’ development under the four separate headings of **spiritual, moral, social** and **cultural** development.

In the course of preparing this material, two approaches to planning collective worship have been developed. In the book these are called Model A and Model B. Both approaches are described in detail to give schools optimum flexibility to choose the planning format most appropriate to their needs and to develop their understanding and expertise in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship. These are set out in Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the book, first in great detail to exemplify the process (day-to-a-page plans) and then in the form of week-to-a-page plans and, later, in the form of more general half-term to-a-page overviews. This is the main body of the work which is supported by a preceding section, *About Collective Worship*, outlining the purpose, philosophy and legal requirements of collective worship and a discussion of what makes it **worship**, whilst ensuring it remains appropriate.

Two further sections, called *Stories for Telling* and *Further Resources* give supplementary material, which is cross-referenced into the plans.

It is hoped that, while the completed plans, with their potential outcomes in pupils’ development, may be useful to schools, the principal benefit from this publication will be in the development of teachers’ thinking about collective worship and practical help towards the processes of planning. Of course, it is demanding, if not impossible, to meet the needs of all pupils in one act of collective worship, especially if the age range spans the whole of the primary school. Apart from the most detailed plans, it has not been possible, within the exemplar material, to offer a differentiated focus for pupils in each key stage. However, the suggestions here are intended simply to inspire. Ideally, each school will build on some of these ideas to develop collective worship that fulfills the needs of its pupils and helps to illuminate their lives.

Section 1

About

Collective Worship

Promoting Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is the starting point and the continuing focus of this book. The importance of provision for pupils' SMSC development has been confirmed in recent education legislation and in the values agenda which underpins the curriculum. In schools, a necessary preoccupation with the implementation of the National Curriculum and a need to respond to the standards imperative has meant, in many cases, a diminishing of both the recognition of SMSC development and opportunities for its promotion. Education is certainly preparation for adult life, but it is more than that: it is about the fulfilment of childhood; it is about fascinating, challenging and inspiring children **now**, and has got to be as much about attitudes and values as it is about knowledge and skills.

There is a widespread belief that even in a pluralistic society, essentially secular in outlook, it is possible and most desirable to come to a sense of shared values. There is a danger that this view, at its most limited, boils down to a narrow conception of simplistic moral absolutes. At its best, this conviction allows for the development of understanding of human ideals and concerns which transcends the belief structures of individuals or groups in society.

These issues were addressed by the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community, set up in 1996 by the SCAA, in response to concerns that society has lost its way in what the Archbishop of Canterbury (The Times, April 1997) described as *widespread moral confusion and false theories of privatised morality*. Its brief was to discover whether such consensus on values could be established and how schools could best be supported in promoting them. The core values were eventually presented in four categories which relate to the self, relationships, society and the environment and these underpin the rationale for the National Curriculum 2000.

Provision for pupils' SMSC development is a key dimension through which these core values become explicit. The Forum recommended that advice should be prepared for schools and the QCA subsequently produced draft guidance on promoting pupils' SMSC development. Six steps to a whole school approach were identified:

Agree, in consultation with the school's community, the school's overall goals in this area.

Identify, in the light of these goals, the objectives for each key stage.

Review current practice to identify present success and opportunities for further work.

Plan and implement the required changes.

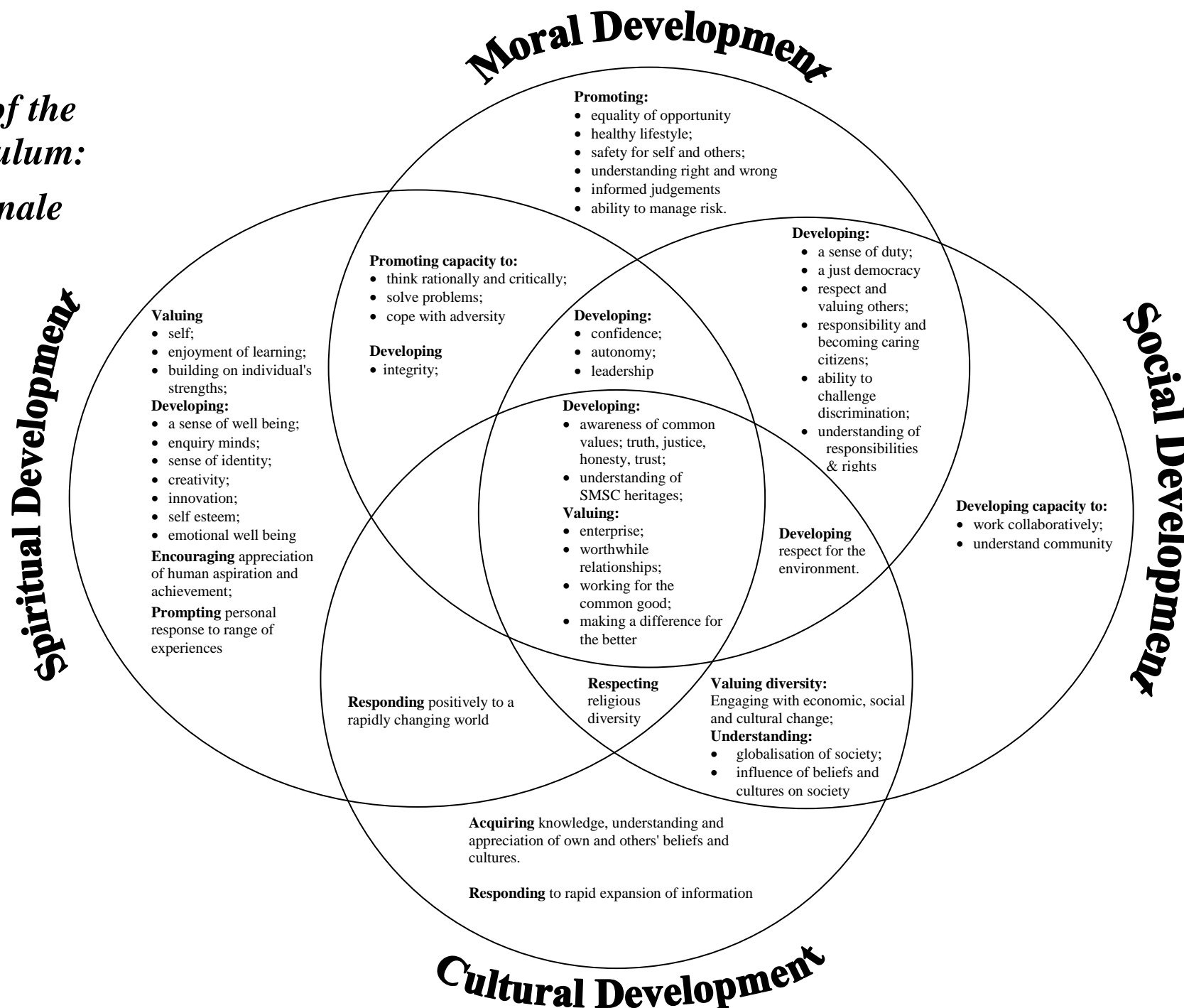
Develop systems and processes by which success can be evaluated.

Recognise and celebrate the achievements of pupils and adults.

This process demands clear understanding of the terms; discussion around their interpretation has got to be a priority for schools addressing the first step. Although this suggested process was not taken up explicitly in the National Curriculum 2000, it remains, nonetheless, a useful tool for schools to use when addressing the provision of SMSC development which remains statutory.

The values agenda is not, however, absent from the National Curriculum 2000 handbook. It is prefaced by a statement of values, aims and purposes, which is underpinned by the principles of SMSC development. An attempt has been made in the table opposite to categorise the SMSC elements of the statement, all of which apply with equal relevance to collective worship. Although outside the curriculum, collective worship makes a significant contribution to fulfilling those aims. The statement of values appears at the end of the National Curriculum document and is essential reading when the values of the school are routinely under discussion.

Aims of the Curriculum: Rationale



In seeking to understand further what is meant by these aspects of schools' responsibilities, it is helpful to define the terms, beginning with the most straightforward.

The most easily understood of all four aspects of SMSC development is usually the **social** dimension. It concerns pupils' growing ability to relate to other people, peers and adults, and to see themselves making a contribution to the communities to which they belong. It is about the capacity to collaborate and support each other. Citizenship, in both its broadest terms to do with responsibility for pupils' own and others' well-being and, more specifically, preparation for participation in democratic processes, sits within, although is not confined by, social development.

Moral development is also generally well understood in primary schools, despite the debates over relativism. It is about helping pupils to understand the balance between rights and responsibilities, the importance of valuing others and their property, and the benefits of working for the common good. It is about above all, knowing the difference between right and wrong, understanding moral dilemmas and recognising the nature of moral conflict. It is to do with helping children make moral choices.

Cultural development has two principal dimensions. It concerns pupils' appreciation of the culture with which they are familiar and their understanding of the diversity of cultures through exposure to experiences of a range of unfamiliar cultural expressions, including those with a religious dimension. Good provision helps pupils to appreciate the dynamic nature of culture, how it interacts within itself and influences individuals and society. Pupils need time to reflect on their experiences and develop a critical awareness of the impact of culture on their own lives and the worlds they inhabit.

For many people, the most challenging of all four dimensions is the **spiritual**. It is the most difficult to define and the most frequently misunderstood. It often demands a good deal of staff discussion time. In its broadest sense, it is to do with the essence of what it is to be

human. In that respect it has an overarching significance, encompassing the three other dimensions within it.

Spiritual development is about helping pupils to know who they are, to develop a sense of identity and self worth, to recognise their own identity inner selves and to reflect on their beliefs, values and feelings. It is about the development of the imagination and appreciation of higher values including truth, beauty, love, compassion, justice and freedom. It deserves joyful, inspirational and 'spirited' treatment by teachers, which evokes response by pupils.

Spiritual development is not confined to a religious context. Religious faith is an expression of spirituality; the two are not synonymous. It is understood in its broadest context: nurture of the spirit, recognising the uniqueness of the individual and his or her humanity and potential. It is helping pupils to develop the capacity to transcend the limitations of the physical world to be creative, to *see more to life than one damn thing after another* (HMCI Stuart Sutherland 1993). It is giving them opportunities to consider ultimate questions about the meaning of life in general and their own lives in particular and to develop positive attitudes, to have hope. It goes further than what the child knows, understands and can do, to what that child is and is becoming.

Collective worship is an important context for the development of these capacities and attitudes. It does not have the sole responsibility for pupils' SMSC development, because that is a whole school, and whole curriculum requirement, but it provides opportunities to make values explicit, to challenge pupils' thinking, extend their emotional repertoires and celebrate who they are and what the school community stands for. Above all, it must offer a unique opportunity for reflection and, for those for whom it is appropriate, a time for worship.

A Philosophy for Collective Worship

As an educational activity then, collective worship can only be justified in terms of the potential benefits to pupils' development and the contribution it makes to the life of the school community. Even in the voluntary sector where there is the clear prerogative to nurture children's religious faith according to denominational tenets, collective worship needs to address broader issues in order to be of maximum benefit to pupils' whole-person development. In community schools, the prerogative is less clear and, although the activity that has been known colloquially by all since 1944 as 'assembly' was redefined in the ERA (1988) and is increasingly referred to by its correct title of 'collective worship', there is still debate about its nature and purpose. There is no definition of what it actually is and the wording of the ERA (1988) is, at best, ambiguous and open to interpretation. The DFE Circular 1/94 sought to clarify the legislation. Its suggested aims for collective worship, which fall into six main areas, are clear. It is to provide the opportunity for pupils:

- to worship God;
- to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to explore their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values;
- to reinforce positive attitudes.

This list offers each school the basis for a discussion about its own philosophy for collective worship, from which a list of principles can be drawn.

Certain principles emerge from the areas above. The first would be **inclusivity**. Although some pupils will take the opportunities offered through collective worship further than others, ie into worship of God, what is offered must be appropriate for all.

If a school really works on this principle, taking care never to compromise the integrity of any person, pupil, parent or member of staff, by the inappropriate use of religious material, then there should never be any need for anyone to be withdrawn. This principle requires an open approach, which invites participation rather than demands it and always roots the religious material in the tradition from which it comes. An example of this approach might be to use a traditional prayer like the Lord's Prayer, but to introduce it as the most important Christian prayer or the prayer Jesus taught, inviting everyone to listen and anyone who wishes to do so to join in. The aims also stress the importance of developing the school as a community. A common ethos and shared values come out of a community that is committed to the inclusion of everyone and where all individuals, whatever their role, feel personally respected and valued.

Another principle which comes out clearly from the list is **involvement**. For so many pupils, collective worship experiences are passive and sometimes, in pupils' own words, boring! Their involvement does not need to require extensive preparation. The purpose of the 'class assembly spectacular' has to be questioned when it involves repeated rehearsals and becomes competitive between classes and a nightmare for class teachers. That is not to say that there is no place in school for polished, thoroughly rehearsed performance; it just may not be in collective worship.

Individual or small groups of pupils can be involved with a minimum of preparation, especially if the focus of collective worship reflects work they have done previously. Indeed class ‘assemblies’ can be presented on a similar basis, with pupils taking responsibility for the organisation as well as the presentation. Sometimes a story can be brought to life through spontaneous dramatisation or the involvement of all pupils in a piece that makes deliberate and effective use of repetition.

Discussion is an important activity in realising those listed aims. If pupils are to ‘consider’ and ‘explore’, they really need to interact with each other. The plans in this book are written for different contexts including collective worship in the classroom. Obviously discussion is easier to encourage in the more intimate grouping of the class itself but even in whole school collective worship, pupils can be given opportunities to talk to the person next to them. Always tell them how long they have for the discussion and establish first of all what the signal will be for them to stop. It is most effective if this signal has both an action and a sound. One of the most effective is a Buddhist ‘singing’ bowl which is hit to create a beautiful and quite powerful lingering note but involves an obvious action in the striking. If they are prepared, pupils generally anticipate the signal and respond sensibly.

Variety is another important principle in itself. These plans are written for maximum flexibility but they are based on a week that begins and ends with whole school collective worship, brings pupils together in key stage groups on Wednesdays and in classrooms on the other two days. There is no reason for this other than it provides a definite shape to the week, allowing the theme to be introduced and brought to a climax when the school is together and gives two opportunities for more informal and perhaps more personal gatherings in classrooms, often using a Circle Time approach. Whatever the pattern, variety in grouping is a good model and this opportunity was made possible by the 1988 legislation.

Even within the school’s chosen weekly pattern, there is scope for variety in the organisation of pupils, where they sit and with whom. If room permits, could the straight rows sometimes be curved into a horseshoe or could pupils sit in the round? Could they ever choose where they sit, in family or friendship groups in the hall? It is good to vary the presentation of the collective worship itself, to make use of a number of strategies to engage pupils at the beginning and to encourage their reflections.

If schools are to meet the suggested aims for collective worship, taking seriously the opportunity for pupils to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs, the challenge is in-built, not just for the school but, for pupils themselves. Such issues can be controversial and demand sensitive handling, especially where they touch moral dilemmas and ultimate questions. Primary pupils are capable of contemplating the big questions and frequently display insights denied at first to adults but the material needs to be made accessible to them without becoming diluted. They can then approach areas to do with justice and peace, inequality and prejudice, the sanctity of life, the integrity of creation, the need to belong, conflict and resolution, belief in God... the list is long and merits discussion but the principle is appropriate **challenge**.

Good collective worship offers pupils a time every day to be reflective. That will most likely take the form of some moments of quiet within an experience, which will involve them in some way and could certainly be anything but quiet! However, this time has its own characteristics which set it apart from other experiences in school, lessons, playtime etc. Pupils need to be helped to see it as time for them personally. This is helped if efforts are made to create an **atmosphere** for collective worship which is different from that during the rest of the day. Whatever the planned activities, collective worship generally begins in an ordered and calm way. This can be made more effective by the use of appropriate music and the encouragement for pupils to listen. However, the purpose of the music is to create the atmosphere and while no-one would want a hubbub of noise it destroys the atmosphere if staff are raising their voices to organise class' lines or 'ssshing' pupils unnecessarily. It is better, where possible, for the leader of the collective worship to be in place before pupils come in and to make eye contact with as many of them as possible. Staff are then able to show pupils that they too are quiet and ready for what is to follow, as everyone listens to the music together. Any disruption is best dealt with quietly. A lighted candle also helps to create atmosphere, although this is most effective when used to focus pupils' attention on a story or to encourage their reflection.

The last of these suggested principles for schools to consider in drawing up their own list goes back to the purpose of the activity which must, above all, be **educational**. Collective worship must offer something to the development of pupils for it to be worthwhile, which is why this book focuses principally on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Legal Requirements

In seeking to clarify the statutory requirements, it is important to distinguish between the law and advice or interpretation. Schools are bound by the requirements of the 1988 Educational Reform Act which charges them to:

- promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and of society;
- prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The basic requirements are that all pupils shall take part in an act of collective worship every day. (ERA 6.1)

This may take place in a whole school group or in any other existing grouping in the school. It may take place at any time in the school day and should be on the school premises.

The responsibility for collective worship in schools rests with the headteacher and governors.

The school's policy and the arrangements for collective worship must be documented and available. (Education Regulations, 1981).

Collective worship must be ***wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character***, which is explained as meaning that it ***reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any Christian denomination***
(ERA 7: 1-3)

Opportunities to Worship

Traditionally, most primary schools have valued the opportunity to bring pupils together for ‘assembly’ and much good practice has been developed over the years to make the most of that daily opportunity. When the wording of the ERA (1988) became known, concern was expressed about the use of the term ‘worship’. In most places it is tempered by the adjective ‘collective’ but the activity is also described as ‘school worship’ and ‘religious worship’. Something more than just assembly was being demanded and many teachers were uncomfortable about the implications.

Worship in its true sense is the activity of a person or a body of believers who are present because they choose to be and want to express religious beliefs which they share with others. This is not the case in school. The term ‘collective’ at least recognises that the gathering is collected rather than a corporate group but the question remains: what is worship in an educational context?

DfE Circular 1/94 offers some help in that it recognises that worshipping God is not appropriate for all pupils and yet what is offered must be *appropriate to the age and aptitude of all pupils*. Worshipping God is not appropriate for some teachers either, and they too have the right to opt out on conscience grounds. The key phrase in the circular is that pupils must have the **opportunity** to worship God. The issue for schools is how to create that opportunity whilst preserving the inclusive principle, without making inappropriate assumptions about belief yet offering a worthwhile experience for all. This material is a resource to help schools meet that challenge. Every act of collective worship planned here includes specific **words for worship**. These are carefully phrased in an open way to preserve the integrity of everyone who is present but are direct enough to focus pupils’ thoughts and to invite anyone who wishes to take the step into worship, to do so, often through prayer.

This gives everyone the opportunity to acknowledge and respond to the idea of people worshipping God and, those for whom it is appropriate, actually to do so. The crucial words are those which introduce the reflection. A repertoire of appropriate phrases is used throughout this book, eg:

- *Let’s make this a quiet time that is just for each of you to think your own thoughts or to talk to God in your head if you would like to.*
- *These words help some people to think about God. They might help you to do that, or maybe you will have your own ideas or want to think about ...*
- *I am going to use some words to help anyone who wants to, to talk to God.*
- *I would like to say a prayer about.. If you would like to make it yours too you can join in by saying ‘Amen’ at the end.*
- *We’re going to listen to some music/ watch the candle/ look at the picture, quietly so that everyone has some time to think about... and to pray if they would like to.*
- *Here are some words that are important to ...(eg: Muslims). Be very still and listen and if they are sacred to you, you might like to join in with them - in your head.*
- *I’m going to read some words from/ written by/ that come from... When I’ve finished we will have a time when everyone is still and there is no sound so that everyone can think carefully about the words, and pray if they would like to.*
- *Listen carefully to these words. See if there is one word or idea that you would like to remember and take with you today. It may help you worship God.*
- *We have been thinking about ...(e.g. things we are thankful for) In a few quiet moments perhaps you would like to think about things you are thankful for and some of you might like to say the words ‘Thank you God’ in your head.*
- *(Emily) is going to say some words that are very special to her. Please listen quietly and be thoughtful about what she is trying to say. Perhaps the words will help you to pray, if you want to.*

- *This music/picture helps some people in their prayers to God. We are going to listen to it/use it for a short time and you might like to let it help you to pray or think.*
- *Let us all think quietly about today's story. Perhaps there was someone in it whom you really liked/thought was very interesting. Some of the people had something important to say. Perhaps you would like to think about that for a few moments, and you may like to talk to God about it.*

Closing periods of silence can be difficult to manage, unless there is a clear signal for everybody, indicating the time for reflection is finished. A variety of strategies can be used, e.g.:

- *A sound: fading in music or striking a singing bowl;*
- *A word: "Amen", "Thank you" or "Well done everybody";*
- *An action: extinguishing the candle or covering the visual stimulus;*
- *An instruction: when you're ready, raise your faces to the light/smile at me/the person next to you.*

Section 2

Planning

Collective Worship

The Big Picture

To make the most of the opportunities offered by collective worship time, it needs to reflect a variety of different but related contexts, all of which contribute to pupils' development. To achieve this, schools need to draw on as wide a range of material as possible, whilst maintaining a coherent whole. The contexts reflect a broadening picture as they move out from the individual and relationships through the school and religious communities to global issues and time and seasons.

The young child is concerned principally with issues that can be related directly to him or herself. Collective worship should offer pupils a framework in which they can develop, recognise and celebrate a sense of identity and self esteem. It should give them access to a wide emotional repertoire, affirming and extending their own range of experiences. It must, therefore, establish a strong focus on the **individual**.

Pupils' development is not, however, confined to the inner person; it is defined and expressed in relationship with others. Here are opportunities for personal relationships to be examined and discussed in a context that is safe and easily accessible. Friendships and family bonds can be explored directly or through story so that pupils are helped to understand and appreciate their own developing **relationships**.

Collective worship brings individuals in a school together in large or small groups to help everyone understand the nature of community and appreciate their own place in the school community. Belonging brings more responsibilities than rights and this short time every day should help pupils to develop their own sense of contributing to the common good. The school itself and the curriculum pupils experience create an immediate and relevant context for exploration through collective worship. The **school community** then, provides a rich and profitable focus.

Widening this model further, the **religious world** around the school and further afield offers a distinctive and important focus for school worship. The requirement is for a religious core to collective worship

which can be *wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character*. This means it can make use of Christian material as it is expressed in the local and wider community but it can also reflect the other religious traditions that are represented. Members of faith communities, sometimes pupils and parents, make worthwhile first resources for schools to use. The more the school can reach out to religious communities and the stronger the bridges are, the greater the learning opportunities on both sides.

Ultimately the canvas on which collective worship is painted has to be **global**. It is an important context for raising pupils' awareness of issues of justice and peace, sustainable development, the environment, prejudice etc. This raises children's horizons and helps them look beyond themselves and the immediate. It is where difficult questions can be raised and considered (but probably not answered).

Finally, all this is bound up within the context of **times and seasons**. If collective worship is spread over an annual or, even better, a three year canvas, the structure allows for celebrations of key religious festivals and some not so familiar, to give pupils a sense of religious time. There will also be season-specific material that is not explicitly related to religious festivals but is worth remembering for local, civic, national or international reasons. In the first instance this calendar of events gives structure to the long-term collective worship plan.

Whilst these are described as areas of focus and used to structure a three year plan, no example of material reflects just one aspect. Each is simply more about one than another. The ideal would be to offer a balance over an annual or three-year programme which reflected all the contexts described, recognising that it may be that one theme may cover them all to some degree.

In the two tables following, the material included in this book in both the plans for weekly themes (Model A) and half-termly themes (Model B) is categorised according to the context it best represents. An attempt has been made to maintain a balance and reflect all contexts appropriately.

Developing Themes

Given the suggestions made previously about the broad base on which to set collective worship, it is most productive (and, in the long run, easier) to plan a three year programme. This book offers two suggested models for planning; Model A which is based on weekly themes and Model B, based on half termly themes. They work on similar principles but the second is more sophisticated and could be seen as a development of the first.

The questions with which the planning begins are: **What do pupils need to promote their development and what kind of experiences will meet those needs?** The suggestions as to how each example of content might contribute to pupils' development are made to summarise that potential benefit.

Both models recognise time-related, seasonal material, building in Christian and other religious festivals but drawing from them an overall theme. For instance, the celebration of *Simchat Torah* in Model A generates a theme for the week around *The Joy of Reading*. Similarly, in Model B, *Pentecost*, which celebrates the beginning of the Church, falls in the half termly theme of *Building*.

Once the religious calendars have put down some markers, other significant dates can be identified, including Saints' days: For

instance the celebration of *St Patrick* is contextualised within the theme: *Ireland*, and notable historical dates like the *Institution of the George Cross* come within the theme: *Recognising Achievement*.

National contemporary celebrations like Poetry Day and One World Week will only need to be built in once in the cycle whereas some major religious celebrations will feature every year. In this way, the structure is built up gradually.

Whilst both models offer continuity, the effect is less sustained in Model A than B but the first is easier to use, especially initially.

However, planning a theme over half a term creates the opportunity for greater depth, consolidation and further insight.

On the following pages are two suggested long term plans for a school's collective worship. The first is Model A and consists of a three year plan of weekly themes. Those that are shaded in the plan are included later in this book (see page 13). The second is Model B, half termly themes, again for three years, all of which are planned to some extent in this book (see page 17). Those that are shaded are planned in greater detail.

Grid of Weekly Themes: Model A: Weekly Themes

CONTEXT	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
The Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising Achievement • Climbing Mountains • Day by Day • Rights & Responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castaways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace on Earth
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasuring • Qualities of a Friend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Together • Threads • Making the Effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dreams • Love Your Neighbour • The Joy of Reading
The School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging • I have learned • Hooray for School! 		
The Religious World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wonderful Mothers • Repentance and Forgiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire • Prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Gift for Life • Pilgrimage
Global Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words, Words, Words • Wisdom • Going Boldy • Beyond Face Value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice • What's it Worth? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in the Future • Treasures of Ireland
Times and Seasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging Prejudice • The Week that Changed the World • Heaven on Earth • Remembrance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom • Light 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's Goodness • Fired Up

Grid of Weekly Themes: Model B: Half Termly Themes

CONTEXT	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
The Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifts & Talents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotions
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate the Difference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Together
The School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposites?
The Religious World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journeys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life
Global Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building
Times and Seasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Letter Days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change

Model A: Grid of Weekly Themes

A U T U M N	Week	FIRST YEAR OF THE CYCLE	SECOND YEAR OF THE CYCLE	THIRD YEAR OF THE CYCLE
	1	BELONGING: Grace Darling rescue, 7.9.1838.	DOING YOUR BEST	A NEW START
	2	TREASURING: United Nations Day for the Ozone Layer 16 September	CARING FOR OTHERS: Death of Dr Bernardo, 19.9.1867. Mother Teresa	JUST IMAGINE ...
	3	RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT: Institution of the George Cross; 23.9.40 Everest climbed 24.9.53	AUTUMN: Autumn Equinox. 22 September	CHANGES: in the natural world; in ourselves
	4	HEAVEN ON EARTH: Rosh Hashanah	KEEPING SAFE: SOS signal established 3.10.06	ANIMALS: St Francis: Patron Saint of Animals; Endangered species list established.
	5	WORDS, WORDS, WORDS ... National Poetry Day	FORGIVENESS: Yom Kippur	LOYALTY
	6	THANKSGIVING: Harvest	TALENTS: Harvest	GOD'S GOODNESS: Sukkot
	7	FEED THE WORLD: One World Week	ONE WORLD: One World Week United Nations Day	THE JOY OF READING: Simchat Torah
	8	GOOD & EVIL: Hindu celebration of Diwali	FREEDOM: Sikh celebration of Diwali	FOR ALL THE SAINTS: All Saints' Day 1 November; All Souls' Day 2 November
	9	REMEMBRANCE: Remembrance Day , 11 November.	PEACE: Armistice Day. 11 November Fall of the Berlin Wall	OH, WHAT A LOVELY WAR?
	10	HOORAY FOR SCHOOL! Universal Children's Day	A WORLD OF BOOKS: Publication of Caxton's first printed book 18.11.1477.	STANDING UP FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE: Release of Terry Waite – 18 Nov
	11	I HAVE LEARNED	SCOTLAND: St Andrew's Day 30 November	SELF-DISCIPLINE: Ramadan
	12	QUALITIES OF A FRIEND	BEING FAITHFUL	LOOKING FORWARD: Advent
	13	GIVING: St Nicholas' Day, 6 December	LIGHT: Hannukah St Lucia	PEACE ON EARTH
	14	GIVING: Christmas; The Gift of a Child	LIGHT: Christmas Christingle	PROMISES: Christmas

* Shaded areas denote themes which are planned in the book. The other titles are suggestions for themes to be developed.

Model A: Grid of Weekly Themes

S P R I N G	Week	FIRST YEAR OF THE CYCLE	SECOND YEAR OF THE CYCLE	THIRD YEAR OF THE CYCLE
	1	CHRISTMAS AGAIN: Epiphany; 6 January Orthodox Celebration	FIRE:	A NEW YEAR: resolutions
	2	DREAMS: 'I have a dream' - Martin Luther King; born 15.1.29	PLANET EARTH: Greenpeace	PEOPLE WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE: . Birthday of Martin Luther King; 15.1.29; Albert Schweitzer 14.1.1875.
	3	CELEBRATING TOGETHER: Eid Ul Fitr ; Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	CASTAWAYS:	COPING WITH DISAPPOINTMENT: Scott of the Antarctic
	4	LEARNING TOGETHER: Education Sunday	JUSTICE:	AROUND THE WORLD: Sir Francis Drake; Sir Francis Chichester, Ellen MacArthur
	5	GLIMPSES OF HEAVEN: The Kingdom of God; Muhammad's Night Journey	LOST & FOUND Parables:	INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: Tu B'Shevat
	6	RED IS ...: Chinese New Year	COULD IT POSSIBLY HAPPEN?: Birth of Jules Verne	LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR: The Good Samaritan
	7	REPENTANCE & FORGIVENESS: Ash Wednesday	SELF-DENIAL: Lent; Temptations of Jesus	SYMBOLIC FOOD: Pancakes; Hot Cross Buns
	8	WALES: St David's Day 1 March	SPRING: Spring Equinox	PILGRIMAGE: Hajj (Eid Ul Adha)
	9	WONDERFUL MOTHERS: Mary; Mother Maria	COMING HOME: Mothering Sunday	WHO CARES FOR US?: Mothering Sunday
	10	ALL THINGS BRIGHT & BEAUTIFUL:	IMPORTANT DISCOVERIES: Death of Fleming; Discovery of Penicillin 11.3.55.	TREASURES OF IRELAND: St Patrick's Day 17 March
	11	CHALLENGING PREJUDICE: Purim	REMEMBERING: Pesach	IDENTITY: Baisakhi; Birth of the Khalsa
	12	THE WEEK THAT CHANGED THE WORLD: Easter	REMEMBERING: Easter	SACRIFICE: Easter

* Shaded areas denote themes which are planned in the book. The other titles are suggestions for themes to be developed.

Model A: Grid of Weekly Themes

S U M M E R	Week	FIRST YEAR OF THE CYCLE	SECOND YEAR OF THE CYCLE	THIRD YEAR OF THE CYCLE
	1	RECONCILIATION	WORKING TOGETHER	TO BE A PILGRIM: John Bunyan
	2	WISDOM	ENGLAND: St George's Day 23 April	LOOK OUT!
	3	TOLERANCE	MAKING THE EFFORT	PICKING UP THE PIECES:
	4	BEYOND FACE VALUE	STANDING IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES	POWER
	5	THINKING OF OTHERS: Christian Aid Week	PRAYER	HOPE
	6	THE START OF SOMETHING BIG: Pentecost	BEING CHANGED: Pentecost; White Sunday	FIRED UP: Pentecost
	7	CLIMBING MOUNTAINS:	THINKING ABOUT GOD: Trinity Sunday	WORSHIP
	8	REVELATIONS Revelation of the Qur'an	WHAT'S IT WORTH?	GROWTH
	9	MAKING THE MOST OF...	CHARITY	A GIFT FOR LIFE
	10	DAY BY DAY	ROLE MODELS: Birthday of Prophet Muhammad	PRAISE
	11	PLACES & SPACES	THREADS	GRIEF & LOSS: The Ninth of Av
	12	RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES	REALISING A VISION: Foundation of the Salvation Army 2.7.1865.	DISASTER
	13	GOING BOLDLY: Apollo II Moon Landing 21 July 1969	MOVING ON:	OVERCOMING ANXIETIES:

* Shaded areas denote themes which are planned in the book. The other titles are suggestions for themes to be developed.

Model B: Themes for a half-term:

A U T U M N	FIRST YEAR OF THE CYCLE	SECOND YEAR OF THE CYCLE	THIRD YEAR OF THE CYCLE
	I WANT TO BE...	GIFTS & TALENTS	EMOTIONS
	Week 1. Cooperative	1. What are gifts and talents?	1. Excitement
	Week 2. Fair	2. Using gifts and talents for others	2. Anger
	Week 3. Determined	3. Amazing gifts and talents	3. Pride
	Week 4. A good friend	4. Gifts and talents for creation	4. Grief
	Week 5. A good listener	5. Using gifts and talents for God	5. Jealousy
	Week 6. Responsible	6. Treasure in others	6. Hate
	Week 7. Me	7. Treasure in myself	7. Joy
	ELEMENTS	LIGHT	OPPOSITES?
	Week 1. The Elements	1. Diwali	1. Right and wrong
	Week 2. Earth	2. Using light to celebrate	2. Rich and poor
	Week 3. Air	3. Delight	3. Weak and strong
	Week 4. Water	4. Let your light shine	4. Friend and enemy
	Week 5. Fire	5. Winter	5. Black and white
	Week 6. A celebration of the elements	6. Hannukah	6. Good and evil
	Week 7. Looking Forward	7. Christmas	7. New and Old

All units are planned in the book; shaded areas denote daily plans; the other themes are outlined.

Model B : Themes for a half-term:

S P R I N G	FIRST YEAR OF THE CYCLE	SECOND YEAR OF THE CYCLE	THIRD YEAR OF THE CYCLE
	VIRTUES	TEACHERS AND LEARNING	<i>LEARNING TOGETHER</i>
	Week 1. Generosity	1. I have learned	1. Reading together
	Week 2. Honesty	2. Wonderful teachers	2. Tackling problems together
	Week 3. Courage	3. Teaching through parable	3. Discovering together
	Week 4. Wisdom	4. Teaching by example	4. Exploring together
	Week 5. Loyalty	5. Teaching through the written word	5. Remembering together
	Week 6. Gentleness	6. I can teach	6. Imagining together
	RED LETTER DAYS	NEW LIFE	CHANGE
	Week 1. What are Red Letter Days?	1. Making a fresh start	1. Waiting for change
	Week 2. Preparations	2. Springtime saints	2. Signs of change
	Week 3. Red Letter Love	3. Light after dark	3. Resisting change
	Week 4. Passover	4. A start in life	4. The need for change
	Week 5. Great Days	5. Signs of growth	5. The pain of change
	Week 6. Easter	6. Life after death	6. The impact of change

All units are planned in the book; shaded areas denote daily plans; the other themes are outlined.

Model B : Themes for a half-term:

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S U M M E R	FIRST YEAR OF THE CYCLE	SECOND YEAR OF THE CYCLE	THIRD YEAR OF THE CYCLE
	LOVE IS...	TIME	BUILDING
	Week 1. A letter of love	1. Marking time	1. Building a home
	Week 2. Love is patient and kind...	2. Precious time	2. Building a school
	Week 3. Love is living for others...	3. Making time	3. Building bridges
	Week 4. Love is not happy with evil...	4. Sacred time	4. Building a life
	Week 5. Love never gives up	5. Taking time	5. Building a Church
	Week 6. Faith, hope and love	6. Losing time	6. Building a fairer world
	Week 7. Love is...	7. Saving time	7. Building a future
	JOURNEYS	CELEBRATE THE DIFFERENCE	LIFE
	Week 1. What's a journey?	1. Look at us	1. Circle of life
	Week 2. Explorations and Expeditions	2. Here we are	2. Tree of life
	Week 3. Journeys for God	3. Changing faces	3. Rhythm of life
	Week 4. Pilgrimage	4. Beyond appearances	4. Gift of life
	Week 5. Journeys to freedom	5. How do you feel?	5. Water of life
	Week 6. The journey of life	6. I think so too	6. Trials of life
	Week 7. My journey	7. This is our school	7. Journey of life

All units are planned in the book; shaded areas denote daily plans; the other themes are outlined.

A Pattern for the Week

Once the theme has been identified, it is important to look for an effective and (if possible) enactive way of introducing it to the whole school on Monday. Create an engagement opportunity that may involve everyone but certainly grabs the attention of all. Introduce key vocabulary and explore the ideas raised by the first exposure of the theme. Design a definite ending to the event, incorporating the words for worship in the most appropriate place. It is good to send pupils away with an open question that is challenging and links into the development of the theme over the week.

The shape of the week allows for two intimate, small group explorations of the theme and one key stage experience, almost a half way situation in terms of context as well as timing. Before deciding where the theme goes on these days, it is crucial to identify where it will (hopefully) be at its climax at the end of the week. It may be that the most powerful material is saved for Friday or some activity is designed that brings all the discussions of the week to a conclusion.

Whether the planning is built up using a different topic each week (Model A) or focuses on a number of aspects of a bigger theme (Model

B), the five individual daily acts of collective worship in any week have to be structured around the given theme. In looking at the aspects to be covered over the week, it is important to:

- begin by identifying the potential benefits to pupils' SMSC development;
- aim to introduce the ideas to be explored with some impact, finding, where possible, a concrete way to express them;
- build up the experiences over the week in small steps that show some progression, making the most of small group opportunities for discussion, but keeping a strong focus on reflection throughout;

- make use of age related groupings to explore aspects of the theme with which particular pupils might identify;
- draw together the ideas and experiences of the week on a Friday;
- maintain the focus on values in all the planning;
- identify and make explicit the aspects of the theme which relate to and unify the whole school, creating a deeper sense of 'collectivity'.

In the six examples that follow here, weekly themes are planned in detail, showing the pattern in evidence using a variety of material. The original intention when the idea for this book was conceived was to produce all the material in this way. However, it soon became apparent that such a volume would be unwieldy and would never be finished! These plans are offered as exemplars to resource the effective use of the rest of the material in the book in both Model A and Model B sections and to inspire the development of individual school planning in the future. Throughout the planning process, however, a clear focus must remain on the purposes of these opportunities. Primary collective worship is first and foremost an important and effective vehicle for promoting personal development and for exploring spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.

The six examples which follow in this section are:-

- I Have Learned
- Peace on Earth
- Fire
- Treasures of Ireland
- Working Together
- Going Boldly

These are presented as detailed daily (page-to-a-day) plans to exemplify clearly the principles and the process.

Further plans are shown in less detail from page-to-a-week plans to page-to-a-half term outlines.

Theme for the Week:	I have learned...
<p>Mapping the Week:</p> <p>Monday: What have I learned?</p> <p>Tuesday: How do we learn?</p> <p>Wednesday: From whom do we learn?</p> <p>Thursday: Learning our lessons</p> <p>Friday: Thanksgiving for teachers & learning</p> <p>Exploring the Theme:</p> <p>The week begins with an opportunity for children to think about their own learning and about how they learn. The focus moves from the individual to common and shared experiences. Learning is not confined to the classroom, but is an ongoing process, rooted in experience. One of the most productive contexts for learning is explored on Thursday when the focus is learning from mistakes. The week ends with a celebration of learning and thanksgiving for all those who teach in whatever aspect of life.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>For the stories: ‘Alexander learns to ‘do’ socks, and ‘A Learning Surprise’ see the section <i>Stories for Telling</i>.</p> <p>The fable ‘<i>The Dog & The Bone</i>’ can be found in any collection of Aesop’s Fables.</p>	<p>Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development</p> <p>This theme contributes to pupils’ development by encouraging them to:-</p> <p>Spiritual:</p> <p>appreciate that learning is a lifelong process; wonder at the processes of learning; recognise that learning is a great joy;</p> <p>Moral:</p> <p>learn from their mistakes; recognise the potential of mistakes as learning experiences;</p> <p>Social:</p> <p>appreciate that learning is a shared experience;</p> <p>Cultural:</p> <p>think about how learning begins, for every individual, whatever their background.</p>

Whole School Collective Worship

Monday

Theme: I have learned...

Focus: What have I learned?

The Assembly:

Engagement:

The teacher shares with pupils something he or she has learned today. Invite pupils from a range of classes to talk about one thing they have learned during the past week.

Exploration:

Invite everyone to learn something together.

Introduce a collection of similar objects which have a visual quality, eg a vase of flowers, a basket of shells or a fossil.

What can you say about these?

What do you know about these?

Record briefly what pupils already know.

Tell them something they do not know, eg the name of the flower or the place where the shells were found.

Give more details.

Ending:

Invite everyone to reflect on what they have learned together.

*** Use the words for worship.** Introduce a song.

Supporting Material:

The assembly begins with an example of learning from the teacher's own experience that day. It could be something learned from radio or television or read in the newspaper. It could be an observation like the sudden realisation that petrol makes beautiful patterns on a puddle.

The link needs to be made, in passing, to the senses.

There needs to be a prepared list of factual details about the objects chosen as the focus for learning together. These need to cover a range of information appropriate to the youngest and oldest children respectively.

Words for Worship:

**Thank you God for giving us the chance to learn together. Thank you for the wonder of the world that we learned about every day.*

Classroom Collective Worship

Tuesday

Theme: I have learned...

Focus: How do we learn?

Key Stage 1 Assembly:

Show children one of the objects from the previous day's collection, e.g. a flower or shell.

Where have you seen this before?

What have we learned about it?

What else could we learn about it:

How would we learn it?

Talk about the need to explore, using the senses, making deductions and pondering ideas.

Tell children about how babies learn and how their curiosity develops, sharing some of the details as appropriate.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Introduce an object from the previous day's collection.

What do we know about this?

How did we learn it?

What other ways are there of learning?

Use the information about how babies learn to explore what learning is.

What does this teach us about how we learn?

How can that benefit our lives?

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

The majority of learning takes place through the senses. This is observed most clearly in the behaviour of babies and very young children. It is recognised that half of all essential learning takes place before the age of five. Amazing facts include:

Within an hour of birth, if given the opportunity, a baby can recognise his or her mother's face and within a few days the baby recognises the mother's smell.

From as early as 4 weeks a baby has learned to smile.

By around a year old most babies have learned to chew, reach out and pick things up, sit up, crawl or take a few steps with support.

By around two years old babies can recognise and use simple words.

Words for Worship:

**Thank you for the miracle of our bodies. Thank you for the chance to learn.*

Key Stage Collective Worship

Wednesday

Theme: I have learned..

Focus: From whom do we learn?

The Assembly for Key Stage 1:

Show pupils a collection of photographs of staff.

Who are these people?

Who else do we learn from?

Add to the collection of photographs pictures of parents, children, the crossing warden etc.

Tell a story about a child learning to accomplish something, for instance, the art of getting dressed e.g. Alexander learns to 'do' socks..

*** Use the words for worship.**

The Assembly for Key Stage 2:

Invite pupils to compile a list of all the people from whom they learn.

I wonder if there is ever a time when you learn unexpectedly?

Tell the story of the discovery of the chemical structure of Benzene.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

The human mind works in many different ways to solve problems and to create ideas. It will gather together its knowledge and understanding and make links and patterns and learn in ways that are often unexpected and surprising, as the story of a French scientist suggests.

For the stories: 'A Learning Surprise' and 'Alexander learns to 'do' socks', see the section *Stories for Telling*.

Words for Worship:

**Help me to take every opportunity to learn.*

Classroom Collective Worship

Thursday

Theme: I have learned...

Focus: Learning our lessons

Key Stage 1 Assembly:

Share the Aesop fable: *The Dog and the Bone*

What did the dog learn?

How did he feel?

What made him learn?

When have you ever made a mistake?

What did you learn from it?

*** Use the words for worship.**

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Tell the story.

What did the dog learn?

What mistake did he make?

Why did the author write the story?

When have you ever made a mistake?

How did it make you feel?

What did it make you feel like doing?

What have you learned from a mistake you've made?

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

Aesop used stories of people and animals to teach about social and moral ideas. *The Dog and the Bone* tells how a dog loses out because of what he has not learned. After stealing a bone and running greedily away with it, the dog sees his reflection in the river and thinking this is another dog with an even better bone, he opens his mouth and loses his prize.

The story warns about the foolishness of greed. Its purpose, as a fable, is to teach in an imaginative way, making effective use of humour and drama

Words for Worship:

**O God, when I make a mistake, help me not to be downcast but to learn from it.*

Whole School Collective Worship

Friday

Theme: I have learned

Focus: Thanksgiving for teachers & learning

The Assembly:

Engagement:

Invite staff to share with pupils the most **exciting** things they have learned during the week and to describe how the learning took place. Ask children to listen out for words that will be used in the assembly to describe something about the learning.

Exploration:

Extend discussion to the children's experiences of learning and ask each class for examples of the most **interesting** things they have learned during the week.

From all that we have shared

*What are the most **important** things you have learned this week?*

How will this learning change you?

Who taught you these things?

Reinforce the idea that the most vital thing the school has to offer children is the guidance of teachers to lead children in their learning in so many different ways.

Ending:

Gather together words used to describe learning. Invite everyone to reflect upon the most **valuable** things they have ever learned and who taught them or helped them to learn for themselves.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

The concluding assembly for the week begins with examples of teachers' learning, to show the range of 'learned' material and illustrate the different ways there are to learn, and be taught.

In addition, representatives from each class need to be prepared with details of their learning from the week. It may be helpful to make this visual as possible, and also to highlight the words to describe learning by presenting them visually in some form.

Words for Worship:

**Thank you God that we can teach and learn. Thank you for those people who give their time and energy to teach and for all the gifts learning offers to us..*

TERM: Autumn

Theme for the Week:

Peace on Earth

Mapping the Week:

Monday: **What is peace?**

Tuesday: **Peace with others**

Wednesday: **Making peace**

Thursday: **Inner peace**

Friday: **Finding peace**

Exploring the Theme:

The week begins by inviting the children to consider what we mean by the word peace, and introducing the ideas that will be explored throughout the week. The week aims to broaden the children's perception of peace from being synonymous with quiet to consideration of inner peace and tranquillity. In doing this the children will encounter a well known song '*Let there be peace on earth*', supported by quotations from the Old and New Testament. They will also experience their own time of peace and reflection.

Resources:

* For songs about peace, see:

'Let there be peace on earth'

'Make me a channel of your peace'

'Peace is flowing like a river' and other songs about peace in:

Come and Praise 1 & 2 BBC Educational Publishing
on cassette and CDs.

Available from BBC Educational Publishing, Freepost KS2811, Wetherby,
West Yorkshire LS23 6YY

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

be quiet and appreciate stillness;
understand the need for, and the benefit of, peaceful moments;
appreciate that some people find tranquillity in prayer;

Moral:

understand that everyone has a responsibility for peace;
reflect on their own capabilities for making peace;

Social:

contemplate a world where there are opportunities for stillness, quietness and peace;

Cultural:

appreciate how cultural differences can disrupt peace;
reflect on efforts for peace that cross cultural boundaries.

Whole School Collective Worship

Monday

Theme: Peace on Earth

Focus: What is peace?

The Assembly:

Engagement:

Ask for pupil volunteers to hold up cards displaying words or phrases for the school to see.

Reveal them slowly so they can be thought about but still hold the children's attention. Ask what is the word that links all of them together.

Exploration:

Discuss briefly the meaning of a few of the words on cards, perhaps using examples

from the world, e.g.: 'no war',

from school, e.g.: 'quiet' and 'no noise'

from oneself, e.g.: 'stillness' and 'tranquillity'.

Explain that these ideas will be explored later in the week

Ending:

Invite the children to reflect where they see peace in the world, in their school and where they feel peace in their lives.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Introduce a song; perhaps '*Let there be peace on earth*'.

Supporting Material:

The cards will have written on them phrases or words that express ideas of peace. Start with the harder words so the children have to think!

e.g. **1.** Tranquillity **5.** No arguments
 2. Calm **6.** No Noise
 3. Stillness **7.** No war
 4. Friendship **8.** Quiet

In discussion a few areas of the world that are still at war could be mentioned and perhaps those that are working hard for peace, e.g. N.Ireland.

In linking quiet and no noise together ask children when they have to be quiet and why? Is quiet the same as peace? What are the children feeling when quiet? Perhaps it is different depending on the situation

Using oneself as an example (or someone to whom the children can relate) discuss the need for a moment of stopping, a period of stillness that is often needed after a busy day of rushing around. If appropriate the practice of daily praying could be mentioned here.

Words for Worship:

**This is my prayer. Listen to the words:*

Dear God,

There are so many places in this world where there is no peace. Help us all to try to make peace and be friends so that we make our part of the world a better and calmer place to live.

Classroom Collective Worship

Tuesday

Theme: Peace on Earth

Focus: Peace with others

Key Stage 1 Assembly:

Sing or play the song.

Have the first two lines written on board.

What is the song asking for?

What is it like/what happens when there is no peace?

Discuss what it is like at home or at school with arguments etc and ask how that makes pupils feel.

What can each one of us do to make peace at home or at school?

How do you feel when there is peace?

If we all were friends and didn't fight what would the world be like?

*** Use the words for worship.**

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Sing or play the song.

Have written on the board the first two lines.

What is the song asking for?

Where is there no peace on earth?

Why do wars happen?

How could war be avoided? (Discuss the views of CND - What do the children think of such an approach to global peace?)

Where is there peace in their lives?

What do they have to do to keep peace?

How does world peace begin with 'me'?

Use the words that make it worship

Supporting Material:

Song: Any one of a number of songs about peace could be used but the most appropriate is:
"Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me."

Words for Worship:

* "Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me."

Think about what you can do to make those words come true.

*Dear God,
Help me in each day of my life to try and make these words come true.
Wherever I am, and whatever I am doing, let my actions and words be peaceful ones. Amen.*

Key Stage Collective Worship

Wednesday

Theme: Peace on Earth

Focus: Making Peace

The Assembly for Key Stage 1:

The teacher begins by approaching a colleague and shaking his or her hand warmly, and repeating this with some children. What does it mean when we shake someone's hand?

Discuss how the gesture began: as a sign to demonstrate a man had no weapon in his hand but came in peace and friendship. Now it is used in greeting. It is still a sign of friendship and of peace between two people. Extend this idea to the Sign of Peace used in a Christian Service.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Invite the children to turn to those nearest to them and shake their hands saying "Peace be with you." How did it make them feel?

The Assembly for Key Stage 2:

Tell the children the Old Testament quotation and discuss what it means in practice.

Do the same with the New Testament quotation. Perhaps relate both pieces of advice to school situations in the classroom or playground.

Discuss: Which attitude will promote peace?
Which is the most difficult to put into practice? Why?
What might Jesus' sayings mean for our behaviour in school?

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

In many Christian churches during the Sunday service there is a part called 'The Peace'. The priest or minister, with arms outstretched in an open and all-encompassing gesture, says "The Peace of the Lord be always with you" to which the congregation replies "And also with you". Everyone is invited to share with each other the Sign of Peace, as they turn and shake hands with all around them, saying to them "Peace be with you".

Supporting Material:

Old Testament: Deuteronomy 19 : 21

"Your eye shall not pity, it shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."

New Testament: Matthew 5 : 39/Luke 6 : 29 "But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also: and if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well."

Words for Worship:

* Think for a moment about the ways in which you react to situations in the playground or classroom. If you want to, you can ask God for strength and help in difficult moments to act in ways that lead to peace rather than more anger and hurt.

Classroom Collective Worship

Thursday

Theme: Peace on Earth

Focus: Inner Peace

Key Stage 1 Assembly:

Invite the children to be very quiet, in order to listen to some music. If they wish they can close their eyes in order to imagine whatever they like whilst listening.

Play some relaxing music.

Gently bring the children back to the classroom.

How did the music make you feel?

What did you imagine?

When else have you ever stopped and felt peaceful?

Is there a special place where you feel peaceful?

*** Use the words for worship.**

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Remind children of Monday's discussion as to whether quiet is the same as peace. Just because people are quiet does it mean that they are 'quiet' or 'peaceful' inside? Explore what may make you feel the opposite of peaceful inside - arguments, worries etc.

Explain that everyone is going to take a few moments to feel peaceful and to help them relaxing music will be played and they will be asked to imagine a peaceful scene.

Invite the children to close their eyes and be very quiet and using the supporting material guide their imagination. Afterwards they can share their special places - but only if they wish to.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

KS2: Make sure you are sitting comfortably. Place your hands in your lap and perhaps close your eyes. Listen to this music. As you listen feel your body relax ... let your hands relax ... your face relax ... feel the tension go from each part.

As you listen I want you to imagine a very special place ... it's a place where you feel very safe ... where you can stop for a moment and completely feel at peace ... perhaps you sit down in this place ... look around you and just take in what you see ... it's a beautiful sight that makes you feel glad to be there, to be alive ... nothing else matters apart from being there ... the rest of life, for this moment, is left behind ... no worries ... no cares ... you are at peace...

It is time to leave. As slowly as you wish, get up and leave that place. When you feel ready come back to the classroom and open your eyes.

Words for Worship:

** In our assembly we have found a precious moment of stillness, just to be.*

Remember how that felt.

Let us try, in our busy days, to stop and enjoy being at peace.

Whole School Collective Worship

Friday

Theme: Peace on Earth

Focus: Finding Peace

The Assembly:

Engagement:

The teacher taking the assembly opens his/her post and shares the contents with the children. The letters are worrying - perhaps bills, news of an ill friend etc. Share the worries with the children.

Exploration:

Tell the story.

Invite pupils to share their responses to the questions with the person next to them.

Who thinks the king had taken the easy way out?

Who thinks he was wise?

Why?

The king clearly felt that peace of mind was so important that he was prepared to give up anything in order to feel at peace and content. The story is not suggesting that we all become poor but that we all put peace within as a priority.

Use the words for worship.

Ending:

We all have things that worry us and stop us feeling happy and contented. But do we, like the king, have the courage to find the solutions to our discontent or to change ourselves in order to find peace.

How important do we each feel it is to find that inner peace?

Supporting Material:

Story: It was hot and the king was worried. He had so many anxieties and problems; it had given him a headache. He decided to lie down. That felt much better ... but then it started. Tinkle, tinkle ... tinkle, tinkle. The king frowned. What an irritating sound. It was the gentle jangling of bracelets on the wrist of the servant girl who was fanning him. Tinkle ... tinkle. It had to stop.

"Please take off one of your bangles," he said to the girl. Blushing, the girl did so. The king settled down - a little peace - that's all he wanted; to forget his cares and worries. Tinkle ... tinkle. It started again. "Please", he said sharply "Please take another bangle off." Quickly she obeyed. Silence returned. The king closed his eyes trying to banish his problems from his mind. Then the bracelets tinkled again.

"Another, please" said the king. The girl obeyed but it was no good - they still jangled unnervingly. She kept on removing the bangles until she reached the last. With a sigh the king closed his eyes. Surely now he would sleep. But no, his problems and worries still crowded his mind. Then it occurred to him. If only he shed his worries like the girl removed her bangles he would permanently find peace of mind. The pleasures of being a king were like the bracelets; they looked attractive but they would not let you rest. So from that day on he left his wealth, power and position and became poor. Some thought he had taken the easy way out, others thought he was wise. What do you think?

Words for Worship:

These are words that are prayed by many people all over the world:

"Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth.

Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.

Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.

Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe."

TERM: Spring

Theme for the Week:

Fire

Mapping the Week:

Monday: The Mystery of Fire

Tuesday: Fire Creatures

Wednesday: Fire Worship

Thursday: Holy Fire

Friday: Fire Dance

Exploring the Theme:

The theme focuses on the spiritual dimensions of the most dramatic of the elements. It explores primitive beliefs about fire and challenges pupils to think imaginatively about it, as well as to appreciate how necessary it is to life.

Resources:

* For 'This Little Light of Mine' see *Alleluya* A and C Black.

For 'Kindle a Flame' see *A Wee Worship Book*

The Wild Goose Worship Group, Iona Community and on cassette: *Heaven shall not wait*

Both referenced in the *Solihull Handbook for Religious Education in Key Stage 1*

* Stravinsky's *Firebird*

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the symbolism of fire as an image of the divine and an expression of God's presence;
think about the eternal nature of fire and the mystery of the created world;
exercise their imagination to transcend the physical world;
contemplate the flame as source of comfort and hope;

Moral:

respect fire as a powerful phenomenon that cannot always be understood or controlled;
recognise the danger of fire and the need to act responsibly;

Social:

appreciate how important fire is to humanity;

Cultural:

reflect on the universal power of fire to fascinate people of all cultures and throughout all ages.

Whole School Collective Worship

Monday

Theme: Fire

Focus: The Mystery of Fire

The Assembly:

Engagement:

Play Stravinsky's *Firebird* and invite pupils to talk about what they see in their heads when listening to the music.

Introduce the theme and invite pupils to think about when they last saw a flame. Remind them that we all depend on fire even though we may not always see it.

Think about warmth, food, travelling etc.

Exploration:

Explain that fire is one of the four elements but that it was more mysterious than earth, air and water. It had to be discovered.

Tell the native American story of the first fire. Talk about the world-creating nature of myth.

Use the words for worship, giving pupils a short extract of music to listen to during the reflection.

Fade the music.

Ending:

Sing: This Little Light of Mine

Supporting Material:

The first people to discover fire were probably the Chinese, some 400,000 years ago. There are many myths about the discovery of fire because of its importance to humanity's survival but also because of its power and mystery.

The native American story tells of the secret of fire being the preserve of the Grizzly Bear who would not share it. He had the firestone on his belt and he guarded it fiercely. He lay in his cave, warm and cosy with the beautiful fire he had kindled, while the other animals shivered outside, looking from a distance. One day a very cold bird, who was also very brave, flew in and asked if she could warm herself. Grizzly agreed on condition that she picked the fleas from his fur so the little bird sat on the bear's huge back, pecking away. Every so often she nipped at his belt until it fell off. Quickly she snatched the belt and flew out of the cave. Before the bear could even roar, the animals had carried off the stone. Eventually clever Fox had the stone in his mouth. He dashed it against a rock and threw a small piece to each of the tribes so that they too could warm themselves by the flames.

Words for Worship:

Let's listen to the music again. We'll be very quiet and imagine the flames as we listen. (pause)

Think about how wonderful the flames are as they curl and dance. Let us remember how fortunate we are to have fire to keep us warm.

Let the fire of love warm your heart.

Classroom Collective Worship

Tuesday

Theme: Fire

Focus: Fire Worship

Key Stage 1 Assembly:

Invite pupils to imagine a beautiful sunset and talk about the colours as they fade. What has happened to the sun?

Talk about ancient beliefs about the sun dying and people worshipping it to rekindle its flames.

Explain why these beliefs were held and invite pupils to explore why they are no longer held.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Invite pupils to imagine a very high mountain, grey and forbidding against the blue sky. There's a rumbling, deep inside the earth, which grows until it is a loud and frightening throbbing; the earth shakes and suddenly from the mountain top comes a huge explosion of flames and smoke and ash ...

Create the build up to the volcanic eruption and then ask pupils to identify what is happening and to think about how it would feel to be there. If resources permit, use untuned instruments to create the sounds of a volcano. Invite pupils to imagine what it would be like if we knew nothing scientifically. How would they explain it?

Talk about Java.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

To ancient people, fire was both mysterious and sacred. They believed it was a force to be worshipped. The earliest gods were sun gods, all powerful beings that lived in the flames. Ra, the Egyptian sun god, was believed to travel across the sky in a boat, only to be devoured by a monster as darkness overpowered the sun. Every night, Ra killed the monster to reign again. The Romans held a feast every winter called Saturnalia to refresh the sun which, they believed, was dying.

So often religious myth surrounds natural phenomena in an attempt to explain them. The Hindu people of Java, as island in Indonesia, believe that their sacred mountain, a volcano they call 'Fire Mountain', is home to a fierce god who can explode with anger. They worship the fire god to ensure that their island continues to be fertile and fruitful because the lava flow from the volcano produces particularly good soil for crops. Every year, despite the fear of eruptions, they climb to the top of the sacred mountain to throw into the crater offerings in thanksgiving for the good harvest and to ask for continued blessings.

Words for Worship:

Let's think quietly for a moment about the mysteries of this wonderful world:

Thank you, God, for the fiery sun and the living earth. Help us never to forget however much we know about your world, how magnificent it is.

Amen.

Key Stage Collective Worship

Wednesday

Theme: Fire

Focus: Fire Creatures

The Assembly for Key Stage 1:

Explain that today the focus is on fire creatures.

Tell a dragon story, e.g. the story of St George killing the dragon.

Explain it is a legend.

Use the story to talk about the dangers of fire.

*** Use the words for worship.**

The Assembly for Key Stage 2:

Explore the phrase... 'like a phoenix rising from the ashes' with reference to a situation like the rebuilding of Coventry Cathedral. Talk about the mythological bird and why such beliefs arose among ancient people.

*** Use the words for worship.** Invite pupils to think of the phoenix they would like to see rising. Link the idea to the fire of the human spirit.

Words for Worship:

** Although we know there aren't any dragons, help us to remember how frightening and dangerous fire can be.*

If you want to, you can ask God to keep you safe from danger.

Supporting Material:

Fire has always attracted mythology, not least in the form of creatures. The most popular of these is the dragon which breathed fire. There are lots of stories of dragons; huge, scaly-skinned, forked tongued creatures with a long tail. They represent evil and no one wants to be friends with them. Perhaps the best known legend is St George.

Supporting Material:

The phoenix, with its flaming plumage, was an imaginary bird that represented the sun. Only one phoenix lived and after a thousand years, it built its own funeral fire before death and another bird rose from the ashes, symbolising new life and future hope. The image has a currency today as a phrase describing something good coming out of disaster, e.g. The Phoenix Trust, set up to support people injured by fire, was established after the horrendous King's Cross fire.

Words for Worship:

** Let us always have hope even if the situation seems hopeless.*

Help other people whose situations must seem absolutely hopeless to keep the fire of their spirit alive..

Classroom Collective Worship

Thursday

Theme: Fire

Focus: Holy Fire

Key Stage 1 Assembly:

Light a candle and invite pupils to be quiet and to focus on it.

Tell them some people believe the flame burns to show God is close.

How does that feel?

Invite pupils to talk about the flame.

* Use the words for worship.

Read, or if possible play a recording of the simple chant *Kindle a flame to lighten the dark.*

Extinguish the candle.

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Light a candle and invite pupils to be quiet and concentrate on the flame.

Talk about the lighting of candles in memory of people, in churches, synagogues, and war memorials. Talk about the external flame signifying God's presence for many religious people of different traditions and the flame as a blessing and purifier.

* Use the words for worship.

Read, or if possible play a recording of the simple chant *Kindle a flame to lighten the dark.*

Extinguish the candle.

Supporting Material:

The candle flame, the most focused and yet most vulnerable and fragile fire, has an enduring and eternal quality. It is a symbol of God's presence in a number of religious traditions. The Ner Tamid is the eternal light in the synagogue; some churches have a light always burning over the altar; for Hindus the light from the aarti flame is a sacred blessing. The single flame is often thought of as the symbol of the individual soul, so candles are burnt to remember the dead. Fire is a symbol of eternity so memorials to soldiers who died in conflict often have a burning flame. Fire also has a purifying quality; Hindus burn the bodies of dead people and scatter the ashes, if possible, onto the River Ganges, the sacred river that they believe flows to heaven. The Olympic movement keeps a flame burning as a symbol of the high ideals carried on from one event to the next.

The symbolism is ancient and predates modern religious practices. Vesta, the Roman goddess kept the sacred flame of the hearth. She vowed never to marry. The young women who served in her temple took the same vow and were known as Vestal Virgins.

Words for Worship:

Look hard at the candle. Watch it flicker. Look at its blue centre and the flame licking upwards from the heart of the fire.

Be really still and listen to what your thoughts are saying to you.

Whole School Collective Worship

Friday

Theme: Fire

Focus: Fire Dance?

The Assembly:

Engagement:

Show pupils a shrine figure or picture of Shiva Nataraja.
Invite them to talk about what they can see. Explore the symbolism of the image.

Exploration:

Tell the story of Shiva's fire dance.

*** Use the words for worship**

Ending:

Invite pupils to think about something they would like to stamp out if they could.

Supporting Material:

Hindus believe God is a supreme being, creator, sustainer and destroyer. One of the most important images of God is Shiva who is sometimes shown as Nataraja, the dancer in the circle of fire. Shiva is dancing to the throb of creation, in the powerful, all embracing fire and under his feet is the evil dwarf, from whom Shiva is protecting the world.

The legend tells how Shiva was meditating on the mountain when ten thousand hermits came to him, angrily demanding Shiva spoke to them but intending to kill the god. When Shiva told them about the truth they released a fierce tiger on him. Shiva killed the tiger with one finger, skinned it and draped the skin over his shoulder. Next they let out a huge snake, but as it slithered across to him, hissing and waving its fangs, Shiva reached out and wrapped its body round his neck like a scarf. The hermits began to worry. They only had the evil dwarf left. They let it loose on Shiva but the god lifted his foot and danced on the dwarf. The rhythm captivated them. Then they could see all the other gods watching Shiva's dance and they worshipped Shiva too.

Words for Worship:

These are words that some people use when they worship God. Listen to them:

Flame dancing spirit, come

Sweep us off our feet and dance us through our days.

Surprise us with your rhythms;

Dare us to try new steps, explore new patterns and new partnerships;

Release us from old routines to swing in abandoned joy and fearful adventure.

And in the intervals, rest us in your still centre.

TERM: Spring

Theme for the Week:

Treasures of Ireland

Mapping the Week:

Monday: Valuing a beautiful country

Tuesday: Valuing story telling

Wednesday: Valuing faith

Thursday: Valuing St Patrick

Friday: Valuing peace

Exploring the Theme:

The theme explores popular and religious Irish culture from a number of perspectives but finishes with the focus on peace. It would be most appropriate to coincide with the celebration of St Patrick's Day, although that is not addressed specifically.

Resources:

Any traditional Irish folk music, e.g. *Fiddlesticks*, Nimbus Records from Past Times.

St Patrick's Breastplate can be found in most hymnbooks.

Songs about peace can be found in the BBC *Come & Praise* collections.

For the story of 'The Two Giants' see the section *Stories for Telling* and 'St Patrick'.

For historical background, see: Brassey and Ross, *The Story of Ireland*.

Orion Children's Books and Dolphin Paperbacks.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate natural beauty;
reflect on the shaping of national/religious identity;
acknowledge the importance of religion for some people;
consider the enduring nature of some words;

Moral:

understand that the responsibility for peace lies with every individual;
appreciate how misconceptions about others are held and passed on;

Social:

become aware of the impact of deeply held and diverse beliefs on community cohesion;
understand the impact of relationships on society;

Cultural:

explore ways in which heritage is communicated through traditional stories and music;
appreciate how communities can be fractured by cultural difference;
understand the importance of religion in Irish history.

Whole School Collective Worship

Monday

Theme: Treasures of Ireland

Focus: Valuing a Beautiful Country

The Assembly:

Engagement:

Play traditional Irish music as pupils come in and invite them to talk to each other about it and how it makes them feel.

Show pupils some images of the natural beauty of Ireland, using either slides or posters. Invite them to think of two or three words to describe what they have seen and share them with another person.

Exploration:

Introduce the phrase 'The Emerald Isle' and invite pupils to think what it means and where it is. Link the description to the metaphor of a jewel (as well as a colour) and talk about the precious nature of one's land.

Begin to explore the idea of deep-seated conflict. The beauty of the landscape has masked a great deal of grief and suffering in a people well known for their friendliness.

Ending:

*** Use the words for worship**

Invite pupils to think about how those words make them feel. What might it be like to be held in the palm of God's hand?

Supporting Material:

Ireland is a land of contrasts. The coastline is dramatic, especially in the west where the land ends abruptly in massive cliffs which drop in sheer crags to the Atlantic waves. The Giant's Causeway of volcanic basalt on the Northern Antrim coast juts out, with geometrical precision, into the sea at the foot of huge cliffs.

The unique and barren landscape of the Burren, limestone pavements in County Clare, contrasts sharply with the fertile central plains and the legendary peat boglands that developed after the last Ice Age and originally covered one seventh of the island.

The generous amount of rainfall ensures a green and luscious look to most of the country and often shrouds it in mist, giving it a mysterious, ethereal feel. But it has not been as serene a place as it looks and the country has a history of bitter conflict.

Words for Worship:

This is an ancient prayer that comes from Ireland. It is called a blessing.

Listen to the words and think about what they mean:

'May the road rise up to meet you;

May the wind be always at your back;

May the sun shine warm upon your face,

The rains fall soft upon your fields;

And, until we meet again, may

God hold you in the palm of his hand.'

Classroom Collective Worship

Tuesday

Theme: Treasures of Ireland

Focus: Valuing Story Telling

Key Stage 1 Assembly:

Tell the story of the Two Giants, using appropriate language.

Invite pupils to talk about:

how this story makes them feel;

why it is told to Irish children;

what stories tell us about ourselves.

Talk about the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland, geometric stepped columns of basalt, which stretch out into the sea and reappear on the Scottish island of Staffa. (Fingel's Cave).

Explain how stories do not need to have actually happened. We can learn about the way the world is and about people from fiction. Link the story to Ireland. * **Use the words for worship.**

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Invite pupils to think of a favourite story and to reflect what it teaches them.

Introduce the idea that stories tell people who they are. They are used to pass on traditions and beliefs from one generation to the next. Invite pupils to talk about why stories are more easily remembered than other words.

Talk about traditional Irish storytelling:

Who are the storytellers today?

What do stories do for us today?

* **Use the words for worship.**

Listen to a traditional Irish folk song, which is a story set to music.

Supporting Material:

Myths and legends are stories which have no basis in historical fact yet, are important ways of explaining the world. Ireland's rich legacy of stories features heroes and fierce battles. They are hundreds of years old. Storytelling used to be the most widespread entertainment among ancient Irish people. The Druids were educated people whose duties included passing on oral history. Each person had a role and it was the responsibility of the *fili* to tell stories. When fully trained, he would have been expected to be able to recite more than 350 tales. The *fili*'s patron would probably expect a different story each evening.

The Druids told stories about the other-world, the place where people's souls went after death, a place of universal youth where flowers always bloomed. The place was believed to be an island off the west coast.

People in Ireland still tell their stories, remembering gods and giants and wicked queens. Places are described according to what is believed to have happened there and the natural features of the country are explained in stories. The story of the Two Giants is one such story. (See Stories for Telling.).

Words for Worship:

** Think about the story you've heard and what you can learn from it. Stories feed the imagination. This is a prayer to thank God for our imagination. You can make it your own by saying 'Amen' at the end.*

Thank you for the joy of stories and for people to tell them to us. Let us use our imagination to the full. Help us to learn about ourselves from the stories we hear.

Key Stage Collective Worship

Wednesday

Theme: Treasures of Ireland

Focus: Valuing Faith

The Assembly for Key Stage 1:

Read verse 5 of the hymn, St Patrick's Breastplate:

'Christ be with me ...'

Talk about the words themselves and invite pupils to suggest what the words might say about the person who wrote them. Draw out ideas of faith and protection.

Tell the story of St Patrick, Saint of Ireland, emphasising his faithfulness.

Return to the hymn and explain why it is called 'St Patrick's Breastplate'.

Invite pupils to talk about what/who protects them.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Read Verse 4 of the hymn, St Patrick's Breastplate:

'I bind unto myself today the power of God to hold and lead ...'

Invite pupils to talk about what they might say about the person who wrote them. Tell the story of St Patrick, man of faith, and explore the idea of words as protection - a piece of armour. Invite pupils to talk about why this is a good metaphor.

Encourage them to share words that are important to them and say why.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland, a deeply religious country where there is much evidence of the importance of Christianity in the lives of individuals and communities. St Patrick is revered, especially among the Catholic population of North and South.

Little remains of Patrick's writing, but the famous hymn, 'I bind unto myself today' is believed to be fifth century and is attributed to him. This is one of a number of Irish prayers known as Loricae, breastplates which, it is believed, protect those who recite them with a special power. Legend has it that Patrick and his companions were once saved from ambush by reciting the words.

They were turned into deer and enabled to run safely away. The hymn is also called 'The Deer's Cry'.

The story of St Patrick is in the section: Stories for Telling.

Words for Worship:

** Listen to the words of Patrick's prayer:*

Christ be with me, Christ within me,

Christ before me, Christ behind me,

Christ beside me, Christ to win me,

Christ to comfort and restore me.

If you want to, you can make these words into a prayer for yourself.

Classroom Collective Worship

Thursday

Theme: Treasures of Ireland

Focus: Valuing St Patrick

Key Stage 1 Assembly:

Talk about some people's dislike of snakes although many are harmless. Ireland has no snakes. Tell the legend of Patrick banishing snakes and toads by ringing his bell on the mountain.

Explain the symbolism of this story and invite pupils to talk about what they would like to 'banish' if they could.

Ring a bell and keep a moment's quietness for pupils' reflections.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Invite pupils to imagine a rocky path zigzagging up a steep mountainside. A little way up, at the side of the track, is a white statue, with a hand raised in blessing. It is dark and there is a very long climb ahead

Talk about pilgrims climbing Patrick's holy mountain, some on their knees.

Invite pupils to talk about why people might undertake such a journey and to talk about an important journey they have made.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

Croagh Patrick is a mountain which dominates the scenery of County Mayo. Its inhospitable terrain was where Patrick regularly spent the 40 days of Lent and where he is believed to have battled with the forces of evil to claim the mountain, and the country, for Christianity. The mountain is a symbol of that struggle and his victory.

When Patrick rang his bell at the edge of the steep southern ridge, all the snakes and toads in Ireland are said to have leapt to their deaths, symbolising Patrick's banishing of evil from the country. This is a place of pilgrimage all year round but particularly on August 1st, the Lughnasa Feast, when tens of thousands of pilgrims climb to the summit, some on their knees.

Mass is celebrated in the tiny chapel on the top but in order to make the journey in one day, pilgrims have to start very early, climbing the first part of the path in darkness.

St Patrick is also remembered with fondness in his feast day, 17th March, when there are parades through the streets of cities all over the world where there are Irish communities.

Words for Worship:

** Let's listen to the words of St Patrick again:*

Christ be with me, Christ within me,

Christ before me, Christ behind me,

Christ beside me, Christ to win me,

Christ to comfort and restore me.

Whole School Collective Worship

Friday

Theme: Treasures of Ireland

Focus: Valuing Peace

The Assembly:

Engagement:

Invite pupils to meet Michael, a little Irish boy who goes shopping for some new shoes. He goes with his granny. They find just what he wants, black and shiny just like his big brother's shoes. He likes them a lot, but he is looking worried. "Granny," he asks, "are these Catholic shoes or Protestant shoes?"

Exploration:

Explore the impact of Michael's question, (a true story) in the context of conflict in Northern Ireland. Explain how religious differences have divided communities, leading to violence. Now there is hope. There is a will to establish peace.

Explore why Good Friday was an appropriate day to sign a peace agreement. Now everyone hopes it will be a reality for the people who have lived in fear for so long. Certainly it would not have been St Patrick's wish, in bringing Christianity to this country, that its people would hate each other so much because of their beliefs.

*** Light a candle and use the words for worship.**

Ending:

Sing an appropriate song, e.g.: 'Let there be peace on earth' or 'Spirit of Peace'.

Challenge pupils to think what they can do today to make their world a more peaceful, harmonious place.

Supporting Material:

In 1998 on Good Friday, a peace agreement was reached in Stormont, which could put an end to religious animosity and violence. It was a courageous step for everyone to take at the end of a long and difficult time of talking and it involved compromises on all sides.

There are still minorities of people who find it difficult to give up the struggle to have their own way but most people all across Ireland want peace more than anything else. They are thinking more and more about other people and less about themselves.

John Lennon's song *Give Peace a Chance*, which was written with Ireland in mind, could be used to close.

Words for Worship:

Peace has been prayed for by the people of Ireland since ancient times. They have asked God for peace and wished each other peace. Here are some words that have been used for centuries. Listen quietly as you look at the candle flame.

Deep peace, a soft white dove to you;

Deep peace, a quiet rain to you;

Deep peace, pure white of the moon to you;

Deep peace of the running wave to you;

Deep peace of the flowing air to you;

Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

TERM: Summer

Theme for the Week: Working Together

Mapping the Week:

Monday: I'd like to teach the world to sing

Tuesday: How we can work together

Wednesday: Becoming strong together

Thursday: When working together made a difference

Friday: Making a difference now

Exploring the Theme:

The theme is introduced through a humorous sequence of pictures that tell graphically of the need to work together. The key idea that is explored in a biblical context, a traditional story and two contemporary situations, is how much more productive and successful the effort is when it is collaborative rather than individual.

Resources:-

* Appropriate music:

“I'd like to teach the world to sing” *Apusskidu* Harrop, Black.

‘When God made the Garden of Creation’ *Come and Praise* BBC.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

remember that they do not live in isolation but that the human condition is shared;

think of others before themselves;

Moral:

understand that they have a responsibility towards others;

discuss ways in which they can promote the common good;

Social:

consider their own behaviour towards other people;

appreciate the benefits of co-operation;

evaluate the impact of shared action on world events;

Cultural:

become aware of the damaging effect of one culture's supremacy over others.

Whole School Collective Worship

Monday

Theme: Working Together

Focus: I'd like to teach the world to sing

The Assembly:

Engagement:

Introduce children to the song by reading the words and discussing them.

What does the writer of the song hope for?

What do the words 'perfect harmony' mean?

Exploration:

Explain to children they will have two minutes to talk to each other about something you are going to show them. Establish a signal for them to stop talking. This is most effective if it involves an action as well as a sound.

Show them the sequence of pictures of the donkeys. After two minutes, invite children to talk about their individual conversations and to share their responses to the story.

How does this show 'perfect harmony'?

What did the donkeys learn?

Ending:

*** Use the words for worship.**

Close by singing the song that introduced the assembly.

Supporting Material:

The words of the folk song, *'I'd like to teach the world to sing'* speak of 'perfect harmony'. That idea can be explored through its opposite, one aspect of which is conflict.

Words for Worship:

** Perhaps you would like to be very quiet for a moment and think about a time when you have been like one of those donkeys - when you have worked against someone or tried to outdo someone to get your own way. We all behave like that sometimes. Think about what you could have done in that situation. If you want to, you can say your own prayer, asking God to help you to be less selfish.*

Classroom Collective Worship

Tuesday

Theme: Working Together

Focus: How we can work together?

Key Stage 1 Assembly:

Invite children to name parts of their bodies and to imagine what they would say to each other if they could talk.

Tell the story of the body that did talk. Use the story to emphasise the need to work together in all aspects of life.

Discuss ways in which everyone works together in school.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Sing: *'I'd like to teach the world to sing'.*

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Invite children to think about what it is that makes their bodies so good at doing things. Tease out the importance of co-ordination and talk about the complex links between the brain and, for example, limbs. The body is a model of many parts working together.

Explore ways in which people can be the parts working together to form a whole - family, school, nation.

Use St Paul's idea of the Church as a body with many parts where every part is equally important. People have to work together to achieve that.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

The key stage 1 assembly makes use of a story about the body parts that complained of the stomach's laziness. The legs had to run to the shops to buy food, the hands had to prepare it, the teeth to chew it and so on, while the stomach appeared to do nothing. So the body parts decided to stop working so hard with the result that the stomach did the grumbling and the legs and arms had no energy. This story can be elaborated to illustrate the need for the body to work in harmony.

The focus of the key stage 2 assembly develops this idea through the biblical material from 1 Corinthians 12: 12-26. The way the body functions as one whole is used as an analogy to explain the unity of the Church as Christ's body. St Paul developed the idea to explain the universal and inclusive nature of the Church. The Christian ideal is that everyone is welcome in the Church and has a role to play in its community.

Making it Worship

** Look around at the other people in this class. We are like a body, working and learning together.*

Think very quietly about how well we do that. We can ask God to help us to do it better. (The teacher can either say some simple words or invite a child to volunteer).

Key Stage Collective Worship

Wednesday

Theme: Working Together

Focus: Becoming Strong Together

The Assembly:

Engagement:

Show pupils a bundle of sticks or a thick newspaper or telephone directory.
Invite individuals to try to break the whole bundle or all the paper.
Separate the sticks/sheets of paper and break or tear.

Exploration:

Talk about the strength of the bundle against the relative weakness of the individual.
Tell the Jataka story about the birds.
Talk about times when people need to stand together like the sticks and what it is that binds them together.
Sing *Bind us together*

Ending:

* Use the words that make it worship

Invite pupils to think about times when they work together.

Supporting Material:

A traditional Buddhist Jataka tale, written in India about 300 BCE, tells of the birds who worked together to escape capture. The hunter would creep up on them in the forest and throw his net over them and capture them to sell in the market. The hunter was very successful until the king of the birds warned his flock about the danger and told them not to be afraid. When the hunter's net fell on them, they were to fly up together and they would carry the net with them.

This was fine and it worked every time. The hunter couldn't understand it. Then, one day, an argument broke out amongst the birds and when the hunter's net fell, they were too busy pecking and squawking at each other to act on their king's instructions. One by one they remembered but despite the best efforts of each individual bird, none of them was strong enough to fly from under the net. On their own, they just couldn't do it.

Words for Worship:

* *'Bind us together, Lord, bind us together in love';*

Help us to find a way to work with everyone and to remember that, however clever we are, we can always be stronger when we work together.

Classroom Collective Worship

Thursday

Theme: Working Together Focus: When working together made a difference?

Key Stage 1 Assembly:

Tell the story very simply, emphasising the unfairness of Rosa's treatment and the strength of the collective response.

*** Use the words for worship**

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Sing or read the words of 'The ink is black' and talk about what the words mean.

Tell the story of Rosa Parks, exploring the racial issue but emphasising the success of the protest coming from the collective, united effort and resulting in the weak becoming strong.

***Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

It was the experience of Rosa Parks on a bus in Atlanta, USA that brought the Civil Rights Movement to prominence. She was refused a seat because she was black. As a result the black people of the city boycotted the buses. They simply refused to use the buses. They stood and watched buses go past almost empty and they walked wherever they wanted to go. For a whole year, no black person used a bus and eventually the bus company had to do something because it was losing money. The action was successful because everyone supported it and black people achieved something together that they would never have managed individually.

Words for Worship:

** Help us to understand that we can achieve so much more when we work with others, and we can make a difference.*

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together in love.

Whole School Collective Worship

Friday

Theme: Working Together

Focus: Making a difference now

The Assembly:

Engagement:

Show children the sequence of donkey pictures again. Remind them of the start of the week and the theme.

Exploration:

Invite children to talk about what would have happened if one donkey had been bigger than the other?

Talk about the unfairness of some situations and the difficulty of changing things alone.

Tell pupils about the Jubilee 2000 demonstration when 70,000 people worked together to achieve something that no one could have done alone. Show them the chain symbol, which was worn by the majority of those demonstrators.

Explain that not all the people were religious, but many who believe that God made the world for everyone and its resources should be fairly shared.

Sing 'When God made the Garden of Creation', or 'It only takes a tiny seed'.

Ending:

*** Use the words for worship.**

Invite pupils to think of the responsibility they have to work together for a better world.

Supporting Material:

The Jubilee 2000 campaign raised the issue of debt. It worked to highlight the problem and tried to persuade the wealthy nations to release the developing countries from their burden of debt. Poor countries are crippled by the need to repay a high percentage of their limited income to pay back what the rich nations are owed. When the G8 leaders met in Birmingham on 16.5.98, 70,000 people gathered in the city centre to demonstrate their concern. At 3 p.m. all the people joined hands to make a human chain around the city. They were asking the leaders to break the chain of debt. The world's most powerful men agreed to listen because so many people worked together to bring the issue to their notice. The G8 summit in 1999 in Germany had Third World Debt on its agenda.

Details of the Jubilee 2000 campaign can be obtained from Christian Aid. Its success is measured in the impact of debt relief in countries like Uganda where 4 million more children now go to school, that is sixty children for every one of the people in the human chain in Birmingham.

Words for Worship:

** This is my prayer for a fairer world: Listen to it and if you want to, you can say your own 'Amen'.*

Dear God, your beautiful world has become a place of hardship and injustice for so many people. Help us to work together for a fairer world in which the chains of unfairness can be broken forever. Amen.

TERM: Summer

Theme for the Week: Going Boldly

Mapping the Week:

Monday: How far is Infinity?

Tuesday: A View from the Moon

Wednesday: Beyond the Stars?

Thursday: What's it Worth?

Friday: How Boldly do I go?

Exploring the Theme:

This theme explores the analogy between space travel and the journey through life.

Resources:

Holst *The Planets Suite*.

'One More Step Along the World I Go' in *Come & Praise* BBC Publications.

'Over the Earth is a Mat of Green' in *Someone's Singing*, Lord Black.

'God who put the Stars in Space' in *ibid*.

'Space Oddity' David Bowie.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

develop the imaginative capacity to ponder the vastness of the Universe, the mystery of Infinity and the awesome possibility of a divine, creative presence; nurture a positive, hopeful attitude to life;

Moral:

reflect with humility on the complexity and fragility of the Universe recognise the need for care and respect for the natural world;

Social:

acknowledge the place of people, and of themselves, in the Universe; meet the unknown in their own lives with confidence;

Cultural:

recognise that the Universe has always been a mystery that has been explored in different ways.

Whole School Collective Worship

Monday

Theme: Going Boldly

Focus: How far is Infinity?

The Assembly:

Engagement:

Pour sand onto the floor (or into a suitable container!) and invite pupils to guess how many grains of sand there are. Relate this first to the number of grains of sand on a beach and then to an imaginary sandcastle. Compare the grains of sand to the number of stars.

Exploration:

Build up the “wow” factor! Use the ‘Did you know...?’ material as appropriate, inviting children to contribute their own ideas.

Introduce the term *infinity*.

Talk about how knowledge about space is acquired and the developments that have taken place. Invite children to reflect on the impact and the scope of knowledge:

When do we ever stop learning?

Is learning always comfortable?

Can we ever know everything?

Introduce a song.

*** Use the words for worship**

Ending:

Send children out with question:

What do you **really** want to find out?

Supporting Material:

If you built a sandcastle 5 miles wide, 5 miles long and 5 miles high, you would not have enough grains of sand to represent the number of stars in the universe.

Did you know?

Light from the sun takes 8 minutes to reach the earth.

The earth is 93 million miles away from the sun.

The next nearest star is 25 million, million miles from us.

We are part of a galaxy, a neighbourhood of stars, which is 100,000 light years across, only one of countless galaxies.

It takes 2 million years for light to travel from one galaxy to the next.

Since Galileo, the boundaries of knowledge have been pushed further and further. More sophisticated equipment has allowed greater exploration of space with subsequent increases in understanding. The latest revelations about planets around distant stars come from the Hubble Telescope.

Words for Worship:

** Just think how amazing it is that there are more stars than grains of sand in a bucket, or on a beach: more than we can ever count. Just think about that and if you want to, say your own prayer of thanks to God.*

Classroom Collective Worship

Tuesday

Theme: Going Boldly

Focus: A View from the Moon

Key Stage 1 Assembly:

Show pupils the photograph *Earthrise over the Moon* or describe it and invite them to create their own mind pictures of it.

Discuss what it is and how small the earth appears.

What do you recognise?

This is where we live. Can you see the people?

Where are the ants and beetles?

How big are you in the picture?

How does it make you feel?

Where do you think God might be?

*** Use the words for worship.**

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Introduce as above.

How do you feel when you look at this picture?

What questions does it make you want to ask?

Why don't we take greater care of our planet?

How important are you in this picture?

Where do you think God might be?

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

Earth rise over the Moon.

This photograph shows the earth in the blackness of space, rising over a landscape of the moon. The earth is blue and green and white. Outlines of the continents can be clearly made out.

This is the view seen so clearly by the astronauts of Apollo II as they stepped out of their lunar module onto the surface of the moon on 20 July 1969.

Millions of people all round the world watched their televisions spellbound as Neil Armstrong took his first famous steps.

“This is one small step for a man,” he said, “but a great leap for mankind.”

Words for Worship:

** Listen to some words from a song of praise called a psalm; you may want to make them into a prayer:*

‘When I look at the sky that 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?

O Lord, your greatness is seen in all the world! Your praise reaches up to the heavens.’

Key Stage Collective Worship

Wednesday

Theme: Going Boldly

Focus: Beyond the Stars?

The Assembly for Key Stage 1:

Help pupils to recall the images of the earth in space. Use ideas opposite for the basis for a fantasy journey, encouraging children to be still and quiet even for a moment, perhaps repeating some of the words to keep their imagination focused. It is important to bring them back to earth!

Invite them to tell someone else quietly how their journey felt and what they saw. Use an established signal to regain their attention. Send them out at the end with the rhetorical question: *I wonder what's beyond the stars? What does it make you wonder?*

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

Read the words of the American astronaut quoted opposite. Invite pupils to guess their source. Read them again, inviting pupils to listen with their eyes closed and imagine they are astronauts. Go on to describe the silent, velvety blackness and suggest they are looking out at millions of stars, as sharp and clear as diamonds.

How does it feel?

What does it make them wonder?

What's beyond the stars?

*** Use the words for worship.**

Words for Worship:

** Creator God, your stars make us wonder; the universe is a mystery. It makes us wonder. It is good to wonder. Thank you for the joy of wondering.*

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

The sky is only blue because of the layer of air around the earth. Outside the earth's atmosphere, it is all black. The astronauts saw the stars much more brightly from space than we see them. And the stars go on forever. Imagine you are leaving the earth in a space ship. You can travel up into that velvety blackness, up and up until the earth looks like a glass ball shimmering behind you. There are so many stars, more than you could possibly count and they do go on for ever. Look around you. There are no sounds. Just deep, silent, velvety blackness. You're quite safe here and you can take time to be still and look around.

Supporting Material:

'You look out of the window of your space ship and you're looking back across the blackness of space, a quarter of a million miles away. You can look back on the earth and see from pole to pole and across oceans and continents, and you can watch it turn and see there are no strings holding it up and it's moving in a blackness that is beyond comprehension.'

The earth is surrounded by blackness even though you're looking through sunlight. There is only light if the sun has something to shine on. When the sun shines through space, it's black.

What are you looking at? What are you looking through? You can call it the universe but its the infinity of space and the infinity of time.'

Classroom Collective Worship

Thursday

Theme: Going Boldly

Focus: What's it Worth?

The Assembly for Key Stage 1:

Listen to the music. Talk about what has happened in the song.

How would you feel if you were Major Tom?

What might make him feel brave?

If Major Tom gets back safely, do you think he would travel in space again?

*** Use the words for worship.**

Key Stage 2 Assembly:

Listen to the music. Talk about what has happened in the song.

What would make someone want to travel in space?

What would be your source of inspiration?

Why would you take such a risk?

Would it be worth it?

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

Space travel involves risk.

The song *Space Oddity* by David Bowie creates an atmosphere of adventure and tension.

For some people in risk situations, faith is a source of strength and inspiration.

Words for Worship:

** Some people pray when they are in difficult situations. Listen to the words of a prayer that someone might use:*

Dear God, thank you for always being there when I need you. Help me to trust you to bring me through. Amen.

Whole School Collective Worship

Friday

Theme: Going Boldly

Focus: How Boldly do I go?

The Assembly:

Engagement:

Tell the story of Apollo 13.

Emphasise the unknown aspects of the experience.

Explore ways in which such travel in space is like everyday life.

Exploration:

Invite pupils to think of something in their own lives, which they are anticipating anxiously (refer to moving on to a new class/school). Talk about the excitement and link to the astronaut's thoughts before take off.

Explore the mixture of emotions and the need to 'go boldly'.

Talk about the effects of a confident outlook but confirm that it's okay to be uncertain and to share that uncertainty.

Ending:

Everyone faces difficult situations, although not all of us face the risks that astronauts cope with. We all need courage to 'go boldly'. Often, feeling you can cope with something is enough to make sure of success.

*** Use the words for worship.**

Supporting Material:

When Apollo II landed on the moon in 1969 it seemed that space was really being conquered. Less than a year later, Apollo 13 took off for the moon but on the way an oxygen tank exploded making the landing impossible and the rest of the mission very uncertain. The astronauts did get back safely, but only just. The risks were very high and it was an anxious time for everyone.

Like so many activities (and more so than most) space travel involves risk. There have been disasters as well as anxious times. The anticipation brings comments like:

'It is a fine morning, a clear sky, sunny, fresh. Only in my soul is there something unquiet.' Soviet Cosmonaut

'We walked out to the pad ... we walked slower that morning; we were looking around a lot; we didn't want to miss anything because, for all we knew, it might be our last time to see things on earth ...' 'When they closed the hatch, it went clang like a dungeon door.'

American Astronaut

Words for Worship:

** Faith in God gives many people the courage to face difficulties in their lives, helping them to 'go boldly'. Just be quiet for a moment and think about something in your life that is worrying you, either because it involves risk or you are just certain what to expect. In the silence you can say your own prayer if you want to, asking God to strengthen you.*

Section 3

Plans for

Collective Worship

Weekly Themes Model A (Week-to-a-Page)

Theme for the Week: Belonging

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

The theme explores belonging, first from a religious point of view, using a traditional Islamic story to encourage pupils to think about where they belong, and finishes with belonging to their school. It is an opportunity to celebrate belonging together and is intended to help pupils understand that belonging is more than outward show. It is a sense of rootedness, security and of feeling valued for being an individual yet being part of a group.

Resources:

The story: 'The Woman at the Gate of the City' is in the section *Stories for Telling*

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate how important it is to belong;
understand that to belong makes demands on the individual;
consider what they personally offer to the groups to which they belong;
think about the ways in to which they show they belong;
reflect how they keep their own light shining;

Moral:

recognise that belonging demands commitment;
contemplate the moral responsibility of belonging;
understand the importance of shared values;

Social:

reflect on the human need to belong;
recognise that belonging involves relationship with other people;

Cultural:

understand that the need to belong is universal but signs of belonging are influenced by culture.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell the story of 'The Woman at the Gate of the City'. Explore why the woman changed her mind. Talk about the adjustments she would have had to make to help her feel she belonged. Invite pupils to think about what makes people leave where they belong today.	The woman who didn't belong	<i>Listen to the words that are said by people who belong to the Muslim tradition: 'I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah'. This is their way of saying they belong to God. Take a moment to think quietly about that idea.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk about where they belong. Explore why it is important for us to belong. Introduce the idea of 'rootedness', of belonging in a particular place.	Where do we belong?	<i>Be very still and think about some of the people to whom you belong. Think of things you have shared and share today. Try and hold someone's face in your mind and if you want to, you can say your own prayer to God.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Begin with the words for worship and invite pupils to suggest how this image relates to their experience. Talk about why it is important that each light shines. Explain the importance to some people of belonging to a religious community and how belonging to a community gives the individual person strength.	Belonging together.	<i>For some people, the different religions are like the branches of a tree. There is one trunk, lots of roots and many branches. On each branch there is a light and the lights are of differing colours. But they all draw their light, their life, from the one tree trunk. We all need to keep our own light bright.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Reflect on the words for worship from the previous day and relate them to the school. Talk about what makes the 'trunk' of the tree. Invite pupils to talk about their individual responsibility to value others and to help them to keep their light shining. Talk about what makes a light go dim and stops the person from wanting to belong. Light a candle.	Feeling we belong.	<i>Repeat the words for worship, using as the first line: Our school is like a tree....</i>
Friday Whole School	Invite pupils to talk to each other about what shows that they belong to the school. Look closely at and talk about the school badge / logo. Explain that there are more important things that show they belong; sharing the same values, following the same rules, feeling part of the community, caring for each other, wherever we come from. Whatever our differences, we share common ground.	Showing we belong.	<i>These are words written by a famous Christian called John Wesley. They are about caring for each other. Listen to them quietly: 'Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.'</i>

Theme for the Week: Treasuring

Mapping the Theme:

This week is planned to coincide with the United Nations' Day for the Ozone Layer, a treasure we are only just beginning to appreciate. It focuses principally, however, on the act of treasuring, of making precious, and moves from the idea of treasuring things to treasuring others. The idea of a person or a relationship as precious is raised in the first story, and explored further in the famous Oscar Wilde story *The Happy Prince*.

Resources:

The Happy Prince. Oscar Wilde.

Appropriate songs would include: 'The Best Gift'.
'Lost and Found' both in *Come and Praise* BBC Publications.

The story of Sajida's Lost Treasure can be found in *Stories for Telling*

The parables of The Pearl of Great Price and The Rich Fool can be found in Matthew 13: 45-46 and Luke 12: 16-21 respectively.

TERM: Autumn

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

reflect on what is precious to them;
develop their capacity to value what is precious;
challenge their assumptions about what is precious;
understand that treasuring is fundamental to what it is to be human;

Moral:

question their capacity to put others first;
think of others;

Social:

contemplate relationships as treasures to be valued;
understand how treasuring can nurture relationships;

Cultural:

be aware that treasuring the Ozone Layer is both a shared, cross cultural responsibility but also an individual one.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce theme by sharing a personal treasure. Talk about treasuring. Tell the story of 'Sajida's Lost Treasure'. Talk about the story. What or who was Sajida's new treasure? What are treasures? Pupils could be invited to bring a personal treasure tomorrow.	What are treasures?	<i>Think about a treasure you have. Try and see it in your mind. If you want to, you can say thank you to God for your treasure.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to share their personal treasures or to describe them and say why they are precious. Talk about what it means to treasure something.	Our own treasures.	<i>Let's be very quiet together and think about the treasures we have. Think particularly about people who lose their treasures.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Talk about the Ozone Layer as a precious treasure. UN Day for Ozone Layer is September 16 th . Invite pupils to consider why we need to recognise its importance and treasure it.	Taking treasures for granted.	<i>Many people believe God made the world. This is a prayer for them: Thank you God for the wonderful world you have given us. Help each one of us to respect and love our world and to care for it responsibly.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Talk about Jesus' teaching about treasuring. The parables of The Pearl of Great Price and The Rich Fool are allegories of the Kingdom of Heaven. Invite pupils to think about where their heart is.	Treasure is where the heart is.	<i>Listen to these words of Jesus: 'Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth where it goes nasty and moth-eaten and thieves break in to steal it. Store up treasure in heaven ... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of <i>The Happy Prince</i> by Oscar Wilde. Talk about the cost and rewards of treasuring others more than ourselves.	The cost of treasuring.	<i>Close your eyes and imagine you are the happy prince, splendid in all your gold. How will you respond to what you can see around you? Can you see yourself treasuring others enough to do what the prince in the story did? Be very still and think how much you treasure other people. I wonder what treasuring means to you? If you want to, you can make your thoughts into a prayer.</i>

Theme for the Week: Recognising Achievement

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

This theme brings together two significant historical events: the institution of the George Cross in September 1940 and the conquest of Everest in September 1953, both associated with valour.

Resources:

The story ‘Juggling for God’ is in the section *Stories for Telling*

For background on the conquest of Mount Everest, see the section *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the strength of the human spirit in aspiring to achieve beyond its limits;
reflect on their own achievements;
value all achievements;

Moral:

recognise that all achievements are worthy of acknowledgement;
question how far one achievement might diminish another;

Social:

think about how one person’s achievement might benefit the common good;
acknowledge that everyone is capable of achieving something;

Cultural:

appreciate that recognition of great achievement transcends cultural differences;
be aware that feats of courage are not the prerogative of people from any particular background.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the theme. Talk about the institution of the George Cross Medal (23.9.40), the highest recognition of civilian bravery. It is given to people who show exceptional bravery. It was awarded in 1997 to Nursery Nurse Lisa Potts for the protection of children in her care. She put herself between her pupils and a man with a knife.	Recognising high achievement	<i>Let's be quiet and think of brave people. Many people act bravely for the sake of others; some, like Lisa Potts, are recognised and celebrated, countless others go almost unnoticed. Thank you, God, for brave people.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk about their own achievements, however small and however varied. Stress the variety of ways in which we can all achieve. Discuss how their achievements are recognised and suggest pupils congratulate each other on achievements.	Our own achievements	<i>Think about the things you can do, with your body, with your mind, with determination and perseverance. Quietly say well done to yourself and if you want to, you can say thank you to God.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of the man who, despite feeling he could not do anything, discovered that he could juggle and make people laugh.	All achievements count	<i>Help us all to discover what we are capable of and to be able to achieve well. Help us to be able to recognise others' achievements.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Tell the story of the 1924 attempt on Mount Everest by Mallory & Irvine. The climbers perished only a short distance from the summit and no one knows whether they reached it or not, but their achievement was awesome.	Unrecognised achievements	<i>Think quietly about the story of George Mallory and Andrew Irvine. They were brave men whose achievement was not recognised; their adventure remains a mystery.</i>
Friday Whole School	Return to Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain (8848m), successfully conquered in 1953 by Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tensing Norgay. This achievement on 24 September was one of the greatest human successes of all time. Invite pupils to think about what makes an achievement great.	The greatest achievement	<i>Let us recognise the achievements of great women and men throughout history and give thanks for their courage, determination and vision.</i>

Theme for the Week: Heaven on Earth

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

This theme gives the children the opportunity to explore their own ideas of heaven, beginning with the celebration of Rosh Hashanah when Jewish people think of the gates of heaven being open for their prayers. These ideas of heaven are developed through other metaphors, one Sikh and one Christian, to help children understand that for some people heaven can be a 'here and now' reality.

Resources:

See: Grimmitt et al at *A Gift to the Child* for:
The sound of the shofar on cassette,
A story about Rosh Hashanah (Rebecca's Story)
The story of The Call of Guru Nanak.

For the story of the Mustard Seed see Matthew 13 : 31-32.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

contemplate their own ideas of heaven;
reflect upon different ideas of heaven;
understand that, for many religious people, ideas of heaven are important;
ponder on issues of death and bereavement;
realise that every little act of kindness shown will make themselves and others happier;

Moral:

understand that they each have the opportunity and responsibility to make life happier for other people;

Social:

recognise that the world is a happier place when everyone is kind to each other;

Cultural:

understand that religious people have strong ideas of heaven;
appreciate that these ideas are expressed in a variety of ways and reflect many different images.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words of Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Begin by showing pupils a shofar and either blowing it or playing a recording of the sound. Talk about the Jewish festival of Rosh Hashanah and the belief that the gates of heaven are open for prayers, until the shofar is blown. Invite pupils to talk about the prayers they would like to send into heaven.	The gates of heaven	<i>When Jewish people celebrate Rosh Hashanah they are saying to God that they are sorry for the things they have said or done. They ask God to forgive them, to give them another chance and the strength to be good. In a quiet moment, perhaps you would like to do the same.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Recall the Jewish festival. Invite children to imagine the gates of heaven and talk about who or what they can see (in their imagination) through the gates. This may give pupils a much needed opportunity to talk about death and loss.	Looking into heaven	<i>Invite children to say/read the prayers they would like to send into heaven 'while the gates are open'.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of Guru Nanak and his experience of tasting the sweetness of heaven, in the nectar of God's name. Invite everyone to talk about the 'sweetness' in their own lives.	The taste of heaven	<i>These are some words that Sikhs sing when they praise God. Listen to them and think quietly about them. 'Just as there is a scent in a flower and reflection in a mirror, so God is in you. Find him in your heart.'</i>
Thursday Classroom	Begin with the words for worship, inviting children to imagine their ideas of heaven. If possible, use music to create an appropriate atmosphere. Encourage children to share their ideas, either orally or in pictures.	My idea of heaven	<i>Close your eyes and, very quietly, think your happiest, most contented thoughts. Enjoy that feeling. Keep it with you. Perhaps heaven is like this.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of the Mustard Seed, which Jesus told to help people understand that heaven is here and now. Explore the idea that, just as the smallest seed grows into a great tree, so the smallest act of kindness and love can have great effect in life. Invite children to think about one small act they can do to make the earth a more heavenly place. Perhaps everyone could be challenged to think about the notice outside the church which says 'What on earth are you doing, for heaven's sake?'	Heaven on earth	<i>Say the Lord's Prayer, inviting children to join in if they wish to. Invite everyone to reflect on the phrases: 'Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven'.</i>

Theme for the Week: Words, Words, Words

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

The week begins with five adjectives, which describe words: wonderful, ordinary, rhythmic, dangerous, significant or (special); the initial letters spell 'WORDS'. The adjectives are introduced on Monday and then used to structure the rest of the collective worship during the week.

The week is planned to coincide with National Poetry Day.

Resources:

Five large cards with the adjectives on one side and their initial letters on the reverse.

For the story of Bilal, see:

Grimmitt et al *A Gift to the Child: Teachers' Source Book*
Simon & Schuster, p68.

For the nation's favourite poetry, see 3 anthologies:

Favourite Poems

Favourite Comic Poems

Favourite Love Poems

edited by Griff Rhys Jones, published by the BBC and available from all book shops.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the power of words;
recognise that words are sometimes inadequate;
be still, without words;
think about the ways they use words;
appreciate how words are used in worship;

Moral:

consider loving others as they love themselves;
recognise the potential of words to hurt;

Social:

consider how fundamental words are to communication between people;
think about the impact of words on other people;

Cultural:

understand how words are influenced by cultural differences but the ideas they express are often universal and transcend cultural difference.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the theme by presenting 5 cards with words; <i>wonderful ordinary, rhythmic, dangerous and significant (or special)</i> . Have the initial sounds on reverse. Invite pupils to talk about what the adjectives might be describing and then guess what the letters spell. Talk about the theme, which will culminate in the National Poetry Day celebration. Set up a poll to find the school's favourite poem.	What are words?	<i>Words are wonderful but sometimes words cannot express how we feel. Sometimes you have to just let your feelings 'be'. For some people, that can be prayer. Let's be still for a moment and just be.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Talk about how important words are and return to the five adjectives. Invite pupils to identify some 'ordinary' everyday words. Suggest two of the most 'ordinary' words are 'I' and 'you'. Talk about their importance. Invite pupils to talk about how they feel about those words. 'Love your neighbour as yourself' are also ordinary words but even more important.	Ordinary words.	<i>This is my prayer for today; You might like to make it yours too. O God, help me to love myself and those who are my neighbours. Help me to use words well. Amen.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	KS 1 Focus on words that are dangerous because they hurt and invite pupils to talk about words that hurt them. KS 2, talk about words that people have died for e.g. Tyndale and the translation of the Bible.	Dangerous words	<i>Be very still and think about a time when you have said something hurtful. How it would feel to risk your life because of something you said? You may want to make your thoughts into a prayer</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Tell a story about the importance of words, e.g.: Bilal and the first Call to Prayer. Invite pupils to talk about words that mean a lot to them.	Significant/special words	<i>These are words Muslims hear five times every day: 'God is most great. I witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of God. Come to prayer. Come to salvation. God is most great.'</i>
Friday Whole School	Invite pupils to share some of their significant words. Talk about National Poetry Day, maybe sharing the Nation's favourite poem from the previous year. Read the poem which has been voted the school's favourite.	Wonderful words	<i>Listen to these words from the Bible. This is part of a psalm, a kind of poem: 'We give thanks to you, O God, We give thanks to you! We proclaim how great you are and tell of the wonderful things you have done.'</i>

Theme for the Week: God's Goodness

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

This theme builds up to a celebration of harvest from a Jewish perspective. The context for the material is the Exodus story of God's goodness to the wandering Israelites, the biblical source of the celebrations. The days are linked by the traditional Jewish prayer, which also raises questions about those for whom God's goodness and plenty are not realised.

Resources:

The stories: 'Manna from Heaven', 'Elijah & the Rains' and 'The Hungry Fox' are all in *Stories for Telling*.

The most accessible text of the 23rd Psalm can be found in the Good News Bible, on page 549 of the Old Testament.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

contribute to and share in a celebration of the earth's resources;
understand something of Jewish beliefs in God's goodness;
recognise a sense of providence and purpose in the essential goodness of the world;
reflect on some traditional words or praise;

Moral:

understand that however much people might believe in God's goodness, everyone has a responsibility to share the earth's resources;

Social:

appreciate how people are linked with each other through present religious practices and with those in the past through traditions and history;

Cultural:

think about how a cultural identity is formed and influenced by history and tradition.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell the story 'Manna from Heaven'. Invite pupils to talk about where they think God lives and how God's goodness might be shown today.	Living God's goodness	<i>Listen to these words of a traditional Jewish prayer: 'We praise you O Lord our God, King of the Universe. Your goodness supports all the world With grace, With love and with compassion You provide food enough for all Your living kindness is everlasting Because of your great goodness We do not want May we never lack daily bread For you feed and nourish all; You are good to all And you provide food for all your creatures.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Introduce the words of a psalm: <i>The Lord is my Shepherd</i> , exploring the Jewish idea of God as provider and carer. Read an appropriate number of verses from the psalm and talk about it as a song of praise for God's goodness.	Singing God's goodness	<i>We praise you, O Lord Provider for all.'</i> (Use these words or some of them, as appropriate, every day and invite pupils to think about them)
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of 'Elijah and the Rains'. Talk about the importance of rain. Invite pupils to raise their own questions about the story and talk about them.	Praying God's goodness	
Thursday Classrooms	Tell the story of 'The Hungry Fox', used by Rabbi Akiba to remind the Jews that they live by God's goodness.	Telling God's goodness	
Friday Whole School	Build a sukkah with a roof of branches and decorated with harvest produce. Use it as a focus for a harvest thanksgiving, keeping the Jewish theme and exploring ways in which Jews today remember and celebrate God's goodness to them. Use the words for worship, then challenge pupils with the idea that in a world where there is so much food, why do some people starve?	Remembering God's goodness	

Theme for the Week: The Joy of Reading

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

The focus on books and reading helps everyone to recognise that there is a world there being, or waiting to be, explored. It broadens horizons, is a key to learning, tells some people who they are and helps everyone to find themselves. For pupils who are finding reading a challenge, this week is intended to be encouraging.

The climax of the week focuses on the celebration of the Torah when the scrolls are paraded around the synagogue in the joyful festival of Simchat Torah.

Resources:

For the story of Akiba see the section called *Stories for Telling*.

The opening verses of the Bible are in Genesis chapter 1, at the beginning of the Jewish Bible or the Old Testament.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

understand how reading broadens everyone's horizons intellectually, imaginatively, emotionally and spiritually;
feel a sense of achievement and enjoyment in their own reading;

Moral:

recognise the importance of reading in helping the individual to consider issues of right and wrong;
appreciate the impact of reading on the direction of a person's life;

Social:

consider how reading can influence the way people relate to each other;

Cultural:

appreciate how what is written and therefore what is read shapes and influences belief.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell the story of Mary Jones who learned to read because she wanted to be able to read the Bible. Explore the emotions involved.	I want to read.	<i>We are fortunate to be able to learn to read. Be very still and think about that. If you want to, you can say your own prayer asking God to help you with your learning.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk about their own experiences of reading, the joys and difficulties. Emphasise the sense of achievement and the importance of reading as a key to learning.	Reading is worthwhile.	<i>This is my prayer for today. If you want it to be your prayer too, you can say 'Amen'. Thank you God for books and for the joy of learning to read them. Amen.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Read the beginning paragraphs of two or three appropriate books. Include Genesis 1:1. Talk about how books open doors into another world of which we can become part. We are never alone with a book.	Doorway to another world.	<i>Let's hear my prayer again. Be very still and listen. 'Thank you God for books...'</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Show pupils a favourite book of yours and invite them to talk about their own favourite books. Explore why books are precious. Explore how books influence us all.	Favourite reads.	<i>Let's use my prayer to help us to think about our favourite stories. You can join in if you want to. Thank you God for books...</i>
Friday Whole School	Show the pupils either a model Torah Scroll or a Torah Mantle. Handle it appropriately. Explain how reading such books tells religious people who they are, where they have come from and how they should behave. Tell the story of Akiba learning to read. Talk about the Jewish celebration of Simchat Torah.	A way of life through reading.	<i>Many people believe God has spoken to them through their holy books. Think about what a wonderful thought that would be. If you have a book that is really important, perhaps you can see it in your head. You may like to say thank you for it.</i>

Theme for the Week: Freedom

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

This theme explores ideas about freedom. By focusing on people for whom freedom is a dream, an idea, it seeks to challenge pupils to think about their own situation but also to recognise the responsibility freedom brings. The material focuses principally on the fight of black people in South Africa and America but raises issues of equality of opportunity on a wider canvas.

Resources:

For a traditional freedom song, see, e.g:

Hyberg *Freedom is Coming* Utryck

ISBN: 91-86788-00-0. Ref for cassette: IC/WGP/006

Distribution in the UK by:

Wild Goose Publications of the Iona Community 0141 445 4561.

For the story of Nelson Mandela, see: the section *Stories for Telling*

and also his autobiography: *The Long Walk to Freedom*

the quotation included in the story is on page 749 of Nelson Mandela's book. (1994) Abacus.

For the story of Harriet Tubman : 'The Black Moses', see *Stories for Telling*.

The story 'Play in the Park?' is in the same section.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

understand the resoluteness of the human spirit to pursue an ideal;
appreciate stories of enduring courage and conviction;
imagine what it would be like to be denied freedom, to be enslaved;

Moral:

appreciate that freedom is a right denied to some people;
understand that denial of freedom is morally wrong;
be aware that freedom carries responsibility;

Social:

recognise that individuals can have enormous impact on societies and on history;
think about what freedom means;

Cultural:

challenge historical notions of cultural superiority;
think about the oppression of some people because of their colour/religion;

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Play a recording of a freedom song and invite pupils to talk about how it makes them feel. Focus on the rhythm and music itself as well as the words. Tell the story: 'Play in the Park?' Talk about situations where freedom is denied, as in the Apartheid era in South Africa.	Singing Freedom	<i>These are the words of a black South African woman waiting for hours to cast her vote for the first time in 1994. Think about them: 'If you could look into my heart today, you would see the sun shining there for the first time in my life.' Be still and think about that woman's joy. What makes the sun shine in your heart?</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Tell the story of Nelson Mandela, the freedom fighter, who became South Africa's first black president, after 30 years of imprisonment for the cause of freedom for his people.	Working for freedom	<i>Let us think about the people of South Africa, trying to build a free and just society and remember the man who led his people to begin to realise the vision. You can make your own prayer if you wish.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Talk about what makes a free society, about equal opportunities for all, irrespective of colour, beliefs, gender etc. Talk about the uniqueness of the individual and the value of everyone.	Living in freedom	<i>The freedom to be myself depends on my recognition of your right to be yourself too. Help me to be free. May you be free as well.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk about what freedom means to them. How are they free and in what respects is their freedom restricted? Tell the story of the release from unjust imprisonment of Guru Hargobind and talk about freedom to be rather than just freedom from.	Celebrating Freedom	<i>Let's give thanks that we are all free to be.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of Harriet Tubman, born a slave in 1820 in Maryland, USA and called the Black Moses because of her work in freeing her people from slavery. Talk about the responsibility freedom carries and the courage it demands from everyone. Invite pupils to consider what their responsibilities are to others who may not enjoy freedom	Understanding freedom	<i>Think quietly for a moment about Harriet Tubman who risked her life many times to save others. Think of her courage and determination. Think what freedom meant to her. Think about your own freedom and if you want to, you can make your thoughts into a prayer.</i>

Theme for the Week: Remembrance

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

This week uses the story of the foundation of the Royal British Legion and the institution of the Poppy Appeal to raise issues about fighting as well as put in context the National Festival of Remembrance.

Resources:

The story: 'Why a Poppy?' can be found in the section *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

recognise the importance of remembering;
think about the suffering associated with war;
recognise that memories can be good or bad;
be inspired by the way a national event, shared by many, grew out of one person's idea and action;

Moral:

ask questions about the morality of fighting;
remember that many people gave their lives for others' safety and well being;

Social:

contemplate the notion of self sacrifice for the common good;
appreciate the importance of the national remembrance;

Cultural:

understand that the need to belong is universal but signs of belonging are influenced by culture;
appreciate that the implications of war transcend cultures.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Show the children a poppy used for the appeal and gather their ideas about it. Share the story of the origin of its use by the Royal British Legion. Discuss why the poppy is a good symbol to use for Remembrance. Invite pupils to talk about what they use to help them remember important events/people.	Why a poppy?	<i>Look at the poppy and listen to the poem again. Imagine the fields of poppies and think about the words. Be very still.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite the children to discuss in pairs a happy and sad memory. Why are these memories important to them? What makes them so memorable? Talk about reasons to remember sad or bad things when they are unpleasant or upsetting.	The importance of remembering.	<i>Listen to their prayer and if you'd like to make it your own, say 'Amen' at the end. Thank you God for all our memories. Help us to be inspired by them and learn from them. Amen.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Introduce the title of the Royal British Legion, linking it with Monday's work and focus on one of the reasons for their founding: "to ensure that we will remember them, those who gave their lives for the peace and freedom we now enjoy." Use an example such as Violet Saboutle to illustrate the sacrifices made in the cause of freedom, remembered today, to encourage individuals to contribute to keeping peace. Invite the children to suggest how we might do this. Explore with the children what is worth fighting for. When is fighting justified?	Fighting for peace.	<i>This is a prayer Christians use: 'Dear God, help us to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds.' Amen.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Use the RBL schools' pack to inform children about the work undertaken by the Royal British Legion. Why is their work important? Draw out the idea that those of us who have not experienced war need help to 'remember' those who suffered. Why is this crucial when there is peace now?	Keeping peace.	<i>These words are about remembering. Let them speak to you. "Let us not forget the strength of their fight nor the fear of each battle. Let us remember each life given for peace which now is theirs."</i>
Friday Whole School	Use a poppy or wreath as a focus to describe how poppies will be used during the Remembrance Service. Recall the poem on Monday. How will we 'keep faith'? The poppies are symbols of hope. The hope is that we will be successful in working for peace. This is to help us remember that each life that was lost was precious.	Poppies of hope.	<i>Like many people all over the world, we will have a time of quiet to remember everyone who suffered or died fighting for peace. Follow these words with a period of silence.</i>

Theme for the Week: Hooray for School

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

This week is an opportunity to help pupils realise that something they take for granted – coming to school – is a right but also a great opportunity, which has been, and still is, denied to some children. It is also an opportunity to celebrate the community of the school and to recognise that its success is a team effort.

Resources:

For an account of school life in the late 19th century see; e.g.: Marshall S. *Fenland Chronicle* Penguin p180.

Materials for badge making.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

see that school can be enjoyable;
appreciate that education helps them to know who they are;
understand that they have a unique opportunity to learn;
make the best use of education in school;

Moral:

acknowledge that everyone has a right to learn;
respect others' right to learn;

Social:

appreciate the benefits of working together as a team;
challenge those who inhibit others' learning by their attitudes and behaviour;
value the school community.

Cultural:

know that children in this country have not always had the opportunity to come to school;
be aware that the rights of children to learn are not universally recognised.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Invite pupils to talk to each other about how they feel to be in school. Explain they are fortunate. Many children do not go to school. Talk about homeless children living in sewers in Bogata (Columbia, South America) and those kidnapped to be soldiers in Sudan. Think about what life holds for those children, who have no education to prepare them for their future.	Denied the right to go to school	<i>These at the words of a Christian prayer. Listen and think about them:</i> <i>'Make your circle around the poor, God of Love.'</i> (Read the words twice with a pause)
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils in pairs to brainstorm why they come to school. Explain that it is one of the entitlements in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28) Explore the notion of rights.	Why do we come to school?	<i>We are all here in our school. Let's feel good about it and remember those children who have a right to learn like we do but nowhere to go to learn.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Use the information in the piece 'School for All' to introduce discussion about entitlement to education. Invite children to think about what life would be like without school.	School for all	<i>Think of three good things about our school and hold them in your head. Remember how fortunate we are to be here. You may want to make your thoughts into a thank you prayer.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	How do you feel about school today? What sort of things might stop you saying 'Hooray for school'? What would make it better? How can we help each other to enjoy school? Provide materials for each child to make a small badge saying 'Hooray for school', to wear for Collective Worship the next day.	Taking school for granted.	<i>Have you noticed how lovely/exciting/interesting your school is? Thank God for school. Help us not to take it and the people here for granted.</i>
Friday Whole School	Invite as many of the people associated with the school as possible in to assembly. Talk about the community as a team and invite someone, e.g.: a lunchtime supervisor or a governor to talk about what the school means to them. The letters spelling the name of the school could be used to structure the presentation. Finish the assembly by inviting everyone to shout 'Hooray for school'!	A team effort.	<i>Let's use the words of the school prayer (listen to the words of a school prayer) to help us to remember how good it is to be here.</i>

Theme for the Week: Qualities of a Friend

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

This week explores the concept of friendship, through some of the characteristics of a good friend. It uses a Jesus story, a traditional Sikh story, an historical story and a contemporary (and amazing) story. Finally, all the characteristics personified in the various stories are drawn together in the concept of love, the only word that is necessary to describe the single, most important quality of a friend.

Resources:

For the story of the call of Matthew, see: Luke 5: 27-33.

Information to help with the story of Captain Oates, 'A Fearless Explorer' can be found in the section Stories for Telling.

See *Stories for Telling*, for the story of 'An Unlikely Friendship'.

It would be helpful, where appropriate, to have the words on large cards, including the final word: Love.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the characteristics of a true friend;
understand that all other characteristics are subsumed in the word 'love', the supreme quality;
reflect on their own capacities to be a friend;

Moral:

consider why friends are important;
challenge their own perceptions of other people;
be critical of their own treatment of others;
be honest about the demands of friendship;

Social:

understand the importance of friends;

Cultural:

appreciate how the qualities of friendship transcend cultural barriers.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Invite pupils to share with someone else the first word that comes into their heads at the word 'friend'. Share and talk about some of the suggestions. Tell the story of the call of Matthew who was unpopular because he was a tax collector and explore Jesus' reasons for choosing him as a friend. Discuss the importance of accepting others just as they are. Challenge children to think about what prevents them from accepting (and liking) some people.	Acceptance	<i>Let us all close our eyes and try to see the face of someone we find it hard to like or feel we want to change in some way. Try to see that person in a new way and think about how you could show him or her that you feel differently.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite children to ask themselves how good a friend they are. How much is a friendship about giving and how much about taking? Why do we need friends? How easy is it to put the other person first? Talk about ways in which we can all be thoughtful and kind.	Thoughtfulness	<i>Let's be still and ask ourselves what a really important friendship is worth. Perhaps you want to ask God to help you value your friends and put them first before you think of yourself. Perhaps you want to tell yourself how precious your friends are.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of Guru Nanak's faithful friend, Mardana, who waited patiently for him when everyone else thought Nanak had drowned. Invite pupils to talk about the questions the story raises for them.	Faithfulness	<i>These are words used by Sikhs, who follow the teaching of Guru Nanak. Let's listen to them: 'Be truthful, be loving and do good things for others. This is the only way that you will know the truth and be given God's grace'.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Show pupils the word 'unselfishness' and explore its meaning. Illustrate the concept with the story of Captain Scott's friend, Lawrence Oates, who sacrificed himself on the expedition to the South Pole in 1912 because he feared he would hold up the others with his frostbitten feet. Talk about sacrifice. Invite children to talk about what they would be prepared to/ have given up for a friend.	Unselfishness	<i>Let's think about that story. Imagine we are in the story, in the snow and the cold. Think of the man who walked out of the tent to save his friends.... think of those he left behind. Let's keep that story in our minds when we are tempted to be selfish.</i>
Friday Whole School	Show pupils the four words on cards to remind them of the focus of each day. Show them the fifth card with the word 'forgiveness' and tell them there is a sixth, mystery word. Illustrate today's idea with the story of Simon Weston and invite children to think about the impact of that unlikely friendship. Invite suggestions identifying the mystery word that makes all the others redundant. Reveal the word LOVE.	Forgiveness	<i>This is my/a prayer to help us to think about being a good friend. Listen to it and say 'Amen' if you want it to be your prayer: 'Help each one of us to be a good friend. Help us to accept each other, to be thoughtful, faithful, unselfish and forgiving. Help us to love one another'. Amen</i>

Theme for the Week: Light

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

This material offers a way into the Christmas celebration, exploring the symbolism of light.

The concrete focus on the candle helps pupils to move from the literal to the metaphoric, encouraging them to see themselves as illuminating others' lives, raising their self esteem and creating a series of positive images for them to hold in the imagination.

Resources:

For the words of the song and for a recording of 'This Little Light of Mine; see: *Come and Praise: Beginning* BBC Publications.

The story of 'Prince Kabir' is in the section *Stories for Telling*.

Jesus' teaching about light is in Matthew 5: 14-16.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

see that light is a metaphor for good in the world and in an individual; appreciate how the human spirit clings to hope, even in the darkest situations;

Moral:

recognise that doing good is a moral obligation;

Social:

appreciate that the good actions of the individual can have far reaching benefits;

Cultural:

reflect on light as a universal symbol, which transcends cultural and religious contexts.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell the story of Prince Kabir who responded to his father's challenge to fill a room in the palace completely. Invite pupils to think about the unique qualities of light and share their observations. Invite pupils to think about the unique qualities of light and share their observations. Light a candle.	What can light do?	<i>Here are some words from the Bible for you to think about 'The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out'. Look at the candle and think about those words (repeat words).</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Darken the room or invite pupils to imagine complete darkness and light a single candle. Talk about how it feels. Why is it better to light a candle than be angry with the darkness?	How does light make us feel?	<i>Look at the candle or imagine it in your head. Think about how powerful that tiny flame can be. You can take the idea of this little candle with you all through your day.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Use the words of the song: 'This Little Light of Mine' to explore the idea of inner light, expressed by smiles. How can smiles dispel others' darkness? Invite pupils to think about their own darkness.	My light	<i>Think about the light inside you, the light of your smile and if you want to, you can say your own thank you to God for your light. Look really carefully at the candle and think about how much darkness you can light up.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	'Your light must shine before people.' In Jesus' teaching, light is a symbol of good actions. Brainstorm with children all the good things they have done or that others have done for them. Invite pupils to celebrate those good actions. Light the candle and reflect on them.	How does my light shine out?	<i>Think about these words of Jesus: 'Your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.' God grant me light in my heart and in my life.</i>
Friday Whole School	Build up the Christingle, explaining the symbolism of individual elements and light the candle. Talk about the Christian belief that Jesus is the Light of the World. After the words for worship, explore the belief that, Jesus shines as a light, giving hope in a dark world.	What's the Light of the World?	<i>Christians believe Jesus is the light, shining in the world. Listen again to the words from the Bible and think about what they mean to you. 'The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out.'</i>

Theme for the Week: Dreams

TERM: Spring

Mapping the Theme:

Dreaming is a recognised form of expression for the inner self and, although difficult to understand, deserves to be valued, both in terms of pupils' own experiences and their response to that of others.

This week uses two biblical stories to explore the origin and meaning of dreams before going on to link dreams to visions for the future.

Resources:

For the story of Jacob's Dream, see: Genesis 28: 10-22;

For the text of the story, see:

Grimmitt et al *A Gift to the Child*, page 81.

For the song: 'Last night I had the strangest dream', see: *Alleluya*
A & C Black Ltd No 45.

For the story of Joseph, see: Genesis 40-41:47.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate that dreaming is a way of knowing which offers access to a person's deepest feelings;

explore the dream as a metaphor for hope;

recognise that to hope is essential to being fully human;

contemplate the idea that God might speak to people in dreams;

Moral:

consider how far dreams can offer insights, choices and resolutions to problems;

Social:

acknowledge the impact of dreamers;

consider how far dreamers deserve acknowledgement;

Cultural:

become aware of the significance of collective dreams in shaping culture.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the theme by telling the story of Jacob's dream. Talk about the idea that some people believe God sometimes talks to people through dreams.	Where do dreams come from?	<i>This is a quiet time for you to think about the story of Jacob's dream and if you want to say thank you to God for amazing dreams like Jacob's, you can.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk about their own dreams. Acknowledge that some dreams are scary. Ask where pupils think dreams come from. Explain a little of the scientific understanding of dreaming as appropriate.	Why do we dream?	<i>Let's be quiet for a moment so that you can think about your own dreams. If you want to, you can say your own prayer about them.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of Joseph's interpretation of his dreams about the future. Explore tentatively the idea that dreams might represent a way of knowing, which is difficult to understand, as the unconscious mind mulls over ideas and problems.	What do dreams tell us?	<i>Let's think about how amazing our brains are. They work in mysterious ways. Let us listen to the ideas that come to us in dreams.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Use the words of the song: 'Last night I had the strangest dream'. Explore the link between dreams and hopes. Invite pupils to talk about their dreams and hopes for the future, to help them develop a positive view of life.	What is my dream for the future?	<i>Be very still and think really hard about your hopes for the future. If you want to, you can talk to God about your dreams and hopes.</i>
Friday Whole School	Talk about 'dreams' as visions for the future and use Martin Luther King's (born 15.1.29) famous speech as an example. Invite pupils to talk to each other about the importance of dreams as expressions of hope. Talk about who the dreamers are and what they offer the world.	What would the world be like without dreamers?	<i>Think about your own visions for the future. Hold a picture in your head. If you want to you can pray this prayer: Help me to have faith in the future and make the most of whatever life offers me. Amen.</i>

Theme for the Week: *Castaways*

TERM: *Spring*

Mapping the Theme:

The whole week focuses on an imaginary stay on a desert island. It uses music to create a calm atmosphere and the voice of the teacher to guide pupils' imagination but not tell them exactly what to think. Thus pupils have an opportunity to explore feelings and thoughts which are very personal and need not be shared unless they particularly want to do so. The length of each day's fantasy journey must be sensitively determined according to the pupils' needs and how familiar they are with this kind of exercise.

It is important to insist children all keep the 'rules' : absolute silence and no touching or distracting anyone else. However, they all need to be reminded they can leave their story at any time. The activity is an invitation not an obligation which is why the language is tentative.

Resources:

For appropriate music, try: '*The Most Relaxing Album In The World Ever*'
Virgin VTDCD212,
or on the Reflection label,
Relaxing Dolphins – RFLBX302, *Rain Symphony* – RFLCD203,
Serene Countryside – RFLCD212, *Winds* – RFLCD202.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

explore innermost feelings and thoughts within a safe context;
examine their own spiritual and physical needs;
understand that, for some people, God is a constant presence;

Moral:

realise that each person has a responsibility to look after him/herself;

Social:

consider their need for companionship when all friendships and relationships are temporarily denied them;
be more aware of the value of other people;
recognise the value of solitude;

Cultural:

consider how their experience on the island might change their views of their own materialistic culture.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the theme of a desert island. Invite pupils to close their eyes and imagine they are on the island. Use relaxing music. Use the words in the first section of the fantasy journey to create the images. Bring pupils back to the context of the hall.	Imagining the desert island.	<i>Think of your island. Think of its beauty, its stillness, and its safety. If you wish, you can thank God for such places in the world.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to revisit their island using the music and repeating the first part of the text. Add the second piece. Bring pupils back to the classroom. Invite pupils to record their experiences in words or a picture.	Building a shelter.	<i>Think of your home here and perhaps your shelter on the island. If you wish, be thankful to God for your home, its shelter and comfort.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Revisit the island through the music, using the first and third sections of the fantasy journey. Invite pupils to talk to each other about being alone.	Thinking of a companion.	<i>Think about how it felt to be by yourself on the island. Some people believe that they are never actually alone, because God is always with them. If you wish, be still and repeat these words of Jesus to yourself: "I am with you always until the end of time".</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Revisit the island through the music, using the first and the fourth sections of the text. Use a circle time approach to encourage pupils to share what they would miss most and what they are happier without.	Thinking of home.	<i>Think of the aspects of home that are most important to you. Think about what you would miss from home. Think how lucky you are to have your home and how you sometimes take it for granted.</i>
Friday Whole School	Return to the island for the last time, using the appropriate text (the first and then the final sections) and music. Explore with pupils how they have used the imagination to find a quiet place, which is always there for them to return to as refuge or for pleasure.	Being rescued.	<i>Perhaps you would like to make this your prayer: 'Thank you, God, for our past experiences. Let us learn from them so that we become better people in your world. Help us to treasure and use our imagination'.</i>

Theme for the Week: Justice

Mapping the Theme:

This theme explores the concept of justice, using the visual image of the scales to help pupils understand the principle of balance in fairness.

The material uses a traditional Jewish story, a parable of Jesus, a contemporary example of a fight for justice in the face of discrimination and finishes with the ultimate sacrifice in the crusade for justice. It challenges pupils to think about their responsibility to a just society.

Resources:

For the story of the Unforgiving Servant see Matthew 18: 21-35.

For the stories: 'A Wise Judge' and 'Paying the Price' see the section *Stories for Telling*.

For the full story of the murder of Stephen Lawrence see 'The MacPherson Report.'

See the section *Stories for Telling* for an accessible version called 'An Untimely Death'.

For a fuller account see:

Wilkins *The Life of Stephen Lawrence*

Tamarind Books ISBN 1 870516 58 3.

TERM: Spring

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

recognise that justice is both an ideal and a basic human right denied to some people;

consider how justice needs to be tempered with mercy;

understand that principles like justice can be expressed visually and powerfully;

appreciate that some people believe God is the ultimate source of justice;

Moral:

challenge their own assumptions;

understand that they have a responsibility to a just society;

appreciate that justice is denied to some people;

remember that justice is so important to some people that it is worth dying for;

Social:

think about how far our society is a just one;

begin to understand that justice is an expression of a society's beliefs about itself;

Cultural:

be aware that societies differ in their commitment to justice;

understand that justice is, nevertheless, a universal right, irrespective of cultural differences.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Show pupils a picture of the Scales of Justice and invite them to talk about what they represent. Explain the concept of fairness for both (or all) expressed in the scales' balance. Justice is the formalising of fairness. Tell the parable of the Unforgiving Servant, involving pupils in spontaneous drama. Bring out the unfairness of the situation.	What is justice?	<i>Light a large candle to focus pupils' attention and invite them to create the image of the scales for themselves and to reflect on times when they have been unfairly treated.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Tell the story 'The Wise Judge' and talk about the importance of justice tempered by mercy. Remind pupils of the Unforgiving Servant and use it to explore the idea that there is more to justice than fairness. Where appropriate, explore with pupils the belief that, for some people, the ultimate source of justice is God.	When is justice difficult to reach?	<i>Light the candle and invite pupils to focus on the story and to reflect on where they might have been in it and how they would have treated others.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Look again at the Scales of Justice and remind pupils of the principle of fairness for all. Talk about discrimination - unfairness - in some situations because of a person's colour or age or gender. Talk about the death of Stephen Lawrence and his parents' fight for justice because they felt they had been unfairly treated by the police.	When does justice need to be fought for?	<i>Light the candle and invite pupils to imagine the face of someone they love very much. Listen to the words of this prayer. You may want to make them your own: O God, help us to understand that justice is for everyone, not just for people we love.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk about situations in their own lives when things have been unfair. Consider how they could, individually and collectively make the world a fairer place.	What can I do for justice?	<i>Light the candle and invite pupils silently to listen to the words of a Latin American prayer: O God, to those who are hungry, give bread; and to us who have bread give the hunger for justice.</i>
Friday Whole School	Use the image of the scales to draw together the ideas previously explored. Explain that, although justice is a basic human right, many people do not experience it and some give their lives to work for it. Tell the story, 'Paying the Price' and explore pupils' own ideas of what would be worth dying for.	When is justice worth dying for?	<i>Light the candle and read Oscar Romero's last words as he broke the bread: 'May Christ's sacrifice give us the courage to offer ourselves for justice and peace.'</i>

Theme for the Week: Investing in the Future TERM: Spring

Mapping the Theme:

This theme celebrates the Jewish festival of new year for trees. It uses the idea of trees as a symbol of continuing life to explore how children view the future, how they are preparing for it and, as a climax to the week, the ways in which they themselves can be seen as an investment in the future.

Resources:

‘Think of a world’ in *Come & Praise* BBC Publications.

For the story of the old man and information on Tu b’Shevat, see ‘New Year for Trees’ in *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the continuing cycles of life;
develop their self esteem and sense of worth both as individuals and as a generation with something to give to the future;
contemplate the future with hope;
be aware that some people believe God invests in the future through people;

Moral:

recognise that they have a responsibility for the future;
be aware of the need to conserve and regenerate now for the future;
understand that present actions have a consequence in the future;

Social:

share their hopes for the future;
recognise what is invested in them by their parents, school, society and the world;

Cultural:

consider how the Jewish symbolism in trees has a relevance and a resonance for all cultures;
recognise that some concerns transcend cultural differences.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell the story of the old man who planted a carob tree because he believed in the future. Talk about the Jewish celebration of Tu b' Shevat and the beliefs which underpin the festival.	Looking to the future	<i>To plant a tree is to say: I believe. I believe that the world can be a better place. I believe that we can overcome our problems. I believe that there is hope.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Recall the story of the old man investing in the future. Discuss what the word 'invest' means. Invite pupils to talk about how they are investing in the future. Talk about making the most of, and enjoying, all they (and you) can learn, in and out of school.	Preparing for the future.	<i>Every day is a step towards the future. This is my prayer for the future: O God, help me to make the most of today so that I have something to give to the future.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Talk about the consequences of a lack of regard for and investment in the future, e.g. species that are lost to the world, now extinct, or under extreme threat, like the rain forest or tigers. Invite pupils to talk about their responsibilities for conservation in a world that suffers because some people want things as cheaply, easily and quickly as possible.	Losing the future	<i>Sing 'Think of a world without any flowers' and invite pupils to reflect on the words.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk to each other about their hopes for the future. Challenge materialistic aspirations by asking if these will bring them everything they want.	Hopes for the future.	<i>Let's use my prayer again: Help me to make the most of today so that I have something to give to the future.</i>
Friday Whole School	Talk about children as an investment for the future. Use the analogy of a bank where money is invested and discuss what is invested in them, i.e.: love, time, patience, endurance, money, and effort. Invite them to think about how the investment will mature into good citizens, parents, and loving and caring individuals.	Children as the future.	<i>Think about yourself as an investment for the future. If you want to make your thoughts into a prayer, here are some words that you could use: O God, help me to be a good investment in your future.</i>

Theme for the Week: Love Your Neighbour

TERM: Spring

Mapping the Theme:

The week gives the opportunity to enter into the story of the Good Samaritan, to empathise with each character and to learn from each situation. It culminates with the person of the Good Samaritan and focus on how the story answers the question: who is our neighbour?

Resources:

Appropriate songs for this week would be:

‘When I Needed a Neighbour’: in *Someone’s Singing Lord* No.35; A & C Black 1973.

For the story of ‘The Robbery’, see the section *Stories for Telling*.

For the story of the Good Samaritan see Luke 10 : 25-37.

For the song: ‘Cross over the Road’: *Come and Praise 1* No.58 BBC.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the strength of love and its ability to transcend all adverse situations and feelings;
contemplate the idea that some people believe God sees the good in everyone;
understand the power of stories to teach;

Moral:

realise that they have an individual choice of whether or not to help in a situation of someone in need;
understand they have a responsibility to help anyone in need whatever the circumstances;

Social:

recognise everyone as their neighbour;
recognise the intrinsic value of each and every human being;

Cultural:

be aware of the power of stories to transcend cultures;
create a culture that is based on love for one another.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the parable by explaining that stories are a powerful way of learning. Jesus used this technique and told stories called parables. Careful, thoughtful listening is needed. The story for the week is answering the question ‘Who is my neighbour?’ which is really ‘Whom should we love?’	Being the listener	<i>Think about the story you have heard and seen. Think about what it may be teaching us. Think of those whom you love and those you find difficult to love. You might like to use this time to ask God to help you be more loving.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Re-tell the story from the point of view of the victim. Discuss how the victim must have felt, what he must have thought. Explore what it is like to be picked on, and the reasons why some people pick on others. Who are today’s victims?	Being the victim	<i>Think of the victim in the story. Perhaps you know someone who is a victim - think how you could help him or her. Take a moment to think about how you could be more aware of others’ feelings.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Remind children of the role played by the robbers. Explore what sort of people they were, and what questions might be asked if they were caught. Tell the story of ‘The Robber’ Discuss how the story may change our view of the robbers themselves.	Being the robber	<i>O God you believe that there is good in everyone. Help us to remember this when we meet others. These are words that will help us all to think about the story and to pray, if you want to.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Focus on the people who passed by. Discuss why they passed by, and why people may not choose to help today. Invite pupils to reflect on when they have ‘passed by’ and the feelings this creates.	Being the passer-by	<i>Read the words of the song ‘Cross over the Road’, verse 1 and chorus and invite pupils to reflect on them. If appropriate, sing the song.</i>
Friday Whole School	Re-enact the story of the Good Samaritan. Reinforce how we can learn and have learnt during the week a great deal from this story. We learn most from the example of the Samaritan. Discuss what his actions demonstrate and then invite pupils to talk to someone else about their answer to the question ‘Who is my neighbour?’	Being the good Samaritan	<i>Jesus said “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Think how following this would make a difference in your life. Think how it would make a difference to our world.</i>

Theme for the Week: Repentance and Forgiveness

TERM: Spring

Mapping the Theme:

The focus of this week's theme incorporates Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, a time when Christians prepare for Easter by recognising the need to repent and be forgiven. It explores ideas about forgiveness through a story told by Jesus and words of the prayer he taught his disciples. The week begins with the powerful story of a twentieth century disciple whose capacity for forgiveness in the face of suffering is legendary.

Resources:

For the story of the Prodigal Son see: Luke 15: 11-32.

For the story of Bishop Wilson, see *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

recognise that giving cause for forgiveness is a human weakness;
consider the emotional impact of both needing and giving forgiveness;
stand in awe of a person whose religious faith strengthened his capacity to forgive;

Moral:

understand the importance of repentance after wrong doing;
appreciate the moral imperative of forgiving others;

Social:

understand that relationships depend upon forgiveness;

Cultural:

explore religious practices associated with Ash Wednesday which essentially transcend cultural differences but also reflect them.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell the story of John Leonard Wilson, Bishop of Birmingham, who suffered as a prisoner of war in Japan but refused to condemn his captors, forgiving them instead. Talk about times when forgiveness is difficult. Ask what is necessary for it to happen.	When forgiveness is difficult	<i>Even after the worst humiliation, torture, starvation, Bishop Wilson was able to say, echoing the words of Jesus on the cross, 'Father forgive them because they don't know what they are doing'. Let's be very still and think about what those words must have meant to him.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to read the word 'trespasses' and to talk about what it means. Ask them where they might have heard it. Locate it in the Lord's Prayer. Talk about why some people might say those words every day. Invite pupils to talk to each other about their 'trespasses'. Introduce the word 'repentance'.	Asking for forgiveness	<i>Say the Lord's Prayer. Invite pupils to listen/to join in if they want to.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Introduce Ash Wednesday and explain the rituals associated with ashing and the symbolism of the burnt palm crosses and the sign of the cross. Talk about repentance and forgiveness. Make some ash and if possible show pupils how it is used. Explore the word 'repentance'.	Before you can be forgiven	<i>Listen to the words so many people will hear today as they wait to have the cross made in ask on their foreheads: 'Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return; turn away from sin and be faithful to Jesus Christ.'</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk about the things they need to be forgiven for. Talk about ways of saying sorry. Set up the words for worship as a 'sorry' activity.	Being forgiven	<i>Look at your hands. Imagine the face of the person you need to ask to forgive you on the palm of your hand. If the person is in the classroom, go and shake hands with him/her, and say sorry. If not, draw round your hand and write your sorry message in the shape.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of the Prodigal Son using spontaneous drama. Draw out, through freeze framing, how each of the characters might be feeling. Talk about Jesus' purpose in telling the story and refer back to the Lord's Prayer and 'Our Father', the way Christians think of God.	All is forgiven	<i>Jesus taught his disciples to pray 'Our Father' and to ask God for forgiveness. Think quietly about the stories we've heard this week and the discussions you've had about forgiveness. Think about what it means to forgive as Bishop Wilson did and to be forgiven. If you want to, you can say your own prayer.</i>

Theme for the Week: Pilgrimage

TERM: Spring

Mapping the Theme:

This week focuses on the Muslim pilgrimage of Hajj. All adult Muslims try to visit the Ka'aba in Mecca at least once in their lifetime. When they go, there are certain observances and actions that they perform to bring them closer to God. This week takes some of these actions separately and helps the pupils to reflect upon them.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

reflect on the spiritual significance of Hajj for a Muslim;
consider their own 'spiritual' places;
understand that there is more to life than the physical/material world;
consider what it might mean to live for others;

Moral:

understand the principle of equality for all;
appreciate how equality for all is expressed in school;
consider the impact of a religious obligation on a person's life;
recognise that there are many ways to deal with temptation;

Social:

contemplate the concept of unity expressed in the Hajj;

Cultural:

appreciate that Muslims travel from all over the world to Mecca;
think about the ways in which religious practices like Hajj influence culture.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Show the pupils two pieces of white cloth (Ihram). Show a picture of a Muslim wearing Ihram. Discuss the symbolism of this dress. All Muslims believe they are equal before Allah; that material things do not have lasting value. Invite pupils to discuss how equality is expressed in school	The Equality Journey	<i>Invite pupils to reflect on the clothes they wear and what it shows about them. If they wish they can ask God for help so that material things do not become too important.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Show pupils a picture of the Ka'aba in Mecca. Explain the background of the Hajj and how it is compulsory for every Muslim who can afford it to go. Explain how Muslims circle it seven times, running the first three if possible. Discuss how it is believed it was the first place built on earth to worship God, and that these actions show its holiness. Discuss what the pupils may feel they ought to do once during their lives?	Obligation of pilgrimage	<i>Listen to one of the prayers said by Muslims whilst going round the Ka'aba. Make it your own if you wish: 'O God, who knows the innermost secrets of our hearts, lead us out of darkness into the light'.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Explain that on the ninth day Muslims have to reach Arafat for the most important part of the pilgrimage. They have to stand between noon and dusk, bare headed in the sweltering sun. The pilgrim thinks of God and prays for mercy. Discuss with pupils what they would think of at such a moment.	Standing on the plain of Arafat	<i>We are going to stand and be absolutely silent and still. Let us recognise that it's hard enough to do in the hall. Imagine more than a million people, all silent together. Their thoughts are directed towards God. Where are your thoughts?</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Show the pupils a picture of the stoning of the jamra pillar. Explain how it is symbolic of resisting temptation and evil and rededication to Allah. Let the pupils think what temptations they would like to stone. Invite them to write their individual thoughts on a piece of paper.	Stoning of the Jamra Pillar.	<i>Let us all think of an important event in our own lives and reflect on what effect it had on us. If you wish, you might thank God for all life's opportunities. Let's look at the words we have written and think about how we resist temptation. Perhaps you would like to screw up the paper and throw it towards the waste paper bin as a sign of rejecting the temptation.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of the wonderful pilgrimage and talk about the importance of Hajj to a Muslim and the sacrifices it demands. Invite pupils to talk to someone else about what they would be prepared to give up for others.	Sacrifice	<i>Listen to these words from an ancient Muslim prayer: All that we ought to have thought and have not thought; All that we ought to have said and have not said; All that we ought to have done and have not done; For thoughts, words and works pray we, O God, for forgiveness.</i>

Theme for the Week: Wonderful Mothers

TERM: Spring

Mapping the Theme:

This material is offered to help pupils reflect on the qualities of mothering at the time of Mothering Sunday. It draws on visual images of the Madonna and Child and of babies to encourage reflection on aspects of caring.

Resources:

For the story of the Annunciation, see: Luke 1: 26 – 38.
and for Simeon's story, see: Luke 2: 22-38

The story of Solomon's wisdom is in 1 Kings 3: 16-28.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

recognise and value their relationship with those who care for them;
reflect on the nature of that relationship;
understand that, for many people, Mary is an important religious figure who symbolises motherhood;

Moral:

consider the nature of responsibility to others;
acknowledge the challenge of such responsibility;
be aware of the needs and feelings of mothers;

Social:

recognise mothers are part of the school community;

Cultural:

appreciate that the unique bonding between mother and child transcends cultures and time;
learn about the representation of Mary in different forms of art.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Show pupils pictures of Mary, Mother of Jesus in posters or on OHP. Identify illustrations through the story of the Annunciation. Talk about the nature of Mary's undertaking, the responsibilities she and all mothers have, as well as the excitement and joy.	The responsibility of motherhood	<i>Think about Mary and her willingness to take on the responsibility to care for a child. Reflect upon your responsibilities to / for those you love. You might like to ask God for strength to be responsible.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	'God made mothers because God can't be everywhere at once.' Use this phrase to initiate discussion as to how mothers, and those who mother others, care. Extend it to show how people who are loving can care in this way too.	What do mothers do?	<i>Think about all the people who 'mother' others. You may like to join in with this prayer: Oh God thank you for all that mothers and those who are like mothers do. Amen.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Return to the picture of Mary. If possible, use an icon. Note the sad expression and explore this, using the story of Simeon. Encourage the children to reflect upon what makes mothers sad.	What makes mothers sad?	<i>Reflect upon something you have done that might have made your Mum sad. Sit quietly. Think about ways in which you could make things better. You may like to ask God to help you.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	In contrast to the previous session challenge the children to think about what makes mothers happy. Invite a few mums in to share their feelings.	What makes mothers happy?	<i>Imagine your mum or someone who loves you smiling at you. Let your love smile back at her and, if it feels right for you, let God's love smile through you.</i>
Friday Whole School	Use a collection of pictures of babies. Draw attention to their vulnerability and discuss the children's response. Share the story of Solomon's wisdom and explore how a mother would rather give up her child and suffer herself than see her child in pain or lost.	The love of mothers.	<i>These are some words that thank God for the love mothers show. You might like to make them your own: Thank you for the love that reaches out and cradles us, the love that feeds and soothes us, the love that laughs or cries with us and that makes us who we are. Amen.</i>

Theme for the Week: Challenging Prejudice

TERM: Spring

Mapping the Theme:

This week celebrates the Jewish festival of Purim, which is a thanksgiving for the saving of the Jews from extermination by the courage and loyalty of Queen Esther. The Jews have continually faced prejudice and this week, which begins and ends with Purim, gives pupils an opportunity to explore how the evils of prejudice and discrimination are challenged and finally overcome by good.

Resources:

For the stories of 'Hannah Senesh' and 'King Solomon learns a lesson', see the section called *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

contemplate how prejudice diminishes the human spirit of both the perpetrator and the victim;
understand how prejudice denies the values of the individual;
challenge their own prejudices;

Moral:

discuss prejudice;
understand that prejudice is wrong;
celebrate the good things that happen;

Social:

recognise that prejudice is destructive of relationships and breaks down community;

Cultural:

appreciate how Jewish identity has been developed through adversity.

	Material	Focus	Words for Worship
Monday Whole School	Tell the first part of the Purim story: The Fast of Esther. Use the gregor (rattle) to obliterate Haman's name, without explanation. Talk about why Haman hated Jews. Explore why names are important to us all and invite pupils to think about what would make them want to obliterate someone's name.	How do some people face prejudice?	<i>Listen to these words. If you want to, you can make this your prayer by saying Amen at the end: O God, let us join with others who believe everyone is equal in your sight and loved by you.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Explore the meaning of the word 'prejudice' (pre-judging) and discuss what it is like when people are prejudiced and treat others unfairly. Use examples from pupils' own experience and from society. Talk about why prejudice is wrong, even evil.	Why is prejudice wrong?	<i>Think about a time when you were treated unfairly. If you want to, you can ask God to help you treat others fairly.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of Solomon and the Bee (at an appropriate level). Invite pupils to discuss Solomon's prejudice. Talk about how we recognise prejudice.	How do we recognise prejudice?	<i>This prayer may help you to think about what you need to do in your own life. O God, help us to recognise when we are prejudiced so that we may truly value and cherish each other.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Tell the story of Hannah Senesh. Invite pupils to talk about how she fought against prejudice and what they could do to combat the prejudice they see around them.	Is there a solution to prejudice?	<i>Imagine all the love in the world flowing out to cover all the darkness and evil, overcoming prejudice and suffering. (Help pupils to be still and focus on the visual image by reading the words several times, very quietly).</i>
Friday Whole School	Recall the first part of the story of Purim. Tell the story of Lots. Talk about why the gregor is used. Invite pupils to talk about how we could obliterate evil. Explore the idea that good obliterates evil and invite reflection on good things that have happened in school during the week	Can we drown out evil?	<i>Focus on a few examples of good things and invite pupils to cheer after each one. Round off the cheers for good things by saying simply, 'Thank you God for good things'.</i>

Theme for the Week: The Week that Changed the World

TERM: Spring

Mapping the Theme:

The stories, which structure the week's theme, tell of the events of the first Easter, from the perspective of five people who were there. The imaginary accounts are based on gospel narratives but are told in the first person to increase their immediacy. It may be necessary to remind pupils of the events as they progress through the week.

Resources:

Candle.

The five accounts can be found in *Stories for Telling*.

Songs to support this theme include:

'A Man for All the People' No.27 in *Come and Praise*, BBC.

'The Angel Rolled the Stone Away' in *Faith, Folk and Clarity* Galliard.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

enter imaginatively into the Easter story;
empathise with the players in the Easter event;
appreciate the significance of Easter for believers;
contemplate the effect of a life-changing experience;

Moral:

explore the importance of loyalty;
appreciate the influence of fear on behaviour;
understand where there is injustice in the story;

Social:

contemplate the effect of grief and loss on individuals and a group;

Cultural:

realise the way this story has shaped cultures;
appreciate how the Easter event is remembered in many cultures as a defining moment.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the theme by inviting pupils to guess which week it was that changed the world. Explain how the last week of Jesus' life will be explored through the eyes of some of the people who were there. Brainstorm a list of possible characters making sure the key ones are included. Tell John's story.	Betrayal: told by John	<i>This week we will use the words of a prayer written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. Listen to the words and think about what they mean to you. If you want to make this your own prayer, you could say 'Amen' at the end:</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Introduce Peter as another of Jesus's disciples. Tell Peter's story in an appropriate way, using spontaneous drama. Encourage pupils to talk to each other about how Peter might have felt and what it is like to let someone down.	Denial: told by Peter	<i>'Goodness is stronger than evil; Love is stronger than hate; Light is stronger than darkness; Life is stronger than death; Victory is ours through Jesus who loved us.'</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Explain who Pontius Pilate was; tell Pilate's story. Invite pupils to think about how Pilate's world might have been changed by these events.	Trial: told by Pilate	Repeat Desmond Tutu's prayer
Thursday Classrooms	Remind pupils that Jesus was sentenced to die by crucifixion and that it was one of the jobs of a Roman soldier to carry it out. Tell the Roman Soldier's story. Explore the emotions he must have felt.	Death: told by a Roman Soldier	Repeat Desmond Tutu's prayer
Friday Whole School	Draw the story together by inviting pupils to imagine how the disciples must have felt after Jesus' death. Introduce Mary Magdalene, a friend of Jesus. Light a candle and tell her story. Emphasise the mystery of this part of the story. It is not historical like the story of the crucifixion but is a story of faith. Talk about the difference it must have made to Mary. Invite pupils to talk about the difference this story makes to the world.	Resurrection: told by Mary Magdalene	Repeat Desmond Tutu's prayer, inviting anyone who wants to, to join in.

Theme for the Week: Wisdom

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

This week focuses on the attribute of wisdom and its effect on decisions, actions and thoughts. It encourages the children to look past the acquisition of knowledge to a far deeper quality in an individual.

Resources:

The Book of Proverbs is a good source of sayings about wisdom, e.g.: Proverbs 1:15, 16:21, 23:4, 23:13. These can be found on pages 630-640 of the Old Testament in the Good News Bible.

For the story of Solomon see: 1 Kings : 3.

The story of 'The Fool's Wisdom,' see *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

challenge their own idea of what is wise;
look deeply into themselves and others to perceive and value attributes other than academic achievement;

Moral:

recognise the importance of right action and the consequences if it is not chosen;
want to be wise;

Social:

recognise that relationships flourish if wisdom is present;

Cultural:

look for signs of wisdom in our culture;
recognise a country ruled by wisdom would be a contented one.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Show the children 3 or 4 proverbs about wisdom. What do they all have in common? Use these sayings to begin to explore what wisdom is and to combat the presumption that to be wise is the same as being clever.	What is wisdom?	<i>Invite the pupils to think about wisdom. Reflect on how they are wise. If they wish they can ask God to help them to be wise.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Let the pupils recap on their own ideas of what wisdom is. Make a list beginning: Wisdom is Use the story of 'The Fool's Wisdom' to discuss the foolishness of the characters and what the wise actions would have been.	Thinking it through	<i>Invite the pupils to reflect on their own actions; when have they acted foolishly or wisely and with what consequences.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Throughout history many leaders have been wise, a useful attribute because of the powerful positions they are in. Tell the story of Solomon praying for wisdom and making wise decisions. Discuss the outcomes of foolish behaviour.	Making decisions	<i>Wise people make the right decisions. If you wish, like Solomon ask God for wisdom so that your actions and decisions will be just and right.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Explore again the idea of wisdom and its definition. Discuss wise people today; who is the wisest person the pupils know and why? Let them make up their own wisdom proverbs or write about a wise person.	Who do I know who is wise?	<i>Read out some of the pupils' work and meditate upon the words. Use music to create a still atmosphere.</i>
Friday Whole School	From the school select some of the pupils' work and share their ideas. Look to future actions in the light of what they have learnt. Discuss the meaning of the prayer before offering it in worship.	Future actions	<i>Let's reflect on these words: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.</i>

Theme for the Week: Making the Effort

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

This theme is a direct challenge to the prevailing 'Me' culture. It explores the efforts that an individual can make and children particularly can make, for the good of others. The collective worship this week would directly support the PSHE and Citizenship objectives.

Resources:

A refuse sack containing a variety of waste: bottles, cans, newspaper, vegetable peelings, garden refuse, stamps, plastic and reusable items like clothes, shoes and books.

The four stories are all in the section *Stories for Telling*:

'Most Precious Trees'

'Harvest Sacrifice'

'Dying for Freedom'

'Angela's Job'

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

live for others;

be aware that some people are motivated to live for others by their religious beliefs;

understand that 'Love' is the supreme expression of living for others;

be inspired to make the extra effort; whatever the task;

Moral:

appreciate the moral duty in making an effort for others;

understand that caring demands effort;

Social:

remember that communities depend on the altruism of the individual;

Cultural:

challenge the 'Me' culture.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words of Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Take in a refuse sack containing a variety of items and empty it. Talk about all the different ways of re cycling rubbish, as an alternative to simply throwing it all in one bin. Talk about the choice and the effort involved. Tell the story of ‘The People who hugged Trees’ and invite children to think about how the actions of the people helped the community.	Making the effort to save	<i>These are the words of a native North American chief. Listen to them and think what they mean for you: All things are connected. Whatever happens to the earth, happens to the children of the earth. We did not weave the web of life, we are merely a strand in it; whatever we do to the world, we do to ourselves.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk about those at home for whom they care. This would give children who might be carers an opportunity to share what they do and how they feel. Many children will be able to talk about caring for pets. Explore the effort that caring demands.	Making the effort to care	<i>Close your eyes and bring into your mind a picture of someone you care about a person or an animal. Hold that picture and enjoy the warm feeling it brings you. If you want to, you can say thank you to God for that feeling.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Use an appropriate story to explore the ways in which some people act for the common good, e.g. ‘Rice Harvest’ for Key Stage 1 and ‘Dying For Freedom’ for Key Stage 2.	Making the effort to act	<i>This is my (a) prayer for today. Listen to it and if you want to, you can make it yours by saying ‘Amen’ at the end. ‘Thank you God for people who are prepared to make the effort for others’ sake.’ Amen</i>
Thursday Classroom	Show pupils a Chappati or Naan bread and ask them where they might eat it. Share it. Talk about serving it to them. Explain how Sikhs give their time and money to the Langar (the free kitchen in a gurdwara) to ensure that anyone who comes is, served and fed. Serving the community in this way is also believed to be service to God.	Making the effort to serve	This is part of a prayer Sikhs use: <i>‘Sweet spoken is the Lord My true friend and guide. He makes us pure And notices our slightest effort to do good.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of ‘Angela’s Job’ and talk about what it takes to be an ‘angel’. Challenge pupils to think about what they could do to live for others, give time to others, make the effort to show love.	Making the effort to love	<i>Let love circle us today; Let love circle our school; Let love circle the sick and the lonely Let love circle the world. Let me join the circle of love.</i>

Theme for the Week: *Beyond Face Value*

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

The theme draws heavily on the work of the charity *Changing Faces* to raise pupils' awareness of facial disfigurement and the difficulties it brings. The material challenges children, in any circumstance, to look beyond the surface and work at getting to know others.

Resources:

For information about the charity *Changing Faces*, and a video contact:

Changing Faces

1 and 2 Junction Mews

London W2 1PN

Telephone: 0171 706 4232

Fax: 0121 706 4234

Email: info@faces.demon.co.uk

Website: www.changingfaces.co.uk

Benjamin Zephaniah's first novel, dedicated to the charity, is called: *Face*
Bloomsbury ISBN 074754 154X.

For further information, see the children's book : V Wilkins *Benjamin Zephaniah* in the Black Profiles series. Tamarind Books.

The story of Zacchaeus, the Tax Collector is in Luke 19: 1-10.

The poem 'A Face' was written by Claire Jackson and Stephanie Persaud who were pupils at Park Hall School, Solihull. It was printed in the summer 2001 newsletter of *Changing Faces* and is quoted here with permission.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

understand that a person is more than his/her face might suggest;
appreciate that appearances can deceive;
emphasise with those whose lives are made more difficult by the reactions of others;
appreciate that being rejected or stared at may make a person feel angry, hurt, lonely, sad;

Moral:

recognise their responsibility to others in different and sometimes difficult circumstances;
understand that it is wrong to make judgements about people based on their appearances;

Social:

recognise the impact of some people's responses to a person whose appearance surprises or shocks them;
be prepared to meet and say hello and talk with someone whose appearance may at first seem unusual or even shocking;

Cultural:

understand that reactions to personal disfigurement can cause suffering irrespective of culture or historical context.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Begin by showing pupils a video clip. Invite pupils to talk to each other about their reactions to the person's face as they see it, and the questions they would like to ask the person. Invite children to see beyond the faces and to share their reactions to the people themselves, to what they say and the ideas they express. Finish with the clip of James Partridge talking about the organisation <i>Changing Faces</i> . Challenge pupils to think about why he set up this organisation.	Seeing beyond each others' faces	<i>Let's listen to the words of the poem 'The Face'</i> <i>'A face is not just the outside,</i> <i>It's on the inside too,</i> <i>It's not just what you look like,</i> <i>It's the inside that is true...</i> <i>The inside's where your feelings,</i> <i>Are mixing up inside,</i> <i>The outside is just a show,</i> <i>Where all your feelings hide...</i> <i>So don't just look at faces,</i> <i>The inside is most true,</i> <i>Think about their heart, their feelings,</i> <i>Their personality too.'</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Explore with pupils, through drama activities in pairs, how it feels to be stared at, ignored or spoken about as if you're not there. Link back to the video clips.	What are you staring at?	<i>Let's be very quiet for a moment and think about how it might feel to be stared at, pitied or treated unkindly.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Consider the work of the charity <i>Changing Faces</i> . Talk about the changes that individuals and communities, including schools, can make to enable everyone to join in and to ensure that no-one is judged or rejected because of the way they happen to look.	Changing Faces	<i>Thank you for the work of Changing Faces. Thank you for those people who understand and help others to understand the needs of people with facial disfigurements.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Tell the story of Jesus and the tax collector. Talk about how Jesus saw him as a whole person and enabled him to be himself. Invite pupils to talk about their responses to the story and what they can learn from it about the way to treat people who are different. Invite pupils to talk about how they would like to be treated. Raise with older pupils issues of wholeness and being oneself.	Learning to see each other better	<i>Imagine for a moment how it might feel to be the tax collector, rejected by everyone and laughed at. Think about the difference it might have made to have someone speak to you as a person and recognise you for who you are.</i>
Friday Whole School	Draw the experiences of the week together by reading the poem <i>Faceless</i> , written by Benjamin Zephaniah, whose first novel is dedicated to the charity. Talk about the importance of valuing people and giving time to getting to know them, to getting beyond 'face value', whatever a person's appearance.	Beyond the face	<i>Faces don't tell the whole story. Help us to love people enough to find out the whole story</i>

Theme for the Week: Prayer

Mapping the Theme:

The focus this week on prayer encourages pupils to understand what prayer is, what it means to some people and to reflect on their own ideas about it. This is also an opportunity to explain and explore the purpose and benefits of collective worship, especially the reflective aspects.

Resources:

See the section *Stories for Telling* for the stories:

‘Emily’s Question’

‘O God, Help Us’

The story of the giving of the Lord’s Prayer is in Matthew 6:5-14.

TERM: Summer

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

think about the nature of prayer and their own ideas about it;
reflect on their ideas about collective worship;
appreciate that, for some people, prayer expresses a close relationship with God;
experience a quiet time with their own thoughts;

Moral:

respect the fact that people have differing views about prayer;

Social:

appreciate how prayer can unite people;

Cultural:

consider how, in times of crisis, people often find themselves praying;
understand that people pray in different ways.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the theme by telling the first part of the story: 'Emily's Question'. Invite children to talk to each other about their own ideas.	What is prayer?	<i>These are words which Muslims use when they pray: 'In the name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most kind. All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, The Most Merciful, the Most Kind; Master of the day of Judgement. You alone we worship and you above we ask for help. Guide us along the straight way.'</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Recall the discussions from the previous day and complete the retelling of 'Emily's Question'. Explore with pupils the ideas it raises.	Does prayer work?	<i>Think about the story of Emily's question. Be still and think about your own questions. Perhaps you might want to ask God your question.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Recall the discussions about Emily's question and invite children to share their ideas about what prayer could do. Tell the story 'O God, Help Us!' Invite pupils to talk about what they would have done. Play a recording of the chant to create a moment of quiet reflection.	What can prayer do?	<i>'I waited, I waited on the Lord.'</i> <i>Listen quietly to the words of this song.</i> <i>Let them wash over you and be aware of how they make you feel.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Begin with a quiet time. Light a candle and use the words for worship. Invite children to record their thoughts in words or pictures and to make them into prayers if they want to. (These can be used in collective worship on Friday)	What would my prayer be?	<i>We've said this is a unique time for you to be quiet on your own and together. Let's be very still now. Think about yourself and what you will do today. Think about where you are in the room and feel everyone else around you. Be still with those thoughts.</i>
Friday Whole School	Explain that some people do not want to pray at all whilst others do but are uncertain how to pray. Jesus' disciples were like this so they asked him to help them. Tell the story of the giving of The Lord's Prayer and read or play a recording of the prayer. Introduce a selection of the children's own prayers as their ideas of how they want to talk to God.	How could we pray?	<i>We're going to hear the prayers that some of you have written to help those of us who want to, to talk to God. Invite individual children to read their prayers.</i>

Theme for the Week: Fired Up

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

This week acknowledges the festival of Pentecost, an important celebration in the Church's year, when Christians believe the Spirit was sent to the world. Fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. This exploration of Pentecost centres around images of fire. The theme is introduced literally and developed in a series of stories linking the festival with the Church today, coming to a climax in the significant events of Pentecost 1995 when the first women priests were ordained into the Church of England.

Resources:

Appropriate 'fire' music would include:

Stravinsky: *The Firebird*

De Falla: *Ritual Fire Dance*

Haydn: *The Fire Symphony*

The stories for this week are in the section *Stories for Telling*:

'Pentecost'

'The Church is born'

'Burning to serve'

The song 'Light up the Fire' (*Come and Praise 1* BBC No 55) could be used this week in the context of a song that Christians sing.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

explore fire as a metaphor;
appreciate Christian views of God;
recognise the importance of Pentecost in the life of the Church;
understand that people can be fired up with enthusiasm for things they care deeply about;

Moral:

recognise that women are as able to serve as men;
challenge their own (possible) gender stereotypes;
empathise with those who are excluded;

Social:

understand that Christians are bound together across the world and throughout the centuries by the beliefs they share;

Cultural:

understand that images of Jesus are influenced by cultural context;
begin to appreciate the impact of the changing roles of men and women.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words of Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Begin by playing a piece of 'fire' music and invite pupils to talk about what it makes them think about. Discuss their responses and play more of the music, this time with visual images of fire. Talk about the power of fire and how it spreads from an initial spark. Invite pupils to think about how their enthusiasm can spread.	Wildfire	<i>Christians believe fire is a symbol of the Spirit of God. This is a Christian prayer: Almighty God, as you have kindled the fire of your love in our hearts, fill us with your spirit so that we may become a shining light to the world. Amen</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Tell the story of Pentecost and talk about what is surprising in the story. Invite children to think about why fire might be an appropriate symbol for the Holy Spirit.	Tongues of fire	<i>Sit very still and think about the story. Perhaps you can imagine yourself being given the power to do something really good.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Recall the story of Pentecost and invite pupils to think about who was the most important person in the story. Help them to understand that the central character is Jesus. Show them a variety of images of Jesus and invite them to talk about the reasons for the differences. Explain that there are followers of Jesus all over the world, and the pictures reflect their ideas about him.	Burning with love	<i>These are words that some Christians sing: 'Shine, Jesus, shine! Fill this land with the Father's glory, Blaze, Spirit, blaze, Set our hearts on fire.'</i>
Thursday Classroom	Show pupils a photograph of a church, if possible one in the locality. Ask them why it is there and for whom. How did it come to be there? Tell the story: 'The Church is born' and explore how it feels to be fired up with enthusiasm.	Fired up	<i>This is a prayer that some Christians use at Pentecost: Almighty God who, on the day of Pentecost, sent your Holy Spirit to the disciples with the wind from heaven and in tongues of flame, filling them with joy and boldness to preach the gospel, send us out in the power of the same spirit to witness to your truth and to draw all people to the fire of your love. Amen.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story 'Burning to Serve.' Invite children to empathise with those who are excluded.	Burning to serve	<i>This is my (a) prayer for you to listen to and think about. Let's be very quiet together: 'O God, may the fire of your love burn for freedom and justice.' Amen</i>

Theme for the Week: Climbing Mountains

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

This material recognises and celebrates the strength of the human spirit in aspiring to achieve and its determination in the face of failure. The metaphor is extended to help pupils reflect on their own aspirations and challenges. From a concrete beginning which features the literal climbing of mountains, the week progresses to a focus on someone who overcame the most tremendous difficulties and yet achieved a summit way beyond his expectations.

Resources:

For the story of Simon Weston, see *Stories for Telling*.

Joni Erickson's autobiography is called: *The Joni Story*. Sanderson Publishing.

Information about Chris Bonington can be found on his web site:
www.bonnington.com.

A good story about a mountaineer is Joe Simpson *Touching the Void*. Vintage.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

explore how the human spirit naturally aspires to achieve, even in the face of hardship and possible failure;
understand the spiritual quest is like climbing a mountain;

Moral:

recognise that accepting a compromise for the common good at the cost of personal aspiration may be difficult but is often morally right;

Social:

consider how seeking to fulfil personal aspirations extends the collective experience of the world;

Cultural:

challenge their own and society's assumptions about success and resulting intolerance of imperfection.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell a story of a famous mountaineer, e.g.: Chris Bonington. Talk about aspiration and perseverance. Talk about how the realisation of personal aspiration impacts on relationships with others.	Climbing real mountains.	<i>Think about the wonderful feeling of achievement that a mountaineer must have at the top of a mountain. This is my prayer for us all: Thank you God for the sense of achievement in a task well done.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to mime an arduous climb in an appropriate way. Consider personal challenges that feel like climbing a mountain. Identify personal summits.	Reaching the summit.	<i>Help us to achieve the best we can in all we do.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell a story of a ‘mountain’ not climbed, either literally or metaphorically, e.g.: Moses who never reached the promised land despite the years in the wilderness.	Not reaching the summit.	<i>Think about a time when you have been disappointed. If you want to, you could ask God to help you to cope with your disappointments.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite pupils to discuss their experiences of failure, when it feels as though they are slipping on their mountain. Talk about how it feels and how they deal with those feelings.	Not reaching personal summits.	<i>Help us to cope with times when we don’t succeed and help us to learn from them.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of someone, like Joni Erickson or Simon Weston, whose life was changed by a tragic accident but who went beyond her or his original aspirations through the strength of the spirit.	Changing direction and finding a summit beyond the one expected	<i>Be quiet and think about the strength of spirit of eg. Joni or Simon in the story. None of us knows what mountains we may have to climb in our lives. If you want to, you can say a prayer to ask God to help you.</i>

Theme for the Week: What's it worth?

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

This theme challenges most pupils' materialistic attitudes which reflect those of an acquisitive culture in which success is often measured by wealth and the hopes of many people are focused twice weekly on the National Lottery.

Resources:

The story of the widow's offering is in Luke 21 : 1-4.

The Story of King Midas is a well known folk tale about greed and the dangers of being greedy.

See the section: *Stories for Telling* for the stories of
'Lorna's Garden'
'Scholar's Gold',

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate there is more to life than wealth;
understand that greed often results in disaster;
recognise what is valuable in their own lives;
realise that wealth does not always bring happiness;

Moral:

challenge the morality of acquisitiveness;
appreciate the value of a small gift, well intentioned;

Social:

understand that the 'value' of gold cannot be compared with that of people;

Cultural:

challenge the values of a materialistic culture.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell the story of King Midas and talk about why he wanted gold, how he felt when his wishes were first granted and the lesson he learned from his experience. Discuss the 'truth' of the story as distinct from its literalness.	Wealth equals happiness?	<i>Imagine for a moment you have watched the King turning everything to gold. Think about how you might feel... for the King... for his daughter. Focus on what you would have learned. How would you change your life?</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Discuss the National Lottery and why it is so popular. Invite pupils to talk about their feelings about it, before and after the draw. What would they do with a win? Talk about the need for balance and the dangers of excess.	How much wealth brings happiness?	<i>This is my prayer: O God, help me not to be greedy and to remember there is much more to life than the things money buys.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of the widow's offering and explore why it was such a precious gift. Invite pupils to talk about what they would give away, to whom and why.	What would I give?	<i>Think about the most valuable thing you have. Imagine you are looking at it, holding it. Imagine you are giving it away. Let's hope we can all live generously.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Remind pupils of their thoughts about their most valuable possession. Tell the story of 'Lorna's Garden'. Invite them to think of something (or someone) more valuable to them than money.	What is valued above gold?	<i>Be still and think hard about the most valuable thing/person in your life. Ask yourself about its worth to you. If you want to, you can make your thoughts into a prayer.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the Jewish story, 'Scholar's Gold'. Invite children to share their reactions to the story.	What is priced above gold?	<i>Help us all to see what is really valuable in our lives and to really cherish it.</i>

Theme for the Week: A Gift for Life

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

Giving for many children has a material outcome. This theme takes them beyond the physical and invites them to think about the gifts that make them who they are, supremely the love which nurtures the human spirit, both in human terms and, for religious people, a reflection of the divine.

Resources:

The parable of the three servants is in Matthew 25 : 14-30.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is in Luke 10 : 25-37.

St Paul's teaching about love is in 1 Corinthians 13.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

celebrate their own gifts;
appreciate that the ultimate gift is the capacity to love, which challenges the values of the world and can supercede rational thinking;

Moral:

develop an awareness that it is right to love even when circumstances are difficult;
understand that everyone has a responsibility to care for each other;

Social:

recognise that everyone has a responsibility to share his/her gifts;

Cultural:

challenge the materialistic and acquisitive attitude to life prevalent in western culture and understand how selfless love defies it.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell the traditional story of Sleeping Beauty. Explain that it is a fairy story, not literally true but containing truths about us all. Discuss the gifts for life pupils would like to give a baby. Draw out the idea that these are personal not material.	Good wishes.	<i>Close your eyes and picture a tiny baby. Look at her tiny hands and feet ... (etc). Think quietly of that baby growing up. It may be a baby you know. Think about what you would wish for her or him. If you want to, you can make it into a prayer.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk about a 'gift' they have been given and one they would like to have. Explore other words for gifts, i.e. talents.	A gift to me.	<i>Some people believe their gifts come from God. Think about where yours are from. Say a thank you for your gifts.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the parable of the three servants, (Matthew 25:14) drawing out the idea that everyone is entrusted with talents or gifts and the story shows how they should be maximised.	Making the most of our gifts.	<i>Think quietly about the story. It may be that you feel close to one of the people in the story. Perhaps the story can tell you something about yourself.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Talk about the Christian belief that Jesus was God's gift to the world. Jesus taught about God. He taught people how to live and how to be. Invite pupils to tell each other what they know of Jesus' teaching. Tell the story of the Good Samaritan.	The gift of Jesus' teaching.	<i>This is a prayer that a Christian might say: 'Thank you God for sending Jesus to show people how to live and love. Amen'.</i>
Friday Whole School	Use the teaching of St Paul (I Corinthians; 13:14) to explore the idea that the greatest gift for the spirit is love. Invite pupils to think of situations/ places in the world where this gift is most needed.	Gift of the Spirit.	<i>Christians believe the greatest gift of all is love. Think what that word means to you and quietly tell the person next to you. Now let's be quiet together and imagine love binding people together.</i>

Theme for the Week: Day by Day

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

This theme is a reflection on collective worship itself. It is designed to help children to appreciate the value of a time set apart for them each day when they can look into themselves and think more deeply about their own lives. It challenges preoccupations with material aspects of life and introduces the notion of spiritual growth.

Resources:

The hymn 'New Every Morning' by John Keble can be found in most traditional hymnbooks.

Other songs which are appropriate to this theme are:

'Morning has broken'

'O Lord! Shout for joy' both in *Someone's Singing Lord A & C Black*.

The most accessible text of Matthew: 6 is found in the Good News Bible, page 10 of the New Testament.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate that there is more to life than material things;
reflect on their needs beyond the physical;
understand something of what prayer means to a believer;
recognise the value of collective worship as time set aside for them enriching their day;
begin to think about what the term 'spiritual' means;

Moral:

understand that other people's feelings must be respected;
remember that whatever has gone before, each day is a new start;

Social:

accept their own and others' feelings;
recognise and question the importance modern society places on material things;

Cultural:

recognise that the need for spiritual growth is universal but is met in culturally diverse ways.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Talk about the idea that Monday morning can be an unpopular time, focusing on work after the weekend. Recognise that people cannot all always be bright and energetic. For some people, starting the day (or the week) is an effort. Invite pupils to tell someone else how they feel today. Explore the idea that, however we feel, each day brings a new start. Read the words of the first verse of the hymn: New Every Morning. This is how some people feel.	A new start.	<i>Be still and quiet and think about how you are feeling today. Let us recognise that there will be days when we all feel a bit down. Let us try to recognise when someone else does not feel good inside. Help us to make the best of today, in whatever way.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk about how they feel this morning. Affirm them and draw out the idea that collective worship time gives everyone an opportunity to listen to themselves inside. For some people, this is a time when they want to talk to God. Reassure those who do not feel good inside that they are in school where they are secure and cared for. No matter what happened yesterday, today is a fresh start; some people would see it as a gift.	Today is a gift.	<i>Think about your day. Think of it as a gift to you. Who is this gift from and what would you like to do with it?</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Use the ideas expressed in Matthew 6:25-29 to explore Jesus' acknowledgement that there would be times when people would have everyday concerns but that these should not be overwhelming. They would be helped by setting time aside to look inside themselves, into their hearts. Jesus was saying there is more to life than what people eat or wear. There is more to life than getting the next Nintendo game. There is more to life even than getting all your spellings right.	There's more to life.	<i>Invite pupils to listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:25-29 and to think about them.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Explain that some people believe that prayer is essential and they organise their day round it. Many people start or finish their day with a time of prayer. Muslims pray five times a day, following the example of the Prophet Muhammad who said prayer was like dipping into a refreshing stream five times every day.	Refreshment	<i>Imagine you are beside a refreshing stream of cool clear water. You can watch the water; you can put your hand into the water; you can drink from it or you can put your whole self into it. Quietly enjoy the refreshment.</i>
Friday Whole School	Begin by explaining that this week's theme has been about enriching the experience of each day. Having a time of calm and quiet helps everyone to do this. For religious people this can be a time of prayer. Tell the story of St. Richard and use the words of his famous prayer. This time set aside helps people to grow in a way that is different from physical growth. It is called spiritual growth. Invite pupils to think about what that might mean.	Enrichment	<i>These are the words of St. Richard. Think about them and if you want to, you can make them your prayer: Oh, Lord of thee three things I pray: to know thee more clearly, to love thee more dearly and follow thee more nearly, day by day.</i>

Theme for the Week: Threads

Mapping the Theme:

The week explores ideas of relationships, within the school community, with families and friends and, for some people, with God. Threads provide a metaphor for the bonds, which are explored. Each ‘threads’ idea has a concrete expression, sometimes actively involving pupils in the threading.

Resources:

A large ball of strong thread, long enough to be held by everyone in the hall.

For a suitable story about threads of grandparents/child relationship, see:
Valerie Flourney *The Patchwork Quilt*
Picture Puffins ISBN 0 14 050641 1.

The story ‘Lily’s Gifts’ in *Stories for Telling* could also be used.

The words for worship on Friday begin with a quotation of John Henry Newman.

TERM: Summer

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

explore various ‘threads’ as metaphors for relationships;
understand that they are joined by many ‘threads’;
reflect on the strength of the invisible threads that help to make them who they are;

Moral:

remember it is good to think of others and to want to be friendly;
challenge their thinking about friends;

Social:

understand that relationships bind people together;
recognise that everyone in their school belongs together;

Cultural:

appreciate how ‘threads’ help to cross boundaries of time and culture.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Pass a strong thread through the hands of everyone in the hall, encouraging quiet concentration on the thread itself as it slips through the hands. Allow time for this activity while singing an appropriate song, e.g.: <i>Bind Us Together</i> . Talk about what the thread symbolises and how it feels to be joined by it.	Threads of Community	<i>Look at the thread in your hands which is joining you to everyone else in the hall. Listen to the words of the song we've been singing and think about the invisible threads that bind us together.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Tell a story of a little girl who helps her grandmother to make a quilt. Draw out ideas of the threads of a person's history through memory and tradition.	Threads through my history	<i>I'd like to invite you to think back as far as you can. Think of all the people and all the things that join you to the past. If you would like to, be thankful to God for all these memories and those who helped to create them.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Talk about how we want to remember people we love who have died. Introduce the idea of a quilt to help remembering, e.g.: The Terence Higgins Trust Quilt in memory of Aids victims.	Threads of loving	<i>Let's be quiet and think about those people we love whom we don't see any more. Thank you for those I have loved.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Talk about friendship bands and why they are given and worn. Set up an activity, which allows every pupil to make a simple friendship band, either of thread or card. Invite children to sit in a circle of friendship and to put a friendship band onto the wrist of the person next to them. Work round the circle, each child saying the words for worship.	Threads of friendship	<i>This is to help you remember I want to be your friend. Help me to be your friend.</i>
Friday Whole School	Remind pupils of the thread that joined everyone together on Monday. Talk about the Hindu Sacred Thread, which symbolises a bond with God. Invite pupils to think about the three strands of their lives that they would want to plait together, if they had a sacred thread.	Sacred threads	<i>'I am a link in a chain, a bond of connections between persons'. Think about all the threads that join us together. If you want to, you can think about the threads that join you to God.</i>

Theme for the Week: Rights & Responsibilities

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

This theme is about human rights, which are explored under four headings. These are based on The Convention for the Rights of the Child. But the focus is on the rights of the individual in the context of the responsibilities those rights put on everyone.

This week's collective worship will contribute directly to pupils' understanding of their role in the community and what it means to be a citizen.

Resources:

For the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and The Convention on the Rights of the Child see the section: *Further Resources* on pages 326 and 327. Unicef has produced a picture book on the rights of the child called *For Every Child* ISBN 0 09 176815 2.

'Ameena's Story' in the section *Stories for Telling* and 'Dying for Freedom'

An appropriate song to use this week would be: 'This Little Light of Mine'.

The suggestion of a song to help children feel secure is:

'Amen, amen, it shall be so' on *Rare Species* Wild Goose Publications.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the uniqueness of every individual;
feel valued and value others;
develop their capacity for empathy;
understand that a denial of human rights is a denial of a person's humanity;

Moral:

understand that rights carry with them responsibilities;
respect other people's individuality;
consider other people's needs and their own responsibility to try and ensure they are met;
recognise their obligation towards democracy;
challenge practices which deny human rights;

Social:

see the interdependence of rights and responsibilities;
feel part of a community and able to participate;

Cultural:

appreciate that the principles of human rights transcend cultures;
recognise that some cultures deny human rights.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Establish what a right is by sorting a variety of statements including a selection from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or The Convention on the Rights of the Child. Emphasise the uniqueness of every individual by inviting pupils in pairs to look at each other and identify three features that are the same and three which are different. Talk about every person's right to be her/himself.	The right to be	<i>You may want to share my prayer: O God, help me to recognise and celebrate who I am. Help me to remember my responsibility to recognise and respect other people's uniqueness. Help me not to label others and treat them badly. Amen.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite children to imagine how it would feel to have nowhere to sleep and not to know when you would next have something to eat. Talk about everyone's right to have a home, food, clothing and medical help if needed. Invite children to talk about the responsibility this puts on us all.	The right to survive.	<i>O God, help me to see when others are in need and to do something about it. Amen.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Take in a leather football and bounce it. Ask pupils where it came from. Tell Amina's Story and invite the children to compare her life with their own. Challenge them to consider what they see as their responsibility and talk about ways of finding out how the things they buy are made.	The right to grow.	<i>Be very still and think about how it would feel to live like Aameena and the countless other children around the world who live like her. Remember your responsibility to make the most of your opportunities.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite children to say where they feel safe and what threatens that security. This would be best done in a Circle Time environment where issues of bullying or abuse could be explored if necessary. Draw out the responsibilities demanded by this right. Play a recording of 'Amen, amen'.	The right to feel safe.	<i>Let's listen to this singing and think about how the words make us feel.</i>
Friday Whole School	Invite children to talk about a time when they have had something to say and no one would listen. Explore the meaning of the word 'Democracy' and everyone's right to participate in it, e.g. the School Council and the right to vote. Tell the story 'Dying for Freedom' and discuss the responsibility that this carries.	The right to join in.	<i>Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations said: 'Human rights are what makes us human. They are the principle by which we create the sacred home for human dignity.'</i>

Section 4

Plans for

Collective Worship

Half Termly Themes Model B (Week-to-a-Page)

Theme for the Half Term: Gifts and Talents

Overview:

- Week 1: What are Gifts and Talents?***
Week 2: Using Gifts & Talents for Others
Week 3: Gifts & Talents for Creation
Week 4: Amazing Gifts & Talents
Week 5: Using Gifts for God
Week 6: Treasure in Others
Week 7: Treasure in Ourselves

Mapping the Theme:

Week 1: What are Gifts & Talents?

This week's collective worship introduces the theme by identifying what is meant by gifts and talents using the children themselves as well as examples of exceptional achievement.

The idea is explored that, for some people, their gifts and talents are God given. Children are challenged to think about where their capabilities come from.

Resources:

The words of the song 'He made me' can be found in *Come & Praise* BBC, page 33.

Friday's words for worship come from *A Book of Hours*, 1514.

TERM: Autumn

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

recognise that they are all uniquely talented in some way;
 appreciate that some people believe their talents are a gift from God;

Moral:

acknowledge the responsibility to develop their own gifts and talents;

Social:

realise the impact of their gifts on others;

Cultural:

be aware of examples of people with exceptional gifts who contribute to traditions and language.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Arrange for a selection of children with various obvious (and less obvious) talents to demonstrate them. Through the examples, discuss the nature of gifts and talents. Invite children to say how they discovered their talent. Explore the notion of ‘just being able to do it’.	Watch this!	<i>Use the words of the song: ‘He made me’ to prompt reflection. Read the words and then sing them together.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Recall the display of gifts and talents from the previous day. Invite pupils to share their reactions and to think about what they are good at. Explain that some gifts and talents are less obvious than others and may take longer to develop. Reassure children that everyone has enormous potential, which can be fulfilled in many different ways.	What am I good at?	<i>Stop and think of something that you can do. If you want to, you can say thank you to God for the things you can do.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Use examples of famous people, e.g. athletics like Chris Akabussi, Eric Liddle and Jonathon Edwards who believe their exceptional talent is a gift from God. Help children to consider where their capabilities come from.	A gift from God	<i>The guru said: ‘You are the Lord; to you we pray, Our life and our body are your gifts to us.’ (Guru Arjan).</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Use either the children themselves or examples of famous gifted people to talk about the need to practice. What seems effortless is the result of a lot of hard work and dedication. Invite them to talk about what dedication means.	Making the most of a gift	<i>Oh God, give us strength to keep going when we find things difficult. Help us to keep trying, even when practice seems boring.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of Solomon asking God for wisdom to rule, for a heart with skill to listen. Establish clearly what Solomon’s gift was, why he wanted it, where it came from and tell the story of what he did with it. Invite pupils to think about why this story has become so well known and why ‘the wisdom of Solomon’ transcends the religious context.	A great gift	<i>These are the words of a traditional Christian prayer: God be in my head and in my understanding; God be in my eyes and in my looking; God be in my mouth and in my speaking; God be in my heart and in my thinking; God be at my end and at my departing.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Gifts and Talents******TERM: Autumn******Mapping the Theme:******Week 2: Using Gifts & Talents for Others***

This week has a strong community focus, both local and international. It uses examples of gifts that can seem insignificant or hard to describe and shows how important they can be when they are developed and used for others. It gives pupils opportunities to think about their own futures and the development of their gifts and talents in the service of others

Resources:

The story of 'King Solomon Learns a Lesson' is in *Stories for Telling*.

The story of the 'Lion and the Mouse' can be found in any collection of Aesop's fables.

For the story of Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, see 'A Pillar of Wisdom' in *Stories for Telling*.

The song: 'When I needed a neighbour' is in *Come & Praise* BBC, page 92.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

Appreciate that everyone can use his or her gifts in the service of others;
Reflect upon the importance of every gift, however insignificant it may seem;
Understand the belief that God inspires people to use their gifts for the good of others;

Moral:

Reflect on how they believe their gifts should be used;

Social:

See how interdependent people are on each other;
Understand that some people use their gifts to make a real difference to others;
Appreciate the communities function best when individuals put their gifts and talents to good use for the common good.

Cultural:

understand that using gifts and talents for others' good is a direct challenge to the prevailing 'me' culture.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Use a selection of items symbolising roles in the home, school or community, e.g. hats. Discuss the skills needed by e.g. a parent, a lunchtime supervisor or a fire officer. Emphasise the way people are dependent on each other and each other's skills.	Serving others	<i>Perhaps you would like to think about all the people who help and support you. Close your eyes and imagine them holding hands around you. If you want to you can go and join the circle. You may have something particular to offer or bring your happy smile and words of thanks.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to talk to each other about what they want to do or become when they are adults. Encourage them to say why and to consider the gifts they have and the skills they will need to develop for the job.	I want to be...	<i>These are the words of a Baha'i teacher. I would like to give these words to you: O God, these lovely children are pearls; cause them to be nurtured within the shell of thy loving kindness. Thou art the Bountiful, the All Loving.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Invite a visitor to come in and talk about his or her job and about the personal motivation to do it. Explore how some people are motivated to use their gifts to help others. Consider what would happen if we all used our gifts only for ourselves.	Why I help	<i>Let's use the words of the song: 'When I needed a neighbour' to focus our reflection. Let's read the words of verse 1 and the chorus altogether and then listen to them read again. Think about what they are saying to you.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Discuss with pupils what gifts they use or would like to use to help others. Tell a story about a seemingly insignificant gift used to help someone e.g. either 'Solomon Learns a Lesson' or the Aesop Fable of the 'Lion and the Mouse'.	Every gift counts	<i>Let me realise I can help people even though I am small.</i>
Friday Whole Class	Tell the story of Archbishop Trevor Huddleston whose gift of sensitivity and utter determination enabled him to speak out for the rights of black people in South Africa. Talk about how gifts that are not easily described can be used to help others. Close the assembly by singing 'When I needed a neighbour'.	Making a difference	<i>Let's re-read the words of verse one of 'When I needed a neighbour' and then we will sing the song.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Gifts and Talents******TERM: Autumn******Mapping the Theme:******Week 3: Gifts and Talents for Creation***

The aim of this week is to use the pupils' on-going curriculum activities in art, music or literature to explore creative talents in themselves and others. Two examples of exceptional creative talent are used to encourage children to think about the value of creativity and its inspiration.

Resources:

For the story of Handel's *Messiah*, see: Grimmitt at al *A Gift to the Child: Teachers' Source Book*, and the pupil book, *A Story of Hallelujah*.

For an accessible version of the music see *The Young Messiah*.
The New London Chorale RCA LP3104 or RCAF 3104.
The song of Caedmon can be found in *Come and Praise* BBC Publications.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

understand that some people believe the source of their inspiration and creative talent is God;
appreciate that religious feelings and ideas can be expressed through creative talent;
wonder at how amazing people, and they themselves, are;

Moral:

reflect on the need to cherish and nurture creative talent;
be aware of the responsibility that some people carry for the nurture of others' gifts and talents;

Social:

acknowledge the importance of valuing everyone's talents;

Cultural:

appreciate how expressions of creative talent reflect a tradition but also can transcend cultural boundaries.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Use the story of Dürer's famous drawing of the Praying Hands to help pupils recognise the value of creative talent of all kinds. Draw out the creative aspect of the sacrifice made by the artist's musician brother.	Sacrifice of a gift	<i>Look at your hands. Think of all that they can do, all the help they can give and all that you would like them to do.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Focus on an artist or musician whom pupils have studied and talk about how the person's creative talent emerged and developed and became recognised.	Recognising a talent	<i>I am going to use some words to help anyone who wants to, to talk to God: Thank you God, for the pleasure people's talents bring to us.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Give pupils an opportunity to share any work they have done in the curriculum using art or music. Draw out the universal aspects of creative gifts. Introduce the words for worship with a brief description of the origin of the song.	Celebrating a talent	<i>Use the words of the song of Caedmon to focus pupils' reflection. Read part of the poem and then sing it if possible.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Introduce pupils to an artist, musician or writer with whom they are less familiar and explore his/her creative gifts. Gather children's responses to the work.	Responding to a talent	<i>Let's look at/listen to the piece we have been talking about. Let's just think quietly how amazing people are.</i>
Friday Whole School	Use the story of Handel's <i>Messiah</i> to talk about creative genius, the source of his inspiration and its impact on others. Invite pupils to think about what inspires them.	Fulfilment of a gift	<i>Light a candle as a focus and play part of the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's <i>Messiah</i>.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:

Gifts and Talents

TERM: *Autumn*

Mapping the Theme:

Week 4: Amazing Gifts and Talents

This week gives pupils the opportunity to consider the extent and variety of personal gifts and talents developed despite physical or mental challenges.

Resources:

"We would be wise to operate on the assumption that everyone has some skill, aptitude, ability which, properly nourished, can provide satisfaction and delight to all of us." Professor Anthony Clare from *How to Survive Depression*
Anthony Clare and Spike Milligan.

For information about Stephen Wiltshire and examples of his work, see his two books:

Wiltshire	<i>Drawings</i>	1987 Dent
	<i>Cities</i>	1989 Dent

For the story of ‘Moonlight Sonata’ see *Stories for Telling*.
The Ode to Joy is part of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

wonder at the triumph of the human spirit in overcoming difficulties;
realise that the possibilities for the expression of gifts and talents are
endless;
appreciate the richness and range of human talent;
accept the complexities of what it is to be human

Moral:

think about the right of every person to explore, develop and express their talent;

Social:

understand that, for some people, an amazing gift offers a way of communicating with others that would not be possible otherwise;

Cultural:

see how talent contributes to tradition and develops culture.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the week's focus with the quotation from psychiatrist, Professor Anthony Clare, and explain the importance of the belief that people have gifts and talents despite physical or mental impairment. Use the example of Spike Milligan, whose humorous writing and performances contrast with periods of deep depression. Read a selection of his poetry, saving the funniest until last.	A gift for laughter	<i>It's good to laugh. If you want to, you can thank God for laughter.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Use the example of Richard Branson, who is dyslexic, to illustrate how the battle to assert oneself and not be written off can contribute to what a person becomes. Invite pupils to think about what they might need to overcome to become what they want to be.	A gift for determination	<i>Whisper very quietly the words: 'I can do it'. Let's whisper them together and feel the words running right through us. (Orchestrate as appropriate!)</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Invite pupils to listen to music played by Evelyn Glennie and talk about how she overcame her profound hearing impairment to become a successful musician and concert performer by feeling and sensing rhythm rather than hearing it.	A gift for music	<i>This is my (a) prayer for the day: Thank you God For rhythm and heartbeat, Pattern and pace; For sense and sound and pulse and whisper, Thank you God.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Talk about the incredible talents of autistic people e.g. Stephen Wiltshire, whose architectural drawings are outstanding. Invite children to talk about anyone they know who has amazing talents. Use a visual image as a stimulus for worship.	A gift for drawing	<i>Let's look at one of these incredible pieces of work and marvel at it.</i>
Friday Whole School	Begin by playing Beethoven's <i>Moonlight Sonata</i> and tell the story of its composition and Beethoven's battle against deafness and depression. Use the <i>Ode to Joy</i> from the Ninth Symphony as the words for worship.	A gift for joy	<i>Listen to the music and reflect on this great talent. Your feelings may be a prayer for God.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Gifts and Talents******TERM: Autumn******Mapping the Theme:******Week 5: Using Gifts for God***

This week offers the opportunity to explore the gifts of faith, wisdom, vision, unity and service as they are expressed by Sikhs, especially in the lives and teaching of their gurus. Three traditional Sikh stories are used as well as a contemporary account of a tourist's visit to Amritsar. The emphasis throughout is on the way individual gifts and talents, however insignificant they may seem, contribute to the community of faith.

Resources:

The story '*A Day at the Golden Temple*' is in the section *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

recognise the importance of religious faith in the lives of some people;
 appreciate how faith in God and daily life can be inseparable;
 consider what makes them really happy;
 be moved by others' experiences and open to new experiences themselves;

Moral:

appreciate Sikhs' commitment to serve others, Sikh and non Sikh alike;
 consider their responsibility to others;

Social:

understand Sikhs' beliefs about service to others;
 appreciate how common values and shared beliefs build strong community;
 think about what they can do for others;
 realise that people are inextricably linked to one another;

Cultural:

appreciate how strong some cultures are;
 value opportunities to step into another culture;
 understand that an established religious and cultural identity allows people to welcome others who are different.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the theme by playing an extract of tabla music to set the context for the week. Tell the story of the call of Guru Nanak. Invite the children to talk to each other about their reactions to the story and to think with their partner about one question they would ask Nanak. Ask pupils what gifts Nanak used for God. Draw out the importance of faith.	Faith	<i>I am going to read some words from one of Nanak's songs. When I've finished, we will be quiet and let the words speak to us. We will remember that these words are sacred to Sikh people. 'I was a minstrel out of work and the Lord gave me a job. The Lord called his minstrel to his high court. On me, he bestowed the role of honouring him and singing his praise.'</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Tell the story of the release of Guru Hargobind. Bring out the wisdom of his actions and talk about how he used that gift to serve God.	Wisdom	<i>For devout Sikhs, God is at the centre of their lives. These are words of a prayer which Sikhs use: 'Join together and unite, my brothers, put aside differences, love one another And always remember God's Name.'</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Reintroduce the tabla music and talk about the succession of gurus. (If possible, show pupils an illustration of all ten). Tell the story of the establishment of the Khalsa and the institution of the holy books as living guru by Guru Gobind Singh. Explore how the vision of the guru helps Sikhs to know who they are.	Vision	<i>The holy book which Sikhs read to help them to worship God is a collection of writing by the gurus. One of them, Guru Arjan, wrote this: 'Happiness comes from love for God!' Think quietly for a moment about where your happiness comes from and, if you want to, you can thank God for it.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Show pupils a kara and encourage them to recall what it is. Relate the previous day's story and invite children to talk about what it says about Sikhs and their relationship with each other and with God.	Unity	<i>Look at the kara and remember what it stands for. I wonder what links you to other people.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story 'A Day at the Golden Temple'. Show pupils a photograph after the story, if possible. Invite children to talk about how Sikhs at the Temple give their gifts to God. Emphasise the importance of every person's effort. Challenge children to think about the small ways in which they serve their home or school communities.	Service	<i>Let us think about all the people who give their time and energy to serve God by serving people at the Temple. Focus on just one thing that you can do today to serve someone else. Imagine yourself doing whatever it is.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:	Gifts and Talents	TERM: Autumn
<p><i>Mapping the Theme:</i></p> <p>Week 6: Treasure in Others</p> <p>This week hinges on the word ‘treasure’. The idea which underpins all the collective worship is that it is worthwhile working at and cherishing talents in oneself and in others.</p> <p>The idea of treasure is explored first in a concrete way and extended as a metaphor of personal, and then community, strengths.</p> <p><i>Resources:</i></p> <p>A treasure chest containing items or cards representing or describing different talents, e.g: a football book, a drum stick, hammer, pencil, chess piece etc.</p> <p>The story ‘The Pot of Water’ is in <i>Stories for Telling</i>.</p>	<p><i>Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development</i></p> <p>This theme contributes to pupils’ development by encouraging them to:-</p> <p><i>Spiritual:</i> value their own and others’ gifts and talents, even if they are not easily visible; appreciate that gifts and talents are precious;</p> <p><i>Moral:</i> understand that it is a moral responsibility to value others’ gifts and talents;</p> <p><i>Social:</i> see how recognising each others’ gifts can develop a sense of community;</p> <p><i>Cultural:</i> recognise that communities are strengthened when individuals treasure each other, especially when cultural and religious divisions are healed.</p>	

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Begin with a treasure chest and invite pupils to guess what might be inside. Unpack the chest and talk about gifts and talents as treasures in other people, which may be easy to see or may need to be discovered. Invite pupils to think about their own hidden talents and talk about why they could be described as treasure.	Hidden talents	<i>Close your eyes and imagine you are the treasure chest. See yourself as the treasure chest, holding treasure. Look inside and see what's there. Look carefully because it may seem to be hidden but it's there.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite children to say what treasure there is in each other. Refute directly the suggestion, if made, that there may be someone without treasure. Explain it is up to others to find it. Talk about ways in which we show others that we treasure them.	Discovering talents	<i>Think about the person sitting next to you. Turn and tell him/her what you treasure about him/her.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Use the story of 'The Pot of Water' to explore the idea that individual contributions make a collective treasure which benefits everyone. We can bring each others' talents out in this way. Invite children to suggest ways in which this might happen in school life or classroom activities.	Complementary talents	<i>Let us all think quietly about today's story. Perhaps there is an important message for us in the story. Perhaps there is an important message for you. Let's think about that for a few moments and you may like to talk to God about it ... when you're ready, look up at me.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Collect together and represent in some way all the talents in the class, e.g. individual leaves displaying the child's name and talent. These could be placed reverently on a tree outline by individual children while they are congratulated by all the others.	Recognising talents	<i>Well done (name of child)</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of the establishment in 1965 of the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland as a symbol of reconciliation. For the first time for generations, people began to see each other in a different light, to treasure each other. Invite pupils to think about what changes their attitudes to others.	Reconciling talents	<i>Members of the Corrymeela Community use this prayer: We commit ourselves to each other, in joy and sorrow. We commit ourselves to all who share our belief in reconciliation – to support and stand by them. We commit ourselves to the way of peace in thought and deed. We commit ourselves to you as our guide and friend.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:

Gifts and Talents

TERM: *Autumn*

Mapping the Theme:

Week 7: Treasure in Ourselves

The climax to this half term's theme is a celebration of all the gifts and talents within the school and a consideration of how they can best be nurtured. It gives an opportunity to understand how the school itself is shaped by the members of its communities and their collective strengths.

Resources:

The Parable of the Talents can be found in:
Matthew 25 : 14-28 or
Luke 19 : 11-27.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

know that some people believe they are responsible to God for the development of their talents;
consider that they are all part of a wider community and contribute to it;

Moral:

understand that they all have a responsibility to nurture and cherish their own gifts and talents.

Social:

remember that they have some responsibility to the community to which they belong;
take a pride in their community;

Cultural:

acknowledge and appreciate that the culture of the school is one of valuing the individual as well as recognising the strengths of the group.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Bring back the treasure chest, this time containing a photograph of everyone in school. Hold up the photograph and explain that everyone is in the treasure box because they are all unique and precious. Go on to explore the idea that there is treasure in each individual, some more obvious than others.	Finding treasure in all of us	<i>These are the words of a great Muslim teacher. Listen to them and let them speak to you: 'Sell not yourself at a little price, being so precious in God's eyes.'</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite children to share their images of treasure which are stereotypically bright and shiny things, and talk about what happens if gold and silver are not kept clean and lose their shine. Relate this image to the children themselves and invite them to talk about when the treasure in them might lose its shine and what they have to do to restore it.	Polishing up your treasure	Help me to shine!
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Use the Parable of the Talents to talk about the responsibility everyone has to make the best of his or her treasure, in order to benefit and help others. Invite pupils to think about why one servant buried his treasure rather than make it flourish. Talk about the importance of being open to every opportunity and prepared to make the effort.	Making the most of your treasure	<i>Let us all think quietly about today's story. Perhaps there was something in it that touched you in some way. Perhaps you could see yourself in the story.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite children to talk about the ways in which the school is like a treasure chest. Explore how the treasure that is in each individual contributes to the treasure of the school. Together, everybody creates that treasure, the strengths of the school.	Treasure in our school	<i>These are the words of a song that Christians sing: 'Bind us together Lord, Bind us together in love.'</i>
Friday Whole School	Bring together all the evidence of gifts and talents from each class gathered the previous week to make a representation of the talents of the whole school, in the form of e.g. a Talent Tree. Talk about what the strengths of the school are. Explore the idea that, although individual talents are treasures, the school is greater than the sum of all these talents. It is like a tree that flourishes. To make it flourish, it needs love, kindness, consideration, courage, determination, compassion. It needs loving people and that is the greatest treasure.	Celebrating our gifts and talents	<i>Today, let us sing the words we heard yesterday. You can join in if you would like to: 'Bind us together Lord, Bind us together in love.'</i>

Theme for the Half Term:

Overview:

Week 1: Right and Wrong

Week 2: Rich and Poor

Week 3: Weak and Strong

Week 4: Friend and Enemy

Week 5: Black and White

Week 6: Good and Evil

Week 7: New and Old

Mapping the Theme:

Week 1: Right and Wrong

This week explores the issue of moral absolutes, drawing on Jewish material where the Law is sacred and an historical story where it was open to dispute and challenged.

Resources:

The story of the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses is in Exodus 20.

The story of Jesus healing on the Sabbath is in Matthew 12: 9-14.

Opposites?

TERM: Autumn

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

reflect on their own responses to issues to do with right and wrong;
be able to prioritise in the questions of right and wrong;
develop a sense of personal integrity;
take seriously an approach to right and wrong which goes beyond absolutes and the simplistic;

Moral:

understand the need for rules;
take seriously their responsibility to keep rules;
appreciate that the distinction between right and wrong is not always easily identified;

Social:

consider the importance of working for the common good;

Cultural:

appreciate that individual and collective understandings of right and wrong are shaped by a variety of influences, many religious and/or cultural.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Invite pupils to talk about what school would be like without rules; what would they be able to do? What would the effect be? Explore the need for rules for the well-being of all, using the story of the Israelites in the wilderness and the giving of the Ten Commandments. Invite pupils to talk to each other about what they consider to be the most important rule.	The need for rules	<i>These are words that Jewish people use every day. 'Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.'</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Remind pupils of the need for rules. Talk about rules in school/the classroom. Invite pupils to talk about why they need to be kept. Older pupils could also explore global rules. Invite children to suggest new rules.	Keeping the rules	<i>Think about a rule that you find difficult to keep. Share it with someone else. If you want to, ask God to help you keep rules.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Explain how Jews keep the seventh day of the week holy - they believe it is a rule from God, a sacred law. Tell the story of Jesus healing the man with the paralysed hand on the Sabbath. Explore the importance of priorities. What does this story say about rules?	Challenging the rules	<i>Jesus said 'Love one another'</i> <i>Think about how these words might influence what you do today.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Present a variety of situations in which there is a moral dilemma and rules are broken, eg: the teacher running along the corridor to call an ambulance; the police vehicle travelling too fast, the refugee stealing food to survive. Explore the rights and wrongs of each situation. Draw out the idea that often situations are more complicated than they seem.	Breaking the rules	<i>Help us to recognise times when rules must be broken and to appreciate the pressure of some situations.</i>
Friday Whole School	Draw the ideas of the week together by using the story of Gandhi who defied the laws laid down by the English in India. Explore why these laws had to be broken for the greater good. Invite pupils to consider when it is difficult to decide what is right and what is wrong.	Rewriting the rules	<i>Listen to the words of a Christian prayer: 'Lord, give me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can change and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.'</i>

Theme for the Half Term:	Opposites?	TERM: Autumn
<p><i>Mapping the Theme:</i></p> <p>Week 2: Rich and Poor</p> <p>This week the opposites being explored are really a challenge to an excessively materialistic society where, for so many people, the highlight of their week is the opportunity – however unlikely – of winning a huge amount of money in some way. The terms ‘rich and poor’ are used to explore something of what it means to be human.</p> <p> <</p>		

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Begin by showing pupils a huge cheque for £1million. Talk about how anyone would receive such a 'prize', ie buying a ticket for the National Lottery. Explore what riches it would bring, what differences it would make. Invite pupils to imagine both good and bad outcomes.	Winning the Lottery	<i>'It could be you!'</i> <i>Think about how it would feel if it were you.</i> <i>You might like to make your own prayer about your own riches.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to imagine winning the Lottery and talk about how an enormous sum of money might make them poorer. What might they lose? Talk about attitudes to money. Talk about the importance to many people of such a win.	A price to pay	<i>The Bible says: 'The love of money is the root of all evil.'</i> <i>Take some time to think quietly about this idea.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of Guru Nanak and the Rich Man. Talk about what really matters in life and the relative unimportance of money in what is enduring. Invite pupils to think about why money has such an important place in people's lives. Draw on the ideas in the story.	Lasting values	<i>Think about things that are most valuable to you and if you would like to, thank God for them.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Tell the traditional Jewish story of the dissatisfied man whose house was too small. Invite pupils to talk about what the story tells them and what they could appreciate better in their lives.	Appreciating riches	<i>Listen to my prayer. If you want to, you can make it yours by saying 'Amen' at the end.</i> <i>'O God, help me to recognise what I have and help me to use it well.'</i>
Friday Whole School	Set up a 'Spiritual Lottery'. Each class must have a big lottery ticket with 6 numbers on it (numbers are identical but in a different order on each ticket). Draw out the six numbers individually and express surprise when everyone is a winner. One by one reveal 6 spiritual qualities on the back of each number, e.g.: imagination, sensitivity, empathy, honesty, courage and love. Talk about spiritual richness. Read an extract from The Beatitudes.	Time riches	<i>It is you!</i> <i>Think about what you can do with the spiritual riches you have. Jesus said,</i> <i>'Blessed are the poor; the Kingdom of God is theirs.'</i>

<i>Theme for the Half Term:</i>	<i>Opposites?</i>	<i>TERM: Autumn</i>
<p><i>Mapping the Theme:</i></p> <p><i>Week 3: Weak and Strong</i></p> <p>Ideas about the relative strength of the individual and of a body of believers are explored using traditional stories of faith from Sikhism and Christianity. The development over the week is from the concrete and physical to the abstract, in considering moral issues to do with personality (albeit strength in the establishment of the Khalsa is also recognised in a spiritual way).</p> <p><i>Resources:</i></p> <p>A Sikh Kirpan (short sword).</p> <p>An old telephone directory for each class.</p> <p>The story of Peter's denial of Jesus is in <i>Stories for Telling</i>.</p>		<p><i>Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development</i></p> <p>This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-</p> <p><i>Spiritual:</i></p> <p>see that strength and weakness are more than physical descriptions; appreciate that to be weak and to fail is human; hope that, when it really matters, there is always another chance; understand how beliefs and values can strengthen the individual; think about their own weaknesses and confront them;</p> <p><i>Moral:</i></p> <p>think about their responsibility to support others; explore their own weaknesses and their impact on others; begin to understand the importance of moral strength;</p> <p><i>Social:</i></p> <p>appreciate the importance of the group identity in supporting the individual to become strong;</p> <p><i>Cultural:</i></p> <p>understand that ideas of strength and weakness in personal and collective terms are set in cultural contexts; appreciate that, for many people, religion and the expression of faith are a crucial source of strength.</p>

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Show children a Kirpan. Explain how it reminds Sikhs to defend the weak in society. Tell the story of the giving of the five ks. Talk about how else the guru helped people to be strong, exploring the ideas of unity with God and with each other. Invite children to talk to each other about what helps them to be strong.	Becoming strong together	<i>Listen to these words in the Sikh holy book; they are words which help Sikhs to know who they are and how they should behave: 'Join together and unite, my brothers; Put aside differences, love one another, And always remember God's Name'</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Give each child a page from an old telephone directory and invite them to tear it up. Then challenge individuals to tear up the whole directory and talk about why it is difficult. Talk about physical strength in unity and go on to explore non-physical strength in the unity of beliefs and values. How do we help each other to be strong?	Strength in unity	<i>Let us listen to the words of (or sing) 'Bind us together, Lord.' Let them speak to you.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Show pupils the two words: <i>weak</i> and <i>strong</i> and ask for definitions. Remind pupils of the idea that these words speak of more than physical strength. Tell the story of Peter's betrayal of Jesus and talk about the ways in which Peter was weak.	What is it to be weak?	<i>Be very quiet and think about a time when you have been weak. Think about how you could do things differently. If you can learn from this, then you will be stronger. This is my prayer/a prayer: O God, forgive me when I have been weak; help me to learn and to be strong again.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Explore what it is to be weak. Refer back to the experience of the single sheets of paper. Consider both negative and positive aspects of weakness. Invite pupils to think about how people give way under pressure, eg: tell lies, can be disloyal, join in when others are being unkind, and fail to help those in need. Invite pupils to reflect upon their own times of weakness.	When am I weak?	<i>Remember the times when you have been weak. Remember those times and use those feelings when others are weak to help you understand how they feel and to be compassionate.</i>
Friday Whole School	Recall the story of Peter's denial. Tell the story of Peter's unhappiness and subsequent strengthening, fulfilling his name: The Rock. Talk about the way Peter died and explore in what ways he became strong. Invite pupils to talk about how they are strong.	How am I strong?	<i>Let us sing together (or read) 'Bind us together, Lord.' Let us be very quiet and think about what those words mean to us.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Opposites?******TERM: Autumn******Mapping the Theme:******Week 4: Friend and Enemy***

This theme uses two religious stories, again from the Sikh and Christian traditions and two secular but highly poignant stories about the dynamics of relationships which changed, in one case temporarily and the other, more permanently.

Resources:

The story of Jesus and Zacchaeus is in Luke 19 : 1-10.

See the section *Stories for Telling* for the stories:

‘Bhai Ghanaiya’.

‘An Unlikely Friendship’.

‘Christmas Day in the Trenches’.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the importance of having and being a friend;
reflect on what friendship demands of the individual;
understand that personal attitude can identify other people as friends or enemies;
see ‘enemies’ as real people just like them;
consider the impact on the individual of making a friend of an enemy;

Moral:

think about their responsibilities as friends;
understand the futility of having enemies;

Social:

understand that relationships grow and change and need nurturing;

Cultural:

appreciate how often differences in culture make people enemies;
appreciate how important it is to understand each others’ cultures.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the theme and tell the story of Jesus befriending Zacchaeus whom no one else liked. Use it to explore what makes a friend, ie: taking notice, giving their time, making a person feel liked and able to like themselves; think about: How am I a friend?	What makes a friend?	<i>Jesus was a friend to Zacchaeus. Think about these words of Jesus: 'Love one another, as I have loved you.' Think about ways you show your friendship.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Tell the story of the temporary cessation of fighting to mark Christmas Day during the Great War, when soldiers left the trenches and played football with enemy soldiers. Discuss with pupils how they see other people as friends.	When can an enemy be a friend?	<i>Think about a time when you find it difficult to be a friend. Think about the things you could do to be friendlier and if you would like to, you might want to ask for God's help.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Use the Sikh story of Bhai Ghanaiya, who ministered to enemy soldiers on the battle field, to raise the question: Who is my enemy?	Who is my enemy?	<i>These are words that Guru Gobind Singh said and Sikhs follow: 'All human beings are the reflection of one and the same God; Recognise the whole human race as one.'</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Greet pupils with the Hindu greeting 'Namaste' (hands together, bowing) which is translated as 'I bow to that of God in you.' Talk about how this attitude might be a basis for friendliness to all people. Discuss what makes friendship difficult.	How do I make friends?	<i>If you want to make my prayer yours too, join in and say 'Amen' at the end: O God, help me to be a friend when I find it difficult.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the remarkable story of 'An Unlikely Friendship', Simon Weston's reconciliation with the Argentinian pilot who bombed the Sir Galahad in the Falklands conflict causing him to suffer horrendous burns. Explore how positive relationships can be formed even in the most difficult of situations. Invite pupils to talk about why this story is so amazing. Challenge them to consider how the experience changed Simon Weston and how turning enemies into friends could change everyone.	Can I make a friend of an enemy?	<i>Jesus said: 'Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who hurt you.' Be very quiet and think about these words.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:

Mapping the Theme:

Week 5: Black and White

This week's theme has a central focus on equality. The stories and activities are used to build up an awareness of the impact of people's attitudes to each other. It is intended to challenge children to think about their own attitudes and to confront any negative or damaging prejudices they may hold.

Resources:

The song: 'The Ink is Black' is in *Come and Praise* BBC Publications.

The story of Lord John Taylor of Warwick is retold in 'Against All Odds' which is in *Stories for Tellin*.

A fuller account of his life can be found in: Wambu, *John Taylor, Lord Taylor of Warwick* in the Black Profiles Series by Tamarind Books or from his website: www.lordtaylor.org.

In the same series are: *Malorie Blackman, Author* and *Samantha Tross, Surgeon*, both written by Verna Wilkins.

For the story of Nelson Mandela, see the section *Stories for Telling*. See also Naidoo, *Journey to Jo'burg: A South African Story*, Collins.

The story of Stephen Lawrence is in the same section and 'The Rainbow People'.

Stephen Lawrence's story is told more fully in: Wilkins *The Life of Stephen Lawrence*, Tarimand Books ISBN 1 870516 58 3 (suitable for children of 9-12 years).

Opposites?

TERM: Autumn

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

value each other as human beings;
recognise diversity as a joy rather than a threat;
appreciate that we are all unique and therefore different from each other;

Moral:

understand that racist attitudes are morally wrong;
understand their responsibility to confront racism;
understand that recognising every individual as a person is a moral obligation;

Social:

appreciate that harmony in any community comes from individuals valuing each other;

Cultural:

challenge the divisions that differences in culture can create;
contribute to the culture of the school which is embedded in the value of every individual and the importance of community.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Begin by singing: 'The ink is black.' Focus pupils on the words and talk about what they say. Discuss the language used and explore the issues raised. Sing the song again. Invite pupils to think quietly about the impact of the word 'together.'	Black and White?	<i>Think about the message of the song. Take away with you and remember the words: 'Together we learn to read and write...' (repeat)</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Remind pupils of the song and invite them to talk about what it might mean in terms of the differences between people. Explore the ways in which we are all different from each other. Tell one of the stories of black struggles for equality, eg Lord John Taylor.	Who is different?	<i>This is my prayer. You can make it your own if you wish by saying 'Amen.' Dear God, help me to remember how much it hurts others when I am nasty to them. Help me to be kind. Amen.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of the Rainbow People and talk about what had to happen for them to be happy. Invite pupils to think about how they treat people who seem different. Talk at an appropriate level about what racism is and what we must all do to eliminate it.	What makes us different?	<i>Think about what you could do to make someone else feel valued today. Recall a time when you have not valued another person or not looked beyond the surface. Perhaps you might like to make your thoughts into a prayer.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Play the Exclusion game. Divide the class into 3 groups. Blue, Green and Red and identify them in some way. The Blues have the power; (a chair each / chocolate). The Greens have to do as the Blues say but the Reds are completely excluded (stand facing the wall, hands on heads, not allowed to look round). Invite pupils to talk about their feelings to each other in both like and mixed groups and share the impact of the experience on them personally.	How does it feel to be different?	<i>Imagine being a Red all the time with no chance of being anything else. Imagine how it would feel and, if you would like to, pray for those who always feel like this.</i>
Friday Whole School	Recall the Exclusion Game and talk about how it felt to be a Green or a Red. Talk about people who feel excluded in today's society. Tell the story of Stephen Lawrence and consider why his family felt excluded. Remind pupils we are all different. Invite them to suggest ways in which we are all the same. Talk about the richness of diversity and the principles of justice and equality for all.	What is the difference?	<i>We're going to listen hard to the words of one verse of the song we sang on Monday. Let these words swim around in your head and use them to help you reflect on all that we have thought about during the week and all that we have learned about being different. Read the words of the third verse of the song.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:

Mapping the Theme:

Week 6: Good and Evil

This week uses the most potentially absolute of all the opposites to build up to the conclusion to the theme.

The traditional Hindu story invites children to explore something of the nature of evil and references might be made here to the previous week's material. The climax of the week comes with a powerful story of faith and the theme is rounded off with a challenge about the relativity of opposites, in all the examples except, perhaps, good and evil.

Resources:

The stories of 'Krishna Fighting Evil' and Oscar Romero: 'Paying the Price' are in the section *Stories for Telling*.

Opposites?

TERM: Autumn

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

consider how good can come from evil;
understand that some people believe God protects them from evil;
appreciate that the issue of evil raises questions which cannot be answered;

Moral:

appreciate that evil is a moral absolute;
think about what they can do to bring about good in their world and in their relationships;

Social:

reflect on how the actions of one good person can change the impact of evil on a society;

Cultural:

be aware that concepts of good and evil are universally understood but are shaped by very different experiences, stories and role models.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce this week with a story that clearly shows the opposing forces of good and evil, 'Krishna Fighting Evil.' Discuss the well defined opposites in this story. What is evil anyway? Is it always so easy to tell good and evil apart? Why does being good matter?	Good and Evil	<i>Here are some words some people use in prayer. You may find them helpful. Circle me Lord Keep peace within Keep evil out</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Begin to explore with the children ideas of good and evil by collecting descriptions of the two extremes. How do they recognise evil in everyday life?	What is evil?	<i>Think about any evil you have seen or heard. Imagine yourself being strong against it. You might like to ask God to help you to be strong and say your own prayer in your head.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Use the story of Nelson Mandela to discuss how some people use goodness in the face of oppression to fight evil. Did Nelson Mandela appear good to everyone? Why did he behave in the way he did? What were the results of his actions? Ask the children what would they have done.	Good versus evil	<i>Here is a prayer you might like to join in by saying 'Amen' at the end. Oh God, help me to remember that no matter how much evil there seems to be in the world, every good action counts. Amen.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Discuss with pupils what can be done when facing or fighting evil. Explore the idea suggested in Romans 12: 20-21. Why might this be a challenge? Encourage the children to think about times when they have seen good fighting evil.	Fighting evil.	<i>Invite the children to think of the good they have experienced and to imagine the good as a bright light reaching into the darkness of evil and overwhelming it.</i>
Friday Whole School	Use the story of Oscar Romero to raise ideas of how some people actively use good to fight evil despite the dangers they face. Even when it appears that evil has triumphed, good can prevail and it is those who have expressed goodness who are remembered and celebrated. Return to the title of the theme and explore why there is a question mark. Invite children to think back over all the weekly themes, with prompts if necessary. Talk about where the ? is justified and where (perhaps this week) it is not.	Good overcoming evil	<i>This Christian prayer helps some people feel they have the strength to be good. Let the light of goodness guide me Let the strength of goodness support me Let love and goodness be my friends always. Amen</i>

Theme for the Half Term:	Learning Together	TERM: Spring
<p>Overview:</p> <p>Week 1: Reading Together</p> <p>Week 2: Tackling Problems Together</p> <p>Week 3: Discovering Together</p> <p>Week 4: Remembering Together</p> <p>Week 5: Exploring Together</p> <p>Week 6: Imagining Together</p> <p>Week 7: Celebrating Together (an optional final week, if there is time in the half term)</p> <p>Mapping the Theme:</p> <p>Week 1: Reading Together</p> <p>The half term begins with a focus on the most fundamental of all skills for learning: reading. The week begins with an introduction to a variety of scripts to help pupils appreciate the wonder of the deciphering and recognition skills they are developing; two religious stories from different traditions are used to explore the importance of reading.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>A selection of texts in different languages or scripts.</p> <p>The story of ‘Akiba’ is in the section <i>Stories for Telling</i>.</p> <p>For a text of the story of the Revelation of the Qur’an, see Grimmer et al <i>A Gift to the Child: Teachers’ Source Book</i> P84 Simon & Schuster and the pupil book: <i>The Story of God’s Beautiful Words to Muhammad</i>.</p>	<p>Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development</p> <p>This theme contributes to pupils’ development by encouraging them to:</p> <p>Spiritual:</p> <p>appreciate the wonder of being able to read; be inspired to read more and find real joy in reading; recognise that reading is a challenge; celebrate their reading achievements; understand the importance for some people of reading sacred words; rejoice in learning;</p> <p>Moral:</p> <p>aspire to make the most of their skills in reading for their own and others’ good;</p> <p>Social:</p> <p>understand how reading brings people together; see how the ability to read can also divide people;</p> <p>Cultural:</p> <p>see how sharing sacred texts is a universal activity for religious people; reflect on how reading reaches across cultures, although what is read differs greatly; understand that culture influences the script that is read.</p>	

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Present the pupils with several texts in different languages or scripts. Base this selection on languages used in the community. Explore the wonder of being able to decipher marks on a page. Look at the different skills possessed within the school that help access words. Invite pupils to think about what's good for them about reading.	What can be read?	<i>Let us think of all the skills and understanding we bring here to this room to help us learn and enjoy reading together. We are amazing yet we can be amazed at what we can read and all that our reading can teach us and give us.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Discuss with pupils what their reading skills enable them to do, as individuals, in groups and as a community. Celebrate these skills by sharing a favourite story or poem, (or for young pupils reading together all the words they know.) Have the words of the prayer displayed for pupils to look at.	Celebrating reading	<i>These words are very a old celebration of reading. 'May the words I read speak to me, enlighten me, bring me closer to those I love, closer to my heart and closer to you O God!' Take time to think about these words.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of Akiba and discuss the importance of learning to read. Invite the pupils to reflect upon what would be missing from their lives if they couldn't read.	A challenge to read	<i>This prayer is used by some Jews. You may like to use it too. 'You favour people with knowledge and teach us understanding. May you continue to favour us with knowledge and understanding and learning for all things come from You. We praise You, O Lord, gracious Giver of Knowledge.'</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Talk with the pupils about the challenges they face when learning to read, what helps them and how they can help each other. Invite children to read in pairs for a short time and reflect upon what is good about this.	Reading together	<i>Be still and think of the times when you have shared your reading with others, when you have learnt and laughed together. Keep hold of that good feeling and if you would like to, you can thank God for it in your heart.</i>
Friday Whole School	Read the story of the Revelation of the Qur'an. Discuss how, for Muhammad, the words were a gift from God. The Qur'an and other holy books bring people together as they have the words and ideas about God. Invite pupils to reflect upon what they read that helps them to feel closer to other people or to God.	A Gift from God	<i>Listen to the first words Gabriel gave Muhammad: 'Recite, in the name of the Lord Who created man from a drop of blood Recite, For your Lord is most generous He taught man to read and write And he taught man what he did not know'.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:

Learning Together

TERM: Spring

Mapping the Theme:

Week 2 Tackling Problems Together

The learning focus this week is on Mathematics. Two stories are used to develop the theme of solving problems but the emphasis is on collaboration, helping pupils to appreciate how much more they can do if they share their learning to deepen their own understanding.

Resources:

The stories of 'Sir Isaac Newton' and 'A Very Old Problem' are in the section: *Stories for telling*.

For information on the development of the decimal system, see 'About Numbers' in *Further Resources* on page 319.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate how amazing numbers are;
develop their sense of personal satisfaction in working with numbers;
be curious and think creatively;
talk about what puzzles them;
pursue problems enthusiastically;
rejoice in learning;

Moral:

discuss the problems they have been working on;
support each others' learning;
persist when problems seem difficult;

Social:

collaborate and share their learning;
understand how one person's learning stimulates others' learning;

Cultural:

appreciate the cultural context of a familiar number system;
value the contribution to our lives made by an ancient and different culture;
be aware of the impact of one culture or another.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Begin with the story of Sir Isaac Newton. Discuss how he used his mathematical knowledge to develop and try to prove his ideas. Although they were questioned then, his ideas now provide a foundation for others as they learn and tackle problems. Encourage the pupils to think about whose learning they depend upon.	Breaking new ground	<i>Listen to this prayer. You may like to join in by saying 'Amen' at the end. Oh God, there is so much learning to be done. May we never stop wanting to tackle problems and find out. Amen.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite the pupils to work in pairs or small groups to solve a number problem. Talk about how it feels to puzzle and try to understand or explain something. Explore the idea that it is the process of questioning and seeking that is important and that this requires determination and effort.	Working together	<i>Think about what you have talked about and the problems you tackled. Let your mind rest on the interest and satisfaction you may have found in the number patterns or resolutions. You may like to offer these ideas to God.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Ask representatives from each class or year group to give an insight into the problems they've been working on and how they are tackling them. Explore the idea that there are different ways to do this.	We have learnt...	<i>Let us think of how we work together to tackle all sorts of problems, and imagine that all that we give to each other in learning is like the building of bricks to make a bridge from the unknown to the known. You may like to thank God in your own way for all the learning that is like this.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	At a level appropriate to the age group involved, share with pupils how the number system was developed. Discuss how numbers can be used in different ways and can create an infinite number of patterns. Give pupils the opportunity to discuss what puzzles them.	Amazing numbers	<i>Think of the highest number you can, then imagine another and another. Take time to wonder about numbers and how amazing they, and the patterns they create, can be.</i>
Friday Whole School	Use the story of Fermat's Theorem to show how Andrew Wiles built upon the work of others and found his own solution to an ancient problem. Invite the pupils to reflect upon ways in which they have worked with others during the week and what problems they still want, or need, to tackle.	Finding a solution	<i>This prayer may help you think about our learning this week. Lord, in each challenge may learning flow from one to another and may understanding strengthen us and lead us further still. Amen.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Learning Together******TERM: Spring******Mapping the Theme:******Week 3: Discovering Together***

Science is the focus of this week, with an emphasis on discovery. Discovering something, whether it is notable or simply in the course of a lesson, is an experience to rejoice in and wonder at. The unknown potential of learning is the idea left with pupils at the end of the week.

Resources:

Pupils' own work in science.

The stories of George Washington Carver and Dr Edward Jenner are in the section *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

marvel at the wonder of discovery;
value human curiosity;
appreciate the processes of discovery;
be open to the unexpected;
rejoice in learning;

Moral:

be prepared to have their thinking challenged;
remember that science has a moral dimension;

Social:

appreciate the impact of one person's discovery on the lives of others;

Cultural:

consider how the capacity to discover is cross cultural.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Show the pupils an appropriate item such as a plant, stone, or dead fish and through observation and questioning see what can be discovered about it together. Discuss this process of learning together. Use a story such as that of George Washington Carver 'The Man who loved Plants', to talk more about discovering.	Discovering	<i>This is a prayer that may help you think about the story we have shared. 'Oh God, Thank you for the curiosity that leads to new discoveries Amen.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Talk about a discovery made in science in class. Discuss the questions posed and experiments and methods and where this process of discovering might lead. What else might the pupils like to 'discover'?	Classroom discoveries	<i>Think about the discoveries you have made. How can they be used? What will you do with your learning? You may like to ask God to help you use it to help others in some way.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Invite pupils from each class to talk about the most interesting discovery they have made in their science work. Ask them how they felt when they made their 'discovery'.	Our 'discoveries'	<i>There have been so many fascinating things talked about today. Let the one you found most interesting stay in your mind. It can be like treasure, something precious. You may feel thankful to God for it in your heart.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Encourage the pupils to work in pairs or small groups and by talking to those they are with, find out something new – make a discovery about this person or people. Reflect upon how discoveries can be made in many different ways and places. Talk about a discovery that is controversial, e.g. genetic engineering or organ transplantation from animals.	Discovering you	<i>Listen to these words and if you'd like to make them yours, say Amen at the end. Lord, There is so much to find out about each of us. May we find joy in our discoveries. Amen.</i>
Friday Whole School	Share the story of Dr Edward Jenner and focus on the impact one discovery can have on the lives of others. Talk about how the skills of discovery lead people into whole new areas of learning as they did Jenner. Invite pupils to consider where they would like their skills to lead you.	What next?	<i>This prayer is based on some Hindu words. May each day bring us new joys May each new task enliven us May each challenge help us grow and May each discovery bring us closer to you, O God.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Learning Together******TERM: Spring******Mapping the Theme:******Week 4: Remembering Together***

This theme draws on a primary source – the testimony of a holocaust survivor – to illustrate the role of memory in learning and looking to the future.

The timing of the focus is intended to allow schools to make appropriate use of Holocaust Memorial Day, January 27th, which commemorates the deaths of more than six million Jewish and other lives, as well as more recent genocide.

Resources:

For the stories of ‘Beth Shalom’ and Paul Oppenheimer, see *Stories for Telling*.

For further information on Beth Shalom, contact The Holocaust Centre, Beth Shalom, Ollerton Road, Laxton, Newark, Nottingham NG22 0PA. Tel: 01623 836627, e-mail: office@bethshalom.com

Paul Oppenheimer’s autobiography *From Belsen to Buckingham Palace* is in the Witness Collection, published by Beth Shalom.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils’ development by encouraging them to:

Spiritual:

remember that every life story counts;
hold on to basic human values;
understand the importance of hope;
reflect on examples of endurance and courage;
rejoice in learning;

Moral:

recognise that remembering in this context is a moral obligation;
realise that everyone has a responsibility to recognise evil and do something about it;
understand the nature of moral absolutes;
consider moral dilemmas;

Social:

acknowledge that all communities and groups are bound together by common humanity;

Cultural:

understand that, for some people, caring knows no cultural boundaries.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the theme with the story 'Beth Shalom'. Challenge pupils to answer the question: Why is it important to remember?	A place to remember	<i>Our thought for today, which I hope you will carry with you all day is: Why do some people hate each other so much? Why can't people love each other even though they are different. We are all different. Let's rejoice in that.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Tell the first part of Paul's story and invite children to talk to each other about when they have felt excluded or picked on.	Memories of Childhood	<i>This is my prayer for today: O God, help us to remember we are all different in some way. We can rejoice in our differences. We can respect them and still love one another. Help us.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Remind children about Paul's story and tell part two. Talk about the dreadful things that happened, (as appropriate). Explore why people hate others.	Terrible remembering	<i>These are the words of a prayer found at Ravensbruck Concentration Camp: 'O Lord, remember not only the men and women of good will but also those of evil will.'</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite children to recall the story and to suggest reasons for telling it. Complete the story. Invite children to think about the responsibilities of people like them in this story and to talk to each other during the day about it.	Remembering for ever.	<i>This is a traditional Jewish prayer: Pray for your enemies that they may be holy and that all many be well with them. And if you think this is not serving God, rest assured that, more than all prayers, this is indeed the service of God.</i>
Friday Whole School	Conclude the theme by talking about the national commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, 27 th January. If possible, show pupils excerpts of the ceremony from a previous year. Talk about the power of the primary source: the survivor's testimony. Emphasise the importance of the links to other atrocities like Rwanda and Bosnia, and the importance of remembering them in the hope that they will not be repeated. Challenge pupils again to think about their responsibility.	Remembering together	<i>The Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks said: 'Memory is the guardian of our conscience.'</i> <i>Think about what those words mean.</i> <i>For evil to flourish it only takes the good person to do nothing.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Learning Together******TERM: Spring******Mapping the Theme:******Week 5: Exploring Together***

This week is about the nature of exploration and its impact on the world, from the great maritime expeditions to the small time tourist.

All are learning something new but the exploration is individual. However, in the climax to the theme, pupils are challenged to consider the global issues that confront us all which have to be explored together.

Resources:

A variety of maps.

The story 'Strangers' World' is in the section *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the excitement of exploring;
be curious;
want to explore individually and together;
wonder at all there is to explore;
know that we can never know everything;
rejoice in learning;

Moral:

understand that exploring unfamiliar places impacts on those who live there;
know that all people and cultures deserve respect;
recognise the shared responsibility that some explorations demand;
consider the responsibility they individually have for each other and the planet;

Social:

recognise that they can have an effect on others individually and in communities;
appreciate that everyone and everything is linked;

Cultural:

be aware of the diversity of cultures across the world;
be encouraged to value difference;
recognise the importance of what people do to express who and what they are and where they come from.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Begin by asking pupils: ‘What is the cost of a map?’ Receive their answers and then draw out the idea that the first maps had to be constructed on blank sheets as the result of the explorations of people like Columbus. Explain how this often involved conquering and colonising the country. People lost their land and their identity. It was a dangerous job all round. Talk about who paid the price for the map. Tell the story: ‘Strangers’ World’ and engage children with the indigenous point of view.	The cost of a map	<i>It’s very easy just to see the world from our own point of view and to forget that the way other people see things and live their lives can be just as worthwhile and good, or as bad and destructive, as the way we are Ours is not the only way.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to imagine themselves as explorers, arriving in an unknown place without a map. Challenge them to talk about what they would take with them, what they would do when they arrive, how they would begin to explore, and what they would be looking for. Explore the idea that maps were drawn differently, according to the perspective of the person who drew them up.	Without a map	<i>This song asks God to be part of the journey. You may like to join in. Let’s sing ‘One more step along the world I go.’</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell pupils of a personal experience of exploring somewhere new on holiday. Use a map to locate the place and share something of the culture and customs of the people. Talk about what you learned, the impact you may have had on the community, what you took from it and what you left behind.	Using a map	<i>I want to say how grateful I am for opportunities to learn from other people about how they live their lives and what is important to them. Perhaps you would like to think that too. We’ll be very quiet for a few moments.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite children to stop and think about all the aircraft flying at that moment. There are thousands of people circling the globe, many on their way to explore somewhere new. Ask the class where they think all this exploration is getting us. What do we achieve by it and what do we learn? Explore the impact of the fact that it seems everywhere is now mapped because humans control every part of the globe, except very small pockets of land and the oceans. Look at a globe and talk about what is left to explore.	All mapped out	<i>I am going to use some words to help anyone who wants to, to talk to God: O God, help us to cherish every little bit of our wonderful planet.</i>
Friday Whole School	Begin by recapping the ideas of the week with children’s help. Explore the phrase ‘Exploring Together’ and ask how we help each other in our explorations. Invite children to draw up a list of rules for travellers’ behaviour. These can range from the most obvious and practical to ones that address the big geographical and humanitarian issues. Challenge pupils to think about the difficulties in keeping their rules.	Mapping the future	<i>Here is part of a Celtic blessing. If you would like to make this prayer your own, say ‘Amen’ at the end. ‘Bless to me, O God, the earth beneath my foot Bless to me, O God, the path whereon I go. Bless to me, O God, the thing of my desire. As thou wast there before at my life’s beginning, be thou at my journey’s close.’ Amen</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Learning Together******TERM: Spring******Mapping the Theme:******Week 6: Imagining Together***

The focus of the week is the creative arts. Their potential as forms of expression is explored in the context of a storm. Music, words and visual images are used and invited finally as contributions towards the dramatic telling of the story of Jesus stilling the storm.

Resources:

Appropriate storm music would be Benjamin Britten 'The Storm' from *Peter Grimes*.

Storm paintings, eg: *Snowstorm. Steamboat off a Harbour Mouth*, Turner; *In the Well of the Great Wave of Kanagawa*, Katsushika Hokusai. These and other suggestions can be found in: Christopher McHugh, *Discovering Art-Water*, Wayland.

The story of Jesus stilling the storm is in Matthew 8: 23-27, Mark 4: 35-41 and Luke 8: 22-25.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

express their emotions in a variety of ways;
develop their imaginations;
recognise the uniqueness of creative expression;
enjoy their own creativity;
rejoice in learning;

Moral:

value each others' work;

Social:

understand the potential of a variety of art forms to convey ideas to others;

Cultural:

understand how the imagination helps us to transcend time and cultural contexts.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce this work through a piece of music such as ‘The Storm’ from <i>Peter Grimes</i> by Benjamin Britten. Invite pupils to contribute suggestions as to what they imagined during the music. Explain that the composer was thinking of a storm and that music is just one expression that reaches out to the imagination. Tell the children that the music will be played again for them to enjoy and think about.	Sharing a Storm	<i>These words may help you think about our time together today.</i> <i>O God – May our hearts and minds be open to the gifts of music, movement, art and drama.</i> <i>Let’s listen to the music again.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Guide the pupils imaginatively through a storm experience with words. Then invite them to express in either art or music what they had imagined. This can be a group or individual activity. Encourage the children to think about capturing their feelings.	Making a Storm	<i>Look at the beginning of your work today. You may be really pleased with it. You may feel it needs much more work. Your imagination can be very powerful. Think about how you use it and, if you would like to, thank God for it in a moment of quiet.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Share with the children another imaginative portrayal of a storm preferably visual, e.g. painting, photo or fabric. Talk about how different art forms are insights into how others see things. They express their ideas and experiences and show what they value. Invite pupils to think about when they feel like the storm inside and perhaps give them an opportunity to express those feelings.	A different view	<i>Listen to your imagination.</i> <i>How does it speak to you?</i> <i>What does it say? How will you reply?</i> <i>Listen, Listen.</i> <i>Listen.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Continue with the activity initiated on Tuesday. You may want to play the music used at the beginning of the week as a focus. Look at each others’ work and discuss how, through expressing imaginative ideas like this, we can have experiences and feelings with people of different times and place.	Creating a Storm	<i>Here are some words you may like to offer to God.</i> <i>Perhaps you would like to look at your hands as I read these words and think about the wonderful things they can do.</i> <i>Let us share our work together;</i> <i>Let us see each others’ imagination at work;</i> <i>Let us cherish our creations and our ability to imagine.</i>
Friday Whole School	Weave together contributions from children throughout the school to support the dramatic telling of the story of Jesus stilling the storm. Encourage the children to let the contributions help them to imagine what it would have been like to be part of the story. How would they have felt?	Stilling the Storm	<i>Think about this prayer and if you want to, you can make it yours by saying ‘Amen’ at the end.</i> <i>We sometimes find you God, in our imagination;</i> <i>We ask that our imaginings will reach out to meet you.</i> <i>Amen.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:

Learning Together

TERM: *Spring*

Mapping the Theme:

Week 7: Celebrating Together

This week is a celebration of all the school means. It brings together all the opportunities for learning explored during the half term. The emphasis is on the corporate nature of the celebrating, helping pupils to understand the importance of community and sharing.

Resources:

For the story: ‘A Surprising Gift’, see the section *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

- celebrate the togetherness of the school;
- recognise their own part in that celebration;
- enjoy a sense of belonging;
- rejoice in learning;

Moral:

value everyone's celebrations and contribute to them;

Social:

feel part of a community;
understand that celebrations are times to share each others' joy;

Cultural:

appreciate that celebrations take different forms.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Invite some children to recall celebrations that have taken place in school. Focus particularly on how they felt about them. Draw out the idea that sometimes we celebrate times that are particularly important for other people. Encourage pupils to reflect upon why it is important to think about our reasons for doing this together as a school.	School celebrations	<i>You may like to join in with this prayer by saying 'Amen'. Oh God, thank you for times when we celebrate together. Help us to open our hearts and share in each others' happiness and enjoyment. Amen</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Share with the children their favourite celebrations in school and explore what they particularly like doing at these special times. Explore the idea of how celebration can make us feel important and special using the story 'A Surprising Gift.'	Favourite celebrations	<i>I'd like to invite you to remember the times you have shared in celebration. Let the warmth of your feelings then stay with you, especially at difficult times.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Present to pupils a 'celebration box' containing a range of objects that represent things that are important or valued in school, e.g. a piece of work, a book, a friendship bracelet, a photo of children. Explore with the pupils the idea that these things are worthy of celebration and will be celebrated at a special time on Friday. Invite reflection on what the children would choose to celebrate.	What have we to celebrate?	<i>Think about all that is good about school for you. If you would like to, you can make these thoughts into your own prayer to God.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Discuss with the pupils what they want to celebrate about school and prepare a small contribution for a school celebration. Invite them to think about what is really important about school for them.	Celebrating us	<i>Invite children to contribute to a class prayer by saying what they are thankful for in school.</i>
Friday Whole School	Bring together from throughout the school, contributions of things the children feel are worth celebrating. Conclude the celebration with a favourite song or a hymn such as: O Lord, shout for Joy!	A celebration of our school	<i>This is a prayer to celebrate our school. Listen to it in your heart. As we celebrate our school, May we feel united in the good we find in our school; May we feel strong in our learning together; May we feel at peace in our friendships; May we feel the love of God surrounding us all.</i>

<i>Theme for the Half Term:</i>		<i>Red Letter Days</i>	<i>TERM: Spring</i>
<i>Overview:</i>		<i>Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development</i> This theme contributes to pupils’ development by encouraging them to:	
<i>Week 1: What are Red Letter Days?</i>		<i>Spiritual:</i> appreciate the importance of significant days; recognise that, for some people important days have religious significance; understand how important celebrations are to individuals and communities; think about what they can learn about themselves by sharing in others’ celebrations; understand that preparations are sometimes spiritual as well as practical;	
<i>Week 2: Preparations</i>			
<i>Week 3: Red Letter Love</i>			
<i>Week 4: Passover</i>			
<i>Week 5: Our Great Days</i>			
<i>Week 6: Easter</i>			
<i>Mapping the Theme:</i>		<i>Moral:</i> recognise that everyone deserves to have his or her Red Letter Days acknowledged and celebrated;	
<i>Week 1: What are Red Letter Days?</i> This week introduces the theme for the half term by identifying potential Red Letter Days, emphasising that every day is a RLD for someone for some reason. Two original stories are used to help children appreciate the universal nature of RLDs and encourage them to respect and share in others’ RLDs.		<i>Social:</i> think about RLDs as expressions of shared values and beliefs; appreciate the community aspects of RLD celebrations;	
<i>Resources:</i> See <i>Stories for Telling</i> for the stories: ‘Connor’s Story’ ‘Celebrating Eid’		<i>Cultural:</i> recognise that remembering and celebrating RLDs is a universal activity keeping people in touch with their community or family; acknowledge that ways of celebrating RLDs vary but the essential purposes are the same; explore how RLDs are an expression of religious and cultural identity.	

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Most parents ask their children what the day has been like at school. Act out the two contrasting scenarios – the child who replies “Nothing” and the child who excitedly describes the events at school. Discuss different attitudes to ‘the day’ and how attitude might affect what you gain from that day.	Another day	<i>Today is a new day, a new start, and a gift for each one of us. Think about how fortunate you are to have such a gift. Some people see each day as a ‘gift from God’: if you wish, thank God for that gift and ask for guidance to use that gift wisely today.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Continuing from Monday’s assembly, explore what the highlights of a day could be. Encourage the pupils to value and appreciate the little things that happen. Perhaps compose a daily ‘highpoint’ diary for a few days.	Highlights of the day	<i>We are going to write one highlight of our day on a piece of paper and, one by one, pin it on a collective display whilst quiet music plays.</i> <i>Remember today is a gift to you.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of Connor’s anticipation of a Red Letter Day. Talk about other days marked in red on a calendar and what it’s like to wait. Make and mark a class calendar.	Why Red Letter Days?	<i>Remember days when you have felt excited. You can make those thoughts into a prayer if you would like to.</i> <i>Let’s all be quiet with our own thoughts.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Discuss with pupils which days they would mark in red on a blank calendar if they had the chance. Invite them to say why. Add your own Red Letter Days, explaining their significance.	Our own Red Letter Days	<i>Here is a prayer. You might like to make it your own.</i> <i>Help us to remember that every day is a Red Letter Day for someone. Help us to value every day.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of ‘Celebrating Eid’. Talk about why it is important to share in each others’ celebrations. Invite pupils and teachers to talk about how it feels.	Someone else’s Red Letter Day	<i>This is a prayer for us as a school. You may join in by saying ‘Amen’ at the end.</i> <i>Let us be joyful with others when they celebrate.</i> <i>Amen.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Red Letter Days******TERM: Spring******Mapping the Theme:******Week :2: Preparations***

This week focuses on the beginning of LENT, highlighting two Red Letter Days for Christians:

Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday.

These two days mark the beginning of the time of preparation for the most important of the Christian RLDs: Easter. As well as making practical preparations, the theme emphasises the need for ‘thinking’ preparation too so there is an emphasis on quiet reflection in the words for worship.

Resources:

The story of the temptations of Jesus is in Matthew 4 : 1-11 and Luke 4 : 1-13.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils’ development by encouraging them to:

Spiritual:

understand that RLDs can be solemn and serious as well as joyful;
realise that people need to mark and remember significant days that recall sad times;
recognise the importance of preparation for RLDs;

Moral:

think about how they could be better people;
appreciate the importance of thinking in preparation for some RLDs;

Social:

understand that RLDs need to be prepared, especially if others are involved;

Cultural:

understand that RLD celebrations are rooted in historical and cultural contexts but are preserved in present practice.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Gradually disclose the contents of a shopping bag containing the ingredients for making pancakes. Ask children what these would be used for and identify the Red Letter Day. Talk about getting ready to celebrate. Help children to understand the practical and symbolic reasons for Shrove Tuesday celebrations.	Getting ready	<i>Imagine yourself preparing for a Red Letter Day. Close your eyes and run through your mind all that you would do. Let yourself feel excitement and wonder what the day will be like. What ever happens you are ready for that day and all that is to come. If you would like to, offer all these feelings in your imagination to God.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Explore further the idea of the thought needed in preparation. Let the pupils make a list of things that need to be done for a Red Letter Day of their choice. Share ideas. If appropriate make pancakes.	Thinking in preparation	<i>Let's take time to be still; you may like to pray in these moments. Oh God thank you for the energy and excitement of times of preparation. In all our 'busy-ness' may we not forget to take time to love and care for others as well as feeling our own good feelings inside.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Discuss the significance of Ash Wednesday for Christians. Explore why it is a serious and solemn Red Letter Day and talk about how that makes it feel different from other celebrations. Invite pupils to talk about when they make solemn preparations. It may be appropriate to talk about the need to remember sad days.	Beginning of Lent	<i>Let's make this a quiet time that is just for each of us to think our own thoughts. Perhaps you would like time to think about something you have said or done that you are sorry for. If you want to, you can say you are sorry to God.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Talk about how some Christians use Lent as a time to think about how they could be better people. Invite pupils to talk to each other about how they could be better people.	Getting better all the time	<i>This is my (a) prayer that you might like to make your own. O God, help me to know that I can be a better person.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of the Temptation of Jesus to show how he prepared for his ministry. Explain this is a story many Christians remember during Lent which is a time for them to reflect on the difficulties and temptations they face in their own lives. Talk about the need all people have to spend time thinking away from the 'busy-ness' of every day life.	Getting away from it all for a moment	<i>Let's all sit quietly and take time to be calm inside. If you would like to, you may talk to God or let your thoughts come and go freely.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Red Letter Days******TERM: Spring******Mapping the Theme:******Week 3: Red Letter Love***

This week incorporates a recognition of Mothering Sunday, which is a celebration of love. The collective worship building up to Friday explores other ideas about the celebration of love, love for God, for a friend, for the stranger and between parents and children.

Resources:

The story of a saint, e.g. St David or St Patrick both of whom are remembered at this time of year.

A story of a child who is a carer.

There may be a child in the school who fulfils this role at home.

The story of 'Testing Friendship' is in the section *Stories for Telling*.

The song 'Magic Penny' is in *Alleluya* Black No 10.

The story of Jesus lost in the Temple is in Luke 2 : 41-51.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate that love is to be celebrated;
think about the ways in which love is shown;
remember those who love and care for them, especially mothers;

Moral:

recognise the opportunity to show love which each new day brings;
understand the responsibility to show care about people they do not know as well as those they love;
reflect on the small ways love can be shown;

Social:

discuss with each other how they show love;
understand the importance of love in relationships;

Cultural:

appreciate that love is a natural emotion, especially between generations;

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell the story of the life of a saint e.g. David (March 1 st) or Patrick (March 17 th) to raise ideas of how the showing of love to God is remembered. Discuss how people show that they love God now. Invite children to talk to each other about how they show love.	Love of God	<i>Oh God Help us to make each day a celebration of love.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite children to talk about what they love about their friend. How do they show their feelings? Share the story of the antelope, the tortoise and the woodpecker, 'Testing Friendship'. How do you celebrate friendships each day?	Love for a friend	<i>This prayer may help you to think about your friends. May our friendship be strong. May our friendship be a blessing to others and ourselves. Amen.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Draw children's attention to days during the year when they raise money to help others. This is another way of showing love – putting the needs of others before your own. Review the work of charity that the school has supported and maybe invite in a speaker for an update. Draw attention to the words of the song: <i>Magic Penny</i> .	Love for those we've never met	<i>We're going to sing Magic Penny very quietly. While you're singing, think about the love that you can give away today.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Tell the story of Jesus lost in the temple. Discuss how parents are concerned for their children and want them to be safe at all times. Sometimes there are misunderstandings but love remains. Invite children to think about when and how they celebrate this love.	Love of a parent	<i>Think about the ways in which each day those who care for you show their love. In a small way this makes every day important. If you would like to, close your eyes and imagine the face of the person or people who care for you. Try to hold that face in your mind and if you want to, ask God to bless that person.</i>
Friday Whole School	Find or make up a story of a carer child. They show their love every day. Talk about Mothering Sunday, inviting children to talk about their relationship. Raise the idea that while it is good to have a RLD, maybe with such great love it is important to find a way to celebrate that love in some small way every day.	Love of a child for a parent	<i>Listen to the words of this prayer and imagine your love reaching out from you. 'Oh God, Let the love that is shown to us grow in our hearts like a seed in good earth. Let the care we show others blossom as the flowers in the ground. Let the love that we show spread around.'</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Red Letter Days******TERM: Spring******Mapping the Theme:******Week 4: Passover***

This week focuses entirely on one Jewish Red Letter Day, the celebration of Passover. The theme is introduced through exploration of the Seder Plate and developed as the story unfolds.

Resources:

The story 'Manna from Heaven' is in the section, *Stories for Telling*.

The story of Moses can be found in Exodus 2– 4.

Appropriate meditative music e.g.

Variations on a Theme by Thomas Tallis by Vaughan Williams.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the importance of celebrating together;
understand the impact of tradition on identity;
explore their emotions as they identify with the story;
reflect on what it means to remember;
appreciate the importance and power of story to tell people who they are and hold them together;

Moral:

reflect on how it feels to cry;
consider how it might feel to be treated badly;

Social:

understand that remembering is a shared, social activity;
appreciate how a shared history holds people together;

Cultural:

contemplate issues to do with injustice in this specific religious context.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Begin with a poster of a Jewish family celebrating Passover. Show pupils a Seder Plate and invite their suggestions as to its use. Explore, by tasting, the symbolism of salt water. Begin the story that the festival recalls, with God hearing the crying of the Israelites.	Something to cry about	<i>Think of the story you have just heard. Think of how, in the story, God hears the people crying. Who hears your crying? Perhaps you would like to think about the last time you cried. We can thank God for tears, a way of showing how we feel.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Tell the next part of the Passover Story: the call of Moses and his return to Egypt. Exodus 2 v 22-5. Discuss the importance of home and what is done for people who have no home.	Call of Moses	<i>God spoke to Moses. In quiet, think of your reaction to this. If you wish, ask God to speak to you so that you might know God better.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of the Plagues. Ask the children how the people might have felt towards Pharaoh. What would they have done if they were Pharaoh? Who do they look to in times of crisis?	The Plagues	<i>The plagues were terrible for those who suffered. Think about times when life is difficult for you. These words may help you. (Read Psalm 121).</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Tell the part of the Passover story. Invite the children to imagine how it might feel to escape? But what would it be like to have nowhere to go. How might it feel to be a refugee?	Passover and the flight from Egypt	<i>This is the song Moses sang when they were free at last. Listen to the words and imagine how it must have felt. 'I will sing to the Lord, for he has risen up in triumph; he has hurled horses and riders into the sea. The Lord is my safety and my protection. I will sing his praise for ever.'</i>
Friday Whole School	Show the children the elements of a Passover meal and explore their symbolism. Talk about the importance for some people of being reminded about the things they value. Explore the importance of traditional stories to tell people who they are. Invite children to talk to each other about what they do to remember things they value.	Remembering	<i>Sit quietly and listen to the music. If you would like to, you can use this time for your own 'remembering' when you can think of times that have been very important to you, which you don't ever want to forget. You may want to thank God for them in your heart.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Red Letter Days******TERM: Spring******Mapping the Theme:******Week 5: Our Great Days***

This week brings the theme of celebrating into the heart of the school. It offers an opportunity to consider together the events that are local and therefore of great importance to the community. The week culminates in a focus on national events that merit celebration.

Resources:

Personal artefacts marking 'great days'.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate that everyone has great days;
celebrate the community of which they are a part;

Moral:

value memorable occasions, however insignificant they may be;
discuss the importance of memories;

Social:

recognise the importance of great days to the individual and the life of the community and the nation;

Cultural:

understand that some celebrations bind people together, irrespective of cultural background;
understand how national identity is a cause for celebration for some people.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Choose a significant day in the life of the school and recall it, inviting pupils' (and teachers') contributions if appropriate.	A great day for the school	<i>Let's think about our school and listen (say) the words of our school prayer/listen to prayers for our school written by (individual children)</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Individual teachers talk to their classes about great days for them personally – graduation, wedding or birth of a child etc. Explore the importance of memories.	A great day for the teacher	<i>I want to be still for a moment to think about my great day (and say thank you to God for the blessings it brought me). Perhaps you would like to be quiet too.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Invite a visitor in from the community, a member of the clergy, a local shopkeeper, police officer or the crossing warden to talk about something significant that happened for the benefit of the community.	A great day for the community	<i>Let us say thank you to God for If you want to make this prayer your own, you can say 'Amen' at the end.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite pupils to share with each other their feelings about their own great days, (probably birthdays) and to talk about how it feels to be special for a day. What would people miss who did not experience that? How would it feel if no one remembered your birthday?	My great day	<i>Imagine yourself in the centre of a group of people who are all smiling and clapping you. Well done! Feel good about yourself. You are special.</i>
Friday Whole School	Either focus on a topical issue like a sporting achievement or use an historical event, e.g. the Armistice or look forward to the coronation of the next monarch. Explore how people celebrate as a whole country. Talk about the atmosphere of great occasions.	A great day for the nation	<i>Use some words appropriate to the occasion you have chosen and invite children to listen and to think about them.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Red Letter Days******TERM: Spring******Mapping the Theme:******Week 6: Easter***

For Christians, the most important RLD of all is Easter Sunday, Resurrection Day. This final week of the half term marks that celebration in a way designed to engage pupils emotionally. Day by day, as the story is told, children are invited to reflect on their own feelings as well as their responses to the narrative. The theme closes quietly and in a deliberately open way with an opportunity for pupils to raise their own questions as part of their reflection on the week.

Resources:

For the song 'Lord of the Dance' see *Faith, Folk & Clarity* Galliard

The story of the events of Holy Week can be found in all the gospels, from:

Matthew	21:1ff
Mark	11: 1ff
Luke	19:28-48, 22:39ff
John	12:12-26, 18:1ff

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the importance of this narrative to the faith of Christians;
reflect on their own deepest emotions;
wonder at the mystery of an event that defied explanation;

Moral:

consider the impact of betraying a friend;
appreciate how righteous anger can justifiably be expressed;

Social:

explore shared expressions of their emotions;
think about the impact of their emotions on others;

Cultural:

understand that emotional reaction crosses cultures and historical contexts but is expressed in different ways.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce children to the idea that for Christians Easter is the culmination of a week of events crucial to God's plans. That is why it is called Holy Week. Begin a week of stories about this week with the story of Palm Sunday. Imagine you are welcoming someone special into your home. How do you make them feel good?	A day of welcome	<i>Think of all the good things you would prepare to welcome someone you love into your home. Let the loving feelings you have reach out to those around you. If you would like to, thank God for all the love you feel.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Tell the children the story of Jesus in the temple. Discuss why he was angry. Was it right to be angry like that? Is it ever good to be angry? Do you have to be violent to show your anger? What other ways are there of expressing anger? How does it feel to be angry?	A day of anger	<i>Listen to these words. I am angry, I want to hurt someone, blame them, make them see there is something more important than me. I am angry, I want to help, heal, protect, save, make them see that the person caring here is me. Think quietly about the things that make you angry. You might want to talk to God about them.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Share the story of Jesus' betrayal by Judas and later by his other friends. Talk about feelings of being let down and of having let a friend down.	A day of betrayal	<i>Reflect upon a time when you were hurt or let down by a friend. Think about times when you made a mistake and were hurtful. Let these feelings help you feel forgiving towards others.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Tell the story of the crucifixion. Being sensitive to the children's responses, encourage them to share their experiences of loss and sadness. Let them see that while their feelings are unique, there are common elements in which people can support each other.	A day of grief	<i>These words may be a helpful prayer for you: O God, in times of sadness may I feel that I am not alone and that there is always love for me. Listen to the spiritual 'Were you there...?'</i>
Friday Whole School	Share the story of the Resurrection. Encourage the children to reflect upon the strangeness and wonder in the story. Invite their comments, questions and thoughts.	A day of wonder	<i>Reflect on the story we've heard this week as you listen to the song, Lord of the Dance.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:		Love is...	TERM: Summer
<p>Overview:</p> <p>Week 1: A Letter of Love</p> <p>Week 2: Love is Patient & Kind</p> <p>Week 3: Love is Living for Others</p> <p>Week 4: Love is not Happy with Evil</p> <p>Week 5: Love Never Gives Up</p> <p>Week 6: Faith, Hope and Love</p> <p>Week 7: Love is...</p>		<p>Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development</p> <p>This theme contributes to pupils’ development by encouraging them to:-</p> <p>Spiritual:</p> <p>appreciate that love can be communicated in different ways; understand the importance of love; be aware of the love that others give them;</p> <p>Moral:</p> <p>recognise the importance of a loving attitude; be challenged to think about how and where they are loving to others;</p> <p>Social:</p> <p>appreciate the difference a loving attitude makes to other people;</p> <p>Cultural:</p> <p>consider the historical and on-going use of letters to communicate emotional and spiritual ideas.</p>	
<p>Mapping the Theme:</p> <p>Week 1: A Letter of Love</p> <p>This half term’s theme focuses on the well known thirteenth chapter of Paul’s first letter to Corinthians, which underpins the central elements of Christian belief. It is known as the Hymn of Love and although the words were written by a Christian for a new Christian Community, they have universal relevance. The first week uses the introductory three verses as a focus, exploring the importance of love. The context of the piece is explained in the story of Paul’s letter, which begins the week. This is a love letter with a difference.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>For the text of Paul’s letter of love see: 1 Corinthians 13 (above).</p> <p>For the story of Paul’s Letter of Love see <i>Stories for Telling</i>.</p> <p>Each class needs a sealed envelope addressed to ‘The Church in Corinth’, which contains the text of Paul’s letter.</p>			

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Produce a sealed envelope addressed to the Church in Corinth and invite pupils to think about what it might say. Tell the story of Paul's Letter of Love. Encourage pupils to talk to each other about what they think the people of Corinth needed to hear in their letter. I wonder what the letter might say. What do you think?	A persecuted community	<i>Imagine you are holding a letter from someone who loves you. Quietly think about how that makes you feel and be thankful for that feeling of love sweeping over you.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Begin by producing the envelope introduced yesterday and recap the story. Open the envelope and read (or invite a child to read) just the first paragraph. Talk about how these opening words might help the people of Corinth to feel better. Invite reflection on what gives children hope when they feel down.	Finding hope	<i>This my (a) prayer. Listen and say 'Amen' at the end if you want to make it your prayer too. O God, help me to remember when I feel low, the kindness of those who care for me and the good times I have with my friends. When others are sad, may my love and friendship give them hope that things will get better.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Begin by re-reading the opening paragraph of Paul's letter and talk about how these words showed the Corinthians what they really needed to do; emphasise that they had to be loving; nothing else mattered.	Giving guidance	<i>Think about the most important thing you have to do today. What do you want to be like? What do you want to achieve? You may like to sit quietly and perhaps ask God for help.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite children to think about how and where we are loving in our day to day lives. As a class, find a way to record all the times during the day when pupils see love in action.	Encountering love	<i>Listen to these words and, if you want to, let them speak for you. Let the love given to me fill me to overflowing; Let my love for others flow freely; Let our world be refreshed for all time with love.</i>
Friday Whole School	Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 and use the words to draw together the ideas explored this week. Talk about how love is expressed in schools and give examples. Close by re-reading the text as words for worship, inviting pupils' reflection on the word 'love'.	The most important gift	<i>Listen to the words Paul wrote and think about what the word 'Love' means to you.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Love is...******TERM: Summer******Mapping the Theme:******Week 2: Love is patient and kind...***

In this epistle (letter) Paul describes what he sees as the characteristics of love, as they are reflected in behaviour. Each week of the half term takes a verse from the main part of the letter and explores it. This week the text is:

Love is patient and kind, is not jealous or boastful.

The materials explore these four descriptions of love using the story of a Christian Saint and a Jewish epic (condensed). The classroom collective workshop allows children to explore some potentially difficult issues to do with love when it is pushed to its limits.

Resources:

An appropriate song for this week would be

‘Peace is flowing like a river’.....in *Alleluya!* Black No 48

For the story of St Aidan of Northumbria see *Stories of Telling*.

The story of Joseph can be found in Genesis 37, 39-45.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

explore the nature of love;
appreciate that love can be put under pressure but can endure;
see love in practical terms;

Moral:

consider the implications of being jealous and boastful;
recognise that being patient and kind is a mark of the value and respect given to others;

Social:

ponder on their own capacity for patience and kindness towards others;

Cultural:

be aware that the nature of love transcends cultural and historical contexts.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Begin by inviting pupils to talk about the things a loving person would do. Make a collective 'Love is...' list. Look at 1 Corinthians 13:4 and explain this is one of Paul's ideas about what love is. To make it clear, so that his readers understand, Paul tells them what love is not. Take the words: <i>patient, kind, jealous and boastful</i> and make sure pupils understand what they mean.	What is love?	<i>Think about a time when someone was very kind to you. Go over that time in your mind. How did it feel? Today try and do at least two kind things for other people. In a few moments of quiet, think about your feelings and perhaps ask God to show you how to be kind.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Discuss the words 'patient' and 'kind' and talk about practical examples in the children's lives. Explore how love is sometimes stretched beyond the limits of patience but is still there and is renewed.	When is love patient and kind?	<i>Be very still. Imagine love flowing out of you like a river... Quietly sing verse 2 of the song: 'Love is flowing like a river'</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of St Aidan of Northumbria who epitomises patience and kindness. Invite pupils to think about and suggest the most difficult thing Aidan had to do.	Patience and kindness	<i>Listen to these words of a prayer. You may like to make it your own. O God, sometimes it's difficult to be kind when there are people we find it hard to like. It isn't always easy to be patient when we are tired or cross. Help us to remember times when we needed patience and kindness and to use these feelings to show understanding towards others.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Discuss the words 'jealous' and 'boastful' and help pupils to understand that such behaviour frequently happens when someone does not feel loved enough. Invite them to think about times when they have felt like that. Conclude with the words for worship, which could be repeated for emphasis.	Jealousy and boastfulness	<i>Hold on to your thoughts. You may find these words helpful: Dear God, when I feel that no-one notices me or cares, may I remember you. When someone is jealous or boastful, may I remember they need my love.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of Joseph whose boastfulness helped to fire his brothers' jealousy and caused tremendous suffering all round. Emphasise how, through their troubles, they learned about love; Jacob saw how unfair he had been and the brothers all realised the strength of their family love.	Love is not jealous or boastful	<i>These are the words of an Indian holy man: 'The positive always defeats the negative: courage overcomes fear, patience overcomes anger and irritability, and love overcomes all.'</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Love is...******TERM: Summer******Mapping the Theme:******Week 3: Love is Living for Others***

The title of this theme is a positive expression of the words of verse 5:

Love is not ill mannered or selfish or irritable: Love does not keep a record of wrongs.

These characteristics are the opposite of those needed to build strong relationships. On a simple level the first two stories would help pupils reflect on what constitutes good manners; at a deeper level, all three stories tell of the often-surprising behaviour of the person who acts in a loving way. The theme gives children an opportunity to think about their own behaviour towards others.

Resources:

For the stories of:

‘The Teacher and the Rude Man,’ ‘Nasruddin’s Coat’ and ‘Bhai Ghanaiya,’ see *Stories For Telling*.

There are a lot of stories written for young children which help them to understand how good manners nurture relationships,

e.g. Vipont: *The Elephant and the Bad Baby* – Puffin
 Hawkins: *Max and the Magic Word* – Puffin
 or: *The Little Red Hen* – Ladybird

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

reflect on the religious idea that God is in everyone;
 appreciate that love is living for others;
 begin to recognise the transforming quality of love;

Moral:

challenge their perceptions of other people;
 consider how self control can grow from a loving attitude;

Social:

empathise with other people;

Cultural:

wonder at the potential and power of love to cross cultural boundaries;
 understand that a loving attitude creates and sustains its own culture;
 consider how far a loving attitude can impact on a selfish, materialistic society.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words of Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Use the story of the ‘Teacher and the Rude Man’ either as a story to tell, or to stimulate spontaneous drama, drawing out pupils’ ideas about what the story illustrates about love. Explore how a loving attitude can overcome ill temper and rudeness, and does not keep a record of wrongs. Read verse 5 of Paul’s letter.	A loving response	<i>Think about a time when you have felt cross with someone and irritable. Imagine these feelings are like balloons and you can let go of them one by one. They will float away, leaving you to be more loving. Close your eyes and imagine those balloons just floating away....</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite children to recap the story briefly and then ask them to identify with either the teacher or the rude man and to consider, in pairs, what else they could have done if they had been in the story. How would different actions have affected the outcome?	Love makes a difference.	<i>When I feel cross and bad tempered, let me remember that rudeness does not make things better. May I always try to find a loving way to be with people.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of Nasruddin’s Coat, if possible using 2 coats as props, one smart and the other dirty. Invite pupils to think about how Nasruddin must have felt when no one would sit by him. Invite pupils to talk about why the people were so selfish. Draw out the idea that it is what people are like inside that matters.	Seeing the person	<i>Some people believe that within each person there is a precious soul, a part of God. Think of all that is good in you. That part is to be treasured and cherished. Let your mind rest on the idea that, just as you are wonderful and unique, so, in his or her own way, is every other person you will ever meet.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite children to talk about when they have experienced other people’s selfishness or intolerance or been intolerant themselves. Rehearse recognised strategies for dealing with such situations, e.g.: bullying. Emphasise how intolerance is a denial of love.	Denying love	<i>Listen to this prayer and think about the words: God of all people, open our eyes, open our minds that we may look beyond things that are strange to us or not to our liking and see the person you created. Help us to be loving. Amen.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of the Sikh warrior, Bhai Ghanaya. Explore the idea that such unconditional love is living for others. Talk about why some people find that idea difficult. Read 1 Corinthians 13:5 again and invite pupils to think about what they would like to be able to do to show their love.	Unconditional love	<i>Guru Gobind Singh believed everyone to be equal. He wrote: “All human beings have the same eyes, the same ears, the same body, built of earth, air, fire and water. All human beings are a reflection of the one and the same God. Recognise the whole human race as one.”</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Love is...******TERM: Summer******Mapping the Theme:******Week 4: Love is not happy with evil***

The essence of this verse is to see truth recognised and justice done:

Love is not happy with evil but rejoices in the truth.

A loving person is unhappy when others are mistreated and takes no pleasure in others' misfortunes. The three stories this week reflect a theme of racial equality. They express three different accounts of love defeating the evil of prejudice and discrimination. The idea of unexpected outcomes when love is applied is picked up from the previous week and extended.

Resources:

For the story of Bilal, see Grimmitt et al *A Gift to the Child: Teachers' Source Book* and *Bilal's Story*.

For the story of Archbishop Tutu's Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, see:
'Ubuntu' in *Stories for Telling*

For Further information see:

Desmond Tutu *No Future without Forgiveness* 1999 Rider Books ISBN 07126 70130

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

think about the power of love to overcome evil;
begin to be aware that truth is expressed different ways;

Moral:

consider how an attitude of love can lead people to a strong but non violent stance against evil;
recognise the potential of a loving attitude to resolve conflict;
appreciate that some people believe that faith in the power of love can bring about justice for all;

Social:

understand that the example of one person with a loving attitude, who stands up and stands out, can change society;

Cultural:

reflect on the way history is changed by individuals who exemplify a loving attitude.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell the story of Bilal, the black slave who was the first muezzin. Use the story to draw out ideas about evil and truth in Bilal's life and the children's own.	Shouting the truth.	<i>Think about the ideas we have talked about. Reflect for a moment on Bilal.</i> <i>What would you shout to show that you are not happy with evil?</i> <i>Let us stand firm in the face of evil.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite children to suggest stories they know in which something or someone is really evil (e.g. Snow White or a character in a story by Roald Dahl) Select one story and retell it. Use it to talk in greater depth about what evil is and to explore where the truth lies in a story that cannot possibly be true.	Recognising the truth	<i>These are words which many religious people use:</i> <i>Lead us from darkness to light;</i> <i>from lies to the truth;</i> <i>Lead us from evil to good</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of Martin Luther King's non-violent approach to the evil of inequality, because he believed that God loved everyone. Talk about peaceful protest against evil and help children to relate this to their own reactions to being angered or unfairly treated.	Fighting with love	<i>Let us all think quietly about today's story. Perhaps there was someone in it whom you really disliked...</i> <i>What do these feelings tell you?</i> <i>Take a moment to think about how you would like to change the story, if you could.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Return to the previous week's story of 'The Teacher and the Rude Man' and draw out the notion that sometimes people behave in a loving way that is unexpected. Relate this idea to the Martin Luther King story and look ahead to tomorrow.	Unexpected love	<i>Perhaps you would like to talk to God...</i> <i>O God of surprises, let the love that is in me surprise me and those around me. Help me to be kind and patient and loving even when someone is hurtful or unfair or wrong.</i> <i>Amen</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story 'Ubuntu' and talk about Archbishop Desmond Tutu's work for justice against Apartheid in South Africa and particularly the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation which he set up after the first whole nation elections. Here, by putting love into action, he was able to bring out many of the terrible stories of the evils of Apartheid, without judgement, but in a loving search for truth.	Truth and reconciliation	<i>Love is not happy with evil, but rejoices in the truth.</i> <i>Demond Tutu says:</i> <i>In a way we are living out what Martin Luther King said – 'Unless we learn to live together as brothers, we will die together as fools.'</i>

Theme for the Half Term:

Love is...

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

Week 5: Love never gives up...

This phrase emphasises the strength of love, which seems to sustain so many people in times of suffering or trial.

Love never gives up its faith; hope and patience never fail.

The stories tell of steadfast love, which is resolute and undeflected. There are opportunities here for children to internalise the stories and to identify with them in a way that helps them to recognise the love in their own lives. There is suggested material to use to distance any children who might find this difficult.

Resources:

The parables of the Prodigal Son is in Luke 15:11 and The Lost Sheep is Luke 15:4-7.

For a delightful retelling of the Lost Sheep, see: Butterworth and Inkpen *Stories Jesus Told*. Marshall Pickering.

For stories to stimulate children's thinking about love see:
 McBratney *Guess How Much I Love You* Walker Books
 Willem *I'll Always Love You*, Hodder and Stoughton
 Giori *No Matter What* Bloomsbury.
 Archbishop Desmond Tutu explores the nature of God's love in his book: *No Future without Forgiveness* Rider Books, page 75.
 For the story of Ruth, see The Book of Ruth, chapters 1-4 in the Old Testament.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

understand how strong love can be;
 appreciate the power of love to sustain people in times of difficulty;
 reflect on what love helps people to do;
 appreciate that love shown to them can sometimes be surprising;
 think about the Christian belief that God epitomises love;

Moral:

explore the relationship between love and forgiveness;

Social:

explore how love makes people think of others;
 appreciate how some people's love for God is expressed in service to others;

Cultural:

understand that biblical examples of the expression of love are bound by the time and place.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Tell the parable of the Prodigal Son in the context of a story Jesus told to illustrate God's endless and forgiving love. Invite pupils to talk about what is surprising in the story and to reflect on when they have been surprised by someone's love or kindness.	God's Love	<i>Love never gives up and its faith, hope and patience never fail.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Use the parable of the Lost Sheep to stimulate a drama activity. Young pupils could role-play the story as a class; older pupils could use hot seating to explore the feelings of the sheep, the lost sheep and the shepherd.	Love for the lost	<i>Think of a time when you were lost or felt all alone. Remember your feelings when you were found. Keep those safe feelings in your mind and if you want to, say thank you to God.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of Gladys Alyward and use it to explore how some people's faith and hope are expressions of love for God through service to others. Invite pupils to share their reactions to what Gladys did and to talk about her motivation.	Love for others	<i>This is a prayer. You may like to make it yours by saying Amen.</i> <i>Thank you for the people who show their love for you by caring for others, even when they are in danger themselves.</i> <i>Amen</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Invite children to think and to share if they want to, where there is love in their lives, the kind of love that never gives up, whatever they do. Have a story to hand if children need to have their thinking stimulated. If a difficult situation arises, return to the idea that love is sometimes under pressure.	Love for me	<i>Christians believe God is love. For some people, this means God loves everyone, whatever they have done. God's love never gives up on anyone; it never runs out. Imagine a constant stream of love flowing around you.</i>
Friday Whole School	Draw the week to a climax with the story of either Ruth or Esther both of whom showed unshakeable faith, hope and patience in her life and her actions. In her story, these are expressions of steadfast love for God and for her people, the Jews.	Love for God's people	<i>This is part of a Jewish prayer. Listen and think quietly about the words:</i> <i>'We give you thanks, O Lord our God,</i> <i>And the God of our fathers;</i> <i>Our lives are built on you</i> <i>And you protect us so that we might be saved.</i> <i>We give you thanks and sing your praise.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Love is...******TERM: Summer******Mapping the Theme:******Week 6: Faith, Hope and Love***

Paul says:

Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love.

This week uses a powerful story of faith and a great religious story of hope, with opportunities in the intimacy of the classroom to explore what these concepts mean to pupils' sense of self worth. The threads are drawn together at the end of the week when faith and hope are seen as the means to an end – that of expressing love. The Salvation Army exemplifies that ideal. (It would be helpful to explore the reasons for the exclusive language in the Salvation Army prayer)

Resources:

The biblical quotation that inspired Corrie can be found in 1 Thessalonians 5:16 on page 256 of the Good News Bible, in the New Testament section.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

explore the meaning of these three significant concepts; faith, hope and love; appreciate why love is the greatest human attribute and the highest ideal;

Moral:

think about their responsibility to love others;

Social:

appreciate the power of love in action and the impact on others' lives;

Cultural:

understand that faith, hope and love transcend historical and cultural contexts.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Use the story of Corrie Ten Boom to explore the power of faith despite all hardship. Invite pupils to talk about what keeps them going when times are tough for them.	Faith	<i>Let's listen to the words that meant so much to Corrie and think about what they might mean to us: 'Rejoice always. Pray constantly. Give thanks in all circumstances.'</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Have the word FAITH for pupils to look at. Talk about how having faith is believing in something. Some people believe in God (recall Corrie Ten Boom). Everybody can believe in themselves and love themselves. Invite pupils to talk about how they might show faith in themselves.	Exploring what faith is.	<i>I can do it! We are going to repeat the words in our heads, to whisper and then to shout them, three times. I can do it! I can do it! I can do it!</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of the restoration of the Temple after the victory of the Maccabees when the light of God's presence, the light of hope, was rekindled. Light a candle that everyone can see to introduce the words for worship.	Hope	<i>Let's look at the candle. Watch the flame. Watch it carefully. Keep your eyes on it and think about the goodness in the world that gives us all hope. Carry that feeling of hope deep inside yourself.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Begin with the word HOPE and talk about how it feels to be hopeful. Illustrate this in a concrete way, e.g.: use a glass, half filled with water and explore the half-full, half-empty dilemma. Explain that a positive outlook is the beginning of hope.	Exploring what hope is.	<i>Sometimes little sayings help people to keep their spirits up when they are feeling low. This is a good one: 'Invent the future and then make it happen!'</i>
Friday Whole School	Talk about the Salvation Army or invite a speaker to talk about love in action through the work of the organisation. Explain St Paul's idea that faith and hope, however strong they are, are not as great as love. It is this love, the result of faith and hope that the Salvation Army expresses. Challenge pupils to think about their responsibility to love others and to show that love.	Love	<i>These are the words of a Salvation Army prayer written a long time ago. Although it only seems to talk about men, the prayer is for everyone. It asks God to help us to support each other, particularly in times of difficulty. 'With heart of God and hand to man, help us to help each other, Lord, each other's cross to bear. Let each his friendly aid afford and feel his brother's care.'</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Love is...******TERM: Summer******Mapping the Theme:******Week 7: Love is...***

The theme concludes with an opportunity for pupils to express their own ideas about what love is, either individually or collectively. Ideally these could be displayed somewhere in the school for visitors to see and as a reminder of what may have been quite an intensive experience. The story of the foundation of the Hospice Movement is a powerful example of love making a difference to people's dying.

Two songs are used to stimulate children's thinking. The theme comes full circle at the end of the week with the powerful story of Paul's experience on the Damascus Road, which transformed him from persecutor of the Christians to founder of the Church, and led him to write the famous letter.

Resources:

The songs 'This Little Light of Mine' and 'Magic Penny' are in *Alleluya* Black Nos. 14 and 10. The most appropriate words to use to include everyone are in the first verse and the chorus of 'This Little Light of Mine.'

For the story of Cecily Saunders and the foundation of the Hospice Movement, see 'A Window of Love' in the section *Stories for Telling*.

Wednesday's words for worship come from a prayer written by Thomas Merton, which Cecily Saunders carried with her in her diary.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

see themselves as agents of love;
recognise that love can be expressed in very practical ways;
express their own ideas about love in creative ways, either individually or collectively;

Moral:

be challenged to think about their personal capacity to love and to show their love for others;
think about what they might do to support an organisation like the Hospice Movement;
appreciate the challenge that someone else's love might present to them;

Social:

understand how love flourishes when it is shared;

Cultural:

sustain a culture of showing love in action in school.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Use the first verse of the song <i>This Little Light of Mine</i> to explore how everyone can express themselves in love. Talk about why light is a good metaphor for love and relate it back to last week's focus on the Salvation Army. Light a large candle to introduce the words for worship or have a representative from each class lighting a class candle, or light a display of candles.	Our ideas of love	<i>Let's sing the words we used to introduce our assembly. Sing them softly and think about what the words mean. Think about your own light shining out in the darkness.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to express their thoughts about love, either drawing on material used this half term or original ideas expressed in words or pictures, individually or as a class. Use a selection of their ideas to create words for worship.	Exploring what love is	<i>Let's listen to the words (child's name) has written this morning. Let's use them to help us think about love.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story 'A Window of Love' and talk about it. Give pupils the opportunity to share their individual or collective ideas about love. Talk about how the school might show love for each other and for the community. Use the words of the prayer on which Cecily Saunders relied constantly as words for worship.	Sharing our ideas about love	<i>My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself and the fact that I think I'm following your will does not mean that I'm actually doing so but I believe that the desire to please you does, in fact, please you. And I hope I have that desire in all I'm doing.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Use the words of the song 'The Magic Penny' to talk about how love flourishes when it is shared. Invite pupils to think of at least one loving action they could do today. Sing the song after the words for worship.	Giving love away	<i>Let's think about the words of the song. 'Love is something if you give it away; you end up having more.'</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, reflecting on his evil actions as Saul and the way the love of Jesus transformed him in the story. Talk about the lesson Paul learned and read the full text of his letter to the Corinthians.	The lesson of love	<i>St Paul says: 'Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love.'</i>

Theme for the Half Term:	TERM: Summer
<p>Overview:</p> <p>Week 1: <i>Circle of Life</i></p> <p>Week 2: <i>Tree of Life</i></p> <p>Week 3: <i>Rhythm of Life</i></p> <p>Week 4: <i>Gift of Life</i></p> <p>Week 5: <i>Water of Life</i></p> <p>Week 6: <i>Trials of Life</i></p> <p>Week 7: <i>Journey of Life</i></p> <p>Mapping the Theme:</p> <p>This theme of ‘Life’ takes different well-known phrases as the focus for each week’s explorations. Each in itself is a symbol and the overall impression that is intended is one of richness and diversity.</p> <p>Week 1 Circle of Life</p> <p>Circle of Life deals with the life and death cycle and the repeated patterns that characterise it. The week begins with a reminder of our connectedness with the past, goes on to explore ways in which the past (and people who have gone before) live on, and considers finally how the good things in people’s lives are not lost.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>The story: ‘<i>The Spirit of a Good Friend</i>’ is in the section <i>Stories for Telling</i>. The most appropriate versions of <i>Ecclesiastes 3 : 1-8</i> is the <i>Revised Standard Version</i> or the <i>Gideon Bible</i>.</p> <p>The music: ‘<i>The Circle of Life</i>’ from <i>The Lion King</i> might help pupils reflect on these ideas.</p> <p>There is a range of children’s books, which help in the exploration of issues to do with death, e.g.: S Varley, <i>Badger’s Parting Gift</i>. Picture Lion.</p>	<p>Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development</p> <p>This theme contributes to pupils’ development by encouraging them to:-</p> <p>Spiritual:</p> <p>be aware of the repeated nature of the patterns of life; acknowledge their connectedness with the past; contemplate the wonder of new life in the natural world; explore the mystery of life and death;</p> <p>Moral:</p> <p>recognise the good and bad in the past; think about what they do to make what they think is good live on;</p> <p>Social:</p> <p>recognise their links through people with the past; be aware of the relationship between generations;</p> <p>Cultural:</p> <p>consider ideas about death.</p>

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Use personal artefacts which have been inherited (a family Bible would be wonderful!) to initiate discussion about every individual's links to the past. Talk about the repetition of some activities and the transmission of values from one generation to another. Talk about why it is important to value things from the past. Draw out the idea that this is an expression of the repeated patterns of life.	Being joined to the past	<i>This is my (a) prayer to help us think about these things: O God, as we look at these treasured possessions, may we celebrate the love and care that is reflected in them, the things that families hold dear from generation to generation and the patterns in our lives.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite children to think about the personal qualities (as well as the things) that they have inherited. This could be an opportunity to look at family photographs, if appropriate. Explore the idea that not everything from the past is necessarily good. Sometimes it is important for people to be able to make a fresh start.	What have I inherited?	<i>This is my prayer. You may want to join in: Thank you God for all that makes me, me. Thank you God for all that I can be. Amen.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story: 'The Spirit of a Good Friend'. Invite children to talk about what they would like to be remembered for.	Living on	<i>Be very quiet and think about a good friend. Try and think about what your friend brings to your life that you will never lose.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Use a dead flower with seeds, to explore the cyclic pattern in plant growth. Talk about seeds and the wonder of new life after the death of the flower. Where appropriate, deepen the ideas to include thinking about people's life and death patterns and beliefs. Invite reflection on how people 'live on'. Explore how, for some people, beliefs about God influence how they think about death.	Rebirth	<i>Invite pupils to listen to and think about the words from Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8. Use as appropriate.</i>
Friday Whole School	Use the story of 'Lily's Gifts' to explore ideas of loss and comfort. Invite children to think about what they carry with them from the past and what they will pass on to the future.	The circle of life	<i>Many religious people believe God is eternal. Listen to these words of a Christian prayer: O Lord of all time, Of beginnings and endings Of yesterday, today and tomorrow, Of seed and decay Of life and death Renew us today To grow and live in your love. Amen</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Life******TERM: Summer******Mapping the Theme:******Week 2: Tree of Life***

The theme of life is explored this week in the context of trees. The tree is a symbol of the living world, of life itself, and of hope. Three stories, two of them traditional religious stories, are used to explore these ideas. The metaphor is extended to allow pupils to identify with trees in thinking about their own lives.

Resources:

The story: 'Most Precious Trees' is in the section *Stories for Telling* and 'New Year for Trees' is in the same section.

The reference for the Christian description of Heaven used on Thursday, is Revelation 22:2.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the reverence and respect some people feel for trees;
be aware of the importance of trees as religious symbols;
relate their own lives to the image of a deeply rooted, flourishing tree;

Moral:

value trees in a variety of ways;
value the commitment of some people to the environment;

Social:

understand the inter-relatedness of human life and the environment;
recognise the impact of people being united in their efforts;

Cultural:

appreciate the universal importance of the tree as a symbol.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Introduce the theme and tell the story of the Buddha's Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree. Explore the notion of enlightenment as deep learning. Invite children to talk to each other about the most important thing they have ever learned. Introduce the words for worship by explaining they are words of the Buddha about his enlightenment.	The tree of enlightenment	<i>The Buddha said, 'In this instant, at this very moment, all worries are set aside; suffering, pride and hatred hurt no one any longer.'</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Use music to create the atmosphere for a fantasy journey and invite children to imagine being beneath a great tree. Help them to imagine the sights and sounds of the tree. Invite them to imagine themselves being firmly rooted and flourishing like a tree, growing strongly from the earth and being fruitful.	My life as a tree	<i>These words are based on a Psalm. Listen to them quietly and think about them; O God, let me be like a tree planted beside a stream with sweet fruit and leaves that give shade to others.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story: 'Most Precious Trees'. Invite pupils to share their responses to the story. Explore why trees are worth saving and where they are threatened today.	Cherishing trees	<i>Let us think quietly about today's story. Let us be grateful for people who really care about our world and devote their time and energy to saving it.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Go outside, if possible, and sit under a tree or walk amongst trees. Talk about the beauty of trees and their place in the eco system. Emphasise how valuable trees are for the survival of the planet and its inhabitants. For many people, heaven is thought of as being like a garden. A Christian description says there is a beautiful river flowing from God's throne and, beside the river, the tree of life flourishes. It produces a crop of fruit every month and its leaves are to heal the pain of the world.	Life-saving trees	<i>Let's remember how precious trees are. Close your eyes and imagine a tree. Hold that picture in your mind and be thankful. You might like to make your feelings into a prayer.</i>
Friday Whole School	Talk about the Jewish festival of Tu B' Shevat – the Festival of Trees. Tell the story: 'New Year for Trees'. Explore in what ways trees could be thought of as signs of hope. Invite children to talk about what gives them hope.	A sign of hope	<i>Jewish people say: "To plant a tree is to say I believe. I believe that we will overcome our problems. I believe that the world can and will get better. I believe the day will come, as the Bible says, when everyone will be able to sit under his fig tree and be unafraid. The man who fears the world will end tomorrow does not plant trees."</i>

Theme for the Half Term:**Life****TERM: Summer****Mapping the Theme:****Week 3: Rhythm of Life**

This week's theme celebrates the energy of life, using sounds and rhythms. It begins and ends with children's own heartbeats, the rhythm of their physical bodies, used to help them think about other ways of seeing rhythms in life.

Resources:

The song 'The Rhythm of Life' is from the musical *Sweet Charity*.

An appropriate recording by Evelyn Glennie would be: *Shadow behind the Iron Sun*, R Cared Seal 09026634062.

The Inspector Morse theme can be found on: *Inspector Morse: Original Music from the ITV Series* by Barrington Pheloung. Virgin VTMC 2.

For information and a recording of the Adhan, see the pack: Grimmitt et al, *A Gift to the Child*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate that a heartbeat means more than just an involuntary physical action;
celebrate the wonder of the energy of life;
understand that, for some people, the rhythms or patterns of life are religiously prescribed;

Moral:

respect those whose lives are given rhythm by their religion;

Social:

be aware of how rhythm can be a communicating force;

Cultural:

appreciating the unifying power of rhythm;
becoming more aware of the importance of religion and culture in structuring some people's live and world views.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Invite children to be very still and feel their own pulse or heartbeat. Explain what is happening and its importance to life. Invite children to talk about how else they feel rhythms in their life. Listen to the song: 'Rhythm of Life' and explore the phrase 'powerful beat': what makes it powerful?	My rhythm of life	<i>Let's listen again to, and wonder at, our heartbeats and be thankful for our own rhythm of life. If you want to, you could thank God for this rhythm of life.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Talk about the percussionist, Evelyn Glennie, who is profoundly deaf and sees and feels rhythm. Invite children to talk about how they feel rhythm. If possible, listen to an appropriate piece of music and invite pupils to move to its rhythm.	Feeling rhythm	<i>Invite children to listen to a piece of rhythmic music, if possibly played by Evelyn Glennie, and to rejoice in the way it makes them feel. Encourage them to respond to the music.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Play a recording of the Inspector Morse theme and invite pupils to talk about what they can hear in the music. Explain that they can hear Morse code expressing the name 'Morse'. Explore Morse code as a life-saving rhythm.	Responding to rhythm	<i>This is my (a) prayer: Thank you God for the way rhythm makes us feel and what rhythm helps us to do.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Introduce the sound of the Adhan, the Islamic Call to Prayer, which punctuates the life of a Muslim. Explain what Muslims do in response to the sound. Invite children to talk about the rhythms of their daily life. You may need to prepare pupils to listen to this sound, which may be unfamiliar.	A rhythm for life	<i>These are the words which create the rhythms of a Muslim's life. Listen to them again and let them speak to you. Take a moment of quiet to think about the sounds that give rhythm to your life. You can thank God for them if you want to.</i>
Friday Whole School	Show pupils the shrine figure of Dancing Shiva. Explore the symbolism and explain that Shiva dances to a drum beat which Hindus believe is the rhythm of creation, the rhythm of life. Close by playing a recording of the Om sound used by Hindus to help them to focus their minds on God as the source of the rhythm of life.	Creating rhythms	<i>Listen to this sacred sound and imagine the sounds of the universe being created. Invite children to listen again to their own heartbeats, the sound of their creation. O God let my heart beat with joy at the world around me, let my heart beat with compassion for those in need; Let my heart beat with love for all your people. Amen.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Life******TERM: Summer***

Mapping the Theme:

Week 4: Gift of Life

This week help pupils to see the wonder of life and be awed by it.

The miracle of growth is explored through an activity using seeds, which begins to raise the question of the source of life. The idea that life, especially human life, is a unique and precious gift, underpins the discussions and culminates in the story of one person who exemplifies the belief that all life is precious and God given.

Resources:

A large parcel containing small individual, gift wrapped boxes, one for each class, each holding seeds (and the means of growing them).

A photograph (poster or slide) of a foetus or a newborn baby, depending on the age of pupils.

The parable of the Talents can be found in Matthew 25 : 14-28 or Luke 10 : 11-27

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

wonder at the gift of new life;
appreciate what joy there is in being alive;
ponder on the idea that every day is a new gift of life;

Moral:

understand that all life is to be cherished;
recognise the responsibility to make the most of their lives;
value people who give their lives for others;

Social:

recognise the contributions their lives can make to others;

Cultural:

understand that, irrespective of culture, every life is valuable.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Prepare a large parcel containing a box for each class, with seeds and the means for growing them in each one. Before the parcel is opened, invite pupils to talk about what it could be and who the sender might be. Distribute the individual parcels to representatives from each class and open them. Talk about seeds as a gift of life and explore from whom they may have come.	A gift of life for you	<i>This is a prayer that some Buddhists use: 'May all beings live in safety with hearts full of joy. Whether weak or strong, great or small, seen or unseen, near or far, born or to be born, may all be full of joy.'</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Plant the seed and talk about what they need to help them to grow. Return to the idea of the source of the gift and explain that many people believe that all life is a gift from God. Explore the idea that the life of all people is valuable.	Life as a gift	<i>In the story of creation in the Bible, God says, 'Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit, you shall have them for food.'</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Show pupils a photograph of either a foetus or a new-born baby and talk about how this can be seen as the unique and precious gift. Explore with children the idea that they are both a gift themselves and have the gift of life given to them. Tell the story of the Talents to help them think about their lives as a gift to be cherished.	The gift of your life	<i>Listen to these words that some Hindus use in prayer: O God! You are the giver of life, the healer of pains and sorrows, the giver of happiness, creator of the universe, send us your purifying light and lead our thoughts in your ways.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Begin with the words for worship, which is a Celtic blessing and explore with children the idea that each day is a gift to be lived. Use a photograph of a sunrise to help pupils think about the promise of the new day.	A gift to be lived	<i>This day is your love-gift to me. This dawn... I take it from your hand. Make me busy in your service throughout its hours yet not so busy that I cannot sing a happy song.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of Mother Teresa's life of service to God through her ministry to the sick and needy of Calcutta. Talk about how she gave her life to God. Invite pupils to think about what they can give of their own lives to others.	A living gift for God	<i>Think very quietly about the gift of your life and what it means. You might like to join in my (this) prayer by saying 'Amen' at the end. 'O Lord, thank you for the gift of my life. May I use your gift to love and serve and be joyful for you'. Amen.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Life******TERM: Summer******Mapping the Theme:******Week 5: Water of Life***

Water is not only essential to sustain life, it possesses life giving, refreshing qualities. This week is designed to help pupils appreciate the value of water. The material moves from the physical need for water, explored in an ancient myth and a contemporary example of aid, to the deeper, more spiritual refreshment and healing that some religious people find in water.

Resources:

For the story: 'First Rain', see the section *Stories for Telling*.

The story of the 'Healing of Naaman' can also be found in:
Stories for Telling.

The story about Muhammad at the stream is called 'The Joy of Water', in
Stories for Telling.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

see water as a symbol of life and hope;
be aware that the significance of water to life goes beyond the physical;
appreciate that some people encounter God through water;

Moral:

be responsible about their use of water;
understand that all life depends on water: we are not self sufficient;
appreciate that water must be used widely;

Social:

recognise the responsibility for water is a shared concern;

Cultural:

understand that access to water is a political issue;
recognise that the need for water is crucial wherever people are and, for some, it presents sometimes insurmountable difficulties.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Begin with the statement: 'Without water there is no life'. Introduce the story, 'The First Rain' by explaining that on the island of Madagascar, there is very little rain. The people of the island tell this story to remind themselves how much they depend on water. Challenge pupils to think critically about their own use of water.	Life giving water	<i>Imagine a dry place, parched and cracked and dusty. Imagine an expanse of dryness in the shimmering heat. No shade, no water. How you long for a refreshing drink to quench your thirst...imagine the first drops of rain. Imagine how it feels on your face, how it smells...</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Recall the dry place from the previous day and explain that there are some places like that where life is very hard for people. Some people need help to survive. Talk about projects run by charities such as Water Aid. Tell the story of Muhammad at the stream.	Precious water	<i>Muhammad once described prayer as being like dipping into a refreshing stream. Use this time to refresh yourselves by being very still and relaxing. If you want to you can use this time to talk to God.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Invite children to imagine a great, wide river, fast flowing and strong. This water is used for washing, cooking and cleaning but it is also a sacred river where Hindus come to cleanse themselves inside and to worship God. Show pupils some images of the Ganges at dawn.	Cleansing water	<i>These are words that Hindus pray at the Ganges: O God! You are spread over the water And across the land You are the spaces between the heavens and the earth In every heart burns bright your light</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Use the technique of guided imagery to create for children an imaginary experience in which they are refreshed by flowing life-giving water.	Refreshing water	<i>You may want to make this your prayer: "Thank you God for refreshing, Life-giving water." Amen.</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of Naaman who was miraculously healed by the prophet Elisha. Show how, for some people, God's healing love is found in beautiful, fresh, life-giving water. Challenge pupils to think about why, for some people, water is a symbol of hope and a sign of God's love.	Healing water	<i>Let these words of a Celtic blessing wash over you. Be very still: 'Deep peace of the running wave to you, Deep peace of the flowing air to you, Deep peace of the quiet earth to you, Deep peace of the shining stars to you, Deep peace of the God of Peace to you.'</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***Life******TERM: Summer******Mapping the Theme:******Week 6: Trials of Life***

This week legitimises the struggles that all individuals face as a natural consequence of being human and which sometimes loom very large for children. Two stories of great courage in the face of trials, one biblical and one contemporary, are used to help pupils explore their own responses to times of trial.

Resources:

For the piece: 'Cross Country Trials' see the section *Stories for Telling*.

The story of Daniel is in the Book of Daniel 1-7, p852-862 Good News Bible.

The story of Coxswain Henry Blogg is in the section *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate that there is always hope even amidst the difficulties of life;
wonder at the strength of the human spirit in the face of apparently overwhelming odds;
understand that some people believe their strength comes from God;

Moral:

think about the responsibility to help others;

Social:

understand that everyone faces difficulties;
appreciate that people can support each other through the trials of life;

Cultural:

appreciate that certain groups of people create a culture of support for others, which involves facing trials themselves as a way of life.

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Use the story: 'Cross Country Trials' to introduce the idea that life has many challenges and testing times. Emphasise that these are part of life and explore the various strategies that people have for dealing with such times. Invite children to reflect on the most difficult thing they have ever done.	Facing	<i>Be very still and quiet. Think to yourself about something that has been difficult for you. Think about how you have been strong and what you have learned.</i>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite pupils to think about the trials they face or have faced and how they have coped. What helped them to keep going or did they have to give up? Invite them to share their thoughts privately with just one other person. Draw to a close by suggesting some of the trials faced by everyone.	Coping	<i>This is my (a) prayer for us to think about: O God, when I feel disappointed, give me hope; when I feel frightened, give me courage; when I feel lonely, help me be a friend; when I lose someone I love, comfort me. Amen.</i>
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Tell the story of Coxswain Henry Blogg and his enduring courage at the helm of the Cromer lifeboat. Challenge pupils to suggest why he (and other crewmen) risk their lives every day to rescue others. Invite pupils to find out more about the RNLI.	Enduring	<i>Here's a thought for you to take with you today. I have made it into a prayer.</i> <i>Protect me, O Lord, my boat is so small and your sea is so big.</i>
Thursday Classrooms	Use the poem 'Footsteps' to explore sources of support when life is tough. Invite pupils to talk about who or what carries them in times of trial and to think about when they could give the support.	Supporting	<i>These are words from a Tukaram, a Hindu mystic: 'This is the essence of it all: God is, God loves you, God carries your burdens.'</i>
Friday Whole School	Tell the story of Daniel and invite pupils to think about the trials he faced and what gave him courage. Invite them to tell each other what questions the story raises in their minds. Help them to consider what the story has to tell them about facing trials of life.	Surviving	<i>This is part of a prayer written by St Columba who faced many trials in his life: 'My dearest Lord, be thou a bright flame before me, a guiding star above me, a smooth path beneath me, today and evermore.'</i> Amen <i>Take a moment to think about the path ahead of you today.</i>

<i>Theme for the Half Term: Life</i>	<i>TERM: Summer</i>
<p><i>Mapping the Theme:</i></p> <p><i>Week 7: Journey of Life</i></p> <p>The symbolic ideas of life are drawn together in this final week in which the metaphor explored is that of a journey. Pupils are challenged to think about their own growth and development as people and, using the end of the story of one of the great figures of the Old Testament, to think about their aspirations and hopes as they prepare to move on to another year in a different school.</p> <p><i>Resources:</i></p> <p>The end of the story of Moses can be found in Deuteronomy 34 : 1-12 in GNB page 206 of the Old Testament.</p>	<p><i>Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development</i></p> <p>This theme contributes to pupils' development by encouraging them to:-</p> <p><i>Spiritual:</i></p> <p>see their own lives as a journey; recognise the importance of making the most of every opportunity; aspire to personal fulfilment and to have hope; celebrate their own and others' achievements</p> <p><i>Moral:</i></p> <p>recognise that some people show others the way;</p> <p><i>Social:</i></p> <p>see shared activities and celebrations as milestones in their lives;</p> <p><i>Cultural:</i></p> <p>be aware that the journey of life is affected by culture; see how the metaphor is expressed in terms of the school culture.</p>

	<i>Material</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
Monday Whole School	Draw your own (or an imaginary) life map, representing the key moments/changes visually and talk about the turning points as the story of your life evolves. Present it and invite pupils to talk about what it might be. Use this to introduce the idea that life is like a journey, long for some people and not so long for others. For children, this is a starting out time.	Starting out	<p><i>We're going to use the same words for worship every day this week. These are words of a traditional blessing from Ireland. It reminds Christians that life is a journey. They believe that Jesus said he would be with them always.</i></p> <p><i>Listen to the prayer and if you want to, you can make it your own.</i></p> <p><i>'May the road rise up to meet you May the wind be always at your back, May the sun shine warm upon your face, The rains fall soft upon your fields; And until we meet again, May God hold you in the palm of his hand. Amen.'</i></p> <p><i>You might like to think about how those words make you feel inside. Take a moment's quiet to be still with your thoughts and if you want to, to pray to God.</i></p>
Tuesday Classrooms	Invite children to tell each other what they would take with them on a long journey. Challenge them to think about their life journey and what is important for them to have with them. These might be material things or memories or feelings.	Provisions	
Wednesday Key Stage Groups	Ask children how they know what to do in their life, which way to go. Talk about significant people who give guidance or act as role models. Talk about figures who exemplify this, e.g.: Gandhi, role model for a nation.	Signposts	
Thursday Classrooms	Explore the idea of key times as landmarks. Use the school year to review shared activities like class visits/special events or individual progress. Celebrate what has been achieved.	Landmarks	
Friday Whole School	Use the story of Moses, standing on the mountain top and looking at the much anticipated Promised Land to introduce the idea that, as children move on through the school and their lives, they are constantly looking at new horizons. Invite them to reflect on their hopes for their personal 'promised land.'	Destinations	

Section 5

Plans for

Collective Worship

Half Termly Themes Model B *(Half term-to-a-Page)*

Theme for the Half Term:***I want to be******TERM: Autumn******Mapping the Theme:***

This theme explores some of the qualities pupils could be encouraged to develop. It has a strong identify focus and draws on a range of religious ideas to help pupils consider their own sense of self. It is also designed to bring the school community together as it begins a new academic year.

Week 1: I want to be Cooperative

Week 2: I want to be Fair

Week 3:: I want to be Determined

Week 4: I want to be a Good Friend

Week 5: I want to be a Good Listener

Week 6: I want to be Responsible

Week 7: I want to be Me

Resources:

The story of Bahira the Monk is in Khattab *Stories from the Muslim World*, MacDonald.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

consider their own personal qualities;
discuss some ideal personal qualities and evaluate themselves against them;
understand that there are challenges in life;
see that there is hope;

Moral:

appreciate that there is inequality and unfairness in their world, locally and globally,
consider their responsibility to others and to justice;
remember that everyone deserves to be heard;
acknowledge that it is difficult to like some people;

Social:

understand the importance of working together with others;
consider what makes a good friend and evaluate how far they reflect the qualities;
appreciate they live and work in a community;

Cultural:

be aware that personal qualities transcend cultural differences.

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
1. <i>Co-operative</i>	As the school begins a new year, it is a good time to talk about ‘working at’ working with people and recognising the difficulties in co-operating. Use activities to encourage and highlight co-operation. Use images such as a jigsaw, cogwheels, and ingredients in a recipe to encourage pupils to see the need for each to take responsibility for themselves when working with others. Look at the school aims.	<i>Oh God, bring us together like strands in a rope, like the links in a garland, like the colours in a rainbow, like the notes in a tune, that we may truly live in harmony.</i>
2. <i>Fair</i>	That’s not fair! What does it mean to be fair? Let the children identify issues of fairness and also injustice. Discuss fairness on local and global scales. Is it possible to treat everyone fairly? As this is time for the Jewish festival of Yom Kippur, perhaps use stories from Jewish history, e.g. the Israelite escape from Egypt. When do the children impinge on the freedom of others?	<i>Reflect on issues when pupils have treated someone unfairly and invite them, if they want, to ask God for forgiveness.</i>
3. <i>Determined</i>	This week invites pupils to reflect upon the challenges they face in life. Use stories to show that some people’s determination stems from their belief in God or from their conviction in justice, e.g. Robert the Bruce, St Christopher, Bahira the Monk. How do the children react to obstacles in their path; what are they, what helps them persevere?	<i>Meditate upon the activities pupils find difficult, but want to succeed in.</i>
4. <i>Good friend</i>	What makes a good friend? What are the essential elements of friendship: loyalty, reliability and understanding. What would a perfect friend be like? Invite pupils to consider in what ways they are a good friend. What is it like to be friendless? Challenge why it may be difficult to like and respect others. Use Zacchaeus, (Luke 19) as an illustration.	<i>Reflect upon the qualities of friendship and be thankful for pupils’ encounters with them in each other.</i>
5. <i>Good listener</i>	This week the art of listening needs exploring to help pupils realise there are different layers of listening, so that they recognise that they can listen beyond the words someone is trying to say. Also they can deepen their understanding of their inner voice and recognise how important it is to listen to it. For some there is a desire to listen to God. The Quakers use silence and wait upon God.	<i>Help pupils to listen to their own thoughts, to the voice inside. For some they could listen to God. Focus their thoughts if appropriate.</i>
6. <i>Responsible</i>	This week provides an opportunity for children to talk through their attitudes and act as, and be, part of a social community. Discuss challenging tasks where pupils have to make their own decisions, perhaps including environmental issues. Explore questions such as: Who am I responsible to? Why should I be responsible? Who is responsible for me? This would lead to looking at people who are responsible for change.	<i>Think or pray for those who take responsibility for other people’s lives. Meditate upon when it is hard to take responsibility.</i>
7. <i>Me</i>	Explore what the children’s aspirations are for themselves and what they hope to be. Acknowledge the qualities they already have; identify the qualities they would like to develop and discuss what they would like to do with their lives. Try to engender hope in the children. Use lives of heroes and heroines to focus their thoughts.	<i>Thank God for the qualities the children have. Use the prayer of St Francis. Focus on aspiring to be better at all these things.</i>

<i>Theme for the Half Term:</i>	<i>Elements</i>	<i>TERM: Autumn</i>
<p><i>Mapping the Theme:</i> The theme explores all four elements: earth, fire, water and air, eternal reminders of the physical world we inhabit, which are also rich in symbolism and myth. The material is explored in the context of ancient connectedness with the elements and a prevailing, modern disregard for them, in an attempt to raise pupils’ awareness of the need to recognise and work with the natural world.</p> <p><i>Week 1: In Touch with the Elements</i> <i>Week 2: Earth</i> <i>Week 3: Fire</i> <i>Week 4: Water</i> <i>Week 5: Air</i> <i>Week 6: Out of Touch with the Elements</i></p> <p><i>Resources:</i> Appropriate words for worship can be found in: <i>Praying Their Faith</i> CEM ISBN 185100 04 51 8.</p> <p>Another rich source of readings and prayers for reflection are the books: <i>Threads of Creation</i> and <i>Leaves from the Tree of Peace</i> Published by the United Reformed Church 020 7916 2020.</p>	<p><i>Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development</i> This theme contributes to pupils’ development by encouraging them to:-</p> <p><i>Spiritual:</i> wonder at the natural beauty that surrounds them; appreciate how modern technology detaches us from the natural world; remember their connectedness to the natural world; explore some of the mythology which expresses awe at the mystery of the elements;</p> <p><i>Moral:</i> realise the dangers in ignoring the needs of the natural world; understand their responsibility as individuals for protecting the elements;</p> <p><i>Social:</i> explore the relationships between people and the natural world; understand how powerful story is in communicating ideas;</p> <p><i>Cultural:</i> appreciate that attitudes change with the development of scientific/technological understanding.</p>	

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
1. <i>In touch with the Elements</i>	Begin by showing pupils the image of the earth photographed from the moon and talk about our detachment, with modern technology, from both the reality and the mystery of the created world. Use a variety of creation myths to illustrate ancient people's connectedness with the natural world. Introduce the four elements which were essential to life: fertile earth, water to nourish life, fire for warmth and lastly air, the most mysterious of all the elements, somehow connected to the sky and ancient ideas of heaven.	<i>Encourage pupils to wonder at the mystery of creation and to think about the power of the elements. Invite them to reflect on their place in the tapestry of creation.</i>
2. <i>Earth</i>	Use a landscape to inspire pupils to talk about why the earth is important. Talk about the richness of the land and the resources within it. Use the Greek legend about Persephone to explore the cycle of the seasons. Think about the earth as the mother goddess, sustaining and giving refuge. In contrast she can erupt violently. Explore why people have buried their dead in the earth.	<i>Native American traditions are rich in prayers and meditations about the earth whom they think of Mother and Great Spirit. Use them to make pupils aware of some people's unity with the earth.</i>
3. <i>Fire</i>	Explore with pupils what comes into their minds when they think of fire. It can be cosy, giving light and warmth or it can rage and kill. If blackout can be effected, a single lighted candle is a good way to demonstrate the power of fire. There are many myths about the discovery of fire and much to be explored in the life of stars and the stories of the constellations. Fire has a sacred significance in many religions and the sun has been worshipped since ancient times.	<i>Many religious traditions use the imagery of fire and light in their prayers. Make use of a lighted candle as a focus for reflection and a source of inspiration.</i>
4. <i>Water</i>	There are many amazing statistics about water: human bodies are nearly three quarters water, the earth has twice as much water as land. Fresh, flowing water has always been thought of as life-giving; traditionally, the oceans were home to monsters and mysterious creatures. Greek legends provide a rich source of stories. Like fire, water makes a good servant, but a deadly master, and there are many examples of the terror of floods, both in recent history and religious narrative.	<i>Reflect on the importance of water for life and invite children to recognise their good fortune in being able to take it for granted.</i>
5. <i>Air</i>	Air has long been symbolised by the sky, fascinating for pioneers who longed to conquer it, from Icarus to the Wright brothers. Norse mythology is rich in stories of Odin, the sky god and Thor, the thunder god. The rushing wind is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Air is the element most resistant to modern technology; when it moves violently, it affects and sometimes destroys all in its path. Yet air, in the form of oxygen, sustains human and animal life.	<i>Help pupils to appreciate the miracle of their own breathing, to be aware of it and to use it for stilling; in contrast invite them to reflect on the power of hurricanes and tornadoes and the mystery of the Holy Spirit.</i>
6. <i>Out of touch with the Elements</i>	Just as ancient people were in touch with the elements, even believing that they were composed of a mixture of two or more elements, so humanity, particularly in the developed world, is out of touch. There is much to be explored in the way we have poisoned the earth, polluted seas, rivers and the air, damaged the ozone layer and abused fire to destroy each other. Even today, the elements are vital to the life of the planet so people have to listen to the earth and work with it rather than against it.	<i>Encourage pupils to be reflective about their responsibility towards the created world. Use a variety of traditional prayers to illustrate how religious people see their relationship to God's world.</i>

<i>Theme for the Half Term:</i>	<i>Virtues</i>	<i>TERM: Spring</i>
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Mapping the Theme:

The half term's collective worship explores six virtues, all illustrated with examples, either through story or visual images. Wisdom uses The Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament of the Bible as a source.

Week 1: Generosity

Week 2: Honesty

Week 3: Courage

Week 4: Wisdom

Week 5: Loyalty

Week 6: Gentleness

Resources:

The story of the Two Brothers can be found in Khattab
Stories from the Muslim World MacDonald.

For the story of David and Goliath, See: 1 Samuel: 17 and for Joshua, see:
Joshua 1-12.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

consider what virtues are and how they are expressed;
understand that many people believe virtues are an expression of a religious life;
appreciate the role models that religious people provide;

Moral:

explore the nature of virtues and relate the examples to their own lives;
understand that everyone can aspire to be a better person;
appreciate that virtues are not absolutes;

Social:

consider what they contribute to others' lives;
appreciate that virtuous living can contribute to the common good;

Cultural:

consider how far the 'religious' and frequently ancient, understanding of virtues is transferable to the 21st century.

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
1. Generosity	Following Christmas, this is an opportunity to explore giving. Talk about the gifts pupils received. Use Epiphany to focus on the Magi and use the imaginary story of the fourth wise man. Explore the nature of generosity through the Muslim story of the two brothers who both give selflessly to the other. Relate it to the principles of Zakat, one of the Five Pillars of Islam.	<i>Encourage pupils to be grateful for others' generosity and to think about the extent of their own.</i>
2. Honesty	Begin by telling the story of the boy who creates an imaginary view from his hospital window to entertain a fellow patient who is immobile and discuss the 'lies' he told. Think about the complexities of telling the truth; use drama to explore situations from different perspectives. Talk about the difficulties of admitting a lie and the impact of dishonesty.	<i>Use some traditional prayers of repentance and invite pupils to make them their own, if appropriate.</i>
3. Courage	Stories of great courage help pupils to explore their own fears through empathy and identification. Use a selection of such stories, e.g. David and Goliath, Joshua, St Joan, Gladys Aylward, Douglas Bader, and Helen Keller. Explore pupils' own ideas of overcoming difficulties and facing challenges.	<i>Explore the idea that, for some people, faith in God gives courage. Invite pupils to reflect on the course of their own courage.</i>
4. Wisdom	The Book of Proverbs is a rich resource to explore this week and pupils could write their own proverbs to share at the end of the week. Other material might include the story of Solomon's wisdom (1 Kings 3: 16-28) and the Wisdom of Guru Nanak. Talk with pupils about the difference between wisdom and cleverness and explore their own sources of wisdom.	<i>Read a selection of texts from the Book of Proverbs and invite pupils' personal reflections.</i>
5. Loyalty	Pupils often have their own very strong ideas of loyalty expressed sometimes in friendship or attachment to family or pets, or more frequently in support of a football team. These ideas can be explored more fully through religious and other stories, e.g. Mardana and Guru Nanak or the Loyalty of Grey Friars Bobby. With older pupils the problems of excessive loyalty leading to violence could be explored. Loyalty needs to be tempered with respect and empathy.	<i>Invite pupils to reflect on their own loyalties and encourage respect for another's point of view.</i>
6. Gentle	Gentleness is often mistaken for weakness when it really expresses great control and strength. Use stories like Androcles and the Lion, St Francis of Assisi and the example of Jesus whose strength was often mistaken for weakness. When a new statue of Jesus by Wallinger was unveiled in Trafalgar Square in London recently, someone said it showed a 'broken, lily livered Jesus'. Talk about the idea of the suffering servant.	<i>Invite pupils to think about themselves in the light of the virtues discussed and, if appropriate, to ask God to develop them as virtuous people.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:

Journeys

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

This half term closes the school year and the focus on journeys allows pupils to reflect their own journeys through school as they move from class to class and, for Y6, on to secondary school.

Week 1: What is a Journey?

Week 2: Explorations & Expeditions

Week 3: Journeys for God

Week 4: Pilgrimage

Week 5: Journeys to Freedom

Week 6: The Journey of Life

Week 7: My Journey

Resources:

See: *Pilgrim's Progress*, by John Bunyan retold by Geraldine McCaughrean, Hodder Children's books for an accessible version of the classic.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

explore the concept of a journey to describe someone's life;
appreciate the metaphor of a journey to describe their own moving on;
understand that physical journeys are undertaken by some people as expressions of religious faith;
marvel at some noteworthy journeys

Moral:

consider how far some people have a choice in their journeying;

Social:

reflect on the implications for others of a person's journey;

Cultural:

understand that the call to undertake journeys and pilgrimage itself is found in all cultural traditions;
broaden their experience of rites of passage as milestones in the journey of life.

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
<i>1. What is a journey?</i>	Begin by exploring physical journeys that the children have undertaken. Focus on their preparations, needs, expectations and experiences. Deepen the involvement by developing a journey in their imagination whilst highlighting the demands or problems that occur when travelling. As the week unfolds the children will draw parallels with life itself which can also be exciting, tedious, long or demanding.	<i>Reflect upon the wonderful experiences of travelling and thanksgiving for the opportunities to travel.</i>
<i>2. Explorations and expeditions</i>	Look at the motivations, lives and adventures of various explorers. Bring out the extreme nature of the challenges faced whilst drawing parallels with those faced in life. Columbus, Armstrong and Hillary demonstrated courage and the need to think carefully and be well prepared. Scott's expedition raises issues of actions affecting the lives of others and of failure. End the week by drawing out the excitement and challenge of reaching new places and people.	<i>Use prayers asking for courage and strength to 'go boldly', to be brave and to persevere.</i>
<i>3. Journeys for God</i>	This week explores people who have made life-changing journeys because they felt God was calling them to do so. Jonah went with reluctance; Guru Nanak was inspired; St Paul faced unpopularity and eventual death. Invite pupils to consider how it would feel to move frequently with few possessions, facing uncertainty and to share the most important journey they have made.	<i>Reflect on the courage and faith these journeys required. Acknowledge the extraordinary qualities of these travellers.</i>
<i>4. Pilgrimage</i>	Develop last week's work by discussing how some believers make religious journeys or pilgrimages. Examine their motivations, the hardships faced which may be a sign of commitment. Initiate work with a focus on Hajj, the Muslim journey to Mecca. The children may look at their own lives, places that are important to them and their feelings in those places. <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i> by John Bunyan can be used to explore the symbolism of journeys and finding a way in life.	<i>Let the pupils imagine going on their own pilgrimage where they can be still, feel good and possibly think about God.</i>
<i>5. Journeys to freedom</i>	Whilst many journeys are exciting, some are full of fear as they are journeys of escape from oppression and violence. Use stories to approach this issue and talk about when the pupils may have wanted to run away from someone or something. Stories could include Moses, the flight into Egypt, escape from war, the Pilgrim Fathers, or current refugee stories.	<i>Reflect upon the children's own safety and give thanks. Make up prayers for those who flee to find freedom.</i>
<i>6. The Journey of Life</i>	Here the parallel of journeying and life is examined more fully. What 'luggage' do people take with them on their life journey; how do they know what to do next; what milestones do they have? Share the rites of passage from different cultures, which are like signposts, or important stages and occasions that occur in people's lives and mark changes in their lives.	<i>Help the children to reflect upon how for some people God, prophets or Gurus are important guides in life; thank God for those who guide them.</i>
<i>7. My Journey</i>	As one academic year closes and another is anticipated, it is an opportune time for pupils to review their personal 'journeys' through life. These can be mapped out in written or pictorial forms and shared. Looking forward and anticipating the future events and challenges can follow.	<i>For all that has been learnt, shared and achieved, invite pupils to say thank you, perhaps to God.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:

Light

TERM: Autumn

Mapping the Theme:

Light is a universal religious symbol. This theme explores its meaning in three traditions: Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity. Light is also an emotional force, expressed as transforming love. In order to appreciate the power of light, it is necessary for pupils to contemplate darkness and the shadows in their own lives and to think about what it is that lightens and enlightens them and the lives of others.

Week 1: Diwali

Week 2: Using Light to Celebrate

Week 3: Delight

Week 4: Let your Light Shine

Week 5: Winter

Week 6: Hannukah

Week 7: Christmas

Resources:

The traditional festival stories for Diwali and Hannukah can be found in: *Dargue Assembly Stories from Around the World* Oxford, or *Jaffrey Seasons of Splendour* Collins

Music suggestions can be found in: *Gilbert Festivals 3* OUP, pages 51 & 64.

For the Hebrew creation story, see: Genesis 1-2:43

The song: 'This Little Light of Mine' is in *Come and Praise Beginning* BBC.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

see that light is a metaphor for good in the world and in an individual;
appreciate how light is a symbol of the presence of God;
see themselves as channels of light;

Moral:

recognise that doing good is a moral obligation;

Social:

appreciate that good actions of the individual can have far reaching benefits;
understand the importance of celebration as an expression of community and identity;

Cultural:

reflect on light as a universal symbol, which transcends cultural and religious contexts.

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
1. <i>Diwali</i>	Introduce the theme by lighting a row of clay divas and tell the story of the triumphant return of the God Rama, welcomed by lights. Over several days, recount the events that led up to this return and finish by talking about Lakshmi, the goddess of good fortune, worshipped at this time by Hindus.	<i>Invite pupils to reflect on the well-known Hindu prayer: 'From the darkness, lead me to the light.'</i>
2. <i>Using light to celebrate</i>	Begin by inviting pupils to think about other times when light is used in celebration, exploring bonfires, both as beacons and on Guy Fawkes Night and candles on birthday cakes. Explore the flame as a sign of God's presence, as in, e.g: the Jewish Ner Tamid, Hindu Puja and the lamp that burns continuously in many churches.	<i>Use lighted candles to focus pupils' thinking about the symbolism of light and to elicit emotional responses.</i>
3. <i>Delight</i>	This week explores the revelatory nature of light, first through the Hebrew story in which God creates light before revealing the rest of creation. Explore the imagery of light in everyday speech (I see; it's clear now; that throws light on the subject; a glimmer of hope, etc) and explore the idea of enlightenment through the story of the Buddha. Muhammad's teaching is thought of by Muslims as a light for their lives.	<i>Focus on what light can reveal and invite pupils, where they want to, to thank God for such light.</i>
4. <i>Let your Light Shine</i>	Explore the idea of the light within each person through the song: <i>This Little Light of Mine</i> and extend this, through Jesus' teaching about good works shining out to the whole world (Matthew 5: 13-17). An expression of that inner light is a person's smile. Explore how this is reflected by others, like a light in a mirror.	<i>Use a candle or diva as a focus and invite pupils to imagine love reaching out to them, and others, from the flame.</i>
5. <i>Winter</i>	This week focuses on pre-Christian celebrations of the winter solstice and sun worship, exploring the crucial importance of light to everyone. Explore the imagery of darkness and its effect, especially on primitive people who saw the universe in pre-Capernicum terms.	<i>Use seasonal poems about winter and invite pupils to reflect on God's providence in the pattern of the seasons.</i>
6. <i>Hannukah</i>	Begin by showing a Hannukiah (the 9 branched candlestick) and lighting the first candle from the Shamash, the servant candle. Explore what it might be for and then, over several days, tell the story of Judas Maccabacus and the miracle of the oil. Revisit the idea of the sacred flame, a symbol of God's presence and talk about what pupils think of as eternal.	<i>Invite pupils to reflect on the light of hope, expressed in the candles of Hannukah. Use some traditional Jewish prayers..</i>
7. <i>Christmas</i>	Retell the Christmas story with a focus on the light of the star and the angels. Explore the symbolism of 'Jesus, the Light of the World' through building up a Christingle and talking about the painting by Holman Hunt by the same title.	<i>Invite pupils to reflect on the light of Christmas and what it means to them.</i>

Theme for the Half Term: Teachers and Learning

TERM: Spring

Mapping the Theme:

Learning is more than knowledge. This theme provides opportunities for pupils and adults to celebrate all the learning that goes on in their lives and so recognise that the deepest learning comes to fruition in wisdom. The theme begins and ends with the pupils themselves.

Week 1: I have Learned

Week 2: Wonderful Teachers

Week 3: Teaching through Parable

Week 4: Teaching by Example

Week 5: Teaching through the Written Word

Week 6: I can Teach

Resources:

A good source of personal accounts of inspirational teachers can be found in *The Times Educational Supplement*, *Friday Magazine*: My Best Teacher feature.

Annie Sullivan was Helen Keller's teacher.

The song 'I'd like to teach the world to sing' is in *Tinderbox* A & C Black.

A good source of traditional prayers is *The Oxford Book of Prayer* Appleton OUP.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

see themselves as learners and teachers;
reflect on their own learning;
recognise the importance of role models;
appreciate the impact of teaching on the lives of individuals;
value teaching and learning as contributing to the development of the whole person;

Moral:

understand the power of story to convey truth;
appreciate that for many religious people, sacred writing is a source of authority;
be aware of how what they learn affects the way they behave;

Social:

think about the impact of religious teaching on society;
understand how people influence each other;

Cultural:

recognise the influence of great teachers;
see how teaching is a product of a culture;

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
1. <i>I have Learned</i>	Begin by inviting pupils to reflect on the most important thing they have ever learned. Draw out the idea that the most profitable learning is in the development of skills, e.g. thinking and reading. Invite pupils to think about how they learn, in what ways and who helps them. Talk about significant people who are teachers (e.g. parents) and things that teach (e.g. books and TV).	<i>Encourage children's reflections on the process of learning and its joys and difficulties, especially the possibility of learning from mistakes.</i> <i>Help them to see that taking risks might help deepen their learning.</i>
2. <i>Wonderful Teachers</i>	Use a variety of stories to illustrate how inspiring teachers can change the lives of others e.g. Confucius, Einstein, David Livingstone, Annie Sullivan, or personal accounts from staff or famous people. Think about what these great teachers taught and what are the most difficult things to teach.	<i>Use a traditional prayer, eg: 'May God protect us both, the teacher and the pupil. May he feed us both. May we work together with energy. May our study be vigorous and fruitful and may there be love and harmony between us.' (Hindu)</i>
3. <i>Teaching through Parable</i>	Jesus was an amazing teacher who told memorable stories that were both simple and profound, to teach his listeners about God and about themselves. There is a rich variety of such parables to draw on, e.g. The Good Samaritan, The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, The Unforgiving Servant, The House on the Rock, The Sower.	<i>Use a selection of Jesus' words as quoted in the stories and invite children to reflect upon them.</i>
4. <i>Teaching by Example</i>	The most effective way of teaching is by example and this is exemplified in countless religious figures: Jesus, St Francis, Guru Nanak, Muhammad, The Buddha. Some lives have inspired other great teachers. Nelson Mandela was inspired by Martin Luther King who was first inspired by Gandhi, one of the greatest role models of all time.	<i>Use a selection of traditional prayers, as appropriate.</i>
5. <i>Teaching through the Written Word</i>	This week offers an opportunity to explore the authority of inscription in the form of sacred writing. The Pentateuch, (the first books of the Jewish Bible) is the basis for the Jewish faith and law but also influenced later Jewish, Christian and Islamic holy books. A possible structure for the week might be to start with Abraham, move on to Moses and Jesus and finish with the Revelation of the Qur'an.	<i>On overhead transparencies, present an appropriate piece of text from the relevant sacred writing, if possible in the original language as well as translation, to stimulate interest and provide a context for words of worship.</i>
6. <i>I can Teach</i>	This week's focus gives children the opportunity to think about how they can contribute to the learning of others in school and younger siblings at home. In classroom collective worship there may be opportunities for pupils to teach each other directly. Partnerships for mentoring or supporting reading can be celebrated. If there is a way in which children can teach teachers, it would be good to highlight those opportunities too.	<i>Invite children to reflect on what they would like to teach others, using the song: 'I'd like to teach the world to sing'</i>

Theme for the Half Term:***New Life******TERM: Spring******Mapping the Theme:***

The season of spring is associated with the appearance of new life in the natural world. It is also a rich time for religious festivals, which celebrate new life or symbolise a new beginning. This theme links together a number of traditions culminating in the most important Christian festival of all, Easter.

Week 1: Making a Fresh Start

Week 2: Spring Time Saints

Week 3: Light & Dark

Week 4: A Start in Life

Week 5: Signs of Growth

Week 6: Life & Death

Resources:

For stories of the patron saints, David, Patrick and George, see: Dargue, *Assembly Stories from around the World*, Oxford.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate the natural order of the seasons and the joys of Spring;
think about the religious ideas expressed in new-start opportunities like Lent;
understand that they can always have a new start;

Moral:

acknowledge that there are times in everyone's life when a new start is necessary;

Social:

understand the natural inclination of most people to celebrate together with others;

Cultural:

recognise that change of new life are themes universally addressed through a variety of religious and cultural traditions.

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
1. <i>Making a Fresh Start</i>	This week focuses on the idea and desire of making a fresh start and the opportunities it brings. Look at ways in which people do this in the secular world: spring cleaning and in the religions: Ramadan before Eid-ul-Fitr or Lent before Easter. It is a time for re-appraisal and perhaps a time to become closer to God. During Lent there is also the idea of forgiveness for sins past. Pupils can reflect upon these ideas in their own lives.	<i>Invite pupils to appraise their own lives, say sorry, and recognise what they still find challenging.</i>
2. <i>Spring time Saints</i>	Begin by looking at St David (March 1 st) whose symbol is the daffodil or leek. Link the Saint with Spring, representing the new ideas David taught. Tell stories of David. Move on to St Patrick (March 17 th) and St George (April 23) where the song 'When a knight won his spurs' can be used. Look at the nature of saints and perhaps how the Union Flag is made up of our crosses.	<i>Help pupils to appreciate the lives of the saints, what is worth remembering about them and the mystery of their achievements.</i>
3. <i>Light & Dark</i>	Explore the festival of Holi, the Hindu Spring festival, which reflects the seasonal change of Spring following Winter. Light follows darkness mirroring good overcoming evil in the traditional stories of Holi celebrations. Talk about the nature of Spring festivals and why it is a good time to celebrate change and new life.	<i>Use prayers to encourage pupils to think about when they are tempted to do something wrong but are strong enough to win through.</i>
4. <i>A Start in Life</i>	This week centres on people who care for others particularly those who give children a start in life and provide them with new opportunities. Reflect on the feelings behind the giving of gifts on Mothering Sunday and discuss the history of the celebration. Look at the figure of Mary, Mother of Jesus, as she is described in the gospels and maybe an icon of Mary. Discuss what hurts parents.	<i>Give thanks for all that carers/mothers do.</i>
5. <i>Signs of Growth</i>	20 th March is the first day of Spring, so think about the changes in the natural world at this time. Use seeds, flowers as visual aids, or play 'Spring' from Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons', or 'Morning' from <i>Peer Gynt</i> by Grieg. The children could respond to these stimuli in poetry or prayer. Look at Psalm 104, which praises creation.	<i>Invite pupils to reflect on their own loyalties and encourage respect for another's point of view.</i>
6. <i>Life & Death</i>	The Easter story culminates in the resurrection, which for Christians offers them a change of new life. Use the week to tell the story of Easter whilst drawing out why the season is remembered by exchanging eggs. Talk about the ways in which Easter might be thought of as a new start for the world. Talk about forgiveness.	<i>Reflect upon all that is known about Jesus and why he is an example of courage, faith and love.</i>

<i>Theme for the Half Term:</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>TERM: Summer</i>
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Mapping the Theme:

This theme helps pupils to recognise the importance of time in their own lives at a stage when it can be both desperately important and totally insignificant, depending upon the situation they are in. The theme presents the abstract concept of time in concrete ways, relating it to the children themselves and to wider perspectives, including the religious world.

Week 1: Marking Time***Week 2: Precious Time******Week 3: Making Time******Week 4: Sacred Time******Week 5: Missing Time******Week 6: Taking Time******Week 7: Saving Time******Resources:***

See: Ecclesiastes 3: 1-9 for a biblical text about time.

Use a variety of creation stories including Genesis 1 and 2.

A.A. Milne *House at Pooh Corner*, pages 169-174.

Appropriate music to help pupils consider how time is spent:

Rimsky Korsakov *Flight of the Bumble Bee*.

Satie *Gymnopedie No 1*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate that time is a gift;
ponder on the mystery of time which can be measured but not controlled;
recognise the order that time brings;
celebrate the passing of time;
acknowledge that some people commit their time to God;

Moral:

recognise their responsibility to use time well;
acknowledge that there is an appropriate time for all aspects of life;
challenge their priorities;
explore their use of time;
be honest about past mistakes;

Social:

remember that time's passing affects people in different ways;
understand that experiences of time are shared by everyone;

Cultural:

understand that time is a cross-cultural concept;
appreciate that beliefs about time are influenced by culture.

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
1. <i>Marking Time</i>	Explore the children's ideas on time and how it is measured and marked. Look at how lengths of time seem to vary. Consider the mystery of time, how it moves on regardless of people. Use different timers to build up times of silence with the children. See how time changes people and things, - The Ugly Duckling. Suggest that some see each day as a gift from God and discuss what they would do with such a gift. Discuss how some put aside time for God.	<i>Read:</i> <i>Ecclesiastes 3: 1-9</i>
2. <i>Precious Time</i>	This week helps the children to think of how special events mark the passage of time - birthdays, anniversaries, religious festivals. Also include rites such as Baptism and Bar Mitzvah. It may be useful to extend the children's knowledge to a festival that is outside their own experience.	<i>Encourage the pupils to share in each other's lives, in the excitement, joys and sorrows and their celebrations.</i>
3. <i>Making Time</i>	The beginning of time and the events thereof are a continuing mystery. This week can help the children explore the wonder and awe associated with events of great magnitude. Include creation stories from different traditions as well as that found in Genesis 1 and 2. Discuss how difficult it was and still is to explain or talk about such mystery.	<i>Use poetry and prose to express the wonder and awe of creation.</i>
4. <i>Sacred Time</i>	People of faith put time aside for God regularly. Look at two religions and their prayer times. Muslims pray five times a day and Jews celebrate Shabbat every week. This gives opportunities for the children to reflect on their own use of time and appreciate when they come together in various groups to celebrate.	<i>Children could share their own prayers or offer ideas for meditation about their own activities.</i>
5. <i>Missing Time</i>	This week explores the idea that things in the past have happened which cannot be now changed –it's too late. Look at conservation issues - animals becoming extinct, ecosystems being destroyed. Let the children discuss what they have done which they now cannot change and how they can learn from past mistakes. Talk about how easy it is to understand with hindsight.	<i>Think about the world we live in and the mistakes we have made. Encourage pupils to say sorry, to God if they wish.</i>
6. <i>Taking Time</i>	There is a need in today's world to take time and relax. Invite pupils to talk about how they do this. Use an appropriate text to stimulate their reflections about taking time (See A A Milne). Consider priorities for the use of time. Use appropriate music to encourage pupils' reflections on ways of using time.	<i>Have short periods of silence using art or poetry as a focus. Encourage a sense of quiet.</i>
7. <i>Saving Time</i>	Can we really save time? What is a good use of time? Let the children record all their actions for a day and see how they use time. Discuss how by 'saving time' more time can be spent on enjoyable activities. Move on to how time can be saved in our memories. Would we really want to go into the future?	<i>Reflect upon and be thankful for past experiences. Help pupils to recognise the value of time.</i>

Theme for the Half Term: Celebrate the Difference

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

The theme explores and celebrates diversity, developing pupils' skills of empathy and identification with others whilst recognising that a sense of community is built up in the school when people who are different relate well to each other. Throughout the half term, some of the ways in which people are different are explored and pupils are challenged to look beyond the surface.

Week 1: Look At Us

Week 2: Here We Are

Week 3: Changing Faces

Week 4: Beyond Appearances

Week 5: How do You Feel?

Week 6: I Think So Too

Week 7: This Our is School

Resources:

For St Paul's teaching, see: 1 Corinthians 12: 12-26

Information about the charity *Changing Faces* can be obtained from:

Website: www.changingfaces.co.uk

For the story of Esther see Stories for Telling.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

appreciate that they are unique;
understand that differences are to be celebrated;
recognise that individuals' perceptions vary;
consider the ties that link people together;
think about the school as a unique community;
recognise that people are more than their appearance;

Moral:

challenge their own perceptions of others;
acknowledge everyone's right to be different;
understand everyone's right to be respected;

Social:

explore how similarities bring people together;
see how diversity can enrich a community/society;

Cultural:

appreciate the importance of culture to the individual;
recognise that culture groups people together;
become aware of universal human qualities, which transcend cultural differences.

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
<i>1. Look at us</i>	This week develops pupils' awareness of physical differences. Tell story of 'Elmer' to show how individuals are recognised by their differences. Through stories and discussions explore the range of differences and similarities in appearances and look perhaps for the reason for some of them.	<i>Look at picture of people with different appearances. Think how interesting it is that people are all different. Thank God for variety.</i>
<i>2. Here we are</i>	Look at differences in appearance due to culture, fashion, and preference. Focus in a positive light on how family members look different. Celebrate the differences between people and how they bring richness and variety to a community. Explore the teaching of St Paul about the parts of the body to illustrate how much individual contributions matter to the whole.	<i>Make a class collection of photos - as the children individually contribute to the collection the others can say 'thank you' softly. Give thanks for belonging.</i>
<i>3. Changing faces</i>	Tell the children about the charity 'Changing Faces' as a focus for discussing people with a more unusual appearance. Bullying can be raised as an issue and explore how it can be challenged. Use story of the persecution of the Israelites by Pharaoh to illustrate how some bully others because they are frightened.	<i>Invite pupils to think about a time when they have been teased. Remember how it feels. Invite pupils to ask for God's help to treat others well.</i>
<i>4. Beyond Appearances</i>	This week looks at how people are different in ways other than appearance. The story of the blind men and the elephant demonstrates how we perceive things differently. Use a mystery bag and let different pupils describe what's inside. Eating food shows how taste varies. Discuss the need to look beyond appearances to find out what a person is like. Explore what it means when we say 'Beauty is only skin deep.'	<i>O God, So many people with so many words and in so many ways look with so many eyes in so many directions to find you. Let your light shine on us and show us how to live and love. Amen.</i>
<i>5. How do you feel?</i>	This week tries to encourage the pupils to realise how other people feel even though their actions may be misleading. Use drama to act out situations such as arguments and then freeze frame and ask the characters how they feel. Discuss how lack of understanding, tolerance and respect leads to persecution. Use the story of Esther or Moses escaping from Egypt.	<i>Think about these words. God of many names. Lover of all nations. We pray for peace in our hearts, in our homes, in our school, in our nations, in our world. The peace of your will. The peace of our need.</i>
<i>6. I think so too</i>	Focus on ideas and values held by groups, both religious and secular, in school that bring individuals together within the community. Look at each other's celebrations, ceremonies to see the values and roles of different groups. Draw upon the teaching of religious leaders who have spoken of tolerance and peace. The pupils could think about ways they co-operate and collaborate in their work.	<i>Reflect upon the words of the Prayer of St Francis.</i>
<i>7. This is our School</i>	This week the variety of roles and individuals coming together to create a unique community can be celebrated and appreciated. Use Romans 3. Discuss the strengths of the school and areas for development. Use the opportunity to emphasise the sense of community, a coming together of many different people.	<i>Write poems or prayers about the school in celebration of each individual's contribution. Invite pupils to write about their hopes for the school.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:**Emotions****TERM: Autumn****Mapping the Theme:**

This half term addresses a variety of emotions to deepen pupils' awareness of a range of feelings, which extend beyond 'happy and sad'. It is intended to broaden children's emotional repertoire and help them to think about their own reactions to personal feelings, sometimes giving them permission to feel (and talk about) negative and painful emotions.

Week 1: Excitement

Week 2: Anger

Week 3: Pride

Week 4: Grief

Week 5: Jealousy

Week 6: Joy

Resources:

For the music:

Star Wars (John Williams) see: CD 07822 110122 Arista.

Death of Ase (Grieg) see: Peer Gynt Suite, Suite No1, Opus 46.

Hymn of Joy (Beethoven) see: *Composers of the Millennium*, BBC Concert Orchestra, Virgin VSCDT 1591.

Nimrod (Elgar) *Enigma Variations*, HMV 572/1382.

For the stories:

'Ganesha's Broken Tusk' See Grimmitt et al *A Gift to the Child*

Children's stories about bereavement include:

Varley	<i>Badger's Parting Gift</i>	Picture Lions
Hans	<i>I'll Always Love You</i>	Hodder and Stoughton
McGough	<i>The Kite & Caitlin</i>	Bodley Head
Isherwood	<i>My Grandad</i>	OUP
Virst	<i>The Tenth Good Thing about Barney</i>	Collins
Jones	<i>Dada Maa Dies</i>	Blackie

For the story of Harriet Tubman, see: 'The Black Moses' in *Stories for Telling*.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

understand that emotions are part of what it is to be human;
 appreciate emotions are deeper than happiness or sadness;
 express their emotions;
 explore painful emotions safely;

Moral:

understand when it is right to conceal one's emotions;
 recognise that some emotions need to be kept in check/changed;

Social:

consider how one person's emotional state affects others;

Cultural:

understand that emotions are felt by everyone but the expression of them is influenced by culture.

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
1. <i>Excitement</i>	Invite pupils to listen to exciting music, eg: <i>Star Wars</i> theme and discuss responses. These could be explored in artistic forms to be reflected on in later sessions during the week. Talk about exciting events and occasions, and what makes them exciting as distinct from happy etc. Tell the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Why were the people excited then? Invite children to talk about excitement.	<p><i>During this half term, it is suggested that many of the words for worship could be generated by the children, to emphasize the unique aspects of each individual's emotional response.</i></p> <p><i>A possible pattern for each week would be to help pupils to identify with the emotion in their own lives, to talk about those experiences in their class groups and to record them in some way, individually or collectively, to be shared with others in collective worship later in the week.</i></p>
2. <i>Anger</i>	Tell the story of Jesus in the temple. Discuss the violence of his anger. Was it a good or bad thing? Discuss with the children what makes them angry and how they show their feelings. Use the story of Ganesha's Broken Tusk to consider the consequences of angry actions. Talk about the positive outcomes of anger using a story such as that of Abraham Lincoln.	
3. <i>Pride</i>	Tell the Aesop's fable of <i>The Donkey and The Dog</i> or <i>The Crow and The Swan</i> . Discuss the dangers of pride and invite pupils to think of their own examples of 'pride coming before a fall.' Explore the notion of legitimate pride - taking pride in one's work or sporting achievements. Invite children to talk about others' pride in them.	
4. <i>Grief</i>	Invite pupils to listen to Grieg <i>Death of Ase</i> , or Elgar's <i>Nimrod</i> . How does the music make them feel, what do they think it's about? Share a variety of stories about grief and loss. Encourage children to talk about their own worries/experiences of grief and assure them that it is good to show their feelings.	
5. <i>Jealousy</i>	Explore feelings of 'It's not fair' through use of part of the story of Joseph (or Jacob and Esau). Consider the consequences of difficult feelings. Use the parable of the Prodigal Son to explore jealousy further and invite pupils to talk honestly about their own feelings.	
6. <i>Hate</i>	Begin to explore ideas about hate through the story of Saul and his transformation. Consider how hate can be turned to love. Talk about how people respond to hatred when they know it's wrong. Discuss this in a social context using the story of Harriet Tubman.	
7. <i>Joy</i>	Begin by listening to Beethoven's <i>Hymn of Joy</i> . Imagine it was sung at your birth. Tell the story of the birth of Nanak and help children to understand joy as a deeper emotion than happiness.	

Theme for the Half Term: Change

TERM: Spring

Mapping the Theme:

The theme uses the world changing events of the first Easter to focus the exploration of the challenges of change generally. The anticipation of change is introduced through the story of Simeon.

Week 1: *Waiting for Change*

Week 2: *Signs of Change*

Week 3: *Resisting Change*

Week 4: *The Need for Change*

Week 5: *The Pain of Change*

Week 6: *The Impact of Change*

Resources:

The chant 'I waited, I waited on the Lord' is in *Heaven Shall Not Wait*, songbook and cassette tape, available from Wild Goose Publications, Iona Community, Pearce Institute, 840 Govan Road, Glasgow. G51 3UT.

The most accessible version of the Bible for the stories indicated is the Good News Bible.

The song 'The Man in the Mirror' is on Michael Jackson's album, *Bad*

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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

Spiritual:

understand that change is a necessary aspect of life;
appreciate the need to be open to change as a person;
ponder on the impact of the Easter story for the people at the time and millions since;
be aware that, for some people, God is an agent of change;

Moral:

consider how they could be changed for the better;
understand that some situations require change and that demands courage;

Social:

consider the impact on others of apparently insignificant changes;

Cultural:

appreciate that change creates its own culture;
think about how a religious story can change the culture of so much of the world;
be aware that change is frequently a feature of, and the result of, cultural influences.

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
<i>1. Waiting for Change</i>	Tell the story of Simeon waiting for the Messiah and use it to explore the reasons for the expectation (Go back to the Old Testament for the prophecy that Simeon believed was being fulfilled: Isaiah 42: 1-5). Explore children's feelings about what it is like to wait. Use a poster of an icon of the Madonna and Child to think about what is to come for Jesus and the changes that there will be for his friends and his mother.	<i>Invite pupils to think about what it is like to wait and explore the need for patience. Use the Iona chant, 'I waited, I waited on the Lord'</i>
<i>2. Signs of Change</i>	Show pupils an apparently lifeless twig with buds on and discuss the signs of change - life and growth. John the Baptist came from the arid wilderness to preach the message, which Christians believe, brings life. (Luke 3: 1-19). He told people to get ready and change their ways. Many people, including Jesus, were baptised (3:21-22). Out of this small start something huge was about to begin. Invite pupils to consider what they would like to change about themselves. Invite pupils to talk about what they would like their 'buds' to grow into.	<i>Explore how signs of change can bring hope and promise of things to come, but signs of change can be negative as well as positive.</i>
<i>3. Resisting Change</i>	Many people wanted to change and were baptised by John and some wondered if he was the promised Messiah that they had been waiting for but John pointed to someone much greater than he. (3:16) Others found the change threatening (3: 19-20) and 7: 18-35) eg: Herod who had John killed. Change requires effort and can be frightening and painful. Consider changes that pupils have and will face. Extend the discussion to consider the need for change in the world, which requires great effort.	<i>Encourage children to think about changes in their own lives which may have been difficult, eg, a new class or a new school. Emphasise the possibility of excitement and growth.</i>
<i>4. The Need for Change</i>	Use material such as information about the situation in Ireland or Kosovo to allow children to recognise the need for change. Use Michael Jackson's song 'The Man in the Mirror' to encourage children to consider what they need to change in themselves (Matthew 7: 1-5). 'Take the plank out of your own eye' Matthew 7:3-5. Begin to relate the events of Holy Week beginning with Palm Sunday (Mark 11: 1-11), the Cleansing of the Temple (Mark 11: 15-19) and Jesus washing the disciples' feet (John 13: 1-17)	<i>Explore the idea that recognising the need for change demands imagination and vision.</i>
<i>5. The Pain of Change</i>	Start with the events of the Last Supper. 'This is my body given for you' (1 Cor. 11: 23-26). One little action, but now millions of Christians take communion all over the world even though only twelve people heard the words and saw it at the time when Jesus did it for them. Tell events of crucifixion (Mark 15: 21-40). Discuss how change requires effort and is sometimes painful. Invite pupils to talk about the most difficult changes they have had to face or fear facing.	<i>Use the traditional Christian prayer: 'God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference.'</i>
<i>6. The Impact of Change</i>	Tell some of the stories of the resurrection (Luke 24). How did this localised killing, a common crucifixion and a seemingly insignificant event, change the whole world? Use the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13: 31-32) to explore the growth of the Kingdom of God, the birth of the Church and its growth worldwide. Tell the story of someone whose life has been changed by belief in the resurrection of Jesus. eg Simon, Peter or Thomas, Nicky Cruz or Cliff Richard.	<i>Draw out the human attributes necessary to recognise the impact of change: resilience, openness, courage and faith.</i>

Theme for the Half Term:

Building

TERM: Summer

Mapping the Theme:

The theme moves from the concrete and physical to the personal, exploring the building of relationships and a fairer world. It incorporates the celebration of Pentecost.

Week 1: Building a Home

Week 2: Building a School

Week 3: Building Bridges

Week 4: Building a Life

Week 5: Building a Church

Week 6: Building a fairer World

Week 7: Building a Future

Resources:

‘The Building Song’ is in *Alleluya*, A&C Black No,59

School Aims

For a good narrative of the Pentecost Story see: Palmer & Brevilly, “A Tapestry of Tales” Collins Education, p83-85
or the re-telling in *Stories for Telling*.

Many Charities e.g. Christian Aid, Oxfam and Comic Relief produce excellent materials for collective worship.

For the Prayer of St Francis, see *Alleluya* A&C Black, No,43

See a guidebook of Bristol for the story of building the Clifton suspension bridge.

For details of the situation in South Africa, see Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Rider Brooks.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This theme contributes to pupils’ development by encouraging them to:

Spiritual:

understand that they can have the power to build their own lives;
appreciate that some people believe this empowerment is God-given;
remember that there must always be hope;
recognise that choice carries responsibilities;

Moral:

challenge their own ideas of fairness as they extend to global issues;
reflect on the importance of bridge building;

Social:

explore their relationships at home, at school and in the wider community;
contemplate forgiveness as a fundamental aspect of bridge building;

Cultural:

be aware that distinctive cultures develop within homes, schools and communities.

<i>Weekly Focus</i>	<i>Developing the Focus</i>	<i>Words for Worship</i>
1. <i>Building a home</i>	Begin by exploring the physical process of building foundations etc. Move through discussions of shelter as a basic human right to consider what makes a house a home. Talk about what is distinctive about a home and what does it reflect?	<i>Encourage pupils to appreciate their own homes and families and to give thanks to God if they want to.</i>
2. <i>Building a school</i>	Look at what makes a school distinctive through its aims, rules and the people within it and talk about how this is reflected in the building itself. Invite pupils to consider what the hopes were (or might have been) of the planners in designing the building.	<i>Either use the school prayer or write one.</i>
3. <i>Building bridges</i>	Use a concrete and literal story about bridge building to introduce the focus, eg: The Clifton Suspension Bridge. Explore the idea of forgiveness as a bridge where there has been conflict, as in eg: Northern Ireland, South Africa, Bosnia and Kosovo. Explore the possibilities for pupils to be forgiving and to act as bridges.	<i>Use the words of the prayer of St Francis to encourage pupils to become bridges themselves. It is better to build a bridge than a wall.</i>
4. <i>Building a life</i>	Begin with the Building Song and explore particularly verses 3 and 4; talk about the possibilities and responsibilities of making life shaping choices and decisions. Finish with the image of the clay in the potter's hands (Jeremiah 18: 1-6) or think about religious belief about God's influence in building a life.	<i>Use the words of verse 3 of the Building Song. Read the words twice and invite pupils to think hard about them.</i>
5. <i>Building a Church</i>	This week celebrates Pentecost, the birthday of the Church. Begin by telling the story of Cuthman's Church and explore the idea of Jesus as the cornerstone of the Church. Talk about what makes a Church. Tell the story of the events of Pentecost, encouraging pupils to think about where they might be in the story.	<i>Help pupils to see their own efforts as worthwhile.</i>
6. <i>Building a fairer world</i>	Begin by sharing a cake, or a packet of sweets between volunteers, reflecting the imbalance in the sharing of world resources. (15 sweets between 2, 4 between 12) and draw out the unfairness. Explore the relationships between countries, issues of debt etc. Highlight the work of charities working towards a fairer world. Use drama to explore the issues.	<i>Reflect on the individual's role in and responsibility for building a fairer world, and give pupils the opportunity to ask for God's guidance.</i>
7. <i>Building a future</i>	Begin with the story of a community rebuilding after the catastrophe of war or natural disaster. Talk about investing for the future and invite pupils to talk about their own aspirations and hopes for the future.	<i>Use the words of verse 4 of the Building Song.</i>

Section 6

Stories for Telling

A Day at the Golden Temple

The Golden Temple is the holiest place on earth for Sikhs. It is the centre of their faith, an expression of their faithfulness and a place of pilgrimage. It is also a centre where tens of thousands of people are given a meal every day, free of charge and visitors are made welcome, wherever they come from and whatever they believe. This is an account of a visit by someone who is not a Sikh, but whose experience at Amritsar will never be forgotten.

It is a truly wonderful sight and I have to pinch myself because I cannot believe I am really here. I am standing on the milky white marble steps, looking down through an archway at the Golden Temple, in the centre of its shimmering lake. The marble and gold building sparkles in the sunlight. It seems to be floating above its reflection, quite serene in spite of the crowds of people around.

Before coming to India, I learned a great deal about Sikh people and what they believe about God. I learned a lot about the Golden Temple, which, for Sikhs, is the holiest place on earth. I have seen many photographs of it, but nothing has prepared me for what I see in front of me. It is very beautiful.

Outside in the courtyard it had been extremely busy. We had left our shoes at the shoe-store before we wandered around the stalls and small shops selling religious objects and souvenirs for the visitors who come here in their thousands every day. As we came into the temple complex itself, everyone had to cover their heads as a sign of respect.

And now this moment has come.

Even before this first breath taking sight of the Golden Temple, we can hear the singing coming from the worship inside, carried over

loudspeakers to the whole area. It creates a sense of peace, although inside the complex it is just as busy as it was outside.

All the other people here are pilgrims who have come to fulfil their Sikh duty and to be uplifted and enriched by their experience at Amritsar. As we stand, taking in that first glimpse, we watch pilgrims kneeling and kissing the marble at the water's edge and then standing and looking for a moment across to their much loved temple. People then begin to go around the marble walkway. We join the pilgrims, taking care to stay in the shade under the colonnades to avoid stepping on the sun-drenched, white-hot marble.

Sikhs believe the pool in which the Golden Temple stands is holy. They call it 'Amrit', which means sweet water. Bathing here is a great blessing and a duty for pilgrims before they go into the temple itself. We can see from the expressions on the faces of those bathing today that it is a serious time of preparation for them, even though their young children are laughing and shouting, as small children do. This is a place for families, for being together with other Sikhs and for feeling close to God.

All around the complex, volunteers offer visitors water to drink and then clean the drinking bowls. These people are amongst the hundreds of pilgrims who come to give their time and energy to serve the temple and their fellow visitors. Others have been up at 4 am to wash the marble paving all around the complex with a mixture of water and cows' milk before the sacred book is paraded back to its throne in the Golden Temple ready for the day's worship. Many more people are working in the langar, the free kitchen, to prepare and serve meals for everyone.

We wait, with hundreds of pilgrims, to cross the threshold onto the causeway which is the approach to the temple itself. Like the pilgrims, we bend and touch the step with the left hand as a mark of respect as we walk into this holy place. Others kneel and kiss the step, the Door

of the Guru. On the causeway, there are throngs of people, some going in, others coming out, their faces aglow with the joy of worship.

Inside it is smaller than I expect and, moving in from the whiteness of reflected sunlight outside, it seems dark. When my eyes adjust, I can see musicians playing drums and harmoniums and lines of people sitting, cross-legged, on the floor. In the centre is the great, sacred book, resting on a huge pillow under a magnificent canopy. Scattered across the floor in front of the book is a sparkling array of coins that have been placed in offering by pilgrims as they pass through the worship rooms. They catch the sunlight as it shafts from the doorway into the rich redness inside. Everyone is singing. The atmosphere is worshipful; every person is totally engrossed in his or her devotion.

Outside we walk around the building. A woman who is drinking the sweet water from the pool, holds up her cupped hands offering water to us. She believes it is life-giving and wants to share it. Once more we join the crowds on the causeway, our faces glowing with the experience we have had. We sit for a while in the shade of the colonnade just watching pilgrims, and being watched by them, before we make our way to the langar to eat.

Before we go to eat, we watch the preparation of the food. Men and women of all ages sit around in small groups, peeling cloves of garlic and chopping mountains of chillies. In the bakehouse, the mass production of chappattis demands a military style operation with several people sweating next to the ovens, flipping the bread with long wooden paddles. The heat in there is unbearable. People smile at us as we watch them, and two men walk by carrying between them a huge tin bath full of dahl, a kind of vegetable curry.

In the eating hall, we sit among hundreds of pilgrims in long lines, to be served water, chappattis and dahl from large buckets. There is as much food as we can eat but we are not asked to pay anything. For the Sikhs, young and old, who work in the langar, feeding us is just as

much on act of service to God as playing tabla (drums) in the prayer hall.

For me this day, spent among faithful Sikhs at their holy shrine, will always be the most memorable day of my visit to India.

A Fearless Explorer

Lawrence Oates was a member of Captain Robert Scott's expedition to the South Pole in 1911. The small group trudged across the endless wasteland of the Antarctic for over two months in nightmarish conditions, cut off from the world, only to find when they got to the South Pole in January 1912, that a Norwegian team had beaten them to it. They were not the first.

Their return journey was even more hazardous and the expedition ended tragically as, one by one, the pioneers died because of the conditions. The reality of the horrors is recorded in Scott's journal.

Captain Oates was the second to die. He was suffering so badly from frostbite that it was less painful to keep his feet frozen than warm them in his sleeping bag. The temperature was -60°C (fish fingers are solid at a freezer temperature of -22°C and exposed human skin freezes at -32°C) in the early hours of what would have been his 32nd birthday, Lawrence Oates walked out of the tent, into the blizzard, with the words:

"I am just going outside and I may be some time." He was afraid he would hold up his friends because of his poor physical condition, lessening their chances of returning safely.

Sadly not one of them did.

Against All Odds

There was a great deal of noise in the Town Hall as the political meeting got underway. People were shouting and some were waving their fists in the air. Above the hubbub, voices could be heard, shrilly calling above the rest.

“We don’t want you. We don’t want someone who is black!” And the prospective parliamentary candidate stared in disbelief at the scene. He had been selected by his party to fight the general election but the people of the town did not want him because he was black. Those people could not have known what they were turning down.

John Taylor was a very successful lawyer, a barrister who had a reputation for fairness and professional skill. He was impressive in court. He had had to work hard to become successful. One of his teachers had tried to dissuade him from going into law because there were no black lawyers and he thought John was being too ambitious. But John, with his parents’ support, kept his vision because he was totally committed to helping people. Later, he also served for four years as a local councillor and became a special advisor to the Home Secretary.

John’s parents had come to England in 1950 from Jamaica. They settled in Warwick which was where John was born. Even though John’s father was a professional man, an accountant, the only work he could get was sweeping a factory floor, so life was not easy for the family. However, John was a clever boy and made the best of the opportunities his education offered, although for a long time he could not decide what his career should be. He was a star footballer and was tempted to play professionally but eventually he decided he would go into law. One of his most important reasons for wanting later to be a Member of Parliament was that there were so many old laws which, in his opinion, needed to be changed and making and changing laws is the job of government.

He did not become an MP because the people of the town did not want him. The reason was that he was black. But in 1996 he was made a life peer. He was asked by the Prime Minister to join the House of Lords, the Upper House, where the work for the government is also debated. He became Lord Taylor of Warwick.

He continues the fight for people’s rights, especially those who face discrimination like he did, because he was black.

Akiba Learns to Read

Akiba was a young Jewish shepherd boy who lived in Palestine about the time of Jesus. His family, who were all very poor, worked for a rich farmer. Akiba grew up in a small, square hut with his parents and brothers and sister. It seemed as though he was always hungry and the delicious cooking smells that came from the master’s house only made him more so. If he was lucky he would have a chunk of rough bread to take out with him on the hillside with the sheep. The Romans who occupied the country made life hard for Akiba’s people but out on the green slopes, in the warm sunshine overlooking the beautiful Mediterranean sea, he forgot all those troubles.

By the time Akiba grew up he knew a lot about sheep and it didn’t matter that he could not read or write. That didn’t bother him at all; he wasn’t interested in learning but he was interested in Rachel. In fact, he fell in love with her and asked her to marry him. Her father refused to have Akiba in his house because he believed his daughter could do better than to marry an ignorant shepherd. But Rachel believed in Akiba and she promised to marry him if he would learn to read and write.

With his new wife encouraging him, Akiba began to study. He found a rabbi, a priest, who would teach him and in the evening, after a long day with the sheep, Akiba would struggle with his letters. Well after

darkness fell, Akiba would be going through the alphabet, fighting to keep his eyes open and his brain working. Then the day came when the rabbi said he knew enough to have a book to read and Akiba was given the book of Leviticus from the Jewish Bible. It is a book full of complicated laws. It was too much for him and he gave up. But Rachel did not give up. She kept telling Akiba that it was a long job and he had to be patient and persevere.

One day when he was out with the sheep, Akiba's attention was drawn to a little waterfall tumbling down a groove in the rock and singing away over boulders towards the sea. Suddenly Akiba heard his wife's words again in his head and he realised that just as the water had taken years to wear away the rock, if he kept going he would learn to read. So he went back to the rabbi, taking his five year old son with him and asked him to teach them both. Together they studied the Books of Moses, the Torah, and then they went on to the writings of the prophets until they had read the whole of the Jewish Bible. By now, Akiba was 40 years old but he was so pleased that he could read and understand the word of God that he decided to become a teacher himself. He became a rabbi, one of the most revered for his knowledge of the Law.

Learning is important to Jews. Jewish children are taught to read Hebrew so that they can understand Torah. Every day in synagogue services, God is thanked for the blessing of learning:

You	favour	us	with	knowledge
And	teach	us		understanding.
May	you	continue	to	favour
and		understanding		us
For	all	these	things	come
We	praise	you		O
Gracious	giver of all knowledge.			

Alexander Learns to 'do' Socks

Alexander was in a hurry to go out in the garden and play. He wanted to go to the bottom of the garden through the long grass to his sand pit. He looked out of the window. There was only one thing stopping him racing out there, his socks. Every morning it seemed that Alexander and his Mum had a battle with his socks. Mum had no difficulty, but as for Alexander, he just couldn't master them. And he did need those socks. The grass was wet with dew and he needed to put on his wellies and, so that they didn't rub his heels, he had to put on socks. The rest of getting dressed wasn't too much of a problem. He had learnt to manage his other clothes.

Alexander picked them up from the chair where he and Mum had sorted them. Pants, sit down, put one leg in them, then the other and pull them up. Next, his vest. Which hole for his head? The biggest, and then there were only two left, one for each arm, easy. Where was his T-shirt? Good, no buttons, he was fine with this. It worked just like a vest. His trousers could be tricky but these were pull-ons so there were no buttons or zips to catch him out. He sat on the bed again and put in one leg after the other. The bump on his head had taught him that feet went into trousers easiest one at a time, when you were sitting down. Now for the socks. Alexander frowned, stood up and sat down again. He tried pushing the tube of material onto his toes as Mum had shown him. It just flopped off again. It was hard reaching down, making the little piece of material hold all of his toes in. He tried again. He knew Mummy would tell him to have a go first. He rolled backwards on the bed with the effort, his feet waving in the air. He could feel himself getting giggly and cross all at the same time. He paused.

"Mum!" he yelled. "Mum, I can't get my socks on!"

"Have you tried really hard?" Mum called back from the bathroom.

“Yes, really, really hard,” Alexander called back. Mum came in carrying her own socks.

“Watch again,” she said. So Alexander did. Mum sat down and bent her legs up. Then she found the hole in the socks.

“That’s a good place to start,” thought Alexander. Next she put her thumbs in the hole and gathered the socks up in her fingers. Alexander thought it was all so difficult. Then Mum pointed her toes and pushed them into the sock. As if by magic she then rolled the sock back over her foot until it was on.

“Now you try,” she said brightly.

“Find the hole.” Alexander concentrated hard, harder than ever before. “I can’t,” he said.

“Yes, you can,” said Mum, “think of the sand pit.” Alexander fiddled with his sock and yes, there it was, the way in.

“Grab it,” said Mum, “and don’t let it get away.” Alexander held on firmly.

“Now gather it up.” The sock nearly escaped from Alexander’s fingers but he just about had it.

“Put those toes in quickly,” Mum said. It wasn’t quite as easy as she made it sound but, yes, his toes and now his foot were wriggling into his sock.

“Brilliant!” said Mum, “I knew you could do it. Try the other one.” Alexander felt all hot with the effort and needed two goes at this as his sock seemed to have a life of its own.

“Grab it... gather it... wriggle in,” he muttered, longing to be outside. But at last he’d done it. He’d learnt to ‘do’ socks. Quick as a flash he was whizzing down stairs to find his boots and then out into the garden. The sand pit was in sight!

A Learning Surprise

The French chemist Pierre Berthelot spent his life studying the way chemicals are formed and how they are linked together to create other substances. He knew that if he could understand how a chemical was made and how it reacted with other chemicals he could make changes and additions and develop new chemicals and substances.

Chemicals are made up of atoms. Chemists have a way of recording the patterns that show how the atoms join together to make the chemical. They call this pattern a chemical structure. Pierre Berthelot was working with a chemical called benzene. He had thought hard and worked so long to try and discover the pattern of benzene’s chemical structure but he just couldn’t get it right.

One night, exhausted after a day’s work, he fell asleep, still thinking about the patterns atoms made. That night he had a most illuminating dream. In his dream he saw a snake wiggling around until it caught its own tail in its mouth. When he awoke he had the idea that the pattern of the atoms that form benzene is in the shape of a ring. This was a great step in his learning and it helped him understand more about benzene and the way in which it could be combined and changed to form other chemicals.

So it would seem that even when we are asleep, understanding can occur; we just have to be awake to ourselves to realise what our mind is trying to teach us.

Ameena’s Story

Ameena sucked at her finger. It was very sore. She looked at her hands. Not a pretty sight at all. There were hard patches of skin that had grown after painful blisters had burst. Still, at least work was over for the day and she was going home.

Ameena longed for her bed. She was too tired to do any school work tonight but would get up early in the morning. She would look out of the small window in the back room of their little house and watch as the great city of Calcutta awoke. In the cool quiet of the early hours, Ameena was able to concentrate and focus her mind on her studies. She really enjoyed her time in school and was desperate to learn but being tired didn't help and all too soon she would be leaving school for ever. Every day after school she went to the football factory where she worked long hours stitching up leather footballs. It could take two and a half to three hours to make just one football. For this, Ameena was paid 15p. It was only a very small amount of money but with her father paralysed after an accident when he was working on a building site, her mother had to stay at home and look after him.

Ameena had an older brother who was going to stay at school to gain his qualifications so that he could get a good job. Ameena wished she could continue her learning, but knew that soon her parents would choose a husband for her and she would be married. Not all young girls in India had their partners chosen this way, but Ameena's parents believed this to be the best for her and she, in turn, wanted to make them happy and so she would obey their wishes. At least she would be able to stop working in the football factory. Whether her hands would ever recover was another matter.

Angela's Job

Jake sighed as he closed his book and laid it down beside him on the bed. Life for Harry Potter was so exciting. It was the exact opposite of Jake's life, stuck here day after day. Jake had been very ill, nearly died in fact, but was now getting better. Jake knew he should just be grateful for that, but he was so bored lying in bed or sitting around downstairs, unable to go out and play. His friends came to see him when they could, but they were at school most days and, anyway, who wanted to sit and chat or play chess or cards over and over again?

"Stop it," he said to himself. "Stop feeling sorry for yourself. It won't be forever."

His Mum came into the room. "Do you feel like getting up and coming downstairs for a bit, love?" she said. "Miss Chesson from the church is coming to see us, well, you really, this afternoon." Miss Chesson visited people when there were ill. Jake groaned inwardly and thought of his prayers last night.

"When I said I was bored, God, I didn't mean it was that bad!"

Miss Chesson came into the room smiling and holding onto her handbag, which resembled a brown bucket. She was an 'old lady' in Jake's eyes; how old he didn't know. She'd looked the same and had the same handbag for as long as he could remember. Jake saw her whenever he went to church. He didn't go every week like his Mum and Dad, but he went with the Cubs on Parade Sundays and Miss Chesson was often talking to his mum afterwards when they had drinks and biscuits, sometimes the highlight of the morning for Jake and his friends.

"How are you, Jake?" began Miss Chesson. "Pretty bored I expect," she added.

"Yes, on and off." said Jake looking at his Mum, hoping she wouldn't leave him on his own with Miss Chesson. What on earth would he find to talk about?

"Well I've brought you this," said Miss Chesson getting a book and a card out of her bag. "The book isn't new but it is one my brother and I read when we were young, many, many years ago." She and Jake's Mum laughed. Jake looked at the title *The Mystery of the Trail of Terror*.

"I know Alfred Hitchcock is probably rather old fashioned now, but it scared the living daylight out of me then," she continued. Jake looked

at Miss Chesson. She didn't seem the type of person who might enjoy reading scary books. Still, you never know, thought Jake.

"Do you like reading scary books now?" he asked her.

"Oh yes" said Miss Chesson. "I love a good mystery, the gorier the better," she added looking slightly embarrassed. "When I was young, I thought I might be a police officer one day. My brother and I used to try and investigate all sorts of things that went on in our neighbourhood." She went on to describe various escapades she and her brother had got up to.

"So is this your job now," asked Jake when he had finished giggling at the thought of Miss Chesson stuck in a greenhouse.

"Oh no" she replied. "This isn't my job. I'm retired now. I just sort of 'do' this."

"Miss Chesson is a volunteer, Jake" said his Mum.

"There are lots of us about," beamed Miss Chesson. She explained how the priest at the church would give her a list of people who were ill and then she would spend most days going out in her little car to visit them, to cheer them up, to be a bit of company and help them in any way she could: do some shopping, read a letter, or write one, sort out things that need repairing.

"I think I make them feel better," she said. "either because we've had a laugh together or because they're relieved to see the back of me!" She chuckled to herself.

"Oh no, Angela, it's not like that. People really enjoy your visits," said Jake's Mum. "I haven't heard Jake laugh like that in quite a while."

As Jake's Mum showed Miss Chesson to the door, Jake looked first at the book she'd given him and then he opened the card. Inside it said 'Wishing you a speedy recovery, from Angela Chesson.' He felt surprised. Surprised at how much he'd enjoyed her visit and surprised that someone he hardly knew would take the trouble to come and see

him like that. Why should she care, why make the effort? And she didn't only do it for him but for other people as well.

"Why does Miss Chesson go and visit people, Mum?" Jake asked.

"She likes to help people," replied Mum. "For her it's a way of serving God, doing whatever she can. I rather admire her," Mum added.

Fancy spending all your free time going to see ill people, thought Jake, not much fun in that. Why does she do it? Probably 'out of the kindness of her heart' as his Dad would say. It was odd, thought Jake as he looked at the card again, how if you covered up the last letter of her name, 'Angela' became 'Angel'.

Funny that!

A Pillar of Wisdom: the Story of Archbishop Trevor Huddleston

Trevor Huddleston was a remarkable man, famous for his sensitivity and concern for others, most especially for black people living in South Africa during the dreadful years of Apartheid. Life was very hard at that time. If you were black, you were not allowed to mix with white people, not allowed to live in the same areas or travel on the same buses or walk in the same parks or go to the same schools. You had to be completely separate because the law said you were not as good as white people. Trevor Huddleston, like many others around the world, thought this was very wrong. He believed that all people should be treated equally. He took the black person's view and even broke the law because he thought it was an evil law. Black South Africans felt he was one of them.

Trevor Huddleston was born in England in 1913. It was when he was at Oxford University, listening to a priest giving a talk about poor

people in London, that he made a decision about his life. He decided he wanted to help people. First he travelled, especially to India where his father and grandfather had both worked. There he saw indescribable poverty. On his return he trained to be a priest and after working in a parish for two years he decided God was calling him to be a monk. In 1939, he joined the Community of the Resurrection based in Leeds. He had to make three promises: to give up all his money; not to get married and to go wherever the Community sent him. In 1943, Trevor was sent to South Africa, to a small African town called Sophiatown, just outside a big city called Johannesburg.

There he saw for the first how evil Apartheid was and it became his determined ambition to fight it and to do his best to end it. For thirteen years Trevor looked after the Church of Christ the King, in Sophiatown. During that time he befriended black people and spoke up for them, even when they were arrested. He cared for them without any concern for his own safety. He got into many scrapes with the authorities and frequently defied the law. He often challenged the police when he saw that they cheated his black friends and he spoke up for people in court. He got a reputation for being difficult and the authorities watched him very carefully. In 1956, they barred him from the country and he had to leave. His community brought him back to England.

You can imagine what he felt. Leaving Sophiatown was, he said, the hardest thing he ever had to do. But he had promised to obey so he had no choice and anyway, the South African authorities would not let him stay.

He was back in Africa four years later, however, as a bishop in another country and he was moved again and again, eventually becoming Archbishop of the Indian Ocean. Wherever he was in the world, he never stopped caring about and working for the people of South Africa. He campaigned tirelessly for their human rights, for their right to be treated as people.

He died in April 1998. His greatest wish had come true in 1994 when the first free elections were held in South Africa, marking the official end to the apartheid laws. President Nelson Mandela called him ‘a pillar of wisdom, humility and sacrifice to the legions of freedom fighters in the darkest moments of the struggle against apartheid.’ Of all Archbishop Huddleston’s memories of his years in South Africa, none was more powerful than the recollection of the little boy in the nursery school he had established who, one night when he had gone to help put the children to bed, grasped his hand and said, “I wish you were black like me!”

A Surprising Gift

Annie Ide was fed up with birthdays. Well, not so much fed up with birthdays, but fed up with **not** having one. Annie told anyone who asked that she didn’t have a birthday of her own. That was how it felt, for Annie’s birthday was on 25th December.

“That’s Jesus’ birthday, and everyone thinks that’s much more important,” she would say. It must have been a bit miserable not to have a day to call your special day, when people would celebrate just your birthday and remember when you were born. Annie’s family and friends and those who had heard her talk about her feelings were sorry but didn’t know what to do about it.

However, one man heard, understood and decided to do something to help. His name was Robert Louis Stevenson. He was a poet and writer. As he had already celebrated 41 birthdays on November 13th, his special day, he felt it would be a good idea for Annie to have his birthday from now on. When he told her she thought it was a rather strange idea so to make his idea clearer, Robert had a document written up for her. It was called a deed of gift and this is what it said: “In consideration that Miss Annie H.Ide.....was born out of all reason on Christmas Day, and is therefore out of all justice, denied consolation and profit of a proper birthday... I do hereby transfer to

Annie H. Ide all and whole, my rights and privileges on the thirteenth day of November.”

Robert Louis Stevenson signed the document and from then on, much to her delight, Annie was able to celebrate a birthday of her own.

An Unlikely Friendship

It was 1982 and Argentina and Britain were at war. From the Argentinean mainland bomber jets were taking off. Their mission was to bomb British ships that were sailing off their coast. Carlos Cachon, an experienced airman, was piloting one of the jets. It was only a short time before he was flying over the sea towards his target. Yes, there were the ships. Carlos flew as low as he could. Four seconds to go. He could see men scurrying on the deck of the ship; ... release the bombs ... yes! A hit! The boat had been hit! Carlos felt a surge of excitement and triumph. He heard his flying mates cheering in his headphones. He landed back home, mission accomplished.

On board the British ship, Sir Galahad, there was chaos. Fire and black smoke were everywhere causing confusion amidst the destruction. Below one of the decks Simon Weston was desperate to get out. The heat from the fire was immense. It was unbearable. Somehow he escaped and was taken to safety, desperately worried about his friends who had also been on the ship. It wasn't till later that he began to realise how badly he had been burnt. His face was unrecognisable, his hands virtually destroyed. Shaken beyond belief, Simon had to face months and years of treatment and operations to help him live with his terrible injuries. His career in the Navy was at an end and he did not know what he would do with the rest of his life. The next seventeen years were more than difficult for Simon. There were times when he felt very low, that life wasn't worth living, that his injuries could not be overcome. Yet slowly, with the support of his family, he began to face up to what had happened to him and to rebuild his life. But one thing kept nagging at him. A face kept haunting him, a face of someone he had never met and did not know. It was the face of the

man who had bombed the 'Sir Galahad' and whose actions had caused such horror. Simon knew he had to meet this man.

“Out of all the people I wanted to meet,” Simon recalled looking at his injuries, “it was the fellow that did this to me. I wanted to look into his eyes and see if there was life there.”

In 1992 this is exactly what Simon Weston did. In Buenos Aires in Argentina, a meeting was arranged between Simon and Carlos: Simon with his terrible injuries and Carlos who had survived the war physically unscathed. Simon said afterwards it had been like meeting up with his tormentor. He felt cold, but he had no bitterness and no hatred.

Simon entered the room and the two men stood face to face. They shook hands and Carlos was the first to speak.

“I am so sorry,” he said, “sorry for your family.” The two men talked. Simon explained all that he had been through since the bombing and how he had felt about meeting Carlos, how he needed to straighten a few things in his mind and leave the past behind. Then, in 1998, six years later, Simon and Carlos met again. The whole atmosphere was completely different. As they saw each other they hugged like old friends. They began to talk and recalled their first meeting.

“You were so brave to meet me.” Simon told Carlos, “It allowed me to put things right for the future.”

“It is so good to be able to extend a friendly hand and an open heart,” said Carlos. “It is what heals the pain.”

They exchanged news and talked about meeting each other's families. When it was time to part, Simon and Carlos had tears in their eyes.

“Although this is the strangest of friendships,” said Simon, “I will always be delighted to call you 'friend'. We were once enemies but that is all in the past - we now look to the future.”

An Untimely Death

Stephen Lawrence died on the 22 April 1993. Before that he was an ordinary young man but since his death, his name has become very well known indeed because of the way he died and what happened afterwards.

Stephen was waiting for a bus with his friend Duwayne. They were both on their way home after an evening out. It was 10.30pm. Duwayne stood at the bus stop whilst Stephen walked to the corner of the street to see if the bus was coming. As he watched his friend, Duwayne saw a gang suddenly surround him. There were some scuffles and Duwayne ran off, calling to Stephen to follow him. The bus came and several people saw the attack. Stephen managed to follow Duwayne once the gang ran off, even though he had been very badly wounded. He ran for a 100 metres before he fell. He died from two deep stab wounds before the ambulance arrived.

No one has ever been found guilty of Stephen's death, although there were strong suspicions about five young men in the community where Stephen lived, but their guilt could not be proved. Stephen's family believed that the police did not do their job properly and they fought for 5 years to get an official enquiry into the investigation. In March 1999 the official report was published. It is 350 pages long and summarises 100,000 pages of other documents. The conclusion reached was that: *Stephen Lawrence was unlawfully killed in a completely unprovoked racist attack by five white youths.*

Stephen Lawrence died because he was black.

People have learnt a great deal from Stephen Lawrence's death and what has happened since. There are changes to the law and to the way the police work as a result.

A Very Old Problem

This story begins around 4000 years ago when some mathematicians in a place called Babylon tried to solve a problem that had been puzzling them. They wanted to break down a square number into a sum of two squares. Nearly two thousand years later another mathematician called Pythagoras had another go at this and came up with his theorem to tackle the problem. Many years after that a French scholar, Fermat, wrote about his ideas. He said that "the square of a whole number can be broken down into two other squares of whole numbers for example: five squared (25) equals four squared (16) plus three squared (9)."

After Fermat died lots of mathematicians tried, again for many years, to prove whether this theorem was right. Eventually in 1993 a British scientist called Andrew Wiles announced that he had managed to prove Fermat's theorem after wrestling with the problem for over seven years. He told how he had worked endlessly, calculating and re-calculating, checking and re-checking the solution to the problem and at last he was able to show his ideas clearly.

So after nearly 4000 years, a mathematical problem that had puzzled many scholars was solved although for many of us that answer is another problem to be tackled.

What problem would you most like to tackle?

A Window of Love

Falling in love is the most wonderful thing. Cecily, when she met David, was so happy that she had found someone to love, and someone who loved her in return. But hand in hand with her joy came great sadness, for David was dying. Cecily had met David in her role as a social worker caring for people who were in hospital, helping them

prepare to go home, supporting their families with any worries they had. She had trained as a nurse but, due to a problem with her back, had had to change her work to something less physically demanding. Cecily believed she could serve God and show God's love through her work but it wasn't until she got to know David and realised the difficulties he faced that she knew how God wanted her to serve him.

Cecily came to see that as well as helping people to get better when they were ill, doctors were needed to help people with another part of their journey through life, to care for them as they were dying. She talked to David about her ideas. She wanted to build a hospital for the dying somewhere where they could be specially cared for, a place of tranquility and love in which they and their families and loved ones could be helped and guided through a very difficult part of their lives.

When David died, Cecily began to channel her terrible grief into her dream to build the hospital. At first she thought she would try and be a nurse again, working at night, for shorter periods that she could manage. Then, in a home for the dying, she met a doctor who told her that the best way to help would be for her to become a doctor herself. Although she was quite old to make such a change in her career, Cecily persevered and by the time she was forty, she had qualified as a doctor. She went on to research ways to help relieve the pain of those who were dying and help them to deal with their fears and anxieties.

She discovered how lonely people can become in these situations and realised how they need love and care. Most important of all, they need someone to listen, someone they can share their feelings and ideas with, so that the end of their journey can be one of peace. She saw how people suffer from what she calls "total pain", meaning not just physical pain but the emotional pain of loneliness and helplessness, the social pain of worrying about their family and friends, and the spiritual pain of searching for meaning and security in their life. All of this pain must be cared about and eased.

David had left Cecily almost all his money when he died. He said that it would just about buy a window for her hospital. Cecily was determined to build a unique home for the dying around David's window, a window of love. She set about raising money. The building would be a 'hospice'. The word hospice comes from the Latin word 'hospes' meaning both 'host' and 'guest'. Long ago monks had treated the sick and dying, as well as travellers, in such places. The people coming to this hospice would be travellers moving on their journey through life.

Cecily had so many plans for the hospice. She wanted to make it the sort of place people would like being in because they were being cared for so well and felt truly loved. Although Cecily wanted the hospice to be like a friendly community in itself, she did not want it to be isolated or set in a place away from other people and everyday. She found a place that was just right, in a busy part of London, yet with trees and space for a garden.

Cecily worked tirelessly, raising money and then supervising plans and building. There was always fund-raising to do and several times they nearly ran out of money. But Cecily and her loyal band of supporters never gave up in their shared dream. At times it was chaotic, especially when furniture and equipment began to arrive. Even the fire brigade helped by putting up the curtains. The hospice, called Saint Christopher's after the patron saint of journeys, was finally opened on 24th July 1967. Patients commented that it was more like a home than a hospital as everyone was given such kind personal care. Still today, even the smallest need and detail is attended to and no worry is too small to be shared and discussed, just as it is in a family. Arrangements are very flexible, to help patients and their families. Visitors can call in whenever they like, just as they would in an ordinary home.

People from all religious traditions and those with no religious faith come together in the hospice. They are joined through love. Through talking about their ideas with staff at the hospice, people are able to

think through their own idea about God and find peace in those thoughts.

Although Cecily didn't aim to build more hospices, people saw what a wonderful place she had created and soon other hospices were built, not just in Britain but throughout the world. Her loving insights had struck a chord with so many people who recognised the importance of her creation and saw the need for hospices elsewhere. Built on her Christian faith and love for David Tasma, Cecily Saunders had started a movement that was to bring hope to many thousands of people. The love Cecily shared with David lives on in the hospice movement and reaches out now to thousands of people, encompassing many different nationalities, backgrounds and religious traditions to make the end of their lives as painless and as peaceful as possible for them and those who love them.

A Wise Judge

Reuben was a tailor. He worked hard but he was poor and it was difficult to earn enough to feed his family. The rich townspeople used to come to him for their clothes but since the merchants began to come to the town with more fashionable clothes, Reuben's business was struggling. There wasn't much money for food and Reuben knew his children were hungry. He did his best to be cheerful and always to do a good job with the clothes he made.

When his wife became ill and Reuben had no money to buy her medicine, he went to one of the merchants to borrow some money. The merchant felt sorry for Reuben and agreed to lend him the money. Reuben promised to pay it back in two weeks.

Reuben worked hard but he did not make enough money in the following two weeks to repay the merchant, who came to claim the debt. Reuben could not pay. The merchant insisted they should go to

the judge who would decide what must be done. The judge listened to the merchant's case and so did the people. They felt sorry for Reuben. It was clear he would pay if he could. They thought the merchant could write off the debt because it was a small amount of money for him.

"No!" said the judge. "The money must be repaid. That is justice."

The crowd muttered indignantly and Reuben looked around him in fear. Then, to everyone's surprise, the judge came down into the crowd, took off his judge's hat and turned it upside down.

"Come on," he exclaimed, "if you feel sorry for Reuben, give what you can help him repay the debt. That is mercy. Justice needs mercy and Reuben deserves both justice and mercy."

Beth Shalom

In 1991 two brothers, Stephen and James Smith, visited Israel with their parents. While they were in Jerusalem, they went to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial dedicated to the six million Jews who died in the Second World War. They did not die fighting; they were murdered because of who they were; they were persecuted by wicked people who believed Jews were not as good as other people.

The brothers came from a Christian family; their parents ran an ecumenical conference centre in Nottinghamshire. There they welcomed Christians from all branches of the Church. The boys learned to be open to other people's beliefs and values.

When they walked around Yad Vashem, they were horrified to see the powerful images which retold the story of the Holocaust. It was difficult to believe how so many people had suffered such unspeakable horrors. It was impossible to believe how anyone could be so cruel and wicked.

But the impact of Yad Vashem went deeper than that. Stephen and James realised that what they were experiencing was not some aspect of history, something that happened to the Jews fifty years before; it was a challenge to them and to everyone because of what it said about the way people treat each other in the very worst circumstances. They felt that more people had to be confronted by this inhumanity. They felt they had to do something to heighten the awareness of others to the consequences of such hatred and violence.

“We knew we could not turn a blind eye and still maintain our integrity,” commented James. “From that point on, we focused our lives on how we might bring this demanding challenge to a wider audience.”

The family decided to turn their beautiful conference centre into a permanent place of remembrance and reflection. There an exhibition of photographs and documents retells the story of the Holocaust in graphic detail. In the peaceful grounds is an enclosed rose garden. Each rose has been planted in memory of someone who was killed. Often they have no other memorial. Every visitor to the centre has the opportunity to hear, first hand, the life story of a survivor, someone who experienced the terror, and lived to tell the world about it.

The centre, which was opened in September 1995, is called Beth Shalom, House of Peace. It is a place of remembrance but it is much more than that. It is a place where the hopes of the future are focused, hopes that depend on people respecting and valuing each other, never again committing such crimes against each other, letting go of suspicions about others because they are different.

The intention of the brothers in establishing Beth Shalom is to inspire people rather than shock them. Visitors **are** shocked because the story is shocking but the vision of Stephen and James ensures that visitors go away from Beth Shalom determined that such a shocking story must never be played out ever again.

Bhai Ghanaiya

From across the battlefield came the cries and groans of the wounded and dying. There had been the fiercest of battles as the Sikh fortress was surrounded by a Turkish army. There were times when the Sikhs felt they had to fight for their beliefs, to fight for God. But now they were exhausted and many of their soldiers had been killed or were badly injured. Some of those survivors stood looking out onto the battlefield. As they watched they saw a figure picking his way amongst those who lay on the ground. He appeared to be giving them water. They recognised him as Bhai Ghanaiya, a fellow Sikh. What they also saw was that he wasn't just giving water to Sikhs but to Turkish soldiers too. He was helping the enemy. Furious, they went straight to their leader, Guru Gobind Singh and they told the Guru what they had seen. The Guru listened to them and then summoned Bhai Ghanaiya to him.

“Is it true what I hear, that you have been helping our enemies, Bhai Ghanaiya?” Bhai Ghanaiya looked at the Guru in pained surprise.

“I have never helped an enemy. I have always been true to you,” he replied.

“No, no we saw him with our own eyes,” the soldiers interrupted. “He made no distinction between Sikh or Turk, just gave out the precious water, regardless.” The Guru's eyes rested again on Bhai Ghayaiya awaiting a response.

“My Guru. When I see people who need help, they are no longer friend or enemy, simply someone in need. When I see them, I see the God I serve, the Great Guru. You have told us that we should defend the weak, feed the hungry and care for the poor. I am doing what I can for whoever needs me.” Bhai Ghanaiya bowed his head before the Guru and waited. Then Guru Gobind Singh nodded solemnly.

“You are right, my loyal friend. While we are fighting, these men are our enemies. But once the fighting is over, we are all people with

needs and feelings. Take this ointment and continue with your work. Know that you are serving the Guru and being a true Sikh.” And so Bhai Ghanaiya returned to the battlefield.

The other soldiers looked on and wondered.

What does this story make you wonder about?

Bishop Wilson

‘Father, forgive them’

In the story, Jesus said these words when he was dying on the cross. He taught everyone that it is right and good to forgive those who hurt them in any way and in these words, he was asking God to forgive the people who were torturing him. What a hard thing to do, even for Jesus. This story is about a man who loved Jesus and wanted to be like him. Although he wasn’t killed by his enemies, he was cruelly tortured and yet he could say, like Jesus, ‘Forgive them for what they are doing’.

John Wilson was born in 1898. He became a priest like his father and after serving in a variety of churches in this country and abroad, he became Bishop of Singapore in 1941.

The world was torn apart by war at that time and many places were very dangerous. When Singapore was taken over just a few months later by the Japanese, Bishop Wilson was taken prisoner, beaten and starved and thrown into Changi Jail where he was tortured. He showed great faith and courage during four years of imprisonment, showing everyone the love of Jesus, whom he followed.

When he was released, he was thin and weak from his ordeal. He came home and began to preach again and to talk about what had happened to him, but there was never any trace of bitterness in his accounts of

his dreadful experiences. Instead he impressed everyone who heard him with his words of forgiveness and love. He understood that his torturers had done what they had done because they worshipped their emperor and believed what they were doing was right. He did not blame them.

In 1953 Bishop Wilson became the Bishop of Birmingham. He was much loved by ordinary people, especially those whose lives were particularly difficult, the homeless and those who were discriminated against because they were different, especially black people. He worked tirelessly for the rights of everyone, yet thought little of himself. Every year, as a war veteran he led the British Legion Service of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall. He was a true hero, but also a humble man who, like Jesus, was able to forgive.

Burning to Serve

History was made on a Sunday in May 1994 in St Philip’s Cathedral in Birmingham. It was no ordinary Sunday anyway. It was Pentecost, the day when the birthday of the Church is celebrated every year. It’s an important day for Christians but for some people, May 1994 was especially significant. It was the day they became priests in the Church of England.

You could say there was nothing unusual about that. Although, of course, it would be a big day for the individuals themselves, many people had been ordained before. Ordination (let’s say that word together: ‘ordination’) is the name given to the service held to make someone a priest. After a long time of training, they have their call to work for Jesus recognised publicly. They make promises and they are blessed by the Bishop.

What made this ordination so very special was that, for the first time ever in this country, this year some of the priests-to-be were women.

Many Christians traditionally believed that only men could be priests. They reasoned that because the disciples whom Jesus chose were all men, and the first people to lead the Church in those early days after Jesus died were all men, that must not be changed. But women wanted to serve the Church too. They burned to serve as priests because they felt Jesus was calling them to do so.

Opinion in the Church was, and still is, very divided. Beliefs are passionately held. Many people feel strongly that women and men are equal and anyone who is prepared and qualified to commit her or himself to this kind of service should be welcomed by the Church. Others feel desperately unhappy that the traditions have been changed. Some of those people felt so strongly that they left the Church of England.

The decision to ordain women was made after many years of fierce debate and unease. Eventually, the majority of people felt it was the right thing to do.

So it was an important moment when each of those women knelt at the altar rail in the Cathedral waiting for the Bishop of Birmingham, Mark Santer, to lay his hands on her head. In that moment each believed she was receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, setting her aside to serve the Church of England in a way no woman had been ordained to do before. History had indeed been made.

Castaway

Monday

Listen to the music ... relax ... If you wish you may close your eyes ... so that you can imagine ...that the sun is shining.

I would like to invite you to imagine you're on an island ... a beautiful island ... your island ... You feel safe and happy to be there ... Perhaps you are on the beach ... You can feel the clean, soft sand

beneath you ... It is warm to touch ... You let the sand run through your fingers. Perhaps you can see the blue, clear sea ... watch the waves gently lapping by your feet ... listen ... all is still and quiet ... Perhaps you can hear birds ... you watch them as they fly freely ... in the endless sky ... Perhaps you are under a tree that gives welcome shade ... all is peaceful ... all is calm ... your very own island ... What a wonderful place ...

(Monday only) It is time to leave the island for today ... although you will return ... When you are ready, open your eyes and come back to the hall.

Tuesday

(Repeat 1): Listen to the music...relax....if you wish....

Today you decide that you must make a shelter ... you walk away from the sea inland ... what would you make a shelter out of? ... Wood from the trees, leaves, stones ... You keep looking ... Where should you build your shelter? ... perhaps by a stream, perhaps on the beach itself or in a clearing amongst the trees ... ah yes, here is the perfect spot ... You begin to build your shelter, your home ... It is hard work in the hot sun ... it is taking shape ... You keep working hard.

Perhaps you are thirsty and stop for a while ... but then return to building ... At last it is made ... your very own home ... your very own space.

It is time to leave your shelter ... although you will return to it ... it is time to come back to the classroom ... when you are ready open your eyes

Wednesday

(Repeat 1): Listen to the music....relax....if you wish....

Yet you are alone ... alone on your island ... with only the animals and plants as your friends ... yet you feel completely safe ... you are

totally relaxed ... Perhaps you begin to think as you lie there ... How does it feel to be alone? ... no-one else to talk to ... no-one else to help you build that shelter yesterday ... yet no-one else to tell you what to do ...

Perhaps you like being alone for this moment ... perhaps you decide you would like someone else to be with you ... You think of family, friends, those back home ... In your imagination you see their faces ... Perhaps you choose one person to share your perfect island ... to have fun and to laugh with ... Let that person stay as long as you want.

It is time now to leave the island once again and return to the hall.

When you are ready open your eyes.

Thursday

(Repeat 1): Listen to the music....relax....if you wish....

You go back to your shelter ... It is exactly as you left it ... your very own home on this island ... Perhaps you sit beside it ... looking out onto your island ... and you begin to remember home ... Perhaps you smile at how different things are on the island ... perhaps some things are better ... perhaps there are things, worries, pressures that you do not miss about life at home ... You are glad they are not with you at this very moment ...

Yet perhaps there are some things that you miss ... Perhaps you can imagine them, hold them in your mind ... happy they will be there for you when you next go home ... feeling happy in yourself.

It is now time to return to the classroom ... and when you are ready open your eyes.

Friday

(Repeat 1) : Listen to the music.....relax.....if you wish.....

5. As you look out to sea you see a shape on the horizon ... a dark shape ... It is a ship ... You keep looking carefully at it ... You can

see it moving ... yes it is moving towards your island ... a chance of rescue ... How can you attract their attention? ...

Perhaps you build a fire on the hilltop ...perhaps you make a flag to fly and be seen ... Will the ship stop? ... Will it see your sign? Yes it is coming closer ... You can see its funnels as it approaches ... It stops a little way out but a smaller boat comes towards shore ... You rush back down onto the beach ... rescue ... you are going to be rescued ... You welcome the people and prepare to leave ... As you get into the little boat you look back at your island ...

Perhaps you are sad at leaving ... perhaps glad to be returning home ... You remember the things you've done, the experiences you've had ... then you turn to look at the ship you are about to board.

It is time to say goodbye to your island ... taking all your memories with you ... You go back home but you can return to your island in your imagination any time you want. When you are ready, return to the hall ... and open your eyes.

Celebrating Eid

Every year the school comes together to celebrate Eid. Sometimes the new moon arrives during a holiday or over a weekend, but this year it arrives during term time so something special is planned. This is the first year Mrs Edwards has been in the school. Many of the children she teaches are Muslim and she has learnt a lot about Islam though them. She is interested and wants to understand how they might feel and what is important for them. There are many thoughts and ideas she shares with her children and there are lots of things they all agree are important but in some ways their ideas differed.

When Mrs Edwards hears about the celebrations for Eid she begins to look forward to the day. She listens as the children talk about the preparations they are making at home. The celebration of Eid comes after a period of fasting. As in some other religious traditions, fasting

is important in Islam. It is one of what is known as the Five Pillars of Islam, five principles of faith laid down by God in the Qur'an. The prophet Muhammad told his followers how they should celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr, little Eid, as it is known. While the children in Mrs Edwards's class do not fast because they are too young, many of their parents and older brothers and sisters are not eating during day light hours and are spending more time in the mosque and at prayer. This must be quite hard and very tiring, especially in warm weather" thinks Mrs Edwards as she eats a banana at break time.

Preparations at school focus on planning and getting stalls ready and preparing games to be held in the playground. Mrs Edwards allows herself to volunteer to have wet sponges thrown at her. Parents are enlisted to make food to sell. A date has been settled on for the school celebration although most families will be waiting for news on the radio or telephone from Pakistan, when the sliver of the new moon is first sighted. Then everyone will be wishing each other Eid Mubarak – a happy Eid!

The children have been talking about the presents they hope to receive and the cards they will make or buy to send. It seems a bit like Christmas to Mrs Edwards. Many are hurrying off after school to buy something special to wear. Mrs Edwards wonders what she will wear. She wants to have the right thing. She wants to be part of the occasion, for her children as well as for herself. She wants them to see she realises how important the day is. She talks to one of the children's parents she knows well. They suggest she wear a shalwar chemise, loose trousers and a tunic, or a sari. Mrs Edwards has both. She has been given them in the past as presents by people who knew her interest. She wants to wear a sari as some of the parents would do, but she isn't very good at putting it on.

When the day comes there is no need to worry. The children are busy working in their classes during the morning then at lunchtime they are joined by their parents and friends. Mrs Edwards begins the day wearing shalwar chemise and then changes into sports gear for her time being soaked by sponges. Afterwards several parents come to her aid. Some Mums come and, with skill and ease, show her how to pleat

and tuck the length of fabric round her waist so that her sari hangs beautifully to the ground and is cool and easy to wear.

Mrs Edwards wanders round the school grounds with children and parents, talking and playing and looking at the stalls and games. The food is simply wonderful and the aroma very appetising. Curries, samosas, bargees, chappatis are all bought out and shared. It all tastes different from the food bought in shops or restaurants, more flavoursome. It is really delicious and even better when the child or adult who has made it comes and tells you how... and then gives you more!

Mrs Edwards and some of the other teachers notice how much easier it is to talk to the children and parents whose language they do not speak, when they are all sharing food or playing games or laughing in the sunshine at teachers getting soaked by excited children.

There is much that is shared without the need to say anything. Moments of difficulty or misunderstanding pass easily and the day is happy and everyone seem to enjoy themselves. That is the purpose of the celebration, to enjoy the day together.

Afterwards Mrs Edwards finds it hard to explain to people how good the day has been. It has felt very good to be together in this way. It is like a different sort of celebration. It is about celebrating **for** as well as **with** someone else, although it is impossible to understand exactly what it is like to hold a different set of beliefs, to have another religion. Mrs Edwards thinks maybe it is possible to be close and appreciate how other people feel and what is important for them, to stand alongside them and be joyful with them, to be happy for each other and let the happiness rub off.

For Mrs Edwards this has been a new and different experience. It is not part of her tradition and yet she has felt in some small way a part of the celebration. She is reminded of a comment made by one of the parents: "There are many rivers taking different pathways but all running to one mighty ocean. So it is with our ways to God."

Christmas in the Trenches

It was on Christmas Eve 1914 that a beacon of hope shone out for a few hours in the darkness of the greatest war the world had ever known.

British and German soldiers had been fighting each other for five months across the fields of Flanders in Belgium. It was dark and cold. There was no comfort and little safety in the trenches which the men had dug to give themselves some protection.

As the soldiers shivered and wondered what lay ahead of them, they heard the sound of singing. It was a familiar tune, although it seemed like a lifetime ago that they had last heard it. The melody, *Silent Night, Holy Night*, carried clearly over the sparkling frosty air. It was difficult to be sure where the singing was coming from because it seemed to fill the whole place, but the words were unfamiliar to the British troops. It was being sung in German:

*‘Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Nur das traurige, heilige paar
Holde knabe im lockigen Haar
Schlaf in himliche Ruh...’*

‘Sleep in heavenly peace’...

The meaning came through even though the words did not make sense. But peace seemed a lifetime away. This was bitter war. Then a voice called out in through the darkness in English from the German trenches.

‘Come over here!’

There was ridicule at first from the British soldiers. They jeered and laughed but one man, the sergeant, called back and then climbed out of the trench and disappeared into the blackness.

The soldiers held their breath, waiting for the sound of shooting. Instead they heard voices ... a conversation over enemy lines.

Gradually, men from both sides emerged with torches and lanterns to meet and shake hands in the narrow strip of field called No Man’s Land.

For two days there was no fighting. Instead, the men shared their rations and showed each other photographs of their families and even played football.

Then Christmas ended and so did the truce.

Connor’s Story

“I can still remember how, like you, I could hardly wait for the day to come. How exciting it seemed, to be out early in the morning looking for shamrocks. We used to get home with our boots soaked with the dew.” Dad was smiling at the memory. “And then we’d put on our Sunday best and our bunch of shamrocks and be off to Mass. Everyone was happy; as it was a Bank Holiday; no work for a day, just singing and dancing and a drink or two.” Dad winked at Mum.

“I loved the music at Mass that day,” she said more seriously. “Hail Glorious St Patrick! Do you remember we sang it at the end of Mass at St Catherine’s last year, Connor? It’s a good hymn, that one; says it all really. I can remember my Mum, your Granny, Connor, used to be singing it for days afterwards. That’s probably how I know it so well,” she added laughing. Connor looked at his Mum and Dad as they recalled the celebrations of St Patrick’s day that they had had as children in Ireland.

That’s where his family came from, but now they lived in Birmingham. For Connor and his family, St Patrick’s day was a

special time to remember Ireland and their feelings for the country, and to celebrate their patron saint and their 'Irishness'.

Even though he was only five, Connor had his own memories of St Patrick's day. He and his sister were told about St Patrick by Dad. Dad was a brilliant storyteller and he told stories of St Patrick as if he had known him. Every year he made the stories fresh and alive. Connor waited eagerly for the telling of these tales. He and his sister didn't go and collect shamrocks but they could be seen on the cards they received on the day and on the faces of some of the children and the adults at the St Patrick's Day Parade in the city. Connor was looking forward to this so much as he was going to walk with his Dad behind the County Kerry Banner.

The people from each county in Ireland who now lived in and around Birmingham had their associations, each one represented at the parade. People from the association would march through the street behind a banner or on a float on a lorry. Ailish was going to be dancing on the County Kerry float as she and her Irish dancing group were very good. In fact she was going to spend much of St Patrick's Day dancing at different celebrations. She was excited too and was practising hard. She hoped that the float that she was on would win a prize for the best float. Ailish would wear her kilt with an embroidered sash fixed over her shoulder and her special dancing shoes. Connor would be walking with his Dad and their friends. He would wear his best clothes with a St Patrick's day badge and a shamrock.

"I wonder" he thought "Will mum let me have my face painted with a shamrock?" He had seen people like this last year and thought it looked great. She certainly would not let him go to Mass like that. Although it was a serious time in church it was also a very a happy service, with lots of music. Connor recalled how last year everyone seemed to be smiling and greeting each other with more than their usual cheerfulness and good humour. A small harp, a fiddle and a tin whistle were placed before the altar. Dad had explained how it all helped people think about Ireland and the music they loved and to be

thankful to God. Their singing would guide their thoughts to St Patrick and help them learn from his teachings. They would sing that special hymn. Mum had helped him learn the chorus and some of the words so that he could join in.

It had felt good last year to be with his family and friends, in amongst all the sounds and celebrations at home, in the church and in the streets. He looked forward to St Patrick's day. Just two more days and it would be here. He kept thinking about it, imagining how it might be; in fact, he could hardly wait.

Coxswain Henry Blogg : RNLI

Everyone who serves as part of the crew of a lifeboat has to be courageous. Some rescues are exceptionally dangerous and the RNLI recognises such valour by awarding medals. The most decorated Lifeboatman was Coxswain Henry Blogg who served on the Cromer Lifeboat from 1909 until 1948. He was awarded an unequalled record of three gold medals and four silver, all for outstanding bravery. He was also awarded the George Cross and the British Empire Medal.

He had many dangerous missions, none more so than on the morning of 9th January 1917 when a freezing gale was blowing and the call came to turn out to a small Greek Steamer, the *Pyrin*, in difficulties in the storm.

The launch had been difficult because of the force of the waves and once at sea, the crew struggled to keep the lifeboat on course, rowing with superhuman strength and determination. Nowadays lifeboats are highly developed craft, benefiting from all the latest technology, but in Henry Blogg's day it was just a simple boat with oars.

The force nine gale made it treacherous even to get alongside the steamer but Blogg and his crew managed to take her crew of sixteen off and into the lifeboat, bringing them safely into harbour an hour later. But while they were doing so, they heard a huge blast at sea. A Swedish ship, the *Fernebo*, loaded with timber, had lost control through engine failure and the explosion had blown the ship in half. Exhausted though they were the crew of the lifeboat knew their services were needed again and once more, without hesitation, they set out into the mountainous waves. With the help of onlookers, they struggled for half an hour to launch the lifeboat, without success; it was swept back to shore.

Meanwhile six of the crew of the stricken ship were trying to save themselves. They launched a small boat and were being tossed about like a cork on the gigantic waves, only to be capsized a little way from the shore. The *Fernebo* itself was washed onto the rocks and began to break up. Rescuers ashore tried to attach rocket lines as everyone watched the desperate crew in the powerful searchlights. It was no good; the lines all missed and it seemed the men would surely drown.

Coxswain Blogg and his men had had four hours' rest and were ready to try again. Once more everyone struggled to launch the lifeboat. Again the coxswain reluctantly had to give up. The waves were too big and the currents too strong. But other attempts at rescue also failed, so in desperation Henry Blogg decided to go again. It was nerve wracking just watching the lifeboat struggle towards the *Fernebo*. In the bright searchlight, the crew could be seen at last pulling people to the relative safety of the lifeboat.

When Coxswain Blogg brought his lifeboat to shore with its rescue complete, it was one o'clock in the morning. The gold medal he was given later was supremely well deserved. He said he was receiving it on behalf of all his crew, who had shown such courage and endurance, but everyone knew that, without his outstanding leadership, the sea would have claimed more lives that night.

Cross Country Trials

There were once seven friends all setting off on a race across the countryside. They needed to do well in these trials in order to be considered for the team to represent their country. As they limbered up, each one was thinking about the race ahead. They wanted to win; they wanted a fast time; they wanted to prove themselves; they wanted to show that they were good enough. They wished each other luck, shaking hands and patting each other on the back, each wanting to do their best.

As they approached the starting line, one of them stopped. He looked at the group of runners from so many different places. Some he knew, some he had only heard about.

"It's no good," he said. "This is going to be such a tough race. There are so many good runners here there's no way I'm going to win. I need more preparation. I'll save my strength and try next year."

The remaining six friends looked in surprise at his retreating back but then with the rest of the runners, they leaned forward in their starting positions and at the sound of the starting pistol, they were off.

The runners settled into a steady pace across the flat as they approached the first hurdle. Made of brushwood, it looked very unwelcoming. All the runners leapt as they came to the fence, some taking it in their stride, others putting in little short steps before they jumped. One runner caught his foot on the wood and fell. He lay still for a moment where he had fallen. Then he rolled over and got up shaking his head.

"If they're all as bad as this," he said, "I may as well give up now."

He went back the way he had come towards his friend who had thrown in the towel earlier. They could commiserate together. The other runners meanwhile were starting up an incline, some going very fast, others taking it at a slower pace. One runner, out in front, was working himself in to a great lather. Glancing over his shoulder at frequent intervals he endeavoured to run on as fast as he could.

"Gotta keep in front," he was gasping. When the others reached the top of the hill one by one, they found him in a heap puffing and panting, unable to go any further.

Down the hill pounded the runners. At the bottom was a ditch over which they had to leap. The first runner leapt confidently over. The second, however, fell heavily. He lay still. The crowd held their breath. The officials, just a little concerned, began to run to help. He got up, shook himself and even though the rest of the runners had long since passed him by, he began to run again, limping slightly but not giving up. He'd get there in the end.

One of the jumps the runners faced and dreaded was a steep bank, on the other side of which was a drop down into a muddy trough. The runners all struggled to reach the top of the bank. As each set of feet ran over it, it became more muddy and slippery. One runner found that no matter how hard she tried, she kept slipping backwards down to the bottom again. She didn't give up but stopped and tried again and again, but still to no avail. Then she paused. She knelt down and sinking her fingers into the mud she half crawled, half dragged herself up the bank. It was not very stylish but she got there and then went crashing down the other side, landing in a heap at the bottom. Some of the spectators laughed at her, but she got up and with a wave and a grin she staggered off again after the remaining runners.

On went the runners, stoically making their way, in fits and starts across the fields. The front runner changed as individual runners slowed down a little, their energy flagging, and then had a burst of energy or enthusiasm. Some were better at going up hill; others were like mountain goats as they ran down the slopes before them. The spectators held out sponges and drinks for the runners to grab as they ran past.

As they neared the end of the race they came to a stretch of water, a shallow river, that they had to cross. They needed to wade through it. Some runners bounded in, the water splashing against their legs and then their bodies. Others were more cautious for fear of losing their footing. The water was icy cold but the runners were determined. Several fell. One seemed to have more difficulty than the rest in righting himself and then soldiering on. A runner close by turned and saw her friend struggling. She slowed and returned to his side, leaning over him and then putting her arm under his to offer support. The other runners were passing them by but she stayed until her friend was

out of the water and until people came to help. Only then did she begin to run after the tail enders of the race. She wouldn't win but some things were more important than winning.

I wonder where you were in the race.

Dr Edward Jenner

Ever since he was a young child, Edward Jenner was interested in everything that was going on around him. He was very observant, noticing even the smallest details and the slightest changes in things. For hundreds of years, people had known that cuckoos were lazy birds, laying their eggs in other birds' nests and leaving those birds to hatch the young cuckoos alongside their own eggs. The mystery was that as soon as the baby cuckoo hatched, the other babies disappeared from the nest. Like so many people, Edward Jenner wondered what happened to them. He began to look for evidence, watching very closely a hedge sparrow's nest which had in it four sparrow eggs and one cuckoo egg. He recorded what he saw in his nature diary:

18 June: *'In the morning early there were four hedge sparrows and the young cuckoo in the nest. About noon it contained the cuckoo and one hedge sparrow only and at night the cuckoo was alone in the nest!'*

But Edward had watched so carefully that he had seen what no one had seen before. The baby cuckoo had pushed the other fledgling birds, one by one, out of the nest! He recorded what he had seen and wrote to the Royal Society about his findings.

It was this skill in careful observation that helped him, when he was older, to solve a terrible problem which was causing the deaths of many, many people. The problem was a terrible disease called smallpox. It was that discovery that made him famous.

Smallpox was very contagious, which means it was very easy to catch. One day, Edward Jenner overheard a milkmaid saying she wouldn't

catch smallpox because she had already had cowpox which was a mild disease sometimes caught by people who milked cows.

Dr Jenner took some cowpox germs from a milkmaid and injected them into a boy. He took a great risk a few weeks later when he injected the same boy with smallpox germs. The boy did not contract the terrible killer disease. He was immune. At last there was a vaccine for smallpox which prevents a person from catching the disease or carrying it to others. Now, thanks to Dr Jenner, smallpox is wiped out completely.

Dying for Freedom

It was one of the most important sporting events of the year, the most famous of all horse races, and it seemed as though half the people in the country were there. Derby day. A busy race course, thronged with people, all elegantly dressed, enjoying the sunshine and the excitement. Even the King and Queen were there, anticipating the big race in which King George V's horse, Anmer, was running. Perhaps he would have a winner!

The build up to the big race, the Derby itself, was enormous. Everyone jostled for a view of the course, waiting with bated breath for the horses to be off. There they were, thundering past, the bright livery of the jockeys creating flashes of colour and the horses making the ground vibrate. The noise levels rose as the crowd shouted their favourites on, all hoping the runners they had backed would win.

Suddenly, a young woman in the crowd slipped under the rail and ran out onto the course, right in front of the horses. She tried to grab the bridle of the king's horse, but the animal hit her and somersaulted, flinging its jockey on the side of the track. The woman had been struck by the horse's chest and lay, still, on the ground.

The cheering stopped as the crowd, unable to believe what had happened, fell silent. Even the King and Queen were shocked. No one

could understand why someone would put herself in so much danger. It was a foolish thing to do, they said, and it had stopped the race. They flocked onto the course to see more closely what had happened. They were all very concerned about the injured jockey and the horse. The unconscious woman was taken to hospital and died a few days later.

Her name was Emily Davison. It was June 1913 and since 1906, she had been a suffragette, an active campaigner for women's rights. Like the other women who were fighting to be treated as equals with men, she had been imprisoned, been on hunger strike, been force-fed, a terrifying tortuous ordeal, and been injured. She decided the campaign needed a martyr, someone who was prepared to die for the cause. She went to the Derby with the intention of stopping the race, although none of her friends knew how she planned to do so.

Emily and the other women in the campaign for equal rights were battling for the right to vote. Nowadays, in this country, we take the right to vote for granted. All men and women over the age of eighteen are entitled to have their say in choosing who will govern the country and who will speak for them in their local community. It was that right that the suffragettes were fighting for because women were not considered worthy of that right.

Emily Davison gave her life for that right, but it was not granted to all women until fifteen years later. Emily believed that 'one big tragedy may save many others' and that her sacrifice would set other women free.

It is amazing that today many women (and men too) do not exercise their right to vote which was won with such a struggle.

How important do you think it is to vote?

What will you do when you are old enough to vote?

Elijah and the Rains

A long time ago, in the story, King Ahab had angered God. He worshipped a god called Baal and built temples for him and put an altar for him in the temple. Then he had another statue made. This time it was of a goddess called Asherah. Ahab had forgotten the commandments God gave to Moses, that God alone should be worshipped. So a prophet called Elijah was sent by God to the King. "In the name of the living God of Israel, whom I serve, I tell you that there will be no dew or rain for the next two or three years until I say so," Elijah told the King.

As you can imagine, the King was not pleased with Elijah. How dare this man bring such a message? Who did he think he was talking to? God told Elijah to go and hide in a place far away called Cherith, near a small stream where he would have water. God told him he had commanded ravens to bring him food there.

Elijah did just as God had said and for a while he had enough to eat and drink. But after some time even the brook began to dry up, as there had been no rain. So God sent Elijah to a town to stay, telling him he had commanded a widow there to feed him. When Elijah reached the town he met a woman. He asked her for water and some bread. She told him she only had enough flour and oil at home to make one last meal for herself and her son and they would starve to death.

"Don't worry," said Elijah. "Go ahead and prepare your meal. But first make a small loaf from what you have and bring it to me, and then prepare the rest for you and your son. For God says the bowl will not run out of the flour or the jar run out of oil until I send the rain." The woman did as Elijah said and, just as God had promised, they had enough food.

After three years of drought God told to Elijah go to the king, God would send the rain. Elijah set off to the King.

"So here is the trouble maker," said King Ahab, when he saw Elijah.

"No!" said Elijah, "it is you who have caused all the trouble by not keeping God's commandments and by worshipping other gods. Come to Mount Carmel with all your priests and those who worship Baal and Asherah." When all the people had come together at Carmel, Elijah spoke to them all.

"Let us see who is really God," he said. "We will set up an altar here with an offering to burn. You pray to your gods and I will pray to mine and we will see whose God will send fire to make the offering burn. Whoever answers the prayers will be God." The people cheered.

"You go first," Elijah told the people. And so they prayed and called on their gods. When nothing happened Elijah jeered at them.

"Pray louder. They can't hear you. Perhaps they're asleep." The people tried again calling and wailing louder and louder, pleading with their gods to send fire. But nothing happened. Then Elijah invited the people to come close to him. He built up an altar to God. He dug a trench round it and filled the trench with water. Then he poured water over the altar so that all the wood to be burned was wet. Then Elijah prayed to God.

"O God, prove now that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant and have done as you asked. Answer me, answer me so the people will know that you are God and will worship you again."

Then God sent fire. It burnt the altar, all that was on it and scorched the ground around and dried up all the water. When the people saw what happened they fell on the ground and cried out, "The Lord is God; the Lord alone is God!"

Elijah told the King to go home for the rain was coming and just as he had spoken the rains came and a great storm brought water back to the land.

Emily's Question

I wonder, why do you think we get together like this every day? What are we here for? Every day children in schools all over the country, all over the world even, do this. They have different names for this time of day; 'collective worship', 'together time', 'assembly', 'pause for thought', but at each place the reasons for coming together are similar. It is a time to stop whatever else we're doing, to pause, to think, listen, reflect, share, celebrate, sing, worship and pray. I wonder why we do these things together? What can we learn in this time?

We can share stories and ideas, talk about our work or particular interests, things that we value as a school, year group, class or individuals and we can celebrate special times and activities. We also all have time to be quiet and peaceful and to think deeply, to reflect upon things that could be important to us, about our feelings, those we love, and things we care about. For some people this will mean turning their thoughts to God and praying. But why should people want to pray when they are in school. Is that about learning? It certainly raises some interesting questions. Why do people pray, what is prayer for and does it work? Lots of people wonder about these questions. There are different ideas about the answers. This is a story about a little girl who thought about these questions a great deal.

Emily sat very still while her teacher said a prayer asking God to help the people in the world who had no food and were hungry. Her friend Shona, sitting next to her, wriggled and whispered. Emily couldn't quite catch what she said and kept her eyes shut as they had been told to. She didn't always shut her eyes. Sometimes she peeped through her

fingers and looked at the other children. Some were looking around them, others were concentrating hard. Were they 'talking to God?' Emily felt that there were times when she could talk to God, but did God listen? They had often prayed for people who were hungry but there always seemed to be more people to pray for and never enough food.

Emily sometimes went to church with her mum and dad and her brother and sister. They prayed for people who were hungry there too and so there were lots of people asking God to do something, but did it do any good, did things get any better? Emily's dad said that the problem was so big that it could not be made better over night.

"But we say that God is so powerful, and good and amazing and that he loves everyone so why are there people dying of hunger? God must know about them because we keep telling him!" Emily felt rather cross with God about that.

"There are no easy answers Emily, love," said her mum, "but I think that all the time God helps people to make things better, although not always in big ways, but quietly, without a lot of fuss, people are doing everything they can to get more food to people who are starving, and to make the people who have so much, like us, share and be more generous."

She paused. "Sometimes we have to pray and do something as well. Perhaps God shows us ways to help when we ask him to do something..."

Maybe God needed help to do things too? It was puzzling. Emily thought about this and then went off to play.

Her mum's ideas came back to Emily a few weeks later when she wore a red nose for Comic Relief. Perhaps this was her opportunity to do something. The people who organised Comic Relief said it was important to enjoy yourself when you raised money. At Emily's school the children made and sold cakes to raise money. Some were

sponsored to wear their red noses and making the tongues uncurl at each other. Emily quite liked it, but there was a girl called Sophie in her class who spoilt it.

“You don’t really need to wear a red nose, Emily. You’ve got one already!” Sophie whispered quite loudly as they were all sitting down for a story. The other children fell about laughing and Emily felt really silly. She couldn’t think of anything clever or funny to say back so she just sat there going red. “Look, see what I mean?” said Sophie. After that it seemed as if for the whole day Sophie and her friends picked on Emily. It got no better the next day and Emily felt quite upset. She tried to avoid Sophie but it was hard. Later in the week she slipped in the corridor and Sophie and one of her friends laughed at Emily. At home that night Emily was very upset. She didn’t know what to do. She didn’t feel like telling her mum. In bed she prayed about it.

“Oh God,” she whispered, “I hate it so much. Please make it stop. Please make Sophie and her friends be nice to me.” Mind, you, she thought, I don’t know why I’m doing this. Why should God listen to me or help me when there must be so many other people who need help?

The next day Emily felt sick as she went to school.

“Fine” said Emily wishing it was. In the playground she found her friend Beth and they went to the classroom together. When she saw Sophie, Emily tried hard to look her in the eye and be brave. Sophie stuck her tongue out. Emily wanted to cry.

“Take no notice,” said Beth, but it just wasn’t that easy. When the time came for the children to go to *Together Time* in the hall, Emily made sure she sat well away from Sophie and was beside Beth. In the quiet of the hall the teacher’s voice drifted in and out of Emily’s mind as her thoughts wandered. Why did Sophie make her feel so bad? What could she do to stop it. Maybe she couldn’t really stop it, unless Sophie went away. The teacher began a prayer. Could God make Sophie go away, thought Emily. No that seemed a daft idea. Maybe Emily had to do something to make it better herself. Could she? Could she just ignore Sophie? What else could she do? She remembered in the distant past some story she’d heard...no it wasn’t a story, just some words of

Jesus. He’d said something about how being nice to the people who had hurt you would surprise them, make them feel guilty, stop them.

“Oh God,” prayed Emily, “help me to understand and to do it.” These didn’t seem very careful, organised words like the prayers she often heard people say in school or in church but Emily felt that that was what she really wanted to say to God. She sat still with the other children around her and waited until they were told to leave the hall as the music played. Emily didn’t feel like speaking to Sophie straight away but by lunchtime she realised she was feeling more confident and clearer in her mind as to how she was going to be. She would be kind and friendly. As Emily walked down the corridor she drew close to Sophie.

“Let’s play over on the grass” she said to Sophie, smiling. Beth was beside her.

“Yes, come on, Soph,” she echoed. Sophie looked surprised and turned to one of her friends. They half nodded, not quite sure how to respond.

“Okay,” said Sophie “but I’m choosing the game.”

“Alright,” replied Emily. She smiled again. It felt better this time. As she ran across to the grass she felt stronger and more sure of herself. By the end of the day, Emily no longer had that horrid sick feeling in her tummy.

“It’s good to see you smiling,” remarked her mum, when she met her in the playground. “What happened? Did the wind change direction?”

“I’m not sure,” laughed Emily. Something **had** changed. She did feel different, more positive somehow. As she lay in bed that night she wondered again. She prayed as she always did that God would look after her family and friends.

“And for me, God. Thank you for whatever happened today. For the way I was able to cope. I hope I will tomorrow.” Emily turned on her side and lay thinking, wondering. I still don’t know whether God hears me, she thought, but maybe sometimes I feel he does. Will I ever know? And with that thought she fell asleep.

Does God listen to prayers? What do you think?

First Rain

The Great Spirit Ndrian-ana-hary peered down from the sky. He looked slowly around his endless creation and his eye fell upon the tiny earth beneath him. He wondered what this little world was like. Should he create some life for this small place or was it too cruel an environment for any creatures to live in happily? He could not go himself as he alone watched over the whole universe he had made, the stars, the sun and the moon. So he decided to send his son, Ata-okolo-inolo to explore this little world and then to return and tell him just what the earth was like and what sort of life would flourish there.

In due course Ata-okolo-inolo went down to the earth. He began to explore and felt a flow of pleasure as the sun broke through the early morning mist to warm the planet and reveal a new world to him. The land stretching before him was beautiful. The mountain peaks, sweeping plains, the deep blue seas were a perfect place for green life to spring forth. He could begin to imagine his father's creation. Great spreading forests and carpets of lush grass would provide homes for creatures large and small and the rolling oceans would teem with fish and animals.

However as the day went on the sun grew hotter and hotter. Ata-okolo-inolo began to long for his home in the cool skies. As the days passed so the sun seemed to burn more fiercely until he could bear it no longer and seeing no other refuge from the rays Ata-okolo-inolo dug down into the baked earth until he found the cool sanctuary he sought. There he stayed.

Meanwhile, up in the skies Ndrian-ana-hary wondered what had become of his son. He knew that it would take the boy some time to explore properly and to decide what could best be done, but surely it would not take this long.

Days, months, years went past. A hundred years and still Ata-okolo-inolo did not return. Ndrian-ana-hary could wait no longer. He was anxious for his son and so he decided to send his servants to earth. These servants were the very first men and women on the earth. They wandered throughout the earth, searching and searching. But no matter where they went they couldn't find Ata-okolo-inolo. He had completely disappeared. With every day that passed they became more and more miserable. They could barely survive in this cruel and barren land. There was no shade to rest in, no plants, no animals, nothing to enjoy and nothing to encourage them. At last, when they felt they could look no more and life was unbearable the people decided to send a message to Ndrian-ana-hary to ask him what to do. The first servants did not know what had happened to their friends or what their master, the Great Spirit, wanted them to do. For the servants of the Great Spirit, life looked bleak. They needed guidance.

Meanwhile, Ndrian-ana-hary began to realise that if he wanted his servants to stay on earth he would have to make things better for them. The earth should be a place where people could live comfortably and in harmony with their surroundings, where they could settle and build homes and communities, have families and care for the animals and wild life about them. There was a crucial element missing on the earth. And so Ndrian-ana-hary sent a precious gift to his servants, he gave them rain. It was as if the water, the first rain, had awakened the earth and it had begun to live again. As the rain fell, so rivers and streams, lakes and oceans brought hope to the people. Gradually the earth began to cool and the creatures and plant life flourished. The people were happier but they went back to their quest for Ata-okolo-inolo.

In some ways, nothing has changed. Some are searching still.

Guru Nanak and the Rich Man

There was a great deal of excitement in the town. People said the great teacher, Guru Nanak, was coming and everyone wanted to see him. There was a lot of talk about who would entertain him and where he might eat.

One man had no time for the talk. He just got on with the doing. He was called Duni Chand and he was the richest man in the whole area, let alone the town. He had a fine palace, richly decorated and lots of servants. He ate only the best food and he had so much money that he ordered far more than he and his family needed to be prepared. He did so love his money. He liked people to know how rich he was too. In fact, he was a really big show off. And he decided Guru Nanak must eat with him.

So the day came. All the preparations had been made and the feast was ready. A lot of guests had been invited so that absolutely everyone for miles would know that Duni Chand had entertained the great guru.

It all went off very well. At the end of the party, Duni Chand told Guru Nanak what a pleasure it had been to welcome him to the palace. Honoured guests were always welcome. The guru thanked him, which made Duni Chand feel even more important. He offered to buy anything that Nanak might need because he wanted to be of service to the great guru, who was indeed a very important guest.

“I do have a task for you,” the guru answered, looking around the room at all the splendour. He took out of his pocket a slender leather case. Inside was a tiny silver needle.

“I would like you to look after this for me,” smiled Nanak. “Keep it safe and give it back to me in the next world.” Duni Chand was delighted to be given such a responsible job to do. He bowed and smiled as Nanak left. But then the rich man’s wife scoffed at him.

“Oh you fool!” she jeered. “How can you take this needle into the next world when you die. You can’t take anything with you, you silly man. The guru has seen right through you!”

Duni Chand was horrified and ran after Nanak to ask him why he had trusted the silver needle to him. He realised, of course, he could not take it with him when he died.

“You are indeed foolish to hoard all this wealth when you know you cannot take anything into the next world,” agreed Nanak. “Why don’t you do good with your money? Give it away! Share your good fortune and make others happy. Then you will also find happiness.”

What do you think the rich man did?

What would you do?

Hannah Senesh

In Israel today, there are at least 32 streets, a boat and two farms named after a remarkable young woman called Hannah Senesh. Although she died when she was only about 24 years old, she is remembered because in the most terrible of situations, she brought some happiness and hope to the lives of many people.

When she was 18 years old. Hannah left Hungary, the country where she was born, and went to Palestine. She knew that if she stayed in Hungary, she would not be able to study and fulfil her ambitions because people of her religious tradition, Jews, were persecuted. The invading German army was rounding up Jewish people and sending them to concentration camps, where they were kept in the most terrible conditions. Families and friends were separated and they lived in fear for their lives. Many were tortured and killed. Hannah, meanwhile, had gone to Palestine where she learned to be a farmer. Her mother wrote to her and told her about the war. She said that Hannah’s brother had escaped and would come to Palestine soon. Hannah wanted her mother

to join them, but her mother said that as long as her children were safe, she did not want to leave her homeland.

At this time, Palestine was ruled by the British and to support their war effort, Hannah joined the Air Force. She was determined to help her people fight the tyranny that was destroying them. These feelings, along with her faith, gave her the courage she needed to undertake a dangerous mission.

In March 1944, Hannah was dropped by parachute into Yugoslavia. With six colleagues, she helped rescue British soldiers who had been captured by the Germans. All the time they sought to help Jews escape from the clutches of the Germans. Unfortunately, it was not long before Hannah herself was captured and imprisoned. The soldiers wanted to know exactly what she had been doing. When she refused to tell them, they tortured her, but to no avail. One day, to try and drag the information from Hannah, the commandant brought her mother to her. Hannah's mother was horrified that Hannah was back in the country and in such terrible danger.

"What are you doing here?" she cried.

"I can't tell you mother," replied Hannah, distressed to see the anguish she was causing her mother. "If I tell you, they will try and force you to tell them."

Hannah's mother was also imprisoned, but the guards made sure they could not see each other. However, Hannah's cheerful nature and friendly manner soon enabled her to persuade the guards to take messages to her mother for her. When the prisoners were out exercising in the yard, Hannah would find ways to catch a glimpse of her mother or even exchange a few words. She would pretend to tie her shoe laces or hesitate as if she had something in her eye and then she could catch up with her mother and they could talk together until the guards realised what was happening.

Hannah was kept in a cell on her own with a high window. Desperate to communicate, she piled up all the furniture in the room and peered out of the window. She realised she could signal to her mother who was kept in a building on the opposite side of the courtyard. Hannah was allowed to have paper and rags. She cut out letters of the alphabet and relayed messages to cheer her mother and the other prisoners.

Firstly for her mother, and then for the many children who were held prisoner along with their mothers, she made beautiful rag dolls. In the dismal and frightening conditions, these gifts were greatly valued. Hannah even taught her mother Hebrew. It all helped to pass the time and to keep everyone's spirits up and their hopes alive.

There was something about Hannah, her warmth and kindness, that made people like her a lot. As time went on, the guards would sometimes take Hannah to see her mother. Hannah would teach both children and adults to read and to share the songs of their faith. She continued to send messages from her window and one day was able to tell her mother and those with her that the war would soon be over. How they all longed for freedom.

But just as it seemed that they would be free at last and liberated as the German army fled into retreat, their captors did a terrible thing. As they left the prison camps, they killed all the Jews held there. One morning just weeks before the other prisoners were set free by the allies, Hannah and her fellow Jews were taken into the courtyard and shot. But, the Germans could not get rid of the memories that people held of the happiness and comfort that Hannah's loving presence had brought.

The story of Hannah Senesh and her example of loyalty and courage in the face of extreme suffering is remembered still and honoured around the world today. However, there were at this time many others whose names may not be remembered or known so well. They too remained cheerful and determined during the Holocaust, as we now call it. They supported and encouraged those around them, often at great personal cost, and remained strong in the hope that one day the terrible evil they faced would be overcome.

Harvest Sacrifice

The farmer could hardly believe that all his harvest was gathered in. He looked with both pleasure and relief at his great stacks of rice. All year the farmer had worked so hard to plant, care for and finally harvest his rice. Now all that had to be done was for the rice to be threshed, to separate the grains from the stalks. The proceeds of the

part he sold would help support his family and they would eat the remaining rice as the main stay of their meagre diet.

As he stood mopping his brow, the farmer looked down the hillside to the beach where the other villagers were gathering for the harvest celebrations. He must hurry to join them. As he looked out to sea, the farmer noticed something strange. It seemed as if the light had changed. The sky had taken on a different colour and on the horizon he could just make out a great wave gathering. Beneath his feet, the ground trembled and his heart lurched as he realised what was happening. Soon he and the village would be in the grip of an earthquake. The tidal wave he could see would come crashing over the beach, engulfing the seashore, the people and perhaps the houses at the bottom of the hill. No one on the beach had any idea of the tremendous danger they were in. What could he do to warn them?

In panic he looked around him. He started to shout and wave his arms but the people were too far away to hear. Somehow he had to get them away from the beach, on to higher ground where they would be safe. His eyes fell on his precious stacks of rice and an idea came to him. Without hesitation, he ran to the bonfire burning the weeds nearby. Picking up a burning stalk he raced towards the rice stacks pausing only for each to catch light. Soon they were beginning to blaze. But the farmer didn't look at his crop he was losing, but turned to the beach.

The people below began to look to see where the plumes of smoke and flames were coming from. And then seeking to help their friend and neighbour save his crop, they began to rush from the beach and up the hillside. It was only as the gigantic wave crashed behind them that they turned and saw what a narrow escape from death they had had. Then they realised what the farmer had done. He had sacrificed his harvest to save them. He had given all he had, all that he had worked for, in a single moment, for them.

Healing of Naaman

Long ago there was a great commander of the Syrian army. His name was Naaman and his story is in the Bible. He was a good and loyal servant to the king and an excellent soldier. Under his command, the Syrian army had become strong and won many battles.

It seemed that Naaman had everything. But there was a terrible shadow over his life. Naaman was a leper. Leprosy is a disease that affects a person's skin and the nerves in the body. Today there are ways of preventing and managing the illness but in those days, people who caught leprosy were sent away from their families and communities to live on their own or with other lepers so that they did not spread this cruel disease. They would have to cover the many sore parts of their body with cloth to try and prevent infection and when they needed food or water and had to go to towns or villages to collect these things, they would often have a bell to ring as warning to people that they were coming so that no-one had to go near them. Families or those who cared for them would often leave food and drink at special places for the lepers to collect them. Those people who caught leprosy had to suffer not just the pain of the disease but terrible loneliness and fear.

Naaman and his household were horrified that he would have to end his days in this way. Naaman was married to a wife he loved dearly. She had a maid to look after her and Naaman's wife was very fond of this young girl as she was so kind and cheerful. The girl had been captured when Naaman and his soldiers were in Israel and brought her back to Syria as a slave. One day the young girl came to Naaman's wife. She had watched her mistress and realised how very sad she had become because of her husband's illness and the path she knew their lives must soon take. The little maid said to her mistress, "I wish that my master could go to the prophet in Samaria. He is a man of God and he would cure your husband of his disease." When Naaman heard what the maid had to say he went straight to the King and told him what she had said.

"Go and see the King of Samaria and see if he can help you" said the king, and he gave Naaman a letter to take to the King.

Naaman set off, taking with him thirty thousand silver coins, six thousand gold coins and ten changes of fine clothes. He gave the letter from his king to the King of Samaria, asking him to cure Naaman of his disease. But instead of helping Naaman, the king was furious.

“How can the King of Syria expect me to do this?” raged the king. “Does he think I’m God with power over life and death? Is he trying to pick a quarrel and start a war between our lands?”

But the prophet heard about the king’s anger and quickly sent a message asking the king to send the man, Naaman, to him.

So Naaman set off with his horses and servants to see the prophet called Elisha. When he arrived at the house, Elisha did not come out and greet Naaman but sent a messenger to tell him to go and wash in the River Jordan seven times and his skin would heal and he would be well again. Naaman was very angry when he heard this.

“What! This prophet doesn’t even come and lay his hands on me or pray over me. What’s so special about the River Jordan. It is no better than the rivers in my own land!” He stormed off towards home. But his servants ran after him and begged him to do as the prophet had suggested.

“After all,” they said “It’s not as if he asked you to do anything very difficult.”

So Naaman did as Elisha had told him and went to the River Jordan where he washed himself seven times. And to his surprise it happened just as the prophet Elisha had said. Naaman’s pale, sore skin was healed and he knew that he was well again.

Filled with joy and relief, Naaman returned to Elisha’s house with all his men.

“Now I know there is no God but your God, the God of Israel. Please let me give you a gift of thanks.” Elisha shook his head.

“I won’t take anything,” he said, “for it is God’s work.”

“Then let me take some of the soil from this land home with me,” Naaman said. “From now on I will only worship the God of Israel. There will be times when I have to go to the house of Rimmon with the king and pretend to worship with him to keep the king happy. But

in my heart I worship the God of Israel. Please forgive me.” Elisha held out his hand in blessing and said,

“Go in peace.” Naaman went back to his own land filled with happiness.

Joy of Water

The Prophet Muhammad travelled many miles with his friends. His companions learned much from him as they travelled, for they talked of their experiences and told stories, always listening to the words of their wise leader.

One day after a hard day’s walking, when they were really hot and tired, Muhammad and his friends stopped for a rest by a stream. They were all weary and longed to refresh themselves after their dusty journey. They could hear the trickling water flowing over their aching feet. As they sat on the bank of the stream, Muhammad’s friends cupped their hands and splashed their faces, the water dripping over their beards and clothes. They dipped their feet into the stream, some wading in, enjoying the feeling of being clean. Suddenly one of them stopped. His eyes came to rest on the prophet. The others too became still and silent as they watched in surprise. Muhammad had taken a little bowl from his bag. He knelt by the stream and scooped up just one bowlful of water. With great care so as not to spill a drop he washed first his face, then his hands and finally his feet.

One of Muhammad’s friends went to the prophet and spoke to him, expressing the question they all wanted to ask.

“Why do you use your little bowl when the water is so plentiful? There is more than enough for everyone.” Muhammad smiled at his dear friends.

“Allah gives us many good gifts. Water is a very precious gift, a joy and there is enough for all. But even when there is so much we should never waste any of the gifts Allah gives us. We must be careful and be thankful for all that we are given.”

Juggling for God

Armand dragged his feet. He knew he had to go to school but he hated it. He was no good at anything. He found reading difficult, he couldn't do maths and when he was asked a question, he stuttered and stammered because the words wouldn't come, even if he knew the answer, which was not very often. Everyone seemed to laugh at him because he was so stupid. He hated that most of all. He was useless. He would hang his head and wait for the end of the day when he could go home to play.

Armand did not play with other children. He stayed at home, on his own, but he was happy there because he could do what he loved to do. He could juggle. He did not know it was called juggling. He had no idea it was clever. He just knew it felt good to toss and catch three, four, or sometimes even five balls, or sticks, or apples. He lost himself in watching the objects flying from one hand, through the air, into the other and trying to do even more difficult actions in between the throwing and catching. Then he knew happiness, the sort of happiness that is really joy that comes from deep inside.

One day a circus came to town and Armand was taken by his mother to see the performance. He could not believe it. There were clowns jumping and tumbling and throwing balls into the air and catching them just like he did. And everyone was laughing. Some of the other children in his class were there but Armand was too wrapped up in the performance to notice. He decided there and then that he would become a clown when he grew up.

And so he did. He joined a circus and became a great success. He learned to walk a tightrope and turn somersaults and ride a cycle with

only one wheel.... and juggle at the same time. He became famous. He had that same feeling of joy inside whenever he performed especially when he made children laugh. It was quite different from the kind of laughing he had endured at school. Now people loved him and he loved what he was doing.

But he grew old, very old, and it became more and more difficult for him to do his aerobatics. His eyes did not seem to work so well and he found it difficult to see the balls or the skittles and he began, for the first time in his life, to drop what he was juggling with. The circus manager did not want a clown who could not be a clown anymore, so Armand lost his job.

He wandered the streets, dejected and sad. Those awful feelings of uselessness returned. He put down his bag of juggling balls and skittles and sat heavily on some steps and put his head in his hands. It felt hopeless.

When it began to get really cold, Armand looked around to see where he could go to sleep out of the wind. Opposite was a church. Slowly Armand picked up his bag and shuffled wearily across the street and into the dimly lit building. He was not used to churches but he found himself standing in front of a statue of a lady holding a little boy in her arms. The child was holding a golden ball in his hand.

Armand looked at the child and something made him open his bag and take out his juggling balls. If only he could juggle just once more, just for this child, to make him laugh... If only he had a golden ball to play with, he would make the little boy chuckle.

The next morning when the priest arrived for the first Mass, he found the clown lying dead on the floor in front of the statue. Around him were his juggling balls. In one hand he held the red one and in the other hand he held the child's golden ball. There was a smile on his face, and the priest was sure there was a smile on the face of the little boy in his mother's arms.

He did not think he had noticed it before.

King Solomon Learns a Lesson

One sunny day, King Solomon was sitting in his palace discussing important matters with his ministers when a bee flew in through an open window. As soon as they saw it, his ministers became frightened that the king could be stung and began to jump around and try and chase or catch the bee. King Solomon, however, remained calm and quiet. He sat patiently while those around him fussed and flapped. The king knew that he would only be stung by the bee if it became frightened. At last when all those fussing were exhausted and had sat down, King Solomon gently caught the bee in his hand as it flew past. The little bee spoke to the king anxiously.

“Please don’t kill me,” it begged. “If you let me fly away free I may be able to help you one day.”

The king laughed. “A tiny creature like you help **me**, a great king! I don’t think that’s likely. What could something as small as you be able to do for a powerful, mighty king? What could I need from you when I have friends and servants many times bigger and stronger than you. No little bee, you may have your freedom, but I hardly think I will be seeing you again.” Then the king strode to the window and gently released the little bee into the breezes beyond. He laughed to himself.

“Fancy a little thing like that offering his services to someone such as me? He has ideas well above his station.” And with that the king didn’t give the bee another thought.

A month or so later the king received a visit from the great Queen of Sheba. She had heard of the wisdom of Solomon and decided to put him to the test.

“Let’s see if the mighty King Solomon can live up to his reputation,” she mused, “I’ll show everyone whether their king really is as wise as

they think he is.” So she issued the king with three challenges, clever puzzles that she had devised.

Firstly she gave him a beautiful shimmering diamond. Through its centre curved a spiralling hole. Solomon’s task was to thread the diamond. The king thought carefully for a while. This was indeed a tricky task. After a while he sent for a silkworm. The tiny worm wriggled its way through the twisting channel within the diamond, drawing its silky thread behind it. When it had finished the king was able to twirl the dazzling diamond in front of the astonished queen’s eyes.

“Hum” she thought, “I’ll catch him out next time.”

The next task for the king was equally intriguing. The queen invited a hundred little boys and girls to the palace. They were all exactly the same age, exactly the same size and wearing clothes that looked exactly the same. In short, they all looked identical.

“Now,” said the Queen of Sheba. “Your task is to find out which are girls and which are boys.” Again the king thought carefully, but not for long. Soon he had ordered his servants to bring a bowl of warm water, soap and towels. Each child was given their own set. Then the king simply told them to wash. The boys almost dived into the water, splashing exuberantly while they cleaned themselves, whilst the girls washed themselves carefully, the water going just where it was intended. Thus the king was able to tell the stunned queen which were boys and which were girls. The queen was becoming more than a bit irritated. Surely she could prove the king was not as wise as he seemed, or was he? The queen felt both cross and worried.

The following day everyone assembled to see what the next task would be. The Queen of Sheba had ordered the making of 499 artificial roses. Each one had to be perfect and identical to all the others. In every way the roses had to be exactly like a real rose, even down to their beautiful perfume. Then the queen hid one perfect rose

amongst the artificial flowers. This one she had picked herself from the royal garden. She sighed with pleasure as she sniffed the heavenly scent, and smiled to herself.

“This time I’ll catch him,” she thought. “Oh great King Solomon,” she said, “your task is to find me the real rose.” Solomon walked amongst the roses. This shouldn’t be too hard. And yet every rose felt and looked and smelt as it had been picked from his own gardens. He became more and more perplexed, and then more and more worried.

“Oh dear,” he thought. “I think this time she has caught me out. She has been too clever for me. Maybe I’m not as wise as everyone thinks after all and now they will all see me as I really am.” He wandered slowly and rather sadly around the room once more, gazing on the beautiful roses. He had to admit it was beyond his understanding. Suddenly close to his ear he heard a buzzing sound. He turned as the tiny bee spoke in a whispering buzz.

“Remember me, great king? Your tiny and insignificant friend. Well I can help you now. Let me find the rose. I can seek it out and I can find the only flower with nectar beneath its lovely petals.”

“Yes ... please,” the king could only whisper back. He watched in amazement as the bee flew off weaving its way amongst the roses until at last it found the one real rose. Once the bee saw that Solomon knew which rose was real he flew to the window. Solomon identified the rose to the queen. She was furious. Solomon’s eyes cast around for his secret helper, the little bee.

“Oh my friend,” he said. “You have not only saved my reputation, you have taught me an important lesson. I was wrong to judge you by your size and think that I was too great to be helped by you. How arrogant I have been. Everyone needs help at some time and everyone can be helpful no matter what their size, they are all valuable.”

Krishna Fighting Evil

Evil has always been a difficult idea for people to understand. As long as there have been people they have wondered about the big question of evil. It has always been impossible to find answers to such big questions, except in the form of important stories which people have used to understand ideas that cannot otherwise be explained. This is one of those stories and it is sacred to Hindus.

The wicked King Kamsa was feeling pleased with himself. He was safe. He had heeded the warning about his sister’s child, Krishna, and had acted quickly.

The baby was a real threat to him and had to be killed. The king had made sure it was done. But, unknown to him, Krishna had been rescued and taken out of King Kamsa’s kingdom and left with foster parents on the other side of the Yamina River. Miraculous things had happened, but then Krishna was no ordinary child.

A message got back to the king that Krishna was safe. What could he do? It did not take him long to come up with a plan; he was clever at evil plans. He sent for the demon Pootana who was always difficult to track down because she was usually busy doing evil of her own. Eventually, she stood before the king, ugly and smelly, her fierce, snarling face screwed into a scowl. Two long fangs protruded from her mouth.

“I hope you have a good reason for sending for me,” she roared. It had better be really dirty work.” The king explained his plan. Pootana was to disguise herself as a sweet, innocent, loving girl and go to the home of Nanda and Yasoda, Krishna’s foster parents and offer to help look after the baby. The king said he would leave the rest to her.

The next moment Pootana was knocking on Yasoda’s door. As the door opened Pootana smiled, such a perfect, lovely smile that Yasoda immediately liked her and agreed, when Pootana made her offer, to let her be Krishna’s nurse.

For weeks and weeks, Pootana behaved like a perfect nurse. She looked after the baby well and seemed to be able to make him chuckle with happiness at any time. Nanda and Yasoda thought they had found

the best nurse in the world. They left Krishna alone with Pootana more and more.

This was the chance Pootana needed. When it was time to feed the six month old baby, she cradled him in her arms as usual and put him to her breast. Pootana knew that she could make her milk poison Krishna. She could almost hear King Kamsa's laugh when she told him of her success.

Krishna sucked and sucked, his eyes closed in contented satisfaction. Pootana waited for him to cry out in pain from the poison and die. But he just went on sucking, harder and harder, until it was Pootana who cried out in pain. And still Krishna went on sucking and sucking until he had sucked all the life out of Pootana. The pain had made her change back into the demon she really was and so she died, her evil face snarled and twisted.

But Krishna flourished and grew into a fine young man. He was good, very good. In fact Hindus believe he was God, come to earth especially to fight evil.

Lily's Gifts

"Who is Lily?" wondered Alexander as he stood beside his mum in the church. People kept talking about her. Lily would have loved that. Lily was so good at that. You look just like Lily when you do that. It sounded as if Lily wasn't actually here with Alexander and his family, but of course she was. She was over there in her Mummy's arms, cooing and making funny gurgling noises as first she, and then her twin brother, were washed by a man in a long black and white dress. What was that all about? Alexander couldn't quite make it all out although it was fascinating. But that was definitely Lily; he'd heard her being given her name.

Later back Auntie Paula's house Alexander was in the kitchen with his Mummy. They were putting sandwiches on a plate.

"Don't you remember Granny Lily's teas?" Alexander's mummy said to Paula. "She seemed to be able to rustle them up at a moment's notice. Out would come a pile of intriguingly shaped tins from the pantry and suddenly there would be this meal all beautifully laid out on the table. I have some of her crockery and as I labour over sandwiches and sponge cakes I often think about her, what she'd say to me. She could tell me how to do it all." Mummy paused. Alexander could tell by her face that she was sad. He knew Mummy missed her Granny. Great Granny had died not long after he was born. Every night he slept under a blanket she had knitted especially for him before she became ill.

Great Granny had taught Granny to knit and now Granny knitted him jumpers that were better than anything you could buy in the shops. And then Granny had taught his Mummy to knit. She knitted blankets for people who lived far away and were very cold at night and had no blankets.

Alexander thought for a while. He hadn't heard Great Granny called 'Granny Lily' before. A Granny Lily and a baby Lily. Why did they want to give a new baby someone else's name? He listened again while surreptitiously removing the icing from a fairy cake.

"She always had one of those tins in her bag" continued Paula "with a cake or the famous rock cakes or macaroons to give to someone who was ill or needed cheering up or something. She just got on and did what she could to help. She was very good like that." Alexander thought Great Granny sounded very kind.

In the sitting room Alexander watched people taking it in turn to hold the new babies. They were talking about who in the family the babies looked like. Alexander thought they just looked like babies but other people thought differently.

"He's got such beautiful eyes, like his Dad. I expect Lily will be like her Mummy with all that blonde hair, like all of her side of the

family.” Alexander had fair hair and did not look like his Mummy one little bit. On a bookcase was a photo of his Granny and his Great Aunt Janet and their mummy and daddy. Great Granny Lily and Great Grandpa Albert. They all had fair hair like him. Would new baby Lily look like them too? Would she be like ‘the other Lily’?

When they got home Alexander wanted to see some photos of Mummy when she was little. She looked funny, even more than she did now. She also had pictures of her brother and sister, Auntie Lizzy and Uncle Michael and some wedding photos. So many different people and Mummy seemed to be saying they were all joined together somehow.

“They’re all your family,” she said. “They love you too.” Alexander saw Great Granny there in the pictures again. “She gave me the material for my dress,” said Mummy smiling, “and then Auntie Lizzy made it for me. Great Granny was really good at sewing, because she did so much sewing. When Great Granny died I had one box and Lizzy had the other, to remember her by.”

Alexander knew what was in the box. Oh how he loved opening it and investigating! It was beautifully decorated with wooden patterns on the outside, and inside were lots of little tins and boxes containing ribbons and buttons and pins and special chalk and reels of bright cotton. He could hardly stop himself from reaching inside but Mummy didn’t let him play with it very often.

There were other things in the house that Great Granny Lily had given Mummy. One was the big vacuum cleaner. Mummy used to laugh when Alexander helped her by using it and said how proud Great Granny would be of him!

“This was Great Granny’s too,” said Mummy showing him a big pottery bowl with fish painted on it in a swirly pattern. “And then when Great Granny Lily died I wanted you to have something to help you understand what she was like. So I bought you this prayer book. One thing she used to say, especially when there was something awful

on the news and you wondered what on earth you could do to help, “Well, you can always pray about it. It’s the least and the most you can do.” I think learning that was the greatest gift she gave me”, said Mummy. “I want you to understand that too.”

Alexander picked up the book and began looking at the pictures. They showed beautiful places, the seashore, great forests, a sunrise, flowers, friends, people from different places, smiling, wondering, loving, happy children. It was beautiful.

Like Granny Lily.

Lorna’s Garden

Lorna is seventy eight years old. She lives in Londonderry in Northern Ireland, in the house where she was born. She inherited the house from her parents.

Once it had had a row of shops next to it but about thirty years ago, the land was bought by a supermarket chain and one of the first big stores in the area was built. People came to do their shopping from all around.

Lorna was happy to live next door to a store. She did not mind the customers coming and going in their cars. Once she was inside her house or her garden, the traffic did not bother her, even though it became very busy over the years.

Then one day, Lorna received a letter. It said the supermarket chain was planning a big new development. It was going to invest millions of pounds in a new super, super, **super** store, the kind where it’s possible to buy almost anything you can think of. They had bought the land on the other side of Lorna’s garden and they were making her an offer she could not refuse for her garden. They offered her ten thousand pounds. Now think how much money that is: ten thousand pounds. Lorna had never been rich; she had never had any money to

speak of, but she had enough to live; she had enough for her needs. She considered herself fortunate. What did she want with £10,000, she thought to herself. So she said no, she wasn't interested. She loved her garden anyway.

Then she had another letter. The supermarket chain put their offer up to £40,000. Gosh, four times as much! They must want the garden badly, thought Lorna, but, then, so did she. She loved her garden.

Then another letter came, and another, and each time the offer went up until it was £250,000. Two hundred and fifty thousand pounds! That's a quarter of a million! And **still** Lorna said no. The newspapers and the radio and TV reporters got to hear and they came to interview Lorna. Whatever was she thinking, turning down an offer of a quarter of a million pounds? Was she holding out for more money?

"No, certainly not!" Lorna replied. "I don't need any money. I've got my garden. I love my garden. And it's **this** garden I want."

So the supermarket chain could not build its new superstore.

What do you think about Lorna's attitude?

What would you have done?

Manna from Heaven

God was sitting on a cloud in heaven. Does God sit on clouds? Well, in the story, God was sitting on a cloud enjoying the angels' singing when suddenly God heard a different sound. It was the sound of weeping and wailing. God looked and saw that the people were suffering. They were slaves and they were being beaten and made to work for their masters.

"I must do something about this," God said. "I will find someone to rescue these people and help me to save them." So God chose Moses to lead the people out of slavery. Moses did not think God's plan was a good idea. In fact he told God he couldn't possibly do what God wanted. He wasn't clever enough or brave enough or a good enough speaker. But God knew better. God gave Moses amazing powers and eventually, after a lot of false starts, the people crossed the Red Sea on their way to the Promised Land.

But God did not make it easy for them. They spent forty years in the wilderness, often arguing and disobeying God. Finally they realised how much they depended on God's goodness to them. Do you know, the story tells how God sent them food every day, sweet, white flake-like fluff, which they called manna?

Manna from heaven, they called it. And God made sure they weren't greedy. This sweet, wonderful food only lasted one day; it couldn't be stored. Except on God's day, Shabbat, when they did no work. Then the manna allowed itself to be collected the day before and stored. Amazing really.

The Israelites gave thanks to God. They celebrated their harvest and the idea stayed with them through the centuries. In the wilderness, they lived in small huts which were easy to build and re-build as they moved from place to place. Once they were settled in the land God had promised them, they built their traditional little huts out in the fields so that they could be near their crops at harvest time and the little huts, called Succot, became a symbol of God's goodness at harvest time.

Moonlight Sonata

One night a man was walking down a moonlit street in a small town when he heard a sound of piano music. He stopped humming the tune that had been playing in his head and followed the sound. As he came closer, he recognised the piece. It was one that he had written himself. The man's name was Ludwig van Beethoven and ever since he could remember, his life had been filled with music. He had learned to play the violin, the piano and the organ and now he was a composer as well. When he reached the little cottage that the piano music was coming from, Beethoven looked in through the window and saw a little girl playing. But the music suddenly stopped and she burst into tears, crying as if her heart would break. Anxious to help her, Beethoven went into the cottage. There he discovered that this gifted pianist was blind and she was crying because she had no other music to play. So Beethoven sat down beside her and began to make up some music for her to copy and play. It was simple but very beautiful, expressing the deepest feelings.

As he played, the candles in the room burned down and so to give himself more light, Beethoven drew back the shutters and opened the window. The moonlight flooded into the room as they played the music together. When he returned home, Beethoven wrote down the music that he had been inspired to compose for the young girl that night, and he called it *The Moonlight Sonata*.

The years passed and Beethoven himself faced the loss of his beloved music as he became deaf. He suffered great anguish as he realised that soon he would hear nothing at all. He thought of killing himself for there seemed to be no reason to live, but somehow he found inner strength to continue. Perhaps he remembered the little girl from so long ago. His friends encouraged him and helped him through the darker moments and he was able to go on composing, hearing the music in his head.

Some of his music was very sad but much of it was full of hope and joy. One piece in particular shares that joy with many people today. It is from the Ninth Symphony and is called *Song of Joy*.

Most Precious Trees

It seemed as if the whole world would be blown away by the wind. The sand whizzed through the air trying to get into every crack and crevice, sweeping through the little village of mud huts whose only protection from the invading sand was the green forest standing guard, creaking and groaning. The great wind smashed into the buildings and the sand left no place or person untouched. But, as Amrita and other villagers were to remind themselves in the days and years to come, they were all safe.....sandy but safe.

Amrita lived long ago in India, in a small village on the very edge of a great desert. Just beyond the group of mud huts grew a forest. Amrita went to the forest every day for she loved the trees. She had one particular favourite and she went to see it, throwing her arms around its trunk and looking up through the delicate pattern of its green swaying leaves.

"How beautiful and strong you are," she would whisper to the tree. "You stand so tall watching over us. Without you what would happen to our village? We would be swept away by the desert winds, we would be covered by the desert sands, we would be scorched by the burning sun, we would not know where to look for water." She rubbed her cheek against its bark and hugged the tree more tightly. "You give us shade and protection and I will love you for it. If you need me, my tree, I will always be there for you. I will protect you."

When Amrita grew up, she taught her children to care for the trees. They hugged them and loved them as she did. Every day they went through the trees to the well for their water. One day on just such a

journey they saw a group of men carrying axes, making their way towards the trees. The leader gave the orders.

“Cut down every tree you can. The Maharajah needs the wood to build his new fortress.” Amrita was horrified at what she heard. She followed the men into the forest. How could they do this? The forest was an essential part of the village, they needed it. Its loss would destroy their community. Hardly able to watch she saw the head axe man take a swing at her favourite tree... She could stand it no longer.

“Stop!” she cried and flung herself between the axe and the tree, hugging the tree trunk. But the axeman was just following orders. He pushed her aside and continued his task. With each blow the tree shuddered until with a great crash it was felled. Amrita shed bitter tears over her beloved tree. By now the villagers had realised what was happening. They could not stand by and watch their trees massacred. They ran into the forest and spread out. Each tree was protected by one or two people standing with their arms around its trunk. Every tree was guarded with love. The axe men were perplexed. They could not take on the whole village.

“The Maharajah will hear of this,” they said as they went hastily away. The villagers gathered together. The Maharajah was the prince and his word was law. No one dared disobey him, and with his mighty army, who could stand against him?

The axe men had never seen the Maharajah so angry as he was when he saw they had returned without the wood he needed and heard why it had been denied him.

“How dare they?” he roared. “These tree-huggers must be taught a lesson. I must be obeyed.” Followed by his army, he set off for the village on his horse. As they saw him approaching just as they had feared he would, the villagers gathered by the well. The Maharajah rode towards them and stopped, sword in hand, looking down on the anxious group.

“So you are the foolish people who have dared to defy my order.” he growled. There was a pause and then Amrita stepped forward.

“My Lord,” she said, her voice trembling. “We cannot let your men cut down the trees. To us they are precious beyond words. They protect us from the ravages of the desert, the sweeping winds, the choking sand and the scorching sun. They show us where to find water. We need them to survive.”

“And I need them for my fortress!” said the Maharajah, and with a flash of his sword he waved his soldiers forward. “Cut down the trees,” he ordered.

Despite their terror the villagers ran to the trees. Each tree was protected by a villager hugging it. As the soldiers approached with their swords a desert wind sprang up. It began to whip up the wind in the soldiers’ faces. It blinded them as they went to their task and they were forced to cling to the trees for safety as the storm raged.

There had never been such a storm as long as the villagers could remember. It tore at every living thing as if it wanted to hurl the village away into the desert beyond. But the trees held firm and with them the villagers and their homes.

When the storm died down slowly the soldiers and the villagers emerged from the places where they had taken refuge. All around them were great drifts of sand. The Maharajah himself stood brushing the sand from his fine clothes. It was a long time before he spoke. He turned to the villagers.

“You have shown great courage and determination,” he said. “I can now see how precious this forest is to you, to us in our land. It must always be protected.”

How the villagers celebrated. They danced among the trees under the leafy green canopy, now decorated with garlands of flowers under a sky lit by fireworks. By the great tree that had fallen, Amrita’s tree, a

memorial was erected to remind all the villagers, and those to come, of the sacrifice that had been made. No one would forget what had been done to save their precious trees and now nearly three hundred years later, the village remains India's First National Environmental Memorial.

Mount Everest Conquered

Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world. It presents the ultimate challenge to mountaineers everywhere. It is 8,848 metres high and is situated in the most northerly range of the great Himalayas, between Tibet and Nepal. To the Tibetans, it is the goddess of the world.

There have been many attempts to conquer it. The first successful climb was led by Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tensing in 1953. The more dangerous south west face was climbed by a British team in 1975, led by Chris Bonnington.

Mystery still surrounds the expedition of 1924 when George Mallory and Andrew Irvine were lost during their attempt on the mountain. They left from the North Col on 6th June 1924 to begin their ascent to the summit. They were last seen by another climber, Odell, just 250 metres from the top. They were never seen again. Mallory was a very experienced mountaineer; his partner was relatively new to the sport. The tantalising question is whether the two men were lost on their ascent, or on their descent from the summit. Was the mountain conquered 29 years before Hillary's successful climb?

In 1999 a team set out to try to discover the truth. Amazingly, they found Mallory's body, preserved in the icy cold, just where he died. He was wearing flimsy clothing compared to the mountaineers who found him. The position of his body suggested to these experts that he had fallen on the way down the mountain. He had promised to leave a

photograph of his wife at the summit and there was no picture of her among the letters on his body, suggesting he had already been there. It was known that he carried a camera and in such cold conditions, the film would still be worth processing. The team searched unsuccessfully for evidence of it, so the mystery remains.

How would it feel to find that camera?

Nasruddin's Coat

There was so much work to do because it was harvest time. Nasruddin was busy in his fields. He sweated all day, pulling and cutting and heaving and hauling and he was exhausted. He was thinking it must be time to stop because the sun was sinking and it would soon be dark. Just as he stood up, stretched his shoulders, arched his back and reached for his old coat, he heard a voice calling his name.

"Nasruddin! Have you forgotten? Come on, it's time we were there!" It was his neighbour, reminding him that they had both received invitations to the feast that was being held in the village that night. Nasruddin had indeed quite forgotten.

There was no time to go home to change so Nasruddin thanked his friend for reminding him and they set off together for the village. As they walked, Nasruddin realised how hungry he was and he began to look forward to his supper.

But he was disappointed. When he got to the party, people whom he knew well greeted his friend but ignored him. He was not shown to a place at the table and the host did not welcome him.

In desperation he went home, only to return an hour later wearing his best coat. Now, although the party was underway, the host saw him come in and got up to greet him and made a place for him at the table. Instead of sitting down as his host expected, Nasruddin took off his coat and propped it up in the chair. Then to the surprise of everyone, without a word to anyone, he spoke to his coat.

"There," he began. "Are you comfortable? I hope you enjoy your dinner. I'll come back for you later". He turned towards the door.

“What on earth are you doing?” asked the host, finding it impossible to understand.

“I’m leaving my coat at your party,” Nasuddin explained. “It’s obviously my coat that you want to see. When I came in my old coat, no one even saw me, let alone spoke to me but as soon as I came in my good coat, you made me welcome. I can see, therefore, that it is my coat rather than me that you want.”

And with that, he left.

Nelson Mandela

Throughout his life Nelson Mandela has worked tirelessly to bring about the end of apartheid in South Africa. This means he wants all the people in South Africa to have equal rights to education, wealth and land. No matter whether their skin is black or white they should all have the right to vote, to speak freely and to be respected as individuals. Some of these things have now been achieved, but when he was growing up, as many black Africans before him had done, Nelson Mandela experienced the way black people were unfairly treated. They had to live separately from the white people. They had the worst jobs, the worst houses, the worst education and the worst health care and, because they could not vote, they could do nothing about it through the government. Nelson Mandela joined, and eventually led, the long, hard fight to bring about change.

One of the most important rights, which was won by those people led by Nelson Mandela, was the right for every person to vote. This marked the beginning of a new period in the history of South Africa. There are still many inequalities for people living there and it will take many years to bring freedom from fear and poverty but a new country has been born where there is hope for the future and a commitment to freedom and equality for everyone.

There are many things to be learned from the history of South Africa. One of these is in the example of how Nelson Mandela led the struggle for freedom. While there are some things he has been criticised for, throughout his twenty-seven years in prison he did not lose his hope

for freedom in the future nor his belief in the potential for goodness in all people. In the face of hardship, torture, brutality and disappointment he never gave up and he endeavoured to protest with dignity, politeness and respect against the way in which he was being so badly treated.

He kept on talking to those who opposed and imprisoned him, not in an unkind way, but fairly and honestly.

Although he believed that he and some of his friends did not deserve to be in prison, he did not allow this injustice to make him bitter or let the evil that he faced make him evil too. Nelson Mandela’s actions set an example to many of his fellow prisoners as well as inspiring other people in South Africa and beyond. His manner enabled him to develop positive relationships instead of being hostile and causing a break down in negotiations. It is told how he befriended some of the prison officers and how one of them was invited to his inauguration when he became president. Through the way in which he behaved, which showed his values and beliefs, people came to respect and trust him even if they did not agree with everything he said or did. In his book about his life Nelson Mandela says this:

“I always knew that deep down in every human heart there was mercy and generosity. No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite. Even in the grimmest times in prison, when my comrades and I were pushed to our limits, I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to reassure me and keep me going. Man’s goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.”

In a few moments of quiet take time to think about these words and think about your ideas of goodness.

When have you seen goodness in others?

New Year for Trees

An old man was planting a tree. It was a struggle to bend over the spade and even more difficult to find the strength to dig out the soil, although it was very dry and dusty. It took him a long time before the hole was deep enough and wide enough for the young carob tree. Eventually he put down his spade, stretched his arms, straightened his back as much as he could and turned to the tree. It was slender and light to lift. The old man gently and lovingly lowered the sapling into the hole he had prepared for it and began to move some of the soil around its roots.

As he was bending over his new tree he heard someone laughing. It was a traveller passing by.

“Well, old man, you’re very old to be planting a tree!” the traveller called out. “How old are you?”

“Seventy years old” the old man replied.

“And how long will it take for that tree to bear fruit?” asked the traveller.

“Oh probably seventy years or more” answered the old man.

“Do you really expect to live to eat the fruit of your new tree?” the traveller scoffed.

“Of course not,” replied the old man, “but the world was fruitful when I was born, so now I am planting for future generations.”

The old man was Jewish and his story is told in the Talmud, a book of ancient Jewish stories. It is remembered every year around February time when, in the Hebrew month of Shevat, Spring begins in Israel. This is the time to celebrate trees.

Jews believe that no tree should have its fruit eaten for the first three years of its life. In its fourth year, its fruit should be given as a gift to God and then the following year it can be harvested. In order to count the years of a tree’s life, the 15th day of Shevat is celebrated as the birthday of all trees, a new year for trees. Jews believe that in showing their love and respect for trees, they are expressing their love for their country, Israel, and investing in its future and the future of humanity.

Oh God, Help Us!

This is a true story of a journey that began just after Christmas in 2000. It started off as just another aeroplane flight. People were making their way across the world to greet family, to celebrate, to work, to get on with busy lives. Food had been served and people were moving around the plane. They were talking with friends, laughing with family, some catching up with work after the Christmas break, some still relaxing, some sleeping.

No one gave much thought to a man who moved restlessly in his seat. Cabin staff watched a little warily but when he made his way towards the flight deck no one stopped him. It was only as he lunged towards the captain and co-pilot that those around began to realise what was happening. He was trying to crash the plane. As he lashed out at the controls and the pilot, the plane suddenly went into a steep dive.

The horror had begun. People and objects were thrown around the cabin as the plane began an almost vertical descent. People were screaming in terror, clinging to each other, desperately trying to comfort children and to offer them what little reassurance they could. On the flight deck those passengers who could, struggled to help the captain as he battled against his violent assailant, fighting not just for his own life but to save the aircraft and all on board. Other flight crew dragged themselves across the plunging craft trying to calm passengers and reach the captain. One passenger recalled afterwards that all they could do was pray. People were calling out to God to help them, to save the plane, drawing on all they held sacred and dear in what felt like their last moments of life.

In the bedlam of the flight deck finally the man was overpowered. He was dragged away and restrained by crew. He was a sick and troubled man. Meanwhile the two pilots had another battle on their hands. With literally seconds to spare, they managed to pull the plane out of its near fatal dive. They had come too close to a dreadful tragedy. Their immense skill and the bravery of those involved had brought the plane back from the brink of disaster. As the passengers clung to each other in relief, some said they would never see their lives in the same way. They praised those who had helped save them. Some said God had heard their prayers and their survival was a miracle.

What do you think?

Paul's Letter of Love

About fifty years or so after Jesus died, a small but growing number of people were meeting together in each other's homes to worship God. They were citizens of the great Greek City of Corinth, capital of the Roman province of Achaia. This was a busy and important city where there was a lot of trade and many wealthy merchants. Most were too busy to worry about the new religion that was growing in popularity amongst people from all walks of life, but the Romans, who ruled at the time, certainly were worried. The authorities had not forgotten the trouble they had had with ordinary people when the troublemaker Jesus of Nazareth had been executed in Jerusalem and even though it was a lifetime ago and half a world away, the Romans were taking no chances.

This new group, 'Followers of the Way' they called themselves, needed to be wiped out so that they would not be any more of a nuisance. In Corinth there were some Jews but most people did not take religion seriously and that was how the Romans liked it.

The Christians had to be extremely careful. They met in secret; they communicated with one another through secret signs; they dared not let any stranger know who they were; they lived in fear yet were committed to remembering Jesus.

There was one man who understood because once he had persecuted Christians. That was until he had a mind-blowing experience one day on the road to Damascus when Jesus changed his life forever. After that, he never went back to hunting Christians to kill them. Instead, he devoted his life to helping and encouraging them in their small groups in countries all around the Mediterranean Sea. His name was Paul.

He had been to Corinth and stayed for a year and a half to help set up the first 'church' there. The people couldn't have a building like Christians do today because it was too dangerous but nevertheless, they called themselves a church and met together regularly in each others' homes. While Paul was with them, they felt strong and full of courage. It was easy to see how they should behave because Paul was a born leader and he told them what to do. But when he left them to go to another city across the Aegean Sea called Ephesus, they missed him badly. They began gradually to lose their way. They forgot some of the really important things Paul had taught them. They argued and some people even began to suggest that what Paul had said no longer mattered. The situation became very tense as divisions split the church. New leaders emerged and some people followed one and others did what another said and they began to bicker, all forgetting the teaching of Jesus whom they were supposed to be following!

Paul was horrified when he heard what was happening. He was busy establishing another church in Ephesus so he was not able to catch a ship back to Corinth. Instead, he began to write letters to the Corinthians.

What do you think he wrote to them about?

Paul's Story

Paul Oppenheimer is one of the Holocaust survivors who regularly tells his story to children and adults on their visits to Beth Shalom. He is pleased to give his time to sharing his experiences with people like us who have no idea what those experiences were really like. He has written his life story in his autobiography called *From Belsen to Buckingham Palace*.

We all know where Buckingham Palace is and it comes into Paul's story because in 1990 he was honoured by the Queen when he was awarded an MBE. Belsen is as different from Buckingham Palace as it is possible to get. It was a concentration camp, a prison of the most awful kind, where Paul was sent during the Second World War. He was imprisoned, not because he had done anything wrong, but because he is Jewish.

Paul was born in 1928 in Berlin in Germany. His brother, Rudi, is three years younger. The boys lived with their parents, went to school, visited their grandparents; their lives were similar to the lives of the other children in their neighbourhood. But they were Jewish and although it made very little difference at first, in 1933 when Paul was five years old, Jews began to be very badly treated. Laws were passed preventing Jewish doctors and teachers from working. Jews were considered to be inferior to – that means not as good as – German citizens and the hatred grew. Jews were attacked, Jewish books were burned in the street and there were huge military rallies where the speakers blamed the Jews for all that was going wrong.

In 1936, Paul's parents decided it was not safe to stay in Berlin so they wrote to Paul's uncle in London and on 24th March 1936, Paul left with his mother and brother for what was described to the boys as a 'holiday'. Their father stayed in Germany.

Paul loved and admired his Uncle Rudi, so staying with him in London was great fun. The most significant thing to happen during that sixth

month stay, however, was the birth of the boys' little sister, Eve. Her British nationality was to be a crucial factor in years to come and probably saved Paul's life.

While the family was in London, Paul's father had got a new job in Amsterdam, so in September, on Paul's 8th birthday, they travelled to Holland to join him. Paul remembers these years as some of the best of his childhood. He went to school, which he loved and learned to speak Dutch.

All was well until 10th May 1940 when, without warning, the Germans invaded Holland. The war between England and Germany had already started but Paul's parents had hoped they would be safe in Holland. It was not to be. Tomorrow we'll hear why.

In Holland, it seemed as though Paul and his family lived an ordinary life although new anti-Jewish laws were beginning to make life difficult, as they had in Berlin. Their telephone was cut off and they were not allowed to keep a wireless set. Jews were not permitted in parks, libraries or theatres. They could not mix with non-Jewish people anywhere.

The family was living in a small flat in Amsterdam because that was the city where all Jewish people had to live. Gradually, during 1942, life became more and more difficult. Every Jewish person had to wear on their clothes the Jewish star, a piece of yellow cloth with the black Star of David printed on it, their money and possessions were taken from them; they were not allowed out after 8pm; they were not permitted to visit the homes of their Dutch friends and, eventually, they started to disappear as they were forcibly taken away from their homes to camps in other countries. Paul remembers going into school each morning, to see who, among the children and the teachers, was missing, having been taken away in the night. Sometimes the people who disappeared had gone into hiding in an attempt to escape being sent away.

Paul's sister Eve did not have to wear the star because she was a British Citizen. As a little girl of 6, she used to go to do the family's shopping because by the time the Jews could shop, almost all the food had gone.

Eventually, in June 1943, Paul and his family were forced from their home by soldiers, early one Sunday morning and told to assemble at the top of the street. They had clear instructions about what to take. Each of them carried a suitcase, labelled with his or her name, date of birth and the country, Holland. They were taken by tram to the railway station. They knew they were being taken to a camp, but none of them knew what it would be like.

Paul and his family were taken to Westerbork, a camp in the north east of Holland, where they were registered. Paul, now 14 years old, and his father were sent to the mens' barracks, Paul's mother with Eve and Rudi to Barracks 57. There were hundreds of people in each of the barracks and although the conditions were cramped and there was no privacy, there were toilet facilities and food. Paul still has his *Badekarte*, showing his bath time was 3pm every Friday.

The worst time of the week was Monday evening when a train with cattle trucks came into the camp to take away about a thousand people. Everyone knew the next camp would be worse but no one knew how much worse; so everyone listened desperately anxiously for their name to be read out on the Monday evening list and breathed a sigh of relief if it wasn't. On 31st January 1944, the Oppenheimer family's names were all read out and on Tuesday morning they were put on the train.

The train journey took Paul and his family back into Germany. It took them to Bergen-Belsen. Around the camp, the prison, were several rows of barbed wire and lookout towers manned by armed soldiers. More soldiers, with fierce guard dogs, patrolled the whole area.

The Oppenheimers were 'exchange' Jews because of Eve's British nationality. They were going to be exchanged for German prisoners of war in Britain, so they were treated better than those people who were going to be killed. They were kept apart from them. Even so, life was hard. Every day all the prisoners had to line up very early to be counted, which meant standing for hours in the rain and the cold, sometimes all day. Food was meagre and the work hard. In spite of all the difficulties, the Jews managed to pray regularly and celebrate their festivals. It was here that Paul learned to read Hebrew and sing and recite traditional prayers.

The prisoners lived with infestations of lice and fleas, responsible for the typhus epidemic that killed many people. There was no medical care. In January 1945, Paul's mother died, leaving Eve alone in the women's barracks. Two months later, their father died, leaving them orphans. It was already the end of the war, and just one month later, the British Army arrived to liberate the camp.

During those last few weeks, Paul and Rudi had to fend for themselves. Hundreds of people died every day. Just before the British soldiers arrived, the guards hustled Paul with other 'exchange' Jews on to a train to try to keep them prisoners in order to negotiate the release of German prisoners. Paul and the others were hostages. They were heavily guarded. The train moved only at night and just ahead of the British troops. The passengers found food where they could when the train was stationary. They became a community, always returning to the train, unaware of what was happening around them and always wondering what lay ahead.

The end of the journey came suddenly. After a fortnight, one morning the guards were no longer on the train. There were Russian soldiers around them instead. They were liberated, but freedom was not easy, especially without parents. Both Paul and Rudi developed typhus but recovered in hospital. By chance, in the confusion after the war, the brothers were reunited with Eve and the three of them were taken back

to Holland where friends of their parents looked after them all. They even went back to school.

In November 1945, with papers in order, the boys arrived in England to join their sister who had come to live with their uncle and aunt a couple of months earlier. Uncle Rudi and Auntie Lotte became their stand-in parents and with their cousins, Peter and Ruth, Paul and his brother and sister began to experience life in a family again.

Paul tells his story in a matter-of-fact way. It was simply what happened. Like other Holocaust survivors who tell their story at Beth Shalom, he is determined that it will not be forgotten but, more importantly, will never happen to anyone else, of any age.

It's our duty to listen and remember. We must make sure nothing like Paul's story ever happens again.

How can we do that?

Paying the Price

This story took place in South America in a country called El Salvador. It is a country where most people are very poor and only a few people are wealthy. The wealthy people own most of the land and because they are rich and powerful they rule the country. There are hardly any schools for those who are poor so the majority of people can't read or write. There are very few ways in which the poor can change the way they live and most of the people who are wealthy don't care that so many people in their country are living in poverty. At the time this story took place many people had been turned off their land, their homes burned and they were left with nothing. Thousands of people disappeared and their families didn't know where they had gone. Hundreds were killed. So many people lived their lives in poverty, fear and despair.

It was in this land that Oscar Romero was a priest. He worked hard teaching people, rich and poor alike, about God and the teachings of Jesus. Time came when he was chosen to be archbishop, the leader of the Christian Church in San Salvador, the capital city. Some other priests were disappointed that Oscar Romero was chosen. They felt that as he had been chosen by the wealthy people, he would not do enough for those who had so little.

However, Oscar Romero surprised them all. Almost immediately he began to speak out for the poor and suffering. Within a month he had become the people's leader. He said they should all be treated fairly, given land and opportunities to work freely and a chance to be educated. He taught the people about Jesus and tried to give them hope in difficult times. Oscar Romero often spoke on the radio through a church radio station, not just to people in the city but reaching out to people across the country. People loved to hear him preach. They were inspired by his faith, and by his teaching that God's love was for all people.

He told them that Jesus cared particularly for those who were poor and oppressed, and that what was happening to them was unfair and wrong. Often when he taught in churches he would be interrupted by people clapping and cheering. As they listened to him and saw how he behaved with consideration and love for the poorest and the weakest and the most downtrodden, so their faith grew stronger. No one as important as this man, the archbishop, had ever spoken up for them before.

As Oscar Romero and the priests who worked with him became stronger in their criticism of those in power, and their support from the people began to grow, so their lives became dangerous. A large number of priests were killed. No matter how hard the archbishop tried to find out who had shot them, the police would not really help him. Oscar Romero himself was a target for the murderers. Letters were sent to him saying that if he didn't stop what he was doing and saying, he would be killed too. The radio station which broadcast his teaching

was destroyed by a bomb and another bomb was discovered in a suitcase in the cathedral where Archbishop Romero was due to speak.

Despite all this Oscar Romero continued his work with even greater energy and commitment. He believed that God was with him in all he did and he was prepared to sacrifice his life so that God's work could be done and the people helped. He told the people that they were not alone in their suffering, that Jesus suffered with them and that they could be strong in their faith.

On the evening of 24 March 1980, when he had been archbishop for only three years, Oscar Romero was saying a simple mass in the chapel of the hospital run by nuns at his home. A mass is a time of worship when Christian people remember Jesus' teaching. They remember how he died and express their love for him. They use bread and wine to remind themselves of Jesus' death and his love for them.

Oscar held up a small piece of bread and broke it to share it, praying that this would nourish and strengthen all the people in their hearts. As he did so, a shot rang out. He fell to the ground, blood spreading across his purple and white clothing. He died a few minutes later in hospital. All those who loved him were devastated by his death but were determined to continue with his work and overcome those evil people who had killed him.

Although it may seem that evil has triumphed in the story of Oscar Romero and the stories of other people like him who are killed for what they believe, the goodness that is shown in their lives, lives on. They are determined not to turn away from that which is good despite the threats made to them. Many people today continue with the work for the poor that Oscar Romero began in San Salvador and are inspired by the things that he taught and by how he lived his life. In countries throughout the world Oscar Romero is celebrated for his love and devotion to the poor and for his faith and courage in the face of evil.

Pentecost

Imagine you are afraid, really afraid. Frightened for your life. Scared of the knock at the door...

Imagine you are huddled in a small room with your friends, listening, whispering...

Imagine someone you loved and respected, a real friend, your leader, has been killed by the authorities and now they are after you...

Imagine going over and over the strange and frightening things that have happened to you all in the past few weeks...

Imagine how jumpy you are and how much you need all your friends...

Listen to the whispering...

"I'll never forget watching Jesus die."

"But he said he'd never leave us. He came back, didn't he? Don't forget we saw him with our own eyes."

"Yes, but now he's gone and we're on our own."

"No we're not, he promised his spirit would be with us always."

Imagine the crowds outside, gathering to celebrate the festival. Imagine you can hear their noise... listen...

Suddenly, there is an even greater noise, like a rushing wind. It whooshes in and swishes around you all. Imagine you can feel its power. And then, as if that isn't enough, it's almost as though there are tongues of fire flickering over each one of you, over your heads.

Just as quickly as they appeared, the flames are gone. But there is no time to wonder because it is inside you, firing you up, making you all feel you can do anything.

Imagine you suddenly feel able to go out, with Peter ahead of you and Jesus in your heart, to face the crowds, to tell them about Jesus and his message, to take on the world.

This is what Luke says it was like on the first Pentecost in his book called *The Acts of the Apostles* in the New Testament section of the Bible. Christians have celebrated Pentecost or Whitsunday ever since as the birthday of the Church. That was when Jesus' friends began to tell everyone what Jesus meant to them. They believed he had sent his Spirit to be with them as he had promised, to empower them and fire them up. This was the beginning of the Church.

What questions does this story bring into your mind?

Peter, The Rock

Simon had been a fisherman until he met Jesus. On that day his life changed for ever. Jesus said simply "Follow me" and that is what Simon did although it was certainly not easy. Simon became one of Jesus' particular friends, the disciples. Jesus gave him a new name. He recognised Simon's strengths, as well as his weaknesses, and had a role for him to play in God's work. Simon became known as Peter, which means 'rock', for, Jesus said, Peter was to be the rock upon which the Church would be built.

Peter spent most of the following three years with Jesus, helping him and learning about God from him. Peter knew that there were people who did not like Jesus and he became afraid for Jesus. When Jesus and his disciples went to Jerusalem they were all in danger. Jesus and his friends were sharing a meal together there and Jesus told them that he knew of the danger and that he may be killed.

"I will never leave you," said Peter.

Jesus turned to his dear friend and smiled sadly. "Before the cock crows twice you will have denied me three times." Peter didn't believe him.

"But I would die for you," Peter protested.

Not long after that Jesus was arrested by soldiers and taken away. Most of Jesus' friends fled but Peter and one other disciple followed the soldiers at a safe distance. Peter wanted to help Jesus but he was so frightened. They came to the High Priest's house and waited to see what would happen. A girl standing near them turned to Peter and said,

"Aren't you one of Jesus' friends?"

"No, no!" said Peter and moved away. Some servants from the house were gathered round a fire they had lit to warm themselves.

"You're one of those Jesus men," they said.

"I am not!" Peter replied. But another man persisted.

"Yes! I saw you with him in the garden."

"No!" shouted Peter, in anger and fear. Everyone turned to look at him and then Peter heard a cock crowing twice and he remembered Jesus' words.

He was devastated. Peter wept bitterly to think that he had let Jesus down when he needed him most, that through his fear and weakness he had betrayed Jesus. And Jesus had told him it would happen. How could he have been so weak?

When Jesus was crucified Peter watched in horror. He could not run away. He had to be there although he felt his heart would break. He didn't think he had the strength to carry on for he could not forgive himself.

Peter, The Sequel

Two days after that terrible day when Jesus was crucified, something happened that began to change Peter. Although he knew he had seen Jesus die, suddenly there was Jesus in front of him.

“Peace be with you,” Jesus said. Peter could see what was happening but he couldn't believe it; he couldn't understand. Jesus appeared to his disciples and other people several more times. Each time he reassured them that they were not alone and that God loved them.

One day Peter was out fishing in his boat. He and his friends had caught nothing and were about to give up when they heard a voice coming from the shore telling them to throw their nets over the other side of the boat. They were rather taken aback by these instructions from a stranger but found themselves doing just as he said. To their amazement their nets were filled with fish. Then Peter knew the stranger on the shore was Jesus. In his joy he leapt from the boat and waded ashore to Jesus. As they all shared the fish for breakfast Jesus spoke to Peter on his own.

“Do you love me?” Jesus asked Peter.

“Yes, you know I do,” replied Peter.

Jesus asked him this three times. Peter became upset. He knew he had let Jesus down. He would have done anything for it to have been different. He still loved Jesus and wanted Jesus to know that and forgive him, then Peter could begin to forgive himself. Every time Peter answered Jesus, Jesus simply replied “Feed my sheep.”

That may sound like an odd thing to say but when Peter thought about it he reflected upon how Jesus had seen himself as a shepherd and all the people as sheep whom he cared for. He had told them God loved them just as a shepherd cares for his sheep. Peter began to realise that now Jesus wanted him to care for the people and to begin a new life

and a new job. Peter had felt crushed by the way he had treated Jesus and Jesus' awful death but now he began to feel better about himself. He had learnt from his mistakes and became a stronger person, more able to cope with the difficult situations and choices he was to face.

There are many stories in the Bible of the amazing and challenging things that happened to Peter. His enthusiasm for Jesus' teaching and his strong belief in God helped him to be a leader and the other disciples turned to him for guidance and help. He did indeed become the ‘rock’ upon which the Church was built. At that time it did not mean actually constructing a building, but Peter brought people together to live and worship and to share their ideas about God. He taught them, cared for them and encouraged them to care for each other and help people who were in trouble or difficulty. This group became known as the Church. As Peter travelled around, so more and more of these groups came together and met to worship in different places. Each group was called a church but also all those people who shared their ideas about God and Jesus felt themselves to be part of one big group or Church that spread throughout many countries.

Peter went around Palestine, Turkey, Greece and Italy telling people about God, and Jesus' teaching. Some people listened and joined the ‘Followers of the Way’ as they were called. Others didn't like them at all and some times life was very difficult for Peter and his friends.

One story that is told about Peter shows how strong he had become and how determined he was to do the job that Jesus had given him, to care for people, to teach them about God and to build up the church. Peter was staying in the city of Rome. One night a fire broke out and swept through the city, destroying everything in its path. No one could stop it and it lasted for six days and nights. Thousands of people were homeless. People wanted to know what had started the fire. Some people said it was the Emperor Nero who did rather strange things at times. In fact he had not been in the city at the time, but he didn't like people saying these things so he decided someone else should take the blame. He decided that he would blame and punish the Christians. They were the people who belonged to the Church that Peter had

started. For Nero their ideas about God and Jesus were ridiculous and he didn't like the way they were getting people's attention. Nero got his soldiers to capture all the Christians they could find and he had many of them tortured and killed. Some of Nero's friends plotted how they could kill Peter. Without telling them, their wives, who had recently become Christians in secret, overheard them and went to warn Peter.

"I can't just run away," said Peter.

"But if you escape you will be able to go on teaching people about God and doing the task Jesus set you," his friends told him.

With some reluctance Peter agreed to leave the city. But he hadn't gone far when he saw a man coming towards him. As the man came closer Peter recognised him. It was Jesus.

"Lord where are you going?" Peter asked him in amazement.

"Peter, I am going to Rome, to be crucified again."

Peter turned back and looked at the damaged city. When he turned back to Jesus the vision had vanished, but Peter knew what he must do. He went back to his friends in Rome and told them that he would go on with his work there. Peter said that if he was arrested and killed then they must continue the work. Soon after that four soldiers came and dragged Peter away. He was tried for preaching against the Roman gods and found guilty. He was sentenced to death. He was to die in the same way as his greatest friend; he was to be crucified, to be hung on a cross. This was a common way of executing people in Roman times.

When Peter was brought from prison to die he asked if he could be killed with the cross upside-down as he was not good enough to die in the same way that Jesus did. Peter's friends watched and wept as Peter died in agony on his cross. They took his body and buried it there in Rome. Many years later another Emperor, Constantine, built a wonderful Cathedral over the grave, which is there now and has thousands of visitors each year. People come to look at the beautiful

building, to pray and to remember Peter and his teachings. For many Christians, the story of Peter reminds them that God always loves them even when they are weak and that through this love they can learn to be strong.

Play in the Park?

Zindzi watched as her little brother played in the dirt track outside their home. It seemed that he was dirty as soon as he got up in the morning even though Zindzi washed him carefully before her Mum and Dad came home from work each night. She had to carry a kettle of water to boil and then a bowlful of cold water from the tap that they shared with seven other families. This was one of the jobs she liked the least. Quite often she had fun playing with her little brother and sister when her parents were at work. Her grandmother kept a beady eye on them and busied herself around the house trying to keep it clean and organised.

There was little space as Zindzi's Aunt and three uncles lived with them too. Zindzi could only dream of having a space to herself and somewhere for her precious doll to be kept away from mischievous hands. Sometimes Zindzi woke up before her brother and sister and shared some precious peace with her Mum and Dad before they set off for work. Sometimes they took the bus, or if they wanted to save money they would walk the six miles into the town of Alexandra where they worked. Zindzi's Dad worked in a garage and her Mum worked as a lady's maid looking after a rich lady who had what seemed to Zindzi like a vast wardrobe of clothes. Her mum told her all about them and Zindzi dreamed of having a seemingly endless choice of things to wear instead of her three dresses, two for every day and one for church on Sundays.

Going to church was often the highlight of the week. Sometimes Zindzi would go to school for some days but most of the time she was

needed at home so it was good to meet up with her friends and play together on the tiny piece of grass outside the church. There wasn't much grass to play on elsewhere as the houses, or shanties as they were called, were all crammed together, each one housing several families.

There never seemed to be enough room to go round, or enough food. Zindzi's little brother in particular was often crying because he wanted more to eat. However people were generally very good at sharing what they had and trying to help each other find what they needed. The older boys in some of the families often went off to the nearby dump and searched through the smelly rubbish to see what treasures came from the big houses in the towns. When it was very hot the smell seemed to creep into every home.

Another exciting thing that Zindzi looked forward to was on the very rare occasions when her Mum and Dad did not have to go to work and then they would sometimes catch the bus into the town and go to the park.

There were several parks in the town but Zindzi could only go into a small part of one of them. All the other places were for white people. Zindzi and her family had black skin and so in the country where they lived there were many places they could not go to. They could only travel on particular buses, shop at particular stores, sit on particular seats, go to particular schools, see particular doctors or be treated in separate parts of the hospital.

When she went to the park, Zindzi would look through the fence at the white children. What made them so different? Why were they so special? How come there were 'whites only' places for them that seemed better and brighter and cleaner and bigger? Zindzi knew that her Dad had a few ideas about this, ideas that got him into trouble. He and her uncle had been stopped by the police and taken to the police station several times. Zindzi's Mum got very frightened when this happened and afterwards her Dad had to stay at home for a while.

There were so many things like that that Zindzi did not understand. She only knew that she loved green grass and the great trees that grew in the park and sometimes wished that when she and her friends played there together with her brother and sister they could talk to the children on the other side of the fence and find out about them and then maybe they could play too.

Praying God's Goodness

A long time ago, there was a drought in the land of Israel. No rain had fallen for months and the land was dusty. The crops withered and animals died. The people were thirsty too.

The King's wife thought she knew the answer. She came from a country where many gods were worshipped and she put up lots of statues to these gods because they made her feel at home. She was a wicked queen and she was doing her best to make her husband, King Ahab, into a bad king.

But back to the drought. There was a real need for rain. Queen Jezebel brought in her favourite priests and together they prayed to Baal, the Rain God. Nothing happened, except the queen got very angry and looked for a few more Jews to kill.

The story tells how God spoke to his prophet in Israel at the time, a man called Elijah. He sent Elijah to the king to tell him God was angry with him. God was going to show the king who was God in Israel.

Elijah told the king to bring four hundred of the priests of Baal to the holy mountain. He said they would see whose God was good to them. So an altar was set up by the priests and an animal's body was laid on it as a sacrifice. The priests believed Baal would light the fire for the sacrifice himself but no matter how much they chanted and danced, nothing happened.

Then Elijah stepped forward. He poured water all over the altar and the animal. Three times it was soaked.

“Oh Lord, I have done what you commanded,” Elijah prayed, “now show the people that you are the God of Israel.” The wet pile suddenly burst into flames and the people praised God.

From the top of the mountain, Elijah looked out over the sea and saw a cloud coming towards them. Then he knew it was going to rain. God was going to show his goodness to them again.

Prince Kabir

Prince Kabir was the king’s youngest son. He had two older brothers, neither of whom was as gentle, as warm-hearted or as wise as he was. His father wanted Kabir to be king after him because he knew he would be a good king. The king felt that his youngest son would be kind and think first about the people in the kingdom. He was not sure either of his other sons would do that; they were selfish, thinking only of themselves. But the king knew that if he decreed that Kabir was to be king, there would be problems with the others. It had to be fair. He had to set a task for his sons to prove themselves.

The king decided on a simple problem. In his palace, there was a huge dark cellar, which had in it, three enormous rooms. The king allocated a room to each of his sons and instructed them to fill it, somehow. He gave each of them a very small amount of money, and the young men went away to think. The eldest son thought only for a moment. “Of course!” he exclaimed, “the cheapest thing I can buy is a large quantity of sand. I will find the best deal I can and get the room filled with it!” So he bought one hundred bags of sand. He would have liked more, but the merchant said he would have to go himself to get it from the desert and that was too far, the prince felt. He had a hard enough job getting it carried into the palace as it was and he only

found help because the men he told to carry it were too frightened to refuse. The prince watched the sacks of sand being carried into his dark, dank room and emptied. But when all the sand from the hundred sacks had been tipped out, it did not even come over his ankles. He was quite cross but he could not think how either of his younger brothers could do any better.

Meanwhile, the king’s middle son had decided to fill his room with rice. It was easily available and quite cheap. But he could only afford to buy fifty bags with his allowance so, of course, once the sacks had been emptied and the rice piled up in a corner, it came nowhere near to filling the room. And what a waste when there were people who would have been glad to eat it.

Prince Kabir thought for a long time. He watched his brothers organising their purchases and supervising the emptying of sacks in their rooms. He knew what he would do. He went to the market and bought just a handful of candles. He didn’t even spend all the money his father had given him.

When the time came for the king to judge his sons’ efforts, he went down to inspect their rooms. He waded through the sand in one room and peered into the next to see the small mountain of rice in the corner. No, his two elder sons had failed to fill their rooms. What had his youngest son managed to achieve, the king wondered?

He was disappointed when he walked into the third room. He could see nothing at all, no attempt to fill the room with anything. Then he saw a small flicker of light, then another, as one after the other, Kabir lit his candles. Soon the dim, dreary room was alive with light. Kabir had done it; he had filled his room. He had passed his father’s test.

He became known as the Enlightened Prince and the title stayed with him throughout his long reign as king. It seemed like an appropriate title for him to have.

Sajida's Lost Treasure

Sajida squatted on the floor of her new bedroom, surrounded by empty boxes and toys of all shapes and sizes. There was also her pink writing set and her box of coloured pencils and felts. They were all important and she was glad to have them out again because it seemed as though they had been packed for ages. But as she rummaged at the bottom of the last box, her heart sank. It wasn't here. And this box had been her last hope. There was a hole at the bottom of this box, worn where it had caught on something in the furniture van, she supposed. It was just possible that if her stone had been in this box it could have dropped out through that hole.

It wasn't just any old stone she was looking for. It was her favourite, the smoothest grey and white stone with a hollow in it that she rubbed her thumb around. It just fitted in the palm of her hand and she had held it to go to sleep for as long as she could remember. How comforting it was to hold it and touch its cool whiteness with the edge of her finger as she tucked her thumb in her mouth. She still needed to do that sometimes, especially when she was very tired or upset. She was beginning to be upset now because she just couldn't find it, her precious stone. She should have taken more care to notice which of her boxes she had dropped it into that morning when she got up for the last time in the old house. But there was so much going on it was so exciting. It was all very well moaning, but it didn't bring her stone back.

She's lost it before of course. It often rolled down the bed during the night and sometimes she woke up lying on it! Once, when she was staying at Granny's, it had somehow wriggled down behind the high old bed and she had to persuade Grandpa to move the mattress to let her find it. But she had always found it before and now....Sajida felt a tear start to squeeze into her eye and she stood up and rubbed her hand over her eyes. Perhaps someone might have seen it....maybe it was in the hall or on the stairs, just waiting to be picked up.

As Sajida got to the top of the stairs she heard voices.

Her mother was talking to someone at the front door. Sajida ran down stairs. She stopped in the hall, one foot still on the bottom of the stair. Next to the woman in the doorway was a little girl with short, brown hair. She was playing with a yo yo and humming to herself. Sajida heard her mother say how kind it was to invite them round and she could do with a cup of tea. The kettle was still packed in a box somewhere.

The girls looked at each other as Sajida stepped forward to stand closer to her mother.

"I should think these two girls are about the same age," the woman in the doorway said. "It will be so lovely for Annie to have someone of her own age next door to play with. We'll look forward to seeing you in a little while."

The thought of going next door to meet Annie properly took Sajida's mind off her stone. She stood in the kitchen, first on one foot and then the other, as she watched her mother unwrapping cups and glasses and hanging them under the cupboard. Eventually her mother said, "Come on then. I can see you're dying to go and I can do with a cup of tea!"

Annie's house was just like Sajida's but the other way round. Even so, it looked very different. Sajida sat on the settee next to her mother, feeling rather shy and uncertain, watching Annie on the big chair opposite swinging her legs. When the girls had finished their lemonade, Annie's mother suggested Annie might take Sajida up to see her bedroom. Sajida looked at her mother who smiled and nodded. Annie's bedroom was at the front of the house, just like Sajida's but she shared it with her sister.

"This is my bed here," said Annie. Sajida looked round. She couldn't believe her eyes. There on the pale green cover, in front of the line of soft toys was her stone, her beloved stone.

“Oh where did you find it?” exclaimed Sajida. “Where was it?”

Annie was astonished. It was just a stone, although she had thought it was especially smooth as she picked it up. She explained she’d found it on the path outside Sajida’s house when she had come round with her mother. She had no idea it was special. It must have dropped out of that box with the hole, thought Sajida, as she clasped it tightly, loving the familiar feel of the stone in her hand. Her thumb found the slight hollow as Sajida ran downstairs to her mother, calling as she went.

Everyone was delighted. The grown ups thought it was a great coincidence. The girls just laughed. Perhaps, Sajida reflected, as she lay in bed in her new bedroom that night, she had found a precious new treasure, someone to treasure perhaps. But the old treasure still felt so lovely in her hand as she dropped off to sleep.

Scholar’s Gold

The merchants gathered on the quay, ready to go aboard the ship that was to take them on a great voyage to sell their goods in foreign countries. They had all paid a great deal for the chance to sail. The ship was loaded with their merchandise, spices and jewels, precious metals, silks and fruit. There was an excited buzz among the crowd. They were going to make a lot of money.

Just as they were going up the gangplank, they were joined by a man in sombre clothes who carried nothing but a small bag. He said he was a scholar and he only carried his wisdom, which the merchants thought very strange.

However, they had little time to wonder about the stranger. Once out in the ocean, a storm blew up and the voyage ended in disaster. The ship sank and all the merchants lost everything.

The voyagers were rescued and taken to the city where the merchants had to beg for help. They had no money, nothing to sell and nowhere to live.

The scholar went straight to the synagogue where he began to teach. His wisdom quickly became well known and people came especially

to listen to him. When a ship came by weeks later and he had the chance to leave and go home, the people showered him with gifts so that he was able to buy a ticket for the homeward voyage. The merchants still had no money. They looked on despondently.

The scholar took pity on them and generously bought tickets for them too. Then they realised that what the scholar had was far more valuable than their goods would ever have been.

Simon Weston

It is 1982. England is at war with Argentina. The ‘Sir Galahad,’ one of England’s warships, is off the coast. Suddenly the ship is underfire. Argentinean planes are dropping bombs. The noise is tremendous; the ship’s sirens are deafening, the planes are flying low, there are explosions with huge flames. The ship is hit. Helicopters enter the scene, men are abandoning ship. The lifeboats try desperately to save as many as possible. Inside the ship Simon Weston has escaped in his mind but everywhere he goes is in flames. Everything he touches is red hot. Escape: he has to get out.

Simon Weston was one of the lucky ones. The Sir Galahad sank with 51 men killed and 47 injured - badly injured - one of whom was Simon. He was burnt all over his body particularly his face and his hands, and as he found himself in hospital his one thought was to save his eyes and his hands. What was going to happen to him? Who would want to know him now?

It took many months of painful operations and physiotherapy for Simon to ever begin to face the world again. His hair at the back of his head was clearly never going to grow again and his face, although much better still bore the deep scars of burns. The Army very early on told Simon he was unfit to continue to be a soldier, so Simon found himself at home in Wales, unemployed and falling into deeper and deeper depression. His mother found him difficult to live with; Simon was rude, wishing that he had died with his friends in the Sir Galahad.

He was at a complete loss as to what to do with his life. His burnt hands prevented him from getting a job and every time he looked in a mirror he was reminded of what had happened. His face was badly disfigured, almost unrecognisable.

Yet gradually Simon began to fight what he had become, a disfigured, disabled person. With the support of his family and friends he began to look around him and think of what he could do. Because of the television coverage, Simon had become quite a celebrity and because of his severe facial injuries he was recognised wherever he went. He began to realise he could use his disfigurement in order to benefit others.

With help, he set up his own charity called 'The Weston Spirit' and began to raise money. He took part in Marathon Runs, did parachute jumps, and all his activities were sponsored. As he was well known and people knew his story, he found generosity in many places. The money he raises now, amounting to 20 million pounds, goes directly to help teenagers who, like Simon once was, are unemployed or lack direction in their lives.

Simon has found his job, his purpose for living, and it is one that has come directly from his injuries. Instead of letting them beat him, instead of hiding away for the rest of his life Simon has taken hold of life and learned from his experience. His mother now says he is a better person for his experience, and Simon has said that getting burnt was one of the best things that ever happened to him. What a statement considering all he has been through! Simon admits it is true,

"Look at all the good that has come from being injured," he says.
 "Look at all the positive aspects of my life that have grown from it."

Simon had to climb and conquer a mountain he didn't know existed before he was injured.

Sir Isaac Newton

If you had met Isaac Newton when he was first at school you would never have guessed that he would become one of the greatest thinkers, mathematicians and scientists the world has ever known. Apart from his great interest in the world around him, Isaac did not seem particularly clever. It was not until he wanted to beat the school bully that he began to work really hard and his exceptional abilities began to show. Isaac was not a very popular boy and once said that his dearest friend was 'the truth'.

At home on his own, Isaac worked to make intricate working models, paddle boats powered by rats, a windmill driven by mice and an ingenious kite that carried a lamp to lead Isaac to school on dark mornings. When he left school Isaac went to university where he studied mathematics. He had a great fascination with the natural world. He used his mathematical training and began to describe the patterns and laws of nature in terms of mathematical principles. His mind was such that he seemed to organise his curiosity about things using numbers and he introduced a way of using numbers to describe science that is used throughout the world today.

One day, in the year of the great fire of London, he went to a fair. There he saw an unusually shaped piece of glass and he became fascinated at how the light passed through it, creating different colours. It was a shape that we now call a prism. Wanting to investigate further, Isaac bought it and took it back to his rooms at Trinity College in Cambridge, where he began to experiment with it. He found that if he made his room dark and then allowed just one beam of light from the window to pass through his special piece of glass, the white light from the window split into all the colours of the rainbow. He became fascinated by light and tried to find out all he could about it. He found that there were seven colours in light: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.

His conclusions from his work challenged the ideas held by other scientists of the time. Isaac was very angry that they refused to see the

truth in his theories. But these discoveries came to be used to explain how rainbows are formed. Isaac often challenged other people's ideas and would work diligently to try and solve the problems other theories raised so he could set out and explain what he saw to be the truth.

Throughout his life Isaac Newton became interested in and worked on many different ideas, sometimes mulling over an idea for years before returning to study it again. One of his most famous discoveries took place when he was staying at his mother's farm. One day he was sitting in an orchard, under an apple tree, when an apple fell on his head. Apart from giving him a bruise, this set him wondering if the force that pulled the apple down to the ground, also held the moon in position. He used his mathematical skills and his scientific knowledge about the earth and the moon to develop his theories about gravity.

Isaac Newton had studied the stars and their movements since he was a small boy. But the telescopes of the day did not always enable the user to see very clearly. As ever, Isaac's response to a problem was to work at it until he had an answer. He designed and built a new sort of telescope that enabled him to see the stars much more clearly and to study them. He developed and wrote about his ideas about time and space.

Isaac's curiosity led him to explore many other ideas and tackle the problems they raised in his mind. When he wrote about his great discoveries he said this: "I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been like a boy playing on the seashore ... now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than the ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before me."

What would you like to know the truth about?

St Aidan of Northumbria

A long time ago, a message came to the monks of Iona in Scotland, from the new King of Northumbria who had won the northern part of England from its previous king in a fierce battle. King Oswald was a Christian and he wanted someone to come over to his new kingdom to teach the people about Jesus.

The monks had heard how wild and uncivilised the people of Northumbria were, but they could not refuse, so they decided to send a monk called Eldric who was strong and forthright. He would be able to speak directly to rough people. But it did not work and after a few weeks Eldric returned, rather angry, to Iona.

"Those people are simply unteachable," he told the other monks. "I was firm with them but they would not listen to me and they certainly do not want to hear about Jesus. It was hopeless. They are wild and they just wouldn't learn. Stupid people!"

"Perhaps you were too firm with them, Eldric. Perhaps you need to be more gentle and loving." The words came from a softly spoken Irish monk called Aidan. Eldric looked astonished and laughed in disbelief, but the Abbot looked up and smiled.

"I think you may be right, Aidan," he said. "Your softer approach is what is needed. You will go to England and try again." The other monks nodded in agreement, all of them grateful that it was Aidan who was being sent to the wilds of northern England and not them. Aidan, for his part, was happy to go where he felt God wanted him to be. His duty was to obey the Abbot, in any case.

Aidan's approach was much more successful. He became a close friend of the king who gave him an island just off the Northumbrian coast as a base for his work. It was ideal, because at low tide he could walk to the mainland and at high tide he was cut off in peace and solitude for quiet prayer. The island of Lindisfarne later became the site of Aidan's

monastery, where he was joined by other monks from Iona to establish a new religious community.

Aidan won the people over by walking the whole of Oswald's kingdom, talking to everyone he met. He responded to their hostility with gentle words, calmly and patiently repeating his teaching about Jesus until everyone understood the message of the Gospel. He showed by example how to live a good life, treating others with kindness and respect and always helping those in need. He gave away everything he had, including his food which he always shared. Gradually the people learned to trust Aidan and to love him. He became their first bishop. His monks helped him to establish churches and to train English boys to become missionaries to the people of England.

Aidan was distressed when his friend, King Oswald was killed in battle and he feared no other king would be as good, but he found the new king, Oswin, just as supportive. Following Aidan's example, both kings gave away their personal riches to help the poor, although it must have been a hard lesson for them to learn. Long after Aidan's death in his monastery on Lindisfarne, the people of Northumbria remembered his message of Jesus' love and the gentle and loving way he had shared it with them.

St Patrick

'I am Patrick, a sinner, most unlearned, the least of all the faithful and utterly despised by many.'

Those words begin Patrick's story as he wrote it himself in his *Confession*. It is a kind of open letter, thanking God for the guidance and grace by which Patrick, who was bishop of Ireland, had lived his life. It was written for the Church in Ireland which Patrick had spent his life establishing. His story is rich with mystery and legend. He lived a long time ago.

Patrick was born around the end of the fourth century CE. No one knows exactly where, but it was in a village, probably in Wales. His father was a landowner and a Christian. It was still dangerous at that time to be a Christian. It was a dangerous world to live in anyway and when he was sixteen years old, Patrick was captured by a band of marauding Irish pirates. He was taken to Ireland as a slave and made to look after sheep for a chieftain called Milince.

Although Patrick says he did not know God at that time, he tells how God looked after him. More and more, as he tended sheep, he prayed. He says his spirit was moved and he prayed many times a day, sometimes as many as a hundred times in a single day and he felt no harm. God was protecting him. One night he had a strange dream when a voice told him to return to his home. It even explained exactly where the ship would be that would take him there, and sure enough, when he arrived in Wicklow, there was the boat.

His faith grew stronger and Patrick decided to give his life to God so he trained to be a priest. When he dreamed he heard the voice of the Irish calling him to return to them, he says he awoke, full of joy and, with God's blessing, went back to Ireland.

He travelled the length and breadth of the country for thirty years, enduring hardship and surviving numerous plots against him. He taught everyone he met about Jesus, baptising thousands and setting up churches and monasteries all over the country. Gradually Ireland became Christian, from the kings and chiefs to the lowliest peasants.

Although he was a bishop, Patrick lived in extreme danger but he never feared for his life because he put his trust absolutely in God. 'Daily' he writes, 'I expect murder, fraud, captivity or whatever it may be, but I fear none of these things because of the promises of heaven. I have cast myself into the hands of God Almighty, who rules everywhere!'

Patrick is remembered and loved all over Ireland for bringing the message of the Gospel to that land.

Strangers' World

On 12th October 1492, Christopher Columbus landed on the tiny island of Guanahani just off the shore of San Salvador. It was his first step into the 'New World'. The island was claimed by the Spanish who changed its people, the Taino, and wiped out their culture, their customs and their language.

This story is an imaginary reflection on the experience from the point of view of one of the Taino people.

*Perhaps you would like to stop and think hard about how it would feel to have your land taken over, to lose it to a different kind of people, to have to live in **a stranger's world**.*

I remember the day as if it were yesterday.

I heard the call from a long way away, if you could be far away on our little green island. I was under the trees looking for a sturdy trunk to make us a new canoe. I was concentrating but I heard the cry very clearly. It came, sharp on the breeze, from the direction of the shore. I could hear in the voice the pitch of excitement mingled with the strains of fear. And I recognised the shout. It was my son. So that was where he was. He had managed to avoid the tree expedition and was down on the beach. He would be collecting yet more shells in the hope of finding a really sharp one to cut the loops of cotton. He was a good boy really.

I clambered through the undergrowth, out to the edge of the tree line to a spot where I could look over the shore. Perhaps the boy had fallen. I needed to see him just to make sure. The iguanas played in the sunlight at my feet as I put up my head to shield my eyes from the sun, my gold armband dazzling me for a moment... and then I gasped.

What I saw amazed me, there were great tree trunk boats, like huge canoes with giant flaps catching the wind. They stretched into the

haze of the bay. It seemed that they were carried on the wind like clouds. As I watched, there were flurries of activity from the boats nearest the shore and then smaller canoes began to race into the shore.

Strangers like this deserved a feast. It was our custom. I rushed down the hillside towards the beach. I had already spotted my boy gazing, his toes curling in the sand and his eyes glued to the strange sight.

Before long, the strangers stood facing us. Many of my people had come, smiling openly and warmly to greet our guests, to make them feel welcome. Our chief stood in our midst.

The strangers were strange indeed. Their skin was pale, like the tops of angry waves and their bodies were covered in a bright shiny smoothness that returned the glare of the sun. Their hair sprouted on their faces as well as their heads and their mouths made odd sounds. They carried bright, flashing sticks above their heads and watched us with their dark eyes. They made noises, fast jumbled noises, to each other. We were silent, understanding nothing except the laughing. They seemed especially interested in our gold armbands and nose rings.

I was afraid. I stretched out my hand and pulled my boy closer to me. It would be bad not to welcome these strangers but I felt no sense of welcome for them. I hoped they would go back to their floating clouds bobbing about in the bay. I wanted them to take their strangeness away.

But they did not go. My people gave them coloured birds and cotton balls to show them we were pleased to greet them. They gave us long strings of beads and soft covers for the boys' heads and they laughed. We shared our food with them, the best fish caught that day. O how I wished they would go.

The next day, they did go. Back to their great canoes, floating in the bay. But they took with them ten of our boys. They took my boy. He

was excited, I could tell; he waved his arms at me from the little canoe as it left the shore and he disappeared into the distance.

I was right to be afraid. He never came back, my son. **They** did, many more of them and they stayed. It was all a long time ago but our little green island was never the same after that day.

There were many mothers like me who grew old without their sons. There were many mothers like me who lived out their years in a strangers' world.

Testing Friendship

This story is based on a traditional Buddhist story from the Jataka Tales. It is about true friendship.

The antelope, the tortoise and the woodpecker were very good friends. They lived in the forest and enjoyed each others' company, especially when they played together. But one day, disaster struck.

While there were down by the lake, refreshing themselves after a long game, antelope stepped into a trap. Snap! Clunk! Ahh! Antelope yelped in pain as the cruel teeth of the trap bit into his leg and he fell. Tortoise and woodpecker were horrified. They were always so careful when they came out of the forest to the lake to make sure they were safe and they were sure they had not been followed. But the man who hunted them had seen Antelope's tracks the day before and thought he would make a juicy meal.

Whatever could they do? The hunter would be back soon to see what he had caught. It was dangerous to stay around and Antelope told them to run away for their own safety. But they could not leave their friend.

Tortoise, who might have been slow but was clever, thought up a plan. He shared it with the others and immediately he and Woodpecker

sprang into action. All Antelope could do was watch and try not to cry because his leg hurt so much.

On Tortoise's instructions, Woodpecker flew up into a tree. From her perch, she could see right along the path and the minute she saw the man coming, she flew down to flap her wings right in his face to delay him. The hunter tried to grab her, but she was too fast for him. She flapped tirelessly in his face and managed to hold him up just enough because when he reached the lake, he found Antelope free from the trap and licking her wounded leg. Tortoise had chewed and gnawed right through the leather straps holding the metal jaws of the trap together.

The hunter was very angry and tried to catch Antelope who was much too quick for him, even with an injured leg. But Tortoise was not so lucky.

"Right!" bellowed the hunter. "I'll have you instead," and he grabbed poor tortoise and pushed him into a bag.

Now Antelope had to be a good friend. He ran by the man, limping and squealing but just out of reach, and the hunter began to follow thinking the animal was easy prey. Cleverly, the antelope led the hunter, twisting and turning, deep into the forest until he was lost.

Then Antelope ran back to release his friend while Woodpecker kept watch. They had to help each other home because, although they were not all injured, they were all out of breath!

The Black Moses

How do you think it would feel to be owned by someone ... not belong to someone like we all belong together, but actually be bought and sold like a possession, a piece of property? That was how it was for a slave. This is the story of a remarkable woman who knew exactly how that felt and devoted her life to the freedom of her people.

Harriet Tubman was born in Maryland in North America in 1820. Her parents were black slaves. As a baby, she was tied to her mother's back while her mother bent over in the back-aching work of harvesting cotton. As a child she worked in the tiny garden outside the family cabin, growing vegetables to add to the small amount of food their master gave them. Slaves were not paid, even for the hardest work.

Harriet hated being a slave and when she grew up she had a reputation for being difficult. She had a defiant attitude, never quite giving in to her masters, so she was put out into the fields to do the heavy work with the men, rather than work in the house as many of the other women did.

Harriet learned that things were different in the north of the country where slaves were not used in the factories as badly as they were on the farms in the south. She heard about people called 'abolitionists' who wanted to abolish, which means to stop, slavery. They had formed a secret network, called the Underground Railroad, to help slaves to escape to the north. It wasn't really a railway but it used the language of the trains: the runaways were 'passengers'; the safe houses were 'stations' and the people who ran the rescues were 'conductors'.

Harriet knew there was a lady not far away who helped black slaves and one day she ran away to find her. She went alone and with the help of Miss Parsons, she took the Underground Railroad north. It was a long and dangerous journey but several weeks later Harriet reached freedom in Pennsylvania where she got a job as a washerwoman and cook. She worked hard to earn as much money as she could to send back home to her family.

She was determined to help others escape from their captivity as slaves. She soon began travelling as a 'conductor' on the Underground Railroad, escorting members of her own family and many others north to safety. It was dangerous work and when a new law was passed in 1850 forcing the return of slaves from the northern states, she was forced to move into Canada. Harriet brought more than 300 slaves to freedom, travelling the journey, which was five hundred miles each way, countless times.

Harriet died in 1913 aged 93 years. She had seen the final abolition of slavery in 1863. She served as a nurse and a spy in the Civil War when she rescued more slaves. Finally she set up a home where she cared for sick and homeless black people. She always spoke up for the rights of her people. They called her the Black Moses.

The Church is born

We take churches for granted. Whether we belong to a church or not, churches are part of our landscape in this country and in many other parts of the world. Churches are significant buildings in cities, towns and villages, frequently dominating the skyline and visible for miles around. But the building is only the outward shell of what is the essence of the church, its community. It is the people who belong together, following the example of Jesus, who make up the Church. Although there are many different branches of the Church today, every Christian community of faith sees itself in some way growing out of the experience of the very first followers of Jesus who contributed to the birth of the Church.

Jesus was a Jew. His friends were Jews. He attended the synagogue, knew Jewish scriptures inside out and celebrated festivals with his

fellow Jews. He observed the strict Jewish laws. He lived a Jewish life, in touch with the great history and tradition of his people. He preached in synagogues and became well known for his charismatic personality. Lots of people flocked to listen to him and learn from what he taught. He became famous. However, because he also challenged much of what was accepted belief and practice, he disturbed the authorities, both Jewish and Roman, so he was put to death.

Jesus' friends had been inspired by him. They loved him; they saw God in him. They had the most amazing experiences, especially after his death, which they could not explain. They talked to one another about their memories of those experiences and their firm belief that Jesus was the Messiah, the saviour all Jews believed God had promised them. They believed that Jesus was with them and that they had a job to do in his name.

After the events in Jerusalem at the Jewish festival of Pentecost, when Peter preached the first sermon about Jesus, the Followers of the Way, as the early Christians were called, grew in number. The Jewish members of this community began to be joined by gentiles, a word which describes anyone who is not a Jew. They had lots of arguments about how important, or not, a Jewish background was. The members of this community were organised by the disciples, now called the apostles, and assisted by other trusted helpers who became known as deacons. The first of these deacons was a young man called Stephen.

As the group was growing, the authorities' concern about it grew as well. The 'Followers of the Way' presented a direct threat to Jewish life. So Stephen was summoned to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council, to defend the faith he was preaching. He was brilliant, so good that the Elders and Chief Priests were even more concerned and condemned him to death by stoning.

Stephen was the first Christian martyr. And, standing by, observing his death, was a prominent Jewish Roman citizen called Saul who led

the cruel persecution of Christians, causing them to meet in hiding, use secret signs and disperse out of Jerusalem with their story of Jesus.

Saul, the arch persecutor, became the best messenger of that story after his dramatic conversion to 'the Way', on the road to Damascus some years later. Paul, as he became, travelled hundreds of miles around much of the Roman Empire, establishing communities of Christians. It was while he was in Corinth, on one of his journeys, that Paul wrote a letter to the Church in Rome, which is the earliest of the writings about Jesus, in the part of the Bible called The New Testament. Later, after Paul's death, Mark, the cousin of one of Paul's companions, Barnabas, wrote down some of their preachings about Jesus, which became the second gospel. The gospels of Matthew, Luke and finally, about seventy years after Jesus' death, the gospel of John, were completed. None of the writers had actually known Jesus but the message by word of mouth from those who did was so powerful that it inspired them to record their beliefs for generations to come.

In Jerusalem by this time, a Jewish uprising against the Romans had been put down by the Emperor's mighty army and the Jews' beloved Temple, the heart of their faith, had been razed to the ground. As the Jews lost their homeland and the focus of their traditions, they dispersed, leaving space for the new religion to grow. By now, the Church was well organised by bishops, who had succeeded the Apostles, and its patterns of worship were already established. It went from strength to strength despite awful persecution by the Romans because Christians refused to worship the Emperor. For two hundred and fifty years, the Church was an underground movement. Many hundreds of these new Christians were killed before finally, in 311 CE, the Emperor Constantine gave permission for Christian worship to be held in public.

The Church became respectable at last and was recognised in the construction of many beautiful buildings, some of which are still standing today.

The Dissatisfied Man

Jacob the tailor was very poor. He lived with his wife Sarah and their five children in a tiny cottage which only had two rooms. The children all had to share one bed and Jacob and his wife slept on the kitchen floor. It was very cramped and it often used to annoy Sarah.

One Passover, Jacob got down all the pots and pans needed for the celebration and put them on the table. The lack of space really got to Sarah.

“Do something!” she shrieked, “I cannot stand it any longer! I need more space for Passover.”

Jacob ran out into the street. He had no idea what he could do. He saw a rabbi. He ran up to him.

“Rabbi, what can I do? I have a tiny house and my wife demands more room for the festival.”

The Rabbi looked at Jacob thoughtfully.

“Take your two goats from the yard and let them live in the house” he said and walked on.

Jacob looked at him in amazement but as he couldn’t think of anything else to do, he decided to take the Rabbi’s advice.

The goats caused chaos. They jumped on the furniture and chewed the clothes, they trampled on the few toys and butted the baby. Sarah was very cross and shouted so much that Jacob fled again out of the house. He ran to the rabbi.

“It hasn’t worked. Your suggestion has given us even less room! What can I do?”

The rabbi paused and smiled at Jacob.

“Collect your cockerel, eight chickens and four geese and keep them in the kitchen,” he said.

Jacob couldn’t believe his ears, but in the absence of any other advice, did as the rabbi suggested.

It was mayhem. The cockerel wouldn’t stop crowing, the chickens got stuck in every nook and cranny, and the geese pecked the children and made them cry.

Jacob didn’t wait for Sarah’s reaction. He escaped to the rabbi.

“Help me please.” he pleaded, “The house is smaller than ever now. What can I do?”

The rabbi smiled. “Go home,” he said, “and gently shoo all the animals out of the house.” Jacob couldn’t wait to do as he suggested. He herded the animals out and shut the door. He and Sarah looked at each other.

“That’s better! The house is suddenly so big,” smiled Sarah in such joy. “It is large enough to celebrate Passover and to invite friends as well. Thank you, Jacob, I shall never complain again!”

The Fast of Esther

Around two thousand five hundred years ago there lived, in Persia, a young girl called Esther. That was her Persian name. She was also called Hadassah, which is Hebrew. Her parents were Jews and when they died, Esther was brought up in their tradition by her Uncle Mordecai. Mordecai treated Esther as his daughter and she was a delight to him as she grew to be such a beautiful, kind and loving young woman.

The king of the land, Ahasuerus, had a terrible argument with his wife and he declared he no longer wanted her as his queen. He vowed to have another wife. So he sent out his officers to find the most beautiful young women in the land and bring her to his palace. Esther was one of the women chosen. She was frightened at the thought of having to go to the palace. However, Mordecai reassured her that all would be well but not to tell the king that she was Jewish. So Esther went along, with many other young girls, to the palace. Each girl was hoping that the king would find her the most attractive and choose her as his queen. Once they were at the palace the girls spent many hours making themselves beautiful and sweet smelling. Until, one by one, they were called before the king. Before the girl went to see the king, each one was asked if she would like a gift. When Esther was asked she simply replied that she needed nothing else as she had been well looked after at the palace. The king was impressed with this and when he met her he admired both her beauty and her calm, dignified manner. When he had seen all the girls, the king sent for Esther again and asked her to marry him and be his queen.

The king grew to love Esther very much. Although Esther was now living in a beautiful palace and could have anything she wanted she remained her kind, thoughtful self. She was able to see Mordecai every day and he told her often never to tell the king about her parents or her religious beliefs.

One day when Mordecai was waiting to meet Esther, he overheard two of the king's servants plotting to kill the king. Mordecai told Esther as soon as he could. She told the king what Mordecai had said and he had the men investigated and when their plot was uncovered they were executed.

After this King Ahasuerus promoted a man called Haman to be his Chief Minister. The king said that Haman was so important that everyone should bow to him before they spoke to him, and do exactly as he said. Everyone did as they were told, everyone, that is, except Mordecai. He declared he would bow only before God. One day when

Mordecai was waiting at the gate to see Esther, Haman came by. He noticed Mordecai's disobedience and was furious. He summoned his advisors and asked them who this man was.

"Mordecai, the Jew," they replied. They explained Mordecai's reasons for his behaviour. Haman was so angry. How dare someone fail to recognise what a great and important man he was!

Haman decided to get his revenge, not just on Mordecai but on all Jews. Haman started to watch out for Jews and find out about them. He began to tell the king about this group of people who did not follow all the country's laws. Haman said that the Jews were making up their own laws and plotting to kill the king. This was not true; in fact, quite the opposite was the case. The Jews knew they were foreigners and tried particularly hard to be law abiding and not to cause any trouble. But the king believed Haman, his trusted minister, and he wondered what to do about these people. He asked Haman for his advice.

Haman continued to work on his plan to destroy the Jewish people. Haman, like many Persians, believed that there were some days that were lucky and that if you wanted to do something important, and for it go well, it was crucial that it was done on a 'lucky day'. To find out which days would be lucky Haman and others like him used a method of casting lots. Each day Haman threw his lot stones until eventually the 'right time' for his wicked plot was forecast by the lots. Haman went to the king and suggested that he had a solution to the king's problem with the Jews.

"Just leave it to me," he said. "Sign this letter and I will have it all sorted out for you." The king signed the letter. Haman wasted no time and sent messages to all parts of the country saying that on the thirteenth day of the month all Jews were to be killed and their money and land to be given to the king. Not one Jew would be spared. What Haman did not know was that the King's beloved wife was also a Jew.

The Feast of Lots : Purim

News of Haman's wicked plot to kill all Jews began to spread and the people could be heard crying and begging for mercy. There was such a noise that Queen Esther heard and wanted to know what was going on. She sent a message to Mordecai to find out and he replied telling her that all Jews were to be killed. Esther was horrified and knew that she must do something to save her people as well as herself. She sent another message to Mordecai to tell all the Jews to fast for three days. Esther did the same herself. Then on the fourth day she went to the king and invited him and his chief minister Haman to a feast. Both were pleased to accept.

That day as Haman left the palace he saw Mordecai waiting at the gate to see Esther and Haman was filled with hatred. He ordered a tall gallows to be built so that on the day the Jews were to be killed, Mordecai could be hanged there for all to see. Haman felt happy at the very thought of this.

The king meanwhile was not happy. When he went to bed that night he could not sleep. So he asked for the court records to be brought to him. He read back over the records of things that had happened. He came across Mordecai's name and remembered the man who had warned Queen Esther of the plot, so had saved his life. That's strange, thought the king. There is no record of this man Mordecai ever being rewarded for his loyalty to me. The next day the king summoned Haman.

"How do you think I should reward someone who has pleased me and shown me great loyalty?" Haman was thinking that the king could only be talking about someone as wonderful as himself.

"He should be given royal clothes, a crown and a parade through the streets of the city so that everyone can cheer him and see what a great man he is," said Haman.

"Right," said the king. "That is how I will reward the Jew, Mordecai. Please see that it is done immediately."

Haman was livid but of course, he had to obey the king. He seethed with fury as he thought about Mordecai. However he had to hide his feelings as he was due to join the king, and Queen Esther for the feast that evening. Little did Haman realise, things were going to get even worse!

The feast was a great success. The king enjoyed himself and was delighted with his wife. He wanted to show her how pleased he was and thank her for her efforts.

"What can I give you?" he asked, "Whatever you request, be it half my kingdom, I will give you." Esther stood before the king and told him what was to befall her and the rest of the Jewish people.

"But who would do this?" said the king, horrified at what she told him.

"It is Haman. He is the enemy of my people, the Jews. He is your enemy too." said Esther. The king was furious and decided that Haman deserved to die, so the scaffold Haman had built for Mordecai was used for Haman instead.

Queen Esther and the Jews of Persia were saved. The king gave Mordecai Haman's job, and all the Jewish people rejoiced and celebrated for now they could worship God freely and live without fear.

The Fool's Wisdom

One bright sunny day an old man and his young grandson were walking down the road. They were leading a donkey. A traveller who

passed by stopped and shouted “You are silly! Why don’t you ride on the donkey? That’s what they were made for.” The grandfather and the boy looked at each other and decided the traveller was right, so on to the donkey they both climbed.

It wasn’t long before passers-by began to comment. One man ran forward, stopped the donkey and said, “How can you be so cruel! This donkey is far too small to carry both of you!” The boy looked at his grandfather. Why hadn’t he thought of that? Immediately he jumped down, letting his grandfather ride alone.

But as they passed, a water carrier said to the grandfather, “How can you ride whilst letting such a small boy walk?” The old man was bewildered. He got down from the donkey and put the small boy on its back. Yes, that was a better arrangement. However, as they journeyed into the city an inn keeper called out to them scornfully.

“What is the world coming to when a strong young lad like you rides whilst your old grandfather has to walk. It’s a disgrace!”

The boy got down from the donkey. What could they do? They were shouted at if both of them rode, criticised if one of them rode and complained at if neither of them rode. There was one thing left to do. Slowly they both picked up the donkey between them and carried it as they went on their way.

The Hungry Fox

A very hungry fox sniffed around looking for food. He came to a stream and stopped at the edge watching the water. Suddenly he spotted a silver fin and then a tail. Oh, fish for supper would be fine. He wondered if he might trick the fish and satisfy his mighty hunger. “Hello!” he called to the fish. “Come over here, I have something very important to tell you.”

The fish was old and wise. He knew the fox was a wily, cunning beast so he kept well away from the edge of the stream and asked the fox what he had to say that was so important.

“There’s a fisherman just down stream from here and he will catch you and eat you for his supper if you’re not careful.” The fox licked his furry lips. He could almost taste the fat, juicy fish. “If you come out of the water, I will carry you up stream away from the danger.”

“No, thank you” retorted the old fish. “In the water I can swim and escape from the net but out of the water I shall be helpless and surely I will die.” And with a flash of silver he was gone.

The wise rabbi told the story to remind the Jews that they needed to stay close to God, to live by God’s goodness. Without God’s goodness they would be like fish out of water.

The Man who loved Plants

You might think that having come from a desperately poor family, earning a fortune would have been very important to George Washington Carver, but in fact nothing was further from the truth. Indeed he did never forget the anxiety as to where the next meal may be coming from, but these memories inspired him to a lifetime’s work

dedicated to making good nutritious food available to even the poorest family. For this he is remembered in America every year on George Washington Carver Day.

George’s family were black slaves in America although he hardly knew them. His father was sent to work away from the rest of the family and when George was very young his mother and sister were kidnapped and he never saw them again. George was a sickly child, not very strong, with a constant cough. As a result he was not sent to work in the fields like most slaves but spent each day in the farm kitchen. Here he saw how plants were grown and used as food and this started what became a life-long fascination.

George used every opportunity to learn more about plants and how they grew. In any spare time that he had, he would go out in search of different types of plants and then return and experiment to see how they grew best. He wanted to go to school to learn to read about all the things he found so interesting but the local schools were for white children only. Eventually, he found a school that he could go to when he was about thirteen. He had to work in the evenings and at weekends to earn money to pay for his lessons. Later he was turned away from High School, not because he wasn’t very clever, but because of the colour of his skin. But George was undaunted and worked on and on, studying botany and related subjects, until finally he had the qualifications he needed to attend University. He was 35 by the time he became Doctor Carver.

He continued to develop and use his expertise. He always shared his knowledge and discoveries, hoping to make life better for others. He worked with farmers to find ways to make their crops grow stronger and more quickly. He found out the most suitable crops for particular areas of the countryside and introduced new varieties to improve the diets of those living there. He introduced watercress, peanuts and sweet potatoes to the southern states of America where they were untried. Peanuts became a firm favourite, as did the peanut butter that George taught people to make. George never made people pay for his help and willingly showed them what he had learned so they could use

his knowledge in their own farming. He became famous throughout America for his work to produce good cheap food for everyone and for his kindness and generosity.

When he died on 5th January 1943 it was written on his tombstone:

“He could have added fortune to fame, but caring for neither, he found happiness and honour in being helpful to the world”

The Pot of Water

There was once a bear who lived in a wood by a brook. One day, no matter how hard he tried, he could find nothing to eat. He sat looking at his pot of water ready on the fire and wondered what he could possibly do to make himself a meal. After a while along came his friend, Dog, carrying in his mouth an old bone.

“Good day, Bear!” said the dog, dropping his bone at his feet and panting in the warm sunshine. “How are you?”

“Hungry,” replied Bear looking glum, although at the sight of the bone an idea began to stir in his brain.

“Well, you can have a gnaw of my bone,” said Dog, “but I’d like it back before I go,” and he sat back in the sunshine to rest. “Thanks mate,” said the bear “you’ll get it back.” And with that he popped it into his pot of water.

Not long after this, Hedgehog and Tortoise came ambling along the path together. Hedgehog was puffing as she rolled an onion along in front of her and Tortoise was telling what seemed to be a long story about his Great Uncle Henry. Bear’s mouth watered when he saw the onion and he smiled at his two friends as they came to a halt beside Dog.

“And where might you two be off to on this fine morning?” Bear greeted them.

“Well I’m just travelling along,” said Tortoise, “and Hedgehog here is taking her onion to the rocks to squash it so she can eat it more easily.” Bear looked thoughtful.

“It’s good to see you both,” he said “and we may be able to help each other. See my pot here? I’m making something to eat. I could soften your onion in the water for you and maybe borrow a little of its delicious flavour while I’m about it. What do you say, Hedgehog?” Hedgehog, who was a little shy, looked at Tortoise and then nodded. Quickly Bear took the onion, rolled it hard to shed its skin and then put it into the pot of water.

“Sit with us a while and enjoy the sunshine,” he said. And so the two animals joined Bear and Dog on the bank by the brook. It was lovely. Then suddenly into the clearing swung Monkey. The others looked up in surprise.

“Greetings my friends!” said Monkey, as he pranced before them. “And what might you four fellas be doing today?”

Hedgehog looked alarmed but Dog laughed and replied

“Oh, we’re just enjoying the sunshine and waiting for Bear here to produce something from that pot of his.” Dog looked at Bear and grinned. Monkey was curious. He looked at the pot.

“How about putting this in. It might bulk it up a bit.” He added, looking at the watery mixture and holding out a potato he had in his hand. Bear looked hopeful.

“All contributions welcomed,” he said. Just as Monkey began to look for mischief, the animals were joined first by rabbit bouncing along with a bunch of carrots hanging from between her teeth, and then by

Cat, looking sleek and watchful. Cat was holding a biscuit which she stroked as she put it down on the ground.

“Something smells good,” said Rabbit hopping around, keeping a careful eye on Dog.

“Yes, it seems that something interesting may be cooking in my pot of water after all” said Bear. “Of course it would be even better if we had a carrot...or two.” He looked tentatively at Rabbit.

“Sure, I can spare a couple of these” said Rabbit generously and tossed three carrots into the pot.

“You can add my biscuit” meowed Cat “but I’d like a mouthful or three”. By now a beautiful aroma was beginning to waft around the friends as they sat together. They looked at each other gleefully. Tortoise looked thoughtful and opened his mouth to speak. Hedgehog looked a little worried – not more Great Uncle Henry stories.

“You know what?” said Tortoise. “Do you know what would really make your pot of water something special?” He paused and the animals gazed at him. “Some salt, and I know just the place to find some.” And without further ado he was off to find some salt.

The others sat in the sun chatting and relaxing together. They were enjoying themselves. They didn’t often make time to sit together like this. Tortoise soon came puffing back and dropped his offering into the pot. Bear fetched a spoon and stirred it. The other animals licked their lips hungrily.

“My friends” said Bear looking at each one of them, “let’s share our morning’s work. I only had a pot of water but now, between us , we’ve made something really good. Let’s enjoy it”

And they did!

The Rainbow People

At the bottom of the mountain lived the Greens. Everything in their world was green. They thought green thoughts. They even believed God was green. At the top of the mountain, in a blue world, lived the Blues who believed it was right and good to be blue and therefore anyone who wasn’t blue was either strange or bad. They definitely believed God was blue.

Greens and Blues never met if they could help it. They hated each other and brought up their children to hate and fear each other too. Children were taught never to step into the other land and not even to look up at the blue sky if they were Green or down into the green valley if they were Blue.

Green boy was surprised then to see a Blue boy lying injured in Green Meadow one day. It looked as if he had rolled into danger and Green boy wanted to go and help but his father stopped him angrily, insisting that Blue boy was evil.

Some weeks later, Green boy strayed just into Blueland. He caught his foot between two rocks and cried, fearing that he would be found by a Blue. His foot hurt but he began to hobble down the mountain towards home. By chance, he was met by Blue boy, who bound his foot with strips torn from his blue shirt.

Despite his family’s anger at his blue bandage, Green boy ventured again into Blueland to thank his rescuer. Although he was welcomed by Blue boy, he was badly treated by the other Blues. But the two boys had smiled at each other and something had changed. They began to meet secretly just at the point where Greenland met Blueland and they began to like each other. One day Green boy was surprised to see his new friend dressed in blue and green stripes. Blue boy told him that, in helping him, he had come to see that green was just as good as blue.

The boys visited each other and gradually more and more of the people began to talk to each other and to meet. They began to venture from their own land. Once they realised that the other people were not so bad as they had thought, together they began to wonder about the Yellows and Reds and Purples. Slowly and cautiously they began to venture from their own land to explore those of the other peoples. Eventually, after many years of looking and listening and talking and thinking and smiling they came to see themselves as the Rainbow People.

The Robbery

There was once a robber who was very good at his job. He never got caught and had become very rich. Friends had tried to get him to change but he blankly refused, and began to plan his next robbery.

One night he broke into a house, but a quick look told him that there was very little to steal. However, he refused to leave without taking something so he decided to steal a bundle of clothes which was lying in a corner. As he gathered them up he heard a noise behind him. Turning round he saw an old man standing there. He began to run, but the old man stopped him.

“Don't run. Here, I'll help you carry these,” the old man offered. The robber presumed the old man was a robber too and let him carry half the cloth, determined however that he wouldn't be allowed to keep any. They both ran away from the house carrying their bundles, the old man travelling much slower but being urged on by the robber who couldn't wait to get to his hideout.

When they reached the robber's hideout the robber handed over a small bundle of cloth to the old man. “There you are,” he said “That's for helping. Now go away.”

“I don't want your cloth,” said the old man as he collapsed exhausted into a chair. “It was my house you broke into and it's my cloth. Here, keep it all. You must be very poor to have to steal from me. Now you know where I live, you are very welcome to help yourself to anything I have, anything at all.”

The robber couldn't believe it. Was he joking? He didn't seem to be. For the first time the robber felt ashamed.

“You are a truly good man,” he said. “How can you be so good and kind after all I have done to you?”

The old man looked at him. “Perhaps you could learn something from this,” he said.

The robber considered and then said, “You are right. I am sorry for what I've done, for the life I've led. I shall try to change my life in the future. Will you help me?”

“I will.” said the old man.

The Spirit of a Good Friend

The king smiled suddenly and shaking his head in amazement he walked slowly towards a magnificent horse, which now stood calmly with his rider in the centre of the square lit by the flaming torches and the stars from the night sky. Just a few minutes ago the king had despaired of ever seeing his son alive again, let alone the horse he rode. The king recalled many hours earlier when the scene had been very different.

When the beautiful young horse, which the king had bought, had been led into the square that morning for the king's inspection it was wild and unrideable. The king thought he must have made a mistake when he bought the horse. Even the bravest, most experienced groom had

been frightened to go near the horse as it lunged and reared on the rope that held it captive. The king had been on the point of having this wild animal destroyed when Alexander, his son, arrived.

Alexander was heedless as ever to the cries of warning as he slowly walked towards the terrifying creature. What Alexander realised was that the horse itself was terrified of its own shadow! But no one else seemed to see it. Alexander took hold of the rope that held the horse and gently turned it round. When he could no longer see his shadow the great horse became calm. To everyone's amazement Alexander leapt onto the horse and managed to stay firm even when it began to rear up. Together they galloped from the courtyard and although the king's fastest riders set off in hot pursuit they could not catch up with Alexander and the horse.

"No one could survive such a ride on an animal like that," whispered the fearful horsemen. "He will surely be thrown and trampled on."

But now Alexander had returned and with him, exhausted but calm, was his horse; the king was to recall this moment for years to come. From that time onwards Alexander and the horse were inseparable. Alexander called the horse Beucephalos, which means 'Bull's Head' in Greek. On the forehead of the magnificent black horse was a white mark, the shape of a bull's head.

Wherever he went, Alexander took his precious horse. It seemed that there was a bond between the man and his horse. Later, when Alexander was exiled from his homeland, Beucephalos went with him, returning in triumph when his master came back as king.

Alexander did not stay home in Macedonia for long but set out to conquer and explore other lands. Alexander rode Beucephalos into battle after battle. They were often injured and became scarred warriors together. Alexander cherished Beucephalos' loyalty and depended on him. No matter how rough the terrain was, Beucephalos carried his master steadfastly onwards.

As they crossed what is now Afghanistan, they came to a river on the border of Pakistan. Here another great battle was to take place. For Beucephalos it was to be his final battle. As the battle raged against the Indian kings, a spear was thrown right at Alexander's heart. Beucephalos reared up to protect his friend and master and the spear pierced his neck. Alexander was thrown from his horse and when he got to his feet he realised what a terrible price he had paid for the saving of his own life. His dearest friend was dying. He clasped the great horse to him in anguish, trying desperately to stop the flow of blood.

The battle raged about them but Alexander was concerned only for Beucephalos. Protected by their friends, the battle was won and the Indian kings defeated, but Alexander cared nothing for this victory. He cared only that he was losing his dearest friend. A tent was put around them as night drew on and Beucephalos lay in his master's arms. So they remained until just before dawn when Beucephalos died. But it was three days before Alexander could bear to be parted from his friend.

When Beucephalos was finally buried Alexander did all he could to honour and remember his dearest friend. A great city was built around the tomb of the great horse. As Alexander moved on so he bore his loss bravely but he never forgot his friend, the horse who had given his life for him. The spirit of this great creature lived on with Alexander and even though the city named after him is no longer standing, Beucephalos is remembered still.

The Teacher and the Rude Man

The people of the village were pleased to welcome their visitor, the Muslim teacher, who was going to teach them more about being faithful to God through their religion, Islam.

They gathered in expectation in the market square, ready to listen. But as soon as the teacher began to talk to them, one man in the crowd

began to heckle. He shouted insults at the teacher. He kept interrupting him. He was very rude and the people were angry and ashamed. However, the teacher ignored the rude man.

They wanted to listen to the teacher and they could not hear what he was saying, which was bad enough, but what was even worse was that it was such bad manners to treat anyone in this way, especially a teacher. The people naturally felt responsible. So they shushed the man; they glared at him and eventually some of them removed him and told him firmly to go away.

All was quiet for long enough to allow the teacher to finish his talk. Then as he turned to walk back to the house where he was staying, the shouting began again. The rude man had returned. He followed the teacher on the other side of the street, yelling abuse at him. Still the teacher ignored him, until he got to the door of the house. Once the door was open, he turned and spoke to the man.

“Why don’t you come in with me and have something to eat and drink? Then you will feel better and you can explain why you are so angry with me.”

The man was so flabbergasted. This was the last thing he expected. The people of the village, who had followed to see what happened, were surprised too.

They watched as the man followed the teacher into the house and wondered what the teacher would say to the man.

What would you have said?

Why do you think the man was angry?

What makes you feel like that?

The Two Giants

This is the story of two giants. They were called Finn and McGonigle. As you can imagine, they were both huge and terrifyingly fierce. Finn lived in Ireland and McGonigle lived in Scotland. They were as frightening as each other. When they walked, the land shook and when

they spoke, the wind stopped in terror and held its breath. They knew about each other of course, and all was well until McGonigle decided he wanted to have Ireland as well as Scotland for his territory. Finn was away from home. He was busy in the north, building the Giant’s Causeway, when a message came from Oonagh, his wife. He was to come home at once and the reason made him tremble in his boots even though he was a huge and fierce giant.

McGonigle was coming and it wasn’t going to be a friendly visit. Without a second thought, Finn had jumped over mountains and valleys to reach his massive castle, perched high on a hill. From here, he could see anyone approaching.

He put his magic thumb in his mouth and sucked. His thumb of knowledge showed him what was going on all over Ireland and today it wasn’t a happy picture. McGonigle was getting close and Finn saw that in his pocket he did indeed have the thunderbolt everyone talked about. Oh dear! Finn wasn’t sure he would win a battle with this Scottish giant despite his own legendary strength and cunning. He was worried.

Oonagh had a plan. She baked some enormous oat cakes, the sort giants have for breakfast but she cleverly hid the baking trays inside. She dusted them with flour and left them to cool. She sent the servants to fetch the baby’s cradle from the loft. Then she dressed Finn up in an old night gown and shawl and told him to fold himself in two and get into the cradle. With a lot of puffing and squeezing, Finn sat at last in the cradle, with the blanket up to his chin, looking for all the world like a giant baby. He practised the gurgling sound he remembered babies making. And they waited.

It wasn’t long before they heard the heavy footsteps of McGonigle and the booming voice, demanding to know if anyone was at home. Oonagh tightened the magic threads, plaited around her waist to protect her, and smiled at McGonigle as she opened the door.

“Welcome!” she said, “My husband, the fierce Finn, is not at home but I can offer you hospitality. Come and sit down!”

McGonigle rested his enormous axe on the table as he sat down to one of Oonagh’s oat cakes. They did look good but as soon as he took a bite, he broke two teeth on the iron griddle hidden in the bread. As he spat out the teeth, Oonagh exclaimed, “Why, that’s Finn’s favourite bread. I’m sure he doesn’t break teeth on it.”

“Mammy, Mammy can I have some bread?” came the high squeaky voice from the cradle. Oonagh gave Finn an oat cake without the hard centre and McGonigle watched amazed as the baby graunched away happily on it. McGonigle took another oat cake and as he bit into, there was a loud crack and three teeth landed on the plate.

“Strike me lightning!” shouted the giant, “Let me look at that baby!” Oonagh told Finn to sit up and smile at the visitor. Finn showed a fierce mouthful of huge teeth as he grinned at McGonigle who put his finger into the baby’s mouth to feel the teeth. Quick as a flash, Finn bit off the finger as McGonigle let out an agonised shriek of gigantic pain. Unfortunately for him, it was his magic finger, the one that allowed him to see more than he could see with his three eyes. As his eyes now darkened with pain and rage, Finn smiled to himself and lay back on the embroidered pillow. McGonigle seemed to shrink as he groaned his way to the door, muttering something about fearing the father of such a baby as this. Finn and his wife laughed until their massive bodies ached every time they thought of the way they had outwitted the fierce giant from over the water. And Finn returned to building his bridge over the sea so that one day he might return McGonigle’s visit.

The Week that Changed the World

John

What a night! It was terrifying and I just don’t know where it will lead. But if I could get my hands on that traitor, Judas, I’d show him what for.

How could he do it?

We’d had such a good Passover celebration till then. All was going well. The arrangements fell into place and the food was good. Jesus seemed relaxed enough although he did say some strange things, on reflection. We couldn’t understand why he said he was breaking his body when he broke the matza bread and why he talked about his blood when he gave thanks for the wine. But the really scary thing was what he said about someone betraying him, someone round **that** table. We were all his friends, we were with him. How could he possibly think ...?

Well, we were all pretty upset when we left to go out into the cool evening. Peter was really distressed, I remember. He went red in the face and kept saying, indignantly, that he would never betray Jesus. Well, as I said, we all felt like that, or I thought we all did, until that awful moment in the garden.

No-one noticed Judas slip away, but by this time, Jesus seemed agitated. He wanted to be by himself and yet he wanted to feel we were there as well. He went off to be quiet. Maybe he knew what was coming. We certainly didn’t. We all fell asleep. Several times he came and woke us. Made us feel guilty somehow, but we were shattered. It was pretty exhausting being one of the Jesus people. Suddenly we heard the commotion and there was Judas, right in the middle of a bunch of soldiers, marching on us. It was Jesus they wanted of course. He’d been annoying the authorities for months with the things he’d been saying and doing, all over the country.

But we were really taken by surprise as they came out of the darkness, armour rattling. I was scared; we all were. We watched Judas greet Jesus as we always did. Nothing strange in that, except that then the

soldiers pounced and Jesus was surrounded and marched away. We scattered into the shadows although not before Peter, the old hot head, had struck a young boy with his sword. Didn't do any good though.

Peter

It was a cold night, I remember. It's funny how you remember details that really aren't important. Especially when all you really want to do is forget.

I remember the warmth of the fire in the courtyard of the high priest. I remember stretching my hands out and feeling the comforting warmth. It was when one of the servants asked me if I was with Jesus that I suddenly realised how dangerous it was there. I pulled my hands back into my cloak and said I didn't know him. Of course, I wasn't with him. Then she started to tell others I was there and I had to keep saying no! All the time I knew Jesus was up there in the house being questioned by the chief priest. It was not fair. He'd done nothing wrong and he needed my support. And I was saying I didn't even know him.

Then I heard the cock crow, twice. Just as he had said it would. And I had denied him three times, just as he'd said I would And I stumbled out of the courtyard and ran, weeping, into the night. It was the blackest night of my life.

Pilate

A very unsatisfactory business, this Jesus man. It was early on Friday morning when they brought him to me. They wanted to be rid of him, the chief priests, but they wanted someone else, someone official, to make the decision so that they did not have to take the blame. As Governor, it was my responsibility but he really didn't seem much of a threat to anyone. He was not violent, he did not even want to defend himself against their accusations. He did not seem like the villain they were telling me he was.

I felt uneasy. I even offered to release him because it was the festival time. I thought the people would go for that. I had heard Jesus was popular with the crowd. But they wanted a real villain, Barabbas, released instead. It looked as though it could get nasty. I had tried to wash my hands of him but there was nothing I could do but get him flogged and sentence him to death. It worried me though.

The Roman Soldier

It was all in a day's work really. Crucifixions are regular but however many you do in a day, they never stop being nasty. Not that they don't deserve all they get, you understand. Today's was different though. There was something about him that made you notice. He was calm. No shouting or yelling. Some of my mates had played dice for his clothes. We often did that. Well they didn't need clothes when they were dead, did they? But I couldn't join in somehow. He puzzled me.

There was a notice we have to nail above his head. 'King of the Jews' it said. What a funny lot they are. Fancy wanting to kill your king. Mind you, he definitely didn't look like anyone's king. But there was serenity about him, even in the worst pain and, believe me, crucifixion hurts. He was like no one else I've ever nailed up. I wonder what sort of king he was.

Mary Magdalene

I've never cried so much. I can hardly see for the tears. After all we have done with Jesus, all our hopes, all the promise, we are without him now. He's gone, dead, crucified. So what was it all for? Why did we trust him? Why did we let ourselves get such big ideas about him? If he was who he said he was, why didn't he save himself? Why did he have to die?

It is lonely without him and very frightening. I have waited until I can wait no longer. I must be where he is. They laid his body in a garden tomb. I go there, just because I can't think what else to do and anyway, no one prepared his body for burial because there wasn't time before the Sabbath. I take oil with me for his broken body. Oh why did he have to die?

But the tomb is already open and inside ... inside it is not dark as I expected; there is a dazzling light and two figures sitting at either end of the place where Jesus' body had been. And now it has gone. How could they do this to us? How could they kill Jesus and then take his body from us? It's hard to see through tears. As I turn, a man is there in front of me. I think he must be the gardener. Maybe he knows where Jesus' body is. Perhaps he has moved it. Then I hear his voice.

"Mary" he says. Just that one word, my name. It is all he needs to say. How often I've heard that voice say my name. It's Jesus. He's standing here in front of me, in the day breaking sun. He's not dead, he's alive. I run to him, my arms outstretched but he stops me before I can touch him.

"Don't be afraid" he tells me. How could I be afraid when he is there? "Go and tell my disciples to go to Galilee. I will see them there". And I run, weeping, this time for joy.

Ubuntu

Ubuntu is a word that is used in several African languages. It is hard to translate but describes an essential quality of what is to be human. Someone who has *Ubuntu* is compassionate, understanding, kind and generous. They reach out to others in love. Anything that harms or belittles another person hurts them too. Without this spirit of ubuntu the strength and capacity to forgive which has been vital to the healing of so many broken lives and communities in South Africa could not have flourished. It has been a key element in bringing together people who in years past could not live together and who fought each other in different ways.

As in many countries, South Africa is home to people of many languages and skin colours. Archbishop Desmond Tutu refers to the

people as The Rainbow People. He speaks in celebration of their differences but for many years throughout the land the colour of a person's skin was often made a reason for hatred, discrimination and violence. Many of the white people in the land who were rich and powerful believed that those people with black skins were not as good as they were, not as clever or as valuable in the sight of God, and should be treated badly. This meant that black people had to live apart from white people, use different schools, hospitals, doctors, have poorly paid jobs, poor quality housing and food and sometimes no schools at all. They could not use the same cinemas, shops or other facilities. They were treated as second class citizens. They couldn't vote to change things and many felt the only way to protest was in peaceful marches or rallies or through violence. Many black people felt they could not and should not tolerate this way of living and they rebelled in any way they could, although those in authority were quick to punish them by harming them or imprisoning them, sometimes for long periods. The white people often felt threatened, even by peaceful protests, and so in many areas meetings of large groups of people were often banned. People could meet at church but they were frequently monitored to ensure they were only at worship.

Over a period of years the situation became worse and worse. A lot of black people lived in fear of attacks from white people, from the police, even from other black people. So many people were killed and many more were imprisoned, tortured, threatened, their families terrorized; others just disappeared. But throughout all of this, some people believed that things could get better and that justice and freedom could be found for those people who suffered. People in South Africa and in countries throughout the world worked in many ways to make the South African Government change so that black people could vote and begin to build the lives they deserved on equal terms with the white people in their land.

Finally in 1990, after 27 years in captivity, Nelson Mandela was freed from prison. He was a man who had come to symbolise the struggle in South Africa for people to be treated fairly. His suffering, and the

profound wisdom and understanding that his years in prison had given him, made him an inspiring leader, not just for South Africa but for people throughout the world. He clearly demonstrated the spirit of ubuntu, for he didn't seek revenge or to punish those who had imprisoned him. He led by example, to help people learn to care for others and use their skills to help build a new South Africa. What became apparent was that many people had suffered so terribly that, to help them live as happy, healthy individuals and as strong peaceful communities, many of the hurts and bad feelings would have to be dealt with, otherwise bitterness and hatred would fester and lead to greater and greater problems.

It was finally decided that, in order to bring people together, there needed to be a time for people to tell their stories, to talk about the awful things that had happened to them or the terrible things they had seen done. It was important for people to learn from what had taken place so it would not happen again. The sacrifices made by so many people to bring about freedom and justice must not be forgotten. To bring to trial for wrong-doings would punish, but not help bring individuals and communities together as they argued over what really happened and who was to blame.

So the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation was set up, led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu who had worked tirelessly for justice for many years. The aim of the Commission was to promote national unity and reconciliation. Officers from the Commission gathered together people's accounts of what had happened to them or their families and then went throughout the country holding sessions in which as many people as possible could come and tell publicly of their experiences. Stories that people wrote or told about their mistreatment were investigated and those who had caused the suffering were given the opportunity to come forward and tell the truth. They were granted amnesty if those listening felt that they had been completely truthful. Their crimes were exposed for everyone to hear and that was punishment in itself. Many of those who denied their crimes were brought to justice and punished.

Many of the things that people did to each other were terrible beyond words, but the sharing of them helped many people to begin to re-build their lives through greater understanding of themselves and each other. The Commission began to help those who had suffered in a number of ways; by honouring the dead, naming streets and buildings after them, offering medical help, counselling, education, training or financial aid. This healing work continues today.

Desmond Tutu describes in his writing how many, many people found it in their hearts to forgive each other, to realize that in terrible times people do dreadful things and that no one can say that, in the most difficult situations, they would not be driven to commit such atrocities themselves. Those who had harmed others had to forgive themselves and learn to live harmoniously in communities with others instead of betraying them or trying to undermine them. This is all in the spirit of ubuntu, to recognize that to forgive is to help not just oneself but others; to know that everyone has within him or her the potential for both good and bad and to realize that it is bringing out the best in each other that we are strong ourselves and part of a greater good.

Why a Poppy?

During the First World War places such as Flanders and Picardy in France were devastated by fighting. The entire landscape was reduced to a barren waste land. All that remained was a sea of mud where so many men died. For those who remained there was one small sign of hope as summer came each year. Across the brown fields wave after wave of red poppies bloomed. Their glowing colour brightened their lives and gave some small encouragement to the soldiers still fighting.

A Canadian doctor, John McCrea, was serving in Northern France and he wrote these verses, drawing on his experiences of war and inspired by the poppies in the fields of sadness and suffering.

*In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
 Between the crosses, row on row,
 That mark our place: and in the sky
 The larks, still bravely singing, fly
 Scarce heard amid the guns below.
 We are the dead. Short days ago
 We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
 Loved and were loved, and now we lie
 In Flanders' fields.
 Take up our quarrel with the foe;
 To you from failing hands we throw
 The torch; be yours to hold it high,
 If ye break faith with us who die
 We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
 In Flanders' fields.*

His poem helped people in Britain, who were away from the fighting, have some understanding of the feelings of the soldiers in the horrific situations of war and to appreciate the courage and determination of the soldiers to fight for what they believed in. On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, The First World War ended. Thousands and thousands of men, women and children had suffered and died. Those who had been involved would never forget what had happened. Life would never be the same again.

Moina Michael, an American War Secretary, was moved by McCrea's poem and wrote

*And now the torch and poppy red
 Wear in honour of our dead.*

She bought poppies with money donated by her colleagues at work and wore one and sold the rest to her friends. She sent the money to help servicemen who were in need after war. A friend of hers, Madame Guerin, saw what Moina was doing and thought it was a wonderful idea to use the poppy as a symbol of the suffering of the soldiers. She came up with the idea to make artificial poppies and sell

them in as many places as possible to raise more money. This was how the poppy movement began.

In Britain a young soldier, Major George Howson, was very moved by the situation of so many servicemen and women who had been badly wounded in the war and now found life very difficult. They needed help to live with their pain, to cope with everyday life and to find work. He formed a society to help them. Other people had similar ideas. The British Legion was founded to give practical help and friendship to ex-servicemen and women and their families. These two groups came together in their efforts. George Howson saw how the idea of making and selling poppies could be used to help provide work and support people in the both groups. A factory was established to make poppies. Today it employs many disabled people making poppies and wreaths. The first Poppy day was 11 November 1921; since then, it has become a very successful tradition, raising funds for the many people it helps. However it not only raises money but just as significantly gives everyone a time to remember all those who suffered during the wars that have taken place during and since that terrible First World War.

Woman at the Gate of the City

The woman stopped and put her bags down. They were heavy. She was carrying everything she could possibly manage and the rest she had left behind. It was so hard to leave her home but she couldn't possibly stay. She just felt she didn't belong any more.

The city gate was busy as usual. Merchants came and went with their loads of silks and spices to buy and sell. Mecca was a trading post where business was good. The woman sighed. She would miss all this too but it was no good, the city was changing and she just didn't feel at home here any more. She looked back at the familiar sight with a heavy heart and bent to pick up her bags. They already seemed heavier than they were when she set out and there was a long way to go. She straightened up and gritted her teeth. Anything was better than staying.

As the woman struggled to pick up her bags, she caught the attention of a man sitting at the gate. Immediately he got up and spoke to her, offering to help with her load.

“You’re very kind,” she said, “but I’m going to the next town and that would be too far. You wouldn’t want to come all that way with me.” The man nevertheless took the heaviest bags and began to walk with her. He enquired why she was leaving.

“Oh, terrible things are happening here. There’s a man turning the city upside down with his new fangled ideas. We used to know who we were and what life was about, but not any more. He says – Muhammad, his name is – that it’s wrong to worship the idols we’ve had for generations. He says we should all worship a god called Allah who is invisible. Well, what use is that, I ask you? I need a god I can see.”

“Hmm, hmm.” The man listened carefully.

“I’m surprised you don’t know about this,” went on the woman. “You must be the only person in Mecca who doesn’t. People all over the city are falling under Muhammad’s spell and doing what he says and they won’t stop. Some have even died rather than give up. Well, I’m not staying for the same thing to happen to me.”

“Hmm, there are certainly dreadful things happening in Mecca,” nodded the man, “but I’m sorry you have to leave your home.”

“You’re a good man. If only there were more people like you in the city ... Tell me,” enquired the woman, “what is your name?” The man stopped, put down the heavy bags and looked into the old woman’s eyes.

“My name is Muhammad,” he said, “and I pray to Allah, the one true God.”

This is a traditional story about Muhammad. How do you think it ends?

Why is it important to feel we belong?

I wonder why the woman wanted a god she could see?

Section 7

Further Resources

for

Collective Worship

About Numbers

Modern numerals developed from early forms of Indian numerals invented by Hindus more than 2000 years ago. Evidence of early numerals has been found in the walls of caves in the Indus Valley. The people used symbols, some of which resembled our digits, to record the calculations they did with an abacus. But they were limited until the invention of the zero, again by Hindus, somewhere between the fifth and ninth centuries.

The zero grew from the dot that was used to mark an empty column on an abacus. From this invention, came the concept of place value. With nine digits, a symbol for zero and a place value it became possible to do simple calculations without the abacus.

It was the Arabs who worked on a number system based on the Hindu decimal system, using the numerals from India and perfecting the concept of zero. With the spread of Islam into Western Europe came also the Muslim scholars' system of calculation which gradually replaced Roman numerals. The system was explained by a Muslim mathematician called Musa al-Khwarizmi in a book whose title roughly translated is '*A Book about Addition and Subtraction according to the Hindu Method of Calculation*', which was written in 825 CE. It took, however, another 300 years before his ideas reached Europe

Faceless

*You have to look beyond the face
To see the person true
Deep down within my inner space
I am the same as you;
I've counted since that fire burnt
The many lessons I have learnt*

*You have to talk to me and not
The skin that holds me in,
I took the wisdom that I got
To make sure that I win;
I'm counting weaker folk than me
Who look but truly cannot see.*

*I've seen compassion from the blind
Who think with open eyes,
It's those that judge me quick you'll find
Are those that are unwise;
Why judge the face that I have no
Just value my opinion.
Friends will come and friends will go
Now I need friends that feel,*

*My friends have changed so much and so
I make sure they are real;
I took the ride and paid the price,
I can't afford to do that twice,
I came to here from ignorance
I cannot call it bliss,
And now I know the importance
Of loving me like this!
To leave behind the backward state
Of judging looks is very great*

*I'm beautiful, I'm beautiful
This minor fact I know,
I tell you it's incredible
Near death has made me grow;
Look at me, smile, you are now seeing
A great thing called a human being.*

Benjamin Zephaniah

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Love is ...

(1 Corinthians 13 paraphrased)

1-3 I may be able to speak the languages of all people and even of angels, but if I have no love I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. I may be able to inspire people with my words; I may have all knowledge and understand all secrets; I may have all the faith strong enough to move mountains; but if I have no love I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and even give up my body to be burned, but if I have no love then it does me no good.

4-7 Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful. Love is not rude or selfish or irritable. Love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil but rejoices in the truth. Love never gives up, there is nothing it cannot face and its faith, hope and patience is ending. Love will never fail.

8-13 Love never ends. There are inspired messages but they will one day be forgotten; there are gifts of speaking in strange languages but these will not last, and as for knowledge, that too will fade. All these things are imperfect and when that which is the perfect comes everything else will disappear. When I was a child, my speech and thoughts and feelings were those of a child, but now I have grown and am an adult I speak and think and feel things differently. What can be seen of God now is like looking in a dusty mirror where the image is dim but when all is perfect and complete we will be able to see clearly and understand what God is like, meeting face to face. Until then these three are with us always, faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.

Saints' Days in March & April

St David (1st March)

David of Dewi was a monk and a bishop in the sixth century. He was known for his ascetic spiritual life (he was nicknamed the 'Waterman' – he never drank anything else), but he was also highly regarded for his kindness and compassion. He died in about the year 601AD, and has been regarded as the patron saint of Wales since the twelfth century.

St Chad (2nd March)

Chad was one of four brothers who became both priests and monks, trained by St Aidan at Lindisfarne. During a period of tension between Celtic and Roman expressions of Christianity he briefly became Bishop of York. However, he graciously moved aside, later to become Bishop of Mercia, centred on Lichfield. Chad was loved for his gentleness and wisdom. He died in 672AD and his relics are in St Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham.

St Patrick (17th March)

Patrick came from Cornwall (some say Wales) but he was captured by Irish raiders and taken to Ireland as a slave. He trained to be a priest in France and then returned to Ireland as a Bishop. He evangelised the land by walking all over the island gently bringing men and women to a knowledge of Christ. The monastic foundations he established were the seed for the conversion of Scotland and England by Columba, Aidan and Cuthbert. Patrick died in 460AD.

St George (23rd April)

George was probably a soldier living in fourth century Palestine. He was martyred in Lydda in about the year 304AD. George replaced Edward the Confessor as patron saint of England at the Crusades, when returning soldiers brought back with them a renewed interest in St George.

School for All

Every child is entitled - that means they have a right to - education and for most children that means coming to school. But it wasn't always so, even in this country. A hundred years ago, some children went to school and some did not. Some children were forced to work. Some just didn't have a school near enough to their homes. Some just went to school until they were considered old enough to work, often as young as eleven.

Getting to school was difficult enough. Children often walked several miles in all weather; the older ones looking after the youngest in the family. Sore feet were the worst thing because heavy leather boots went hard when they got wet and were dried quickly overnight, ready for the long walk the next day. Even when children got to school, there was often no chance to get dry and warm. The school room usually had a fire but it was rarely warm enough to raise the temperature much on cold days. It was the teacher's job to teach, not to look after children. Children often found life difficult for some reason, so lots of children were unhappy and many stayed away if they possibly could. In some places there was a three mile limit and children who lived further away from the school were excused from going. But a lot of children who did go learned to read which was something their parents often couldn't do.

After the end of the First World War, the Great War, as it is sometimes called, there was a great deal of work to be done, to rebuild this country. The factories were desperately short of labour and thousands of the young men who would have been working in them had been killed in the fighting. It was expected that some of the work would be done by children but the government decided that children needed a better chance. A law was passed in 1918 which said that every child must go to school until the age of 14.

This became known as the Fisher Act after the Member of Parliament who introduced it, Mr H Fisher, President of the Board of Education. In his speech in the House of Commons he said

"We assume that education is one of the good things of life which should be more widely shared than has hitherto been the case amongst the children and young persons of the country."

This was the first time children had a right to something we all take for granted.

And the same ideas are being expressed today. A World Bank report put it clearly: Education will determine who has the keys to the treasures the world can furnish.

What do you think those treasures are?

The Wallinger Statue

Mark Wallinger was the first artist to be given the chance to put his work on an empty plinth in Trafalgar Square. Stood there for one year, the sculpture is life size, cast in marble dust and resin and called 'Ecco Homo' (Behold the Man). It shows a shaven figure, eyes closed, hands bound behind his back, cowed and subjected to the taunts of the crowd, and Pilate's condemnation.

The artist describes it as the depiction of Jesus as an ordinary human being, who is being led out by a lynch mob. The figure does indeed look vulnerable. He is totally submissive and the symbolism of the image of suffering is completed with the circles of barbed wire pressed onto the up tilted head.

Reactions to it when it was erected were mixed. Some found it profoundly moving, even expressing the urge to protect its vulnerability. Others who were passing were asked to respond to the new statue and felt its obvious weakness was a metaphor for the position of the Church in today's world: 'His smallness just shows what little meaning Christianity has in the world today. He's a typically broken, lily livered, Anglican Jesus.'

'You couldn't put your faith in someone like that, he's as weak as a kitten. What kind of saviour is he?'

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”

“Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind”

“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”

“No one shall be held in slavery or servitude”

“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”

“Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law”

“All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law”

“Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him (sic) by the constitution or by law”

“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile”

“Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal”

“Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty”

“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his (sic) privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his (sic) honour and reputation”

“Everyone has the right to freedom of movement”

“Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution”

“Everyone has the right to a nationality”

“Men and women... have the right to marry and to found a family”

“Everyone has the right to own property”

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion”

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”

“Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association”

“Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realisation...of...economic, social and cultural rights”

“Everyone has the right to work...everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions”

“Everyone has the right to rest and leisure”

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for...health and well-being”

“Everyone has the right to education”

“Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community”

“Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realised”

“Everyone has duties to the community”

“Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying...any right to engage in any activity...aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth”

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Every child has:

the right to life;
the right to a name and a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and to be cared for by her/his parents;
the right to protection of her/his identity by the State;
the right to live with her/his parents unless incompatible with her/his best interests. The right, if desired, to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents if separated from one or both;
the right to leave and enter her/his own country, and other countries, for purposes of reunion with parents and maintaining the child-parent relationship;
the right to protection by the State if unlawfully taken or kept abroad by a parent;
the right to freely express an opinion in all matters affecting her/him and to have that opinion taken into account;
the right to express views, and obtain and transmit ideas and information regardless of frontiers;
the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance;
the right to meet together with other children and join and form associations;
the right to protection from arbitrary and unlawful interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence, and from libel and slander;
the right of access to information and materials from a diversity of sources and of protection from harmful materials;
the right to benefit from child-rearing assistance and child-care services and facilities provided to parents/guardians by the State;
the right to protection from maltreatment by parents and others responsible for her/his care;

the right to special protection if s/he is temporarily or permanently deprived of her/his family environment, due regard being paid to her/his cultural background;
the right, in countries where adoption is allowed, to have it ensured that an adoption is carried out in her/his best interests;
the right, if a refugee, to special protection;
the right, if disabled, to special care, education and training to help her/him enjoy a full life in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and a full and active life in society;
the right to the highest standard of health and medical care attainable;
the right, if placed by the State for purposes of care, protection or treatment, to have all aspects of that placement regularly evaluated;
the right to benefit from social security;
the right to a standard of living adequate for her/his physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development;
the right to education, including free primary education. Discipline to be consistent with a child's human dignity;
the right to an education which prepares her/him for an active, responsible life as an adult in a free society which respects others and the environment;
the right, if a member of a minority community or indigenous people, to enjoy her/his own culture, to practice her/his own religion and use her/his own language;

the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and to participate in recreational, cultural and artistic activities;
the right to protection from economic exploitation and work that is hazardous, interferes with her/his education or harms her/his health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development;
the right to protection from narcotic drugs and from being involved in their production or distribution;
the right to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse;
the right to protection from being abducted, sold or trafficked;
the right to protection from all other forms of exploitation;
the right not to be subjected to torture or degrading treatment. If detained, not to be kept with adults, sentenced to death nor

imprisoned for life without the possibility of release. The right to legal assistance and contact with family;

the right, if below 15 years of age, not to be recruited into armed forces nor to engage in direct hostilities;

the right, if the victim of armed conflict, torture, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, to receive appropriate treatment for her/his physical and psychological recovery and reintegration into society;

the right, if accused or guilty of committing an offence, to age-appropriate treatment likely to promote her/his sense of dignity and worth and her/his reintegration as a constructive member of society;

the right to be informed of these principles and provisions by the state in which s/he lives;

the Convention has 54 Articles in all. Articles 41 to 54 are concerned with its implementation and entry into force

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly 20th November 1989