

Encounter Christianity KS2 Website

In Questions about Jesus

Spread 1 pages 2/3

Aims for the Book

- To introduce pupils to key events from the life of Jesus and the way in which these raise questions about the person of Jesus.
- To enable pupils to understand the importance of these events at the time of Jesus.
- To enable pupils to reflect on the relevance of these events for Christians today.
- To encourage pupils to raise questions about these events in the light of their own experience.

Learning Objectives

Pupils will

- Reflect on the joy and wonderment of birth and creation.
- understand that for Christians the birth of Jesus is hugely significant.
- Know that Christians believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

Background

- There are three accounts of Jesus birth in the Gospels. Two, in Luke and Mathew, are told in story form, although they are very different; the third, in John's Gospel, is different again. All three stories, however, make the point that Jesus is the Messiah, the 'Anointed One', who, in the promise given to the Jews by God, will come to bring about the Kingdom of God, a rule of peace and justice. That was God's promise and the angel, or messenger, appearing to the shepherds was telling them that the time had come and the promise was fulfilled

Bible References

Matthew 1.18 – 2.23, Luke 2.1-20, John 1.1-15

Ways of using the picture

- Talk with pupils about events surrounding a birth. What happens? How are the preparations made? Are there any family stories?
- Some births take place in remarkable circumstances. Why should the Messiah be born in a stable? Discuss Beryl Cook's painting.

Key Words

Greeting, Fun, Joy, Gift, Delight, Creation, Wonder, Special, Mood

You will need

- A collection of musical instruments
- Art materials

Activity

The Joy of Creation. Ask pupils to reflect on the picture and describe in sound (using musical instruments), colour (paint) and gesture (hand or body movements), the mood of the picture.

Ask pupils to explain why the mood might be so.

Explore the Christmas activities that fully catch this mood, .e.g. some carols and songs, lights, decorations and make a display of these ideas, in drawings, words and paintings. Biblical texts might be used from Luke's gospel expressing the wonderment of this birth for Christians.

Learning Outcomes

Pupils will :

- have had opportunities to experience and respond to feelings about birth and creation.
- be aware of the significance of the Christmas story for Christians.

Extension Work

Explore the wonder of birth and specialness of individuals. Each pupil can do a hand print or a digital photograph with other pupils making positive comments about their specialness. Challenge the pupils to compile one about Jesus.

Reflect and wonder about the 'nativity' story. Why were the lowly shepherds the first to hear the news of the birth of Jesus?.

Spread 2

Pages 4/5

Aims for the Book

- To introduce pupils to key events from the life of Jesus and the way in which these raise questions about the person of Jesus.
- To enable pupils to understand the importance of these events at the time of Jesus.
- To enable pupils to reflect on the relevance of these events for Christians today.
- To encourage pupils to raise questions about these events in the light of their own experience.

Learning Objectives

Pupils will

- recognize the power of light as a symbol for people of faith
- know that for Christians light is used as a symbol for Jesus.

Background

Christians are concerned to show that Jesus' coming was the fulfillment of God's promises. Simeon, an old and revered man, is the person who recognizes this very special baby for what he is and gives thanks to God, knowing he can now die happily in peace. He prophesies

that Mary and Joseph will experience pain and suffering in the years to come. Luke, the gospel writer, emphasizes that Jesus came for all people, not just the Jews. This is remembered in the Church calendar at Candlemas (2nd February) and ends the Christmas season.

Bible references

Luke 2. 25-35

Ways of using the picture

- Is there something special about babies that makes people think about the future and what kind of life they will have?
- What might Mary and Joseph have felt about being given warning of suffering on such a happy day

Key Words

Reflections, Shining, Hope, Power, Presence.

Activity

Challenge pupils to suggest ways of completely filling a room using very little money. Exchange ideas and wait for the suggestion of a candle, match etc. – some form of light. Demonstrate this in a darkened room.

Discuss how some people have a presence that enables them to fill or light up a room. Explore how they do this. Possible ideas might be laughter, physical attributes, song, joking, gentleness, calmness.

In relation to the stories known about Jesus why might Christians consider that Jesus might light up a room or the world?

Learning Outcomes

- Pupils will develop a greater understanding of why light is a symbol used by people of faith.
- Pupils will have a greater understanding of the way in which Christians use symbolic language when they describe Jesus as a light for the whole world.

Extension Work

Make a Christingle and explore the use of symbols. (see *Teaching Christianity at Key Stage 1, Owen G and Seaman A, The National Society, 1999, page 25*). Make links with the prophecy of Simeon that Jesus would be a light to the world. Pupils can create their own symbols to represent Jesus using a variety of media.

Spread 3 Pages 6/7

Aims for the Book

- To introduce pupils to key events from the life of Jesus and the way in which these raise questions about the person of Jesus.
- To enable pupils to understand the importance of these events at the time of Jesus.
- To enable pupils to reflect on the relevance of these events for Christians

- To encourage pupils to raise questions about these events in the light of their own experience today.

Learning Objectives

- To help pupils recognize the influence that people exert on each other.
- To help pupils recognize the importance of dialogue.

Background

Jesus was, of course, Jewish and it was natural that he and his parents would go to the temple to celebrate Passover. This is the great festival remembering the Israelites escape from Egypt led by Moses. The story depicts Jesus as a remarkable youth whose parents don't understand who or what he really is. He is, even in his youth, able to engage religious leaders in debate and the Temple in Jerusalem is his spiritual home. He has earthly parents, Mary and Joseph, but already he speaks about his 'Father in heaven' and says he must be about 'my Father's business'. They find him on the third day, prefiguring his death and resurrection.

Bible reference

Luke 2, 41-52

Ways of using the picture

- Discuss with the pupils how we learn from each other.
- Were Jesus parents' careless not to miss him for so long?
- Discuss why the Temple, destroyed in 70 CE, was such an important place for Jews, There was only one Temple so why was Jesus drawn to it?
- What do you find most interesting about V.S. Masoji's picture?

Key Words

Dialogue, Company, Discussion, Enthralled, Comfortable, Influence.

Activity

Reflect and discuss with the pupils who are the significant influences in their lives.

Discuss the situations in which they are most comfortable and at ease for example, where and with whom.

Pupils can draw a similar picture to that shown on page 6 of the situation in their own experience which they feel 'at home'. What is being said by whom? Who listens?

Set up a role play. Wonder at what might be being said in this picture by Jesus and the scholars.

Learning Outcomes

Pupils will have reflected on the influences in their lives and with whom they feel most comfortable.

Pupils will be aware of the way in which both pupils and teachers learn from each other.

Pupils will know that in Luke's Gospel, Jesus was shown to be a remarkable person with very special qualities.

Extension

Dialogue and exchange of views is important in Judaism. Group pupils – put a question or Biblical quotation in the centre of a large sheet of paper. (You could use some of the questions posed in this book or extracts from the Bible references)
In groups, pupils discuss the meaning of the text and then write their individual views on the sheet. This large sheet could then be passed to the next group in order that they can add their understandings having the benefit of the views of the previous group – keep passing it on. Reflect on the helpfulness of this in understanding writings.

Spread 4 Pages 8/9

Aims for the Book

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- To encourage pupils to raise questions about these events in the light of their own experience.

Learning Objectives

Pupils will:

- Develop understanding of the mixed emotions brought about by pressure from others to act as they want you to.
- Develop self assurance
- Show empathy for Jesus through exploring the events of the Temptation

Background

The temptation story touches on a number of Bible stories. Forty is a powerful number. Noah watched it rain for forty days and nights and the Israelites were in the wilderness for forty years before entering the Promised Land. Jesus' forty days was a time of reflection and preparation before he began his mission. He too was in the wilderness, like Israel. He used the time to reflect on how he should carry out God's promise once his ministry started. He rejected the temptations of the devil who invited him to perform wonders: turn stones to bread; throw himself off the pinnacle of the Temple; bow down to the devil in return for receiving the Kingdom of the world..

Bible references

Luke 4. 1-13, Matthew 4. 1-11, Mark 1. 12-13

Ways of using the picture

- Reflect with the pupils on how they think about and plan for the future.
- Read the story of the Temptation. What was Jesus trying to reject? Do the pupils think of the devil as a real person? Or was it all happening in Jesus mind? Use Stanley Spencer's painting to start the discussion.
- What temptations do the pupils have? Do they, can they, control them?

Key words

Temptation, resist, devil, true, miracles, pure, deny, honest, modest

Activity

Study closely the expression on the face of Jesus in the painting by Stanley Spencer. Discuss why his face is presented like this.

Read the Bible extract in full to appreciate Jesus' modesty and composure. Pupils can consider times when they have had to remain composed and resist showing off or boasting. Design a set of story boards which show the events in the five scenes in the story. Using these graphics, devise a mime to show each episode of the story from Jesus' viewpoint. Extend beyond mime to use music instead of body movements to capture the feelings of Jesus.

Learning Outcomes

Pupils will have:

Produced a story board, set to music, that reflects the feelings Jesus may have experienced through the Temptation narrative.

Extension

Pupils can explore the many influences on their own behaviour and the responsibility to themselves and others to be true to themselves.

Spread 5, Pages 10 - 11

Aims for the Book

- To introduce pupils to key events from the life of Jesus and the way in which these raise questions about the person of Jesus.
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- To encourage pupils to raise questions about these events in the light of their own experience.

Learning Objectives

Pupils will

- Recognize the importance of Jesus for Christians as the Son of God
- Be introduced to the terms 'anoint' and 'Messiah' and the meaning of these for Christians
- Begin to recognize acts of humility
- Develop empathy for others and appreciate the views of others.

Background

Any anointing in the Gospels has two immediate points of reference: (a) the word 'Messiah' means anointed so there is an implication that Jesus is the Messiah; (b) dead bodies were anointed before burial so there is a direct reference to Jesus death. Mary recognized who Jesus was, respecting him and acting as his servant. Jesus recognized her action and praised her. It is, however, a difficult story for many Christians who wonder if Mary is doing the correct thing. Perhaps the meaning is: love God first – then your neighbour and those in need.

Bible references

Matthew 26. 6-13, Mark 14. 3 – 9, John 12.1-8

Ways of using the picture

- Discuss the various ways in which we show respect for each other.
- Why was it not time to give the money to the poor? What do you think Jesus meant? Do you agree with him?
- Mary was using expensive oil. What do you think that meant to her? What was she saying to Jesus?
- What is the artist Wu Yuen-Kwei, illustrating in this scene? What are all the people saying?

Key words

Anoint, Messiah, Saviour, humility, humble, love, respect, servant.

Activity

Read the text of page 11 together as a class. Explain any new terms. Study the graphic and consider how the different characters felt about Mary's behaviour.

In groups, freeze frame the action to explain how the characters felt after witnessing this event,

Individually, consider Mary's actions and how she shows humility in Jesus presence.

Compose an abstract poem in which each line identifies a metaphorical expression to explain humility. For example:

First line as a colour ... Humility is white
Second line as an animal... It is a timid mouse
Third line as a feeling... It is an inner strength and confidence
Fourth line as a taste... It is a melting Galaxy Bar
Fifth line is where it lives... It lives in the hearts of all people

Learning Outcomes

Pupils will through drama and poetry demonstrated understanding and empathy for the people in this story.

Pupils will have had the opportunity to recognize acts of humility.

Pupils will know how to use the terms ' Messiah' and 'Son of God' in their appropriate context of Christian beliefs about Jesus.

Extension

Pupils can find out in which rites of passage anointing takes place. Consider why the tradition has been upheld and what the action symbolizes.

Spread 6 Pages 12-13

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Learning Objectives

Pupils will:

- develop empathy with different characters in the story of the Prodigal Son.
- Draw on their own experiences and relate these to this parable
- Express their views clearly in oral and symbolic forms

Background

Jesus used parables to teach – but to teach what? Is it: the forgiveness of the father; the penitence and humility of the son; the resentfulness of the brother; the futility of riches; money can't buy friendship? Try not to worry about the meaning and explore some of the feelings pupils imagine the story's characters might have had. Stories are always interpreted in different ways in different times and places. The sculptor, Solomon Saprid, captures the anguish of the returning son.

Bible reference

Luke 15.11-32

Ways of using the picture

- Ask the pupils which character attracts them most/least
- Which character to the pupils have most sympathy with, and why?
- Can the pupils associate themselves with any character in the story? Can they see something of themselves in every character?

Key words

Forgiving, lost, redemption found, greed, jealous, forgiveness, parable, welcome, family, share, relationship

You will need

Modeling materials e.g. clay, platicene

Activity

To forgive or not to forgive? That is the question.

Pupils could re-enact the story to develop empathy with the characters. Each group could produce a script for a radio play with directions and sound (this will ensure familiarity with the story).

Regroup the pupils so that all the 'son' characters are together, all the 'father' characters are together and likewise the 'returning sons'.

Each group could then prepare their case for whether the father in the story should forgive his returning son.

Hold a class debate on the issue using pupils as spokespeople and jury, encouraging all to vote in the end.

Assessment opportunities

Pupils could record their learning by producing their own sculpted image of the character with whom they have most sympathy (in clay or plasticine) and explain reasons for their choice.

Learning Outcomes

Pupils will:

Have familiarized themselves with the parable of the Prodigal Son and reflected on the role of the different characters in the story

Have debated the actions of the characters in the story

Have produced figures which represent characters from the story.

Extension

Could consider times in their own lives when they have had to go 'cap in hand' and ask for support

Spread 7 pages 14-15

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Learning Objectives

Pupils will

- recognise the value of gifts both great and small.
- Consider the value of the gift of love and giving one's self when material gifts and money are not available.

Background

Much of Jesus teaching is concerned with wealth and riches. The implication is that money can obscure the wealth of riches that will come to one who is obedient to God's will. The widow gave every thing she had to God. She held nothing back, unlike the wealthy who only give part of themselves. Jesus criticizes those people who pretend – the wealthy and some religious teachers. They are more concerned with themselves than with God.

Bible references

Luke 21. 1-4, Mark 12.41-44

Ways of using the picture

- Discuss whether it is possible to give up everything
- In the story what was Jesus really talking about? Was it just money or what is in one's heart?
- It can be easy to give 'things'. What would be most difficult for the pupils to give, including feelings and emotions?
- Read Judith Nicholls' poem carefully. Encourage the pupils to write their own poem on 'Giving things up'.

Key words.

Gift, love, forgiveness, friendship, money, wealth, possessions, cost, sacrifice.

Activity

Discuss the poem with the pupils (enlarged for whole class/group use) and record their understanding of it.

Write down the children's key phrases/words or times when the children have given something important away or gave their time supporting someone else.

Discuss the amount the poor widow gave and talk about this in relation to the pupils' own pocket money. i.e. if a child had £1 and gave it all away to do good for someone else, they would be giving away 100%. The rich people in Jesus' story did not give away 100%. Is it always possible to do that? Why not? Why is that impossible sometimes? When are people in a position that requires them to give of their all?

Discuss times that the children offer. Prompt with examples of

- 1) Parents of a sick child.
- 2) Brothers and sisters helping each other e.g. siblings who give their bone marrow to help save a life, and thereby putting their own lives at risk.
- 3) The story of Ruth and Naomi from the Bible.

4. Acts of sacrifice and bravery, e.g. Grace Darling (see in Journeys about Jesus pages 22-23). The commitment of Aid Workers eg Medecins Sans Frontiers, Christian Aid.

Discuss the event of Jesus' death and that Christians believe that this was the ultimate sacrifice for their salvation.

Discuss the work of all emergency services, Police, ambulance, fire rescue, life guard, nurses, doctors, rescue workers. Discuss the ways in which they are seen to sacrifice their lives for the good of others. List these on white board as each key feature is raised by the children.

Learning Outcomes.

Pupils will

- know about the 'gift of giving' of ourselves, and of material gifts
- know about the Christian story of Jesus' sacrifice, his death on the Cross and they will know that others have given their lives to help others.
- be aware of the 'gift of giving' of ones life in a different way, i.e. charity worker, work of the emergency services.

Extension work.

Write a poem about what you would give to a needy friend/sick relative/sick animal/ unhappy school mate. The poem might reflect what you would do to help in what ways you would give.

Write a short piece about loving someone and what you would give them.

Research the activities of aid workers who are "in the front line" This could be done on the internet or you could invite an aid worker into school.

Spread 8 Pages16-17

Aims for the Book

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- To encourage pupils to raise questions about these events in the light of their own experience.

Learning Objectives

Pupils will

- Explore the teaching of Jesus in the 'Sermon on the Mount'.
- Consider the relevance of Jesus' teaching for life today.
- Know that Christians are challenged by Jesus commandments.

Background

A great deal of Jesus ethical teaching is collected together in the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Level Plain. Both sermons say that God's rule, the Kingdom of God, can only come if people are prepared to put God first. They must love God because then everything else falls into place; only then can one love one's neighbour. Jesus says people

should not be worried about what will happen in the future because they will be looked after and cared for by God. Jesus' teaching would be familiar to his hearers because it was largely traditional Jewish teaching.

Ways of using the picture

- 'Do for others just what you want them to do for you' (Matthew 7.12) Why is it so hard to follow this simple rule?
- Discuss with the pupils their motives for doing 'good deeds'. Is it ultimately self-interest or is there something else?

Key Words

Forgiveness, thought, unconditional, enemies, value, love, sacrifice, understanding.

Activity

Discuss the picture and text with the pupils.

Focus on the questions, especially the second one, 'Is it possible to love people who don't like you?'. Think about the times when the pupils feel that someone has wronged them. What was their reaction? Share experiences. Discuss how the pupils felt. Talk about how they feel now after the event and prompt the pupils to say whether or not they forgive the person.

Discuss the meaning of forgiveness. What actions would someone have to take to never be forgiven by their friends or their community/society? A murderer/thief/terrorist
Discuss that sometimes it is hard to forgive, but a helpful way forward is to love that person, as is also trying to understand the reason for their action.

If it is appropriate, sensitively discuss the events of September 11th.

Discuss cases in the news such as the Enniskillen bombing where a father lost his daughter, then, inspired by his belief in God and in spite his grief, he continued afterwards to promote forgiveness and peace in Northern Ireland.

Instigate a class debate about a human dilemma, where one panel/body of thought could represent the views of the 'forgivers' and the other panel/body of thought would represent the views of the 'unforgiving'.

Learning outcomes

Pupils will:

Recognise the challenges of Jesus teaching
Have had the opportunity to debate some human dilemmas
Have explored some of Jesus' teachings in relation to their own experience.

Extension work

Discuss why the crowd on the Mount of Olives would have been so interested to hear Jesus' teaching about how to live their lives. Find out about the different ways in which people today find guidance for daily life. This could include researching both religious and non-religious viewpoints.

Spread 9 pages 18-19

Aims for the Book

- To introduce pupils to key events from the life of Jesus and the way in which these raise questions about the person of Jesus.
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- To enable pupils to reflect on the relevance of these events for Christians today.
- To encourage pupils to raise questions about these events in the light of their own experience.

Learning objectives

Pupils will

- explore the character of Judas in the story of Jesus' betrayal
- Consider feelings of betrayal and make links with their own experience.

Background

Judas is usually regarded as the 'treasurer' of the disciples and is occasionally cast in a poor light. It is not clear why he betrayed Jesus. Perhaps he wanted to force Jesus' hand and make him do a fantastic miracle; perhaps he was disillusioned; perhaps he had a quick impulsive temperament. Perhaps, most important of all, he was a bit like us, frightened, concerned, unable to be brave – a bit like Peter. Things got out of hand and so he threw away the money and he killed himself.

Bible references

Luke 22. 47 – 53, Matthew 26. 47 – 56: 27. 3 – 9, Mark 14. 43 – 50, John 18. 3 – 11

Ways of using the picture

- Discuss with the pupils why they think Judas may have betrayed Jesus.
- Judas is always regarded as a bad person. Do you agree? Why? What would you have done if you were Judas?
- Ask the pupils to express in writing how they feel when they are betrayed – or betray!

Key words

fear/afraid, authority, regret, peer pressure, betray, 'to make a stand for something', betrayal, betrayal

Activity

Discuss the situation in which Judas found himself; the reasons why Judas might have acted the way he did.

Discuss when we might have betrayed someone and the feeling associated with that action of betrayal; why did we betray them, did we feel pressured to go with the crowd?

Discuss when we have felt betrayed and the feelings associated with that betrayal. Why did that person betray us? Could we forgive them in an understanding of their point of view? Or is the act of betrayal beyond our forgiveness?

Look carefully at the painting on page 18. Make a list of the words to describe the emotions in the different faces. Working in groups, use these ideas for each group to create either a poem or a short piece of drama or mime entitled 'The Betrayal'.

Learning Outcomes

- (i) Pupils will be able to discuss the act of betrayal from their viewpoint or the viewpoint of others.
- (ii) Pupils will be able to discuss the issues surrounding Judas betrayal of Jesus.

Extension Work

How do the pupils think Jesus responded to Judas? Did Judas receive forgiveness?

Consider the old saying of "running with the foxes and hunting with the hounds". Write a poem or story about how it feels to run with the crowd and do what the majority want from you and then how it feels to run against the crowd and be in a position of a minority where you may have to stand up firmly for what you believe to be right.

Discuss the concept of fear of rejection of our friends and seeking approval from those whose opinion we value/want to impress.

Spread ten - pages 20-21

Aims for the Book

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- To encourage pupils to raise questions about these events in the light of their own experience.

Learning objectives

Pupils will

- consider extremes of human emotion, and
- understand the sadness of Jesus' friends on Good Friday.

Background

Mary, the mother of Jesus, gave birth to him and over thirty years later, she watches him die in public, slowly and in great pain. He is executed as a common criminal. Supported by female friends at the foot of the cross, it must have been the lowest point of her life. She may have believed Jesus to be the Son of God but, he was her son, dying in such a dreadful manner. Christians identify with the anguish felt by Mary as she watched her son die on the cross. Her trust and faith in God inspires Christian commitment. Stemming from this, within some Christian traditions, Mary is the most revered of all the saints.

Bible references

John 19. 25 – 27, Luke 23. 48 – 49 Mark 15. 40 – 41, Matthew 27. 55 – 56

Ways of using the picture

- Discuss what feelings and emotions may have been experienced by Mary as she watched Jesus die. Start by looking at Elizalde Navarro's painting.
- Write a poem after collecting words that express the anxiety of the women.
- Discuss why the pupils think women were at the foot of the cross but few, if any male disciples. Why women

Key words

- Sadness
- Despair
- Dejection
- Anguish
- Distress
- Crying
- Darkness

- Helplessness
- Hopelessness
- Devotion

Activity

In a quiet and comfortable setting such as circle time, share examples of times of extreme human emotion: joy and happiness / sadness and sorrow. Try to keep the conversation as impersonal as the children want to make it, being sensitive to specific circumstances and family situations. Be guided by the children as the depth they wish to go when sharing such subjects as the death of a pet or a public figure such as Princess Diana, or when there is a national disaster. Contrast these with the highs of a birthday treat or a 'trip of a lifetime' to Disneyland, or the feeling they have when they wake up on Christmas morning.

Listen to suitably 'haunting' music that sets a sad or sombre reflective mood

e.g. Handel's *Largo*
 Barber's *Adagio for Strings*
 Elgar's *Nimrod*
 Gluck's *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*

Whilst listening and looking at the painting of Mary and her friends (page 20), encourage the children to talk about the *colour*, the *shape*, and the *rhythm* of sadness and despair. In talking, help them to really feel the mood and empathise with the feelings of the women in the picture.

Paint or draw a picture, make a collage, individually or in groups, to symbolise despair and grieving. It could well be abstract, thinking of the colours and shapes representing the desolate mood and emotional anguish represented in the women's faces.

In small groups and using suitably sounding instruments, compose a simple piece of rhythm that is 'in tune' with Mary's feelings after the death of her son, when she must surely have been inconsolable. Talk about how, very often, people lose themselves in a piece of music or in looking at a painting, when they find that they are too upset to talk or to share themselves with others at a sad time. How might this give them some comfort?

Pupils could share their music and artwork with others in a suitable occasion by performing the Bible readings to a backdrop of the pictures and mood music that they have composed.

Back in the intimacy of a circle time, share ideas about the despair Jesus' friends must have felt when they thought that it was all over on Good Friday. How could they have supported each other and those who had known and loved Jesus? How can we 'be there' for other people when they need us most?

Learning outcomes

Pupils will

- recognise the power of music to create and enhance mood as well as to comfort and console, and
- have shared in something of the sadness experienced by Christians on Good Friday.

Extension work

As a witness to Jesus' death, write an entry for your diary, or a letter to a friend who wasn't present when Jesus was crucified. Describe the mood and the your feelings as you watched and your feeling of emptiness at the end of the day.

In contrast, imagine the newspaper headlines that night, both from the point of view of

- the Jews, and
- their Roman keepers.

Spread eleven - pages 22-23

Aims for the Book

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Learning objectives

Pupils will

- recognise that there are some things that we cannot prove, and
- consider the power of important events in our lives.

Background

Thomas was called Didymus – the twin. He may have been a real twin but he may also represent the ambiguity of human nature. Seeing is believing and touching is confirmation!

Thomas was the person who would not believe until he received a personal experience of the risen Christ; he didn't accept the words of others. He has passed into the English Language as Doubting Thomas. Yet when he saw for himself, he didn't need to touch and doubts flew away.

Bible reference

John 20. 24 – 29

Ways of using the picture

- Discuss with pupils how and why we believe something.

- What helps us decide whether we can believe someone or not? Is it because we know and trust them? Did Thomas trust the disciples?
- We do believe some things we cannot prove ourselves – what sorts of things do we believe?
- Discuss the mood and atmosphere in Michael Smither's painting.

Key words

- Doubting
- Questioning
- Concrete proof
- Trust
- Belief
- Sureness
- Truth
- Evidence
- Resurrection

Activity

Discuss "What is Truth?" How do we know, can we test, what we believe to be True? Using science as an example, talk about testing a theory or hypothesis. Can we test religious beliefs in the same way?

"Seeing is believing" -

"The camera never lies" -

Can we say these things nowadays?

How about the world of virtual reality?

Look at 'magic eye' pictures, optical illusions and see how what we see can be deceptive. Can we **always** believe our eyes? What **can** we believe? When we use our senses? Sight? Touch?

Play a feely-bag game and try to identify something just by touch, without seeing it, and read the story of *The Blind Men and the Elephant*. Do we always rely on our senses to make sense of the world? Is that a safe way of knowing what is real? Where does belief and trust come in?

Thomas wanted to see and touch Jesus for himself, but in the event, he **knew** the Truth when he saw it.

Play some 'trust' games in pairs or small groups:

- Blindfold a partner and lead them round the playground or school field.

- Close your eyes and fall backwards, trusting your partner to catch you.

Can we always trust our friends? How well do we have to know them before we trust them fully? Do we always know when someone is telling the truth? Can we always believe what people say to us? Can we believe those in our family? Our teacher? Our friends? How important is Truth in our lives?

Belief is the way you interpret the evidence.

Present the pupils with a set of facts and a set of beliefs,

e.g. "The walls are blue."

"All people should be treated as equals."

Ask them to discuss which are the more important - facts or beliefs?

Learning outcomes

Pupils will

- consider influences in their lives which might change their beliefs, and
- recognise the value of Truth.

Extension work

Show the two-minute extract from the film *Contact* with Jodie Foster where she is asked, "Did you love your father? Prove it!" How could you prove you care for someone? How would they know that you love them?

How could you describe God - the unseen? How could we "see" God?

Spread twelve - pages 24-25

Aims for the Book

- To introduce pupils to key events from the life of Jesus and the way in which these raise questions about the person of Jesus.
- To enable pupils to understand the importance of these events at the time of Jesus.
- To enable pupils to reflect on the relevance of these events for Christians today.
- To encourage pupils to raise questions about these events in the light of their own experience.

Learning objectives

Pupils will

- understand the symbolism of the sharing of bread and wine for Christians, and
- explore their hopes for the future.

Background

Many Christians, feel the close presence of Jesus, not in a personal revelation or experience, but in the Lord's Supper (often called the Eucharist, Mass Holy Communion or the Breaking of Bread). In the act of sharing of bread and wine Christians remember the Last Supper Jesus shared with his disciples where he asked them to 'do this in remembrance of me'. It is, for Christians, proof of the resurrection – that Jesus lives on in the bread (Jesus' body) and wine

(Jesus' blood). Salvador Dali shows the Christian belief that Jesus is present whenever they gather to share bread and wine.

Bible reference

Matthew 26. 26-30, Mark 14. 22-26, Luke 22. 14-23, 1 Corinthians 11. 23-25

Ways of using the picture

- How do families (and schools) remember special events and special people?
- Sharing a meal is an important social event. What do the pupils think Christians take from the sharing of bread and wine in the memory of Jesus.
- With the pupils, organize a simulation of the Eucharist (or invite in a friendly Minister) and look at the meaning of, and symbolism used in, the ritual.

Key words

- Mystery
- Symbolism
- Sharing
- Eucharist
- Holy Communion
- Bread and wine
- Body and blood
- Remembrance
- Salvation
- Eternal life

Activity

As a class, discuss times of shared celebration and remembrance such as birthdays, anniversaries and festivals. Contrast these happy occasions with those that are associated with feelings of sadness.

Ask the pupils to think about someone very special to them. How do you remember them? What difference does this remembering make to you? Perhaps if a member of your family was going away for a long time, you might decide to have a special family celebration or meal that you will all remember. Talk about the last time Jesus met with his friends the night before he died, and how He asked them to remember him after he had left them. Each time they broke bread and drank wine they were reminded of the Last Supper they had shared together and of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. This is why Easter is the most important festival and the happiest time of the year for Christians.

Use an extract from *Badger's Parting Gifts* by Susan Varley. Read how, although badger was no longer with his friends, he had given each of them a special memory of him. He wanted them to help each other using these gifts.

Discuss the joy and the mystery of the resurrection for the disciples and the Christian belief that Jesus is present with his followers every time they break bread together.

Plan an Easter menu for a special celebratory Christian meal, explaining the symbolism of the food. Remember that the colours of Easter are white and gold (yellow) - the colours of new

life. Design a tablecover that reflects the importance of the celebration. Use candles to add to the atmosphere.

Bake some Hot Cross Buns. The ingredients symbolise Jesus' death:

currants - nails

spices - bitter tears and sadness

cross - crucifixion

Conversely, the yellow Simnel cake, baked for Easter day, celebrates new life.

Make a loaf of bread to share. (Links could be made with the Key Stage 2 Big Book pages 10 – 11 - All Change Rap) What happens to the loaf in the process? Compare this with the yeast-less (unleavened) bread that Jesus would have eaten at Passover. Find out if it keeps fresher for longer than ordinary bread. Why did Jesus talk about himself as bread?

Share the meal together in a circle time. Choose one child to represent Jesus and break the bread to pass around in a basket. Is this different from eating individual rolls? Bring some red grape juice to represent the wine.

Eucharist is a special celebration 'meal' for the Christian 'family'. Ask a member of the clergy to show the children how s(he) prepares the table for the Eucharist and the special objects used - chalice, paten, candles. The word Eucharist comes from the Greek word *eucharisto* meaning 'thanksgiving' and during this service, Christians say thank you to God for sending his Son to be their Saviour. The bread and the wine used in the Eucharist help Jesus to come alive for people today and bring Christians closer to God. Some Christians call this service Holy Communion because the word 'communion' means 'joining together'. Is it important for Christians to meet together as a family?

Ask the children to reflect on the concept of 'new starts'. Think about the opportunities for new starts in their own lives and compare this to Eastertime. So just as spring gives rise to feelings of joy and hope as the apparently dead world is reborn, so also out of disappointment, despair and even death can come hope and a fresh start.

Why do people say, "We live in hope"? Explore with the children some of their wishes for their own future. Make a display of work "My hope is"

Learning outcomes

Pupils will

- have celebrated a shared meal, and
- know the Christian symbols of the Eucharist.

Extension work

Christians believe that death is not the end. Death is seen as a beginning - entering on a new life. They believe Jesus' resurrection and teachings can guide and inform their lives today. Read poetry and prose, e.g. the *Narnia Chronicles* which convey a message about Christian beliefs in eternal life.

As a group, record on tape your joint hopes and dreams for the future of the world. Make a class poem out of this wish list.

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

The National Society sponsored the publication of *Encounter Christianity*. Have a look at their web site at <http://www.natsoc.org.uk> to find out more about their work.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the National Society for Promoting Religious Education. The header features the organization's name and logo, along with contact information: Church House Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ, Reg Charity No. 313070, and the website URL www.natsoc.org.uk. A tagline reads "leading education with Christian purpose".

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- THE SOCIETY:** A navigation menu with links for About us, Contacts, Join, Give, History, Archives, and Links.
- SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, COLLEGES, PARISHES, PARENTS, DIOCESES, DOWNLOADS, HELP:** A vertical list of categories.
- SEND AN EMAIL:** A button with the phone number 020 7898 1518.
- Help us to make sure this web site meets your needs:** A call to action for user feedback.
- Church of England secondary school provision:** A news item about the increase in secondary schools since 2002.
- Building Church schools for the future:** A news item about government plans to renew secondary school buildings by 2015.
- New book! Worship as Simple as Possible:** A news item about a new book by Susan Murrell.
- Education Sunday 8 February 2004:** A news item about the Education Sunday leaflet for 2004.
- SEARCH:** A search bar with a "Go" button.
- QUICK LINKS:** A list of links to various resources, including "COLLECTIVE WORSHIP from Culham and the NS", "National Society News Issue 20 online now", "Culham Institute report on school leadership: Becoming Fit for Purpose", "Christian Character: Developing an Anglican ethos in independent schools", "National Society seeks Honorary Treasurer", "Workforce agreement day conference Friday 27 February 2004", "Notes to support The Challenge of a Lifetime", and "Round-up of recent news".
- Last updated:** 11.12.02

The National Society

- provides a wealth of resources, inspiration and information for Church schools (and others worldwide) on the free-access web site www.natsoc.org.uk (including material from the former subscription only site) for which there is an ambitious development plan;
- co-owns a joint venture company with the Government, Partnerships for Church of England Schools, to unlock public and private funds for the rebuilding of Church of England schools;
- is supporting the implementation of Lord Dearing's 2001 review of Church schools (for the complete text, see www.natsoc.org.uk) which it helped fund along with the associated video *The Challenge of a Lifetime* (available on loan from diocesan offices);
- is revising the inspection system for Church schools (under Section 23 of the 1996 Act) and in 2004 will publish and implement a new inspection framework with training and fresh registration of Church school inspectors (inspection reports and an annual review of school improvement will be on the web site);
- will continue to think creatively to support and improve Church school education.

For further information please visit our web site at <http://www.natsoc.org.uk>