Simply Collective Worship

Cycle 2
(Part of a 4-year cycle)

Wanting, Waiting and Weathering the Weather



Assemblies and thoughts for the day

for 7-11 year olds

By Phil Lord

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1.1 Attitude And Ambition

Preparation

Bookmark Matthew 13:1-23 or download the video 'The Parable of the Sower and the seeds' (2m 56s)

http://www.max7.org/en/resource/ParableSower videos can be downloaded on memory sticks and kept as a permanent resource in the school courtesy of www.max7.org

It is currently the time when farmers are busy harvesting their crops. It is amazing that just a few months ago the farmer sowed just a tiny seed and now, after being looked after by the farmer, is being collected and will feed many of us.

Possibly show a couple of seeds and the final harvested crops (e.g. sweetcorn etc...). Ask pupils for examples of the various crops that are harvested.

Either you or a pupil read the story below or from a children's bible.

(Taken from Matthew 13:1-23)

Jesus told a few stories about seeds. In one he explained that a farmer was sowing seeds in his fields. The story describes how the seeds fell on different types of ground. Seeds fell on the path, on the rocky ground, amongst the weeds and finally on the good soil. Each seed had a different experience. The seed that fell on the path was eaten up quickly by birds. The seed that fell on rocky soil grew quickly but because there wasn't much moisture in the earth, the heat of the sun quickly shrivelled them up and they



died. The seed that fell amongst the weeds again grew quickly, but of course weeds grow quicker and choked the plants so again they didn't last long. Finally, many of the seeds were sown in the good soil producing a good crop of thirty, sixty or one hundred times what was sown.

If you have downloaded the video from www.max7.org show it now.

A parable is the name given to a story told by Jesus to illustrate an important message or explain a difficult lesson. The parable of the sower was used to explain what people might do with important pieces of advice. In this parable, the seed is an important message about how Christians should think and act. The different places the seed fell are the different ways in which people act on the advice they are given. Every piece of advice we are given is like a small seed. This parable reminds us, that even if we are given good advice, it doesn't automatically make our lives better, we need to do something with that advice.

At the beginning of a school year and throughout our time at school many seeds will be planted. That seed may be a fact that a teacher may give you, a skill that you need to master or an instruction that you

need to listen to. It may be a homework or school value (like caring). School will provide us with many seeds today and throughout the year. ***Ask pupils to give you examples of a 'school seed'.*** In the story that Jesus told us, he reminds us that for a seed to be successful and produce good things it needs to be sown on good soil. When explaining the parable, Jesus compares the different types of ground to different attitudes that people have. Over the next few days we will explore how important our attitude is to ensure that we all get the most out of the 'school seeds' sown throughout the year.

Read this section if you have a school motto. What is our school motto? Our school motto is a statement that we use to help us to think about what is important in our school. Our school motto contains seeds that we want to see grow in the life of our school. What do we need for our school motto to become part of the life of our school? The reason those qualities will be seen in the life of our school is because we try to live out those values in our choices and the way we work together.

Time to reflect

- What are some of the seeds that we will receive at school today?
- What type of ground do you want to be?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

It is important at this time of year that we think about what we want to achieve this year at school. Help us to become the type of person that will enable these good seeds we receive at school to become all that they can be. *(Amen)*



1.2 The Path

Yesterday we heard the parable of the sower. ***Ask the pupils to recount the four types of ground that the seeds fell on, and ask what the seeds could represent in school.*** The first type of ground that the seeds fell on was the path. A path is hard and cold, not a good place to help seeds to grow. In the parable, Jesus said that the birds came and ate the seeds. Firstly, the seeds were not able to start growing. Sometimes we are given a seed by a teacher or another important adult at school or at home and we decide that we are not going to do it. Make your bed, be nice to your little sister, learn your 8 times table, research the Celts… these are all good and important seeds, but if you decide that you are not going to do it the moment you hear it, it's like a seed that has fallen on the path. It isn't even given the chance to grow. Secondly Jesus said that the birds came and ate the seeds. If we decide that we are not going to do whatever the seed represents then they won't last long. We only have one chance to do something for the first time! If we get a second chance it's because someone knows what is best for us, but it doesn't mean we'll always get a second chance. Don't be like the path.

Time to reflect

- What would the school be like if everyone acted like the path?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Thank you that every day there are seeds to help us grow. Help us not to be like the path, help us to be positive and see that they will produce good things in our lives, in our school and in our homes. *(Amen)*



1.3 The Rocky Soil

Recount the types of ground and ask pupils to explain what the path represents. The second type of ground that Jesus described was the rocky soil. The seeds that fell on the rocky soil could grow quickly. There was just enough soil to ensure a positive start and the seeds sprouted and grew. Do you ever get given homework or the title of a new project and are really enthusiastic about it at first? You plan a complicated cardboard model and a fantastic acrylic piece of artwork with flashing lights and a moving centre piece. You even start to research it on the internet. The deadline is a week away and you know you have plenty of time to complete it. However, it's the morning of the day the project needs to be handed in and you've not started it, the pieces are all over the floor at the end of your bed. You get up and print off a page from a website you've found called 'Celts for kids'. It's not gone as you'd planned. That is like the seed in the rocky soil, it started well, with the intention of growing big and strong, but there isn't much moisture in the rocky soil and soon enough the growing stops and the sun makes the plant wither and die until what is left is a shrivelled up good intention.

School seeds, like real seeds, need our time and effort for them to grow big and strong. Our attitude and the effort we have will ultimately decide if and how the seeds will grow. Don't be the rocky soil, give it as much effort as you can.

Time to reflect

- Can you think of a time when you were like the rocky soil?
- How can we ensure that we put in enough effort? (Good friendships, good attitudes?)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Thank you for the times when we have good ideas, we ask that you would help us to have the energy and effort to see it through to the end. Help us to make the most of the seeds that are given to us today. *(Amen)*



1.4 The Thorns

Recount the types of ground and ask pupils to explain what the path and the rocky soil represents. The third type of ground can be found in all schools, places of work and occasionally everybody's thoughts. The seed fell amongst thorns and weeds. They are like the seed in the rocky soil, it started to grow quickly and enthusiastically but the weeds and the thorns grew as well. The weeds took away what was needed for the seed to grow, the weeds used the moisture in the soil, they grew taller and left the small plants in the shade, they grew stronger and quicker strangling the life out of our little shoots. How often do you have a seed that is taken away because of what someone has said to you. It might be "you're not good enough!" or "you'll never be able to do that!" Like the thorns and weeds those words start to strangle the good intentions and the effort that you had and that seed dies. The seed might be a school value, you might want to show 'care' to a child who is on their own in the playground, but one of your classmates will take the micky out of you if you help. The weeds choke the good thought and the child in the playground is left lonely. Don't let the words and actions of others stop you from doing the right thing or being who you should be. Don't be the thorn in someone else's world.

Time to reflect

- What school values do you have that you need to ensure aren't being strangled out?
- How can you ensure that you do the right thing today?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Help us today to take no notice of those that want to discourage us from doing the right thing, and forgive us for the times when we have discouraged others. *(Amen)*



1.5 The Good Soil

Recount the types of ground and ask pupils to explain what the path, rocky soil and thorns represents. The final type of ground that Jesus described was the good soil. How important it is that seeds should fall on 'good soil'. This type of ground had everything the seed needed to grow big and strong. The good soil had enough room for the seeds to spread out, enough moisture and nutrients to ensure that the seeds were healthy. If you were a seed wouldn't you be happy that you fell on the good soil? Not only did the seeds grow and become healthy plants but they were able to produce more seeds. Jesus said some produced thirty, some sixty and some one hundred times that which was sown. The difference between the types of ground made a big difference in what the plants finally produced. So far we have explored the three types of ground that can ruin the 'school seeds' from growing. The perfect environment for a school seed to thrive is if we decide that it is important, if we feed the seed with our time, energy and effort. The farmer in the story threw the seeds and that is similar to us at school and home, seeds are coming at us thick and fast. The only ones that will grow are the ones we choose to let grow. School values, important facts, difficult lessons all of these will only produce good things in our lives if we are prepared to accept them and work on them. So at the beginning of this school year our attitude is the only thing standing between us and potential success.

Time to reflect

- What school targets would you like to achieve this year?
- What could you do about it now?

Think: a new seed is the product of an old seed sown in good soil

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Thank you for stories that make us think, we know that we have the potential to produce good things from the lessons we learn at school and at home. Help these lessons grow that we may sow good seeds to those we meet. *(Amen)*



2.1 Small Man, Big Welcome

Preparation

Allow a pupil time to read the account of Zacchaeus.

What do we mean by the term 'welcome'? This week we are going to think about what it is to feel welcome. We are going to think about what makes us feel welcome and how we can welcome others. We will also think and talk about times when we have felt unwelcome and the lessons we can learn to ensure that we are a welcoming community. First we are going to hear a story from the Bible in which a man was made to feel welcome.

Hello, my name is Zacchaeus. Have you ever been made to feel unwelcome? I have. You see, I am a chief tax collector, that means I organise the collecting of money from honest, hardworking people and give it to the Romans. Although we don't live anywhere near Rome, the Romans make us pay taxes to them after they took over the running of our country. They aren't very popular. As you can probably imagine, I am not very popular either. The Romans ask people to pay their taxes but I collect them, I'm allowed to take a bit more as payment for the work I do. Lots of people hate giving the Romans money and they hate me because I have become very rich collecting it.

Well, one day Jesus came to Jericho, the town where I live. He's a popular man. Word of his arrival spread through the town so that even I found out. People came out of their houses and lined the streets to get a glimpse of him. I don't quite know what took over me, but I just had to see him. I ran up and down the rows of people trying to find a gap so that I could see the road, but it was too busy. People had lined up and none of them would let me through, I don't blame them, who would be kind to a tax collector, especially one who 'sometimes' charged them more than they owed.

All I knew was that I really wanted to see Jesus. I'm a short man, I couldn't see over the crowd and there was no way I could get through all the people, so I decided to run ahead and climb one of the many



sycamore trees that lined the road. Can you imagine me, a short but wealthy business man climbing a tree? It must have looked rather strange.

I climbed the tree and waited until I could catch a glimpse of Jesus on the road. I'm not sure what I expected to see, I suppose I just wanted to see this celebrity that I had heard everyone talking about. Jesus appeared with so many people around him. He walked closer and was about to pass by, when he stopped, looked up at me in the tree and called me by my name. Well as you'd expect, I was more than a little surprised. Actually, I nearly fell off the branch that I was clinging on to. He asked me if he could come and visit me at my house. I didn't quite know how to reply. I couldn't say no, could I?

Do you think the people in Jericho made Zacchaeus feel welcome on the day of Jesus' visit? They wouldn't let him through even though they knew that he wasn't tall enough to see over them. The only way Zacchaeus could see Jesus was to climb a sycamore tree. We will find out what happened when Zacchaeus met Jesus later on this week, but I think that Zacchaeus would have been surprised when Jesus called his name.

The word attention means that we take notice of something or someone that we think is important. In this story, Jesus gave Zacchaeus his attention. One very important rule in making someone feel welcome is that we should give them our attention. A welcoming community, like our school, should make people feel as if they are important.

Time to reflect

- When have you felt welcome? What made you feel welcome?
- When have you felt unwelcome? What made you feel unwelcome?
- How can we give others our attention and make them feel welcome?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for times that we are made to feel welcome. We also know what it means to be ignored or made to feel unwelcome. May we give others our attention today, may our actions and the words that we say make others feel important, cared for and welcome. *(Amen)*



2.2 Welcoming A Better World

Yesterday we heard a story about a man who climbed a tree to see if he could catch a glimpse of Jesus. Can anyone tell me what the name of that man was? What did Jesus do when he passed the tree Zacchaeus was in? Jesus gave Zacchaeus his attention and we said yesterday that giving someone our attention is very important if we want someone to feel welcome. Zacchaeus received Jesus' attention, but the story doesn't end there.

Zacchaeus
Hi again, yesterday I told you that Jesus stopped and told me to come down from the tree. Well you can't imagine how I felt, Jesus, this person that everyone came to see, stopped to talk to me. I am a tax collector, so most people walk the other way when they see me coming, but Jesus called me by my name. I was so happy, I climbed down and welcomed him gladly. He asked to come to my house. Jesus is famous for teaching about loving and caring for others and although I felt welcome I also felt as if I needed to make right the wrong things I have done, especially as a tax collector. I said to Jesus that I would give half of what I own to the poor and any money I had cheated out of people I would pay back four times that amount.

Yesterday we were asked to think about an example of when we were made to feel welcome. It is probably very unlikely that the welcome you had made you give away half of your toys, but I bet it made you feel better. For a short time, the welcome made your world a better place. If one small welcome can make your world a better place, I wonder what lots of welcomes could do?

Time to reflect

- How does a welcome make the world a better place?
- What would happen if everyone tried to be as welcoming as possible?
- How do we make others feel welcome?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for times that we are made to feel welcome. May we give others our attention today, may our actions and the words that we say make others feel important, cared for and welcome. May the welcome that we give today help to change the world for the better. *(Amen)*



Time to reflect

Spend time thinking and talking about times that we felt welcome and times when we felt unwelcome. You as the teacher may want to start with an example. Below are some suggested ground rules you may want to use whilst discussing sensitive issues.

Don't use names – instead say 'boy', 'girl', 'he' or 'she'. Some people are in the room who may have made other children feel unwelcome, the purpose of this is to draw out how we improve our welcome, not punish those who make us feel unwelcome.

Focus on the actions – how did the positive ones make us feel welcome and should they be repeated and encouraged? How did the negative ones make us feel, should they be discouraged?

Lessons to learn – the focus of this discussion should be about the 'lessons we can learn'. Remain positive and draw out the impact each example has on our actions. Refrain from saying, "that was awful" or "I can't believe he did that", instead you could use, "I'm glad you said that" or "that shows that our actions can really affect someone".

Whole class or small groups – if you keep the whole class together you can ensure that the children don't use names and you can focus on the 'lessons to learn'. You can keep a positive focus to the discussion.

Disclosures – please be aware of your school's child protection policy. Consider what you will do if a child starts to disclose a child protection issue in a whole class setting. Don't let the pupil disclose to the whole class.

Bullying – accounts of bullying may be expressed in the discussion. Deal with these **after** the session.

Sum up – possibly finish the session by reminding pupils what we can do as a community to make others feel welcome.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for times that we are made to feel welcome. May we give others our attention today, may our actions and the words that we say make others feel important, cared for and welcome. May the welcome that we give today help to change the world for the better. *(Amen)*



2.4 Ignoring A Welcome

This week we have thought and talked about how we can make people feel welcome and what we can do as a school to make others feel welcome. In the story of Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus felt welcomed because Jesus gave Zacchaeus his attention. In the examples we talked about yesterday giving our attention to someone means that we have to give some of our time, it takes effort and thought. Does anyone know what 'ignore' means? If we ignore someone it means that we don't take notice of someone else. Sometimes we feel unwelcome, because we feel ignored, no one takes any notice of us. Other times we ignore others by accident. We may not take any notice of a new person because we are too busy playing with our own friends or thinking about our own day. We may have even been ignored by the person we actually wanted to welcome. That should not stop us from continuing to be a welcoming community. If we know that sometimes we ignore others by accident and other times we are ignored by accident it can help us not to get too upset about these times. It can also help us to be aware of those times we generally ignore others and try a little harder to become a more welcoming community.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever felt shy when others have tried to welcome you?
- Have you ever felt upset when others have ignored you?
- Have you ever ignored others?
- What can we do to help ensure that we take notice of others in the playground?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know what it is to be ignored and we are sorry for the times when we have ignored others that need our attention and our welcome. We are thankful for times that we are made to feel welcome. May we give others our attention today, may our actions and the words that we say make others feel important, cared for and welcome. *(Amen)*



2.5 Don't Worry, Just Welcome

This is an account from one of the people in the crowd that lined the streets when Jesus welcomed Zacchaeus.

I was there when Jesus stopped and talked to Zacchaeus. I couldn't believe it! Jesus stopped and talked to Zacchaeus. You see, I've heard that Zacchaeus is a tax man, you know, one of those men the Romans use to collect our money. The last person I'd want to welcome is Zacchaeus, can you imagine what other people would have thought if I'd have spent time with Zacchaeus. I don't think I could have shown my face in the town again.

What other people think can often stop us from doing what we know is right. When Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house, the Bible says that the people began to 'mutter'. They weren't happy that Jesus had gone to the tax collector's house. But Jesus wasn't concerned with what the crowd thought, he knew that the right thing was to make Zacchaeus feel welcome. Often we can let what other people think stop us from doing the right thing. We overlook a person who can seem lonely in the playground because we are worried about what others think about us. Making others feel welcome is the right thing to do. We can make other people feel welcome every time we see them, not just the first time we meet them. We said that feeling welcome can make our world a better place, let us continue to make everyone feel welcome, no matter what others think and help to make our school, our community and our world a better place.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever stopped talking to someone because you were concerned about what other people might think?
- Why can what you think other people might say about you stop you from doing what you know is right?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for times that we are made to feel welcome. When we have the choice to do the right thing, help us to be less concerned about what others think about us. May we give others our attention today, may our actions and the words that we say make everyone feel important, cared for and welcome. *(Amen)*



3.1 The Space Race

Preparation

Search and display an image of Sputnik 1 or space race timeline.

Have you ever wanted to do something better than someone else? Or looked at what your friends can do and thought I could do that. This morning we are going to hear about events in what was called the 'Space Race'. Two countries that wanted to outdo each other and be the first to complete great achievements in space.

On the 4th October 1957 the Soviet Union (the name given to a set of countries centred around Russia) began a set of events that changed our world forever. The Soviet Union launched the first man made satellite into space. Interestingly, a satellite is the name given to anything that orbits, or goes around, a planet, so the moon is a natural satellite. The Soviet Union called their satellite Sputnik which is the Russian word for traveller. It was the shape and size of a beach ball with four antennae used to send radio signals back to earth. Sputnik was the first man made object that orbited our planet, it took just over one and a half hours to travel around the earth. Scientists were able to track Sputnik as it travelled around the earth giving them important information helping them to develop new satellites. On the 3rd November of the same year, Sputnik 2 orbited the earth containing a dog called Laika, the first animal to orbit the Earth.

Although many Americans were surprised about this incredible achievement the American government had been developing rockets and satellites since the mid 1950's.



They launched their first called Explorer 1 on the 31st January 1958 only three months after Sputnik 1. At that time America and the Soviet Union were worried that one country would bomb the other, this became known as the cold war. A lot of money was spent by both countries developing and sending up satellites into space. NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, began on the 1st October 1958. The 'space race' as it was called was certainly underway.

The Soviets were the first in space, the first to send an animal to space and on the 14th September 1959 the first to get to the moon with a space craft called Luna 2. The first person to orbit earth was also a Soviet. On the 12th April 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space on a space craft called Vostok 1. America wasn't far behind and launched Alan Shepherd into space in the spacecraft Freedom 7 on the 5th May of the same year.

On the 25th May 1961, the American president, John F. Kennedy, announced to the world that America was going to put a man on the moon. This was called the 'Apollo' programme. It would involve sending three men up in a rocket, landing on the moon, taking off from the moon and

then safely landing back on earth. Whilst the Americans were developing their 'Apollo' programme, the Soviet Union sent the first woman into space, sent up the first rocket with three cosmonauts aboard and on the 18th March 1965 it was the first to have a man leave a spacecraft and complete a 'spacewalk'.

The Americans continued with their Apollo programme and three astronauts orbited the moon in 1968. Six months later, on Tuesday 16th July 1969, Neil Armstrong, Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin and Michael Collins launched from Cape Kennedy, in Orlando Florida. Four days later, whilst circling the moon, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin travelled to the surface of the moon. It is thought that over 500 million people watched and heard Neil Armstrong as he took, "one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind". Michael Collins stayed with command module. All three men returned safely to earth on Wednesday 24th July.

Why do you think it was called a 'Space Race'? Do you think the Americans would have landed on the moon if the Soviets hadn't launched Sputnik 1? This week we are going to think about the benefits and problems with competition. We will think about times when looking at the achievements of others can inspire and motivate what we do, we will also think about times when competition can cause problems and take our focus away from what is important.

Time to reflect

- Was the space race a competition? What was the prize?
- What have others done that inspired you to do something similar?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This morning we have heard about some incredible events that encouraged two countries to achieve the seemingly impossible. We are thankful for those who have inspired us, that have helped motivate us to achieve things that we never thought we could do. *(Amen)*



3.2 Healthy Competition

Can you think of a time when trying to do something better than someone else can help us? Have you heard of the word 'competitive'? What does it mean? Being competitive means that you want to win, it is a feeling that many of us have, but some of us are more competitive than others. Some of us will be competitive with some things and not with others. Some might be competitive with completing school work, others with running or football.

A competition is when teams or individuals compete against others to find out who is the best. The football season will see many teams play against each other, scoring goals and gaining points to see who is the best team. It is the same for almost any sport. Yesterday we heard about the 'space race'. Can anyone tell me why it was called a race? At school we may have a competition for the best attendance or prizes for achievements throughout the week or year. Healthy competition can help us as we strive to get better because we want to be better. The word motivation means 'the reasons we do what we do' and healthy competition can be the motivation we need to practise an instrument, continue to play a sport or make sure that we arrive at school on time.

Time to reflect

- What do you think healthy competition means?
- Has competition helped you to improve? What has improved?
- Can healthy competition apply to school skills as well as sports and instruments?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are mindful of the times when competition has enabled us to improve what we do. We are thankful for those who have inspired us, that have helped motivate us to achieve things that we never thought we could do. May our communities and our families benefit from healthy competition. *(Amen)*



3.3 Unhealthy Competition

Yesterday we talked about healthy competition. Can anyone remember how healthy competition can help us? This morning we are going to think about unhealthy competition. Whilst competition can help us to improve in many areas of our lives, it can also have some bad side effects. We are going to think about three of these.

1. **Comparing ourselves with others.** Competition helps us to improve, but sometimes we might see someone who is much better than us at something that we want to be good at. If we compare ourselves too much to that person it may cause us to become disheartened thinking that we'll never be that good, so there's no point carrying on with it. Don't let the achievements of others stop you from reaching your goal, instead, let others inspire you to become the best you can be, knowing that it may take a bit of time and practise.

2. **Cheating.** Many competitions involve trying to win, but some try to win at any cost. The need to win can sometimes make people cheat to make sure that they come first. A victory that has come about through cheating, isn't really a victory at all.

3. **Boasting.** It is important that we congratulate other peoples' achievements and it is right that we should feel good about ourselves when we win or do something well, but it is important to respect the feelings of others. If you didn't do as well in something as you thought you might, having someone boasting about how they are the best will only make you feel worse. When we do well, we still need to respect the feelings of others.

Competition and wanting to win is a natural part of our lives. By knowing what unhealthy competition looks like can help us to avoid it and focus on the right type of motivation.

Time to reflect

- Can you think of other examples of unfair competition? How do they make you feel?
- How does knowing about the bad side effects of competition help us to stop them?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that what we think and how we approach competition can either help us to improve or otherwise make us feel as if we should never have begun. We are aware that the need to win can sometimes make us think about cheating. We also know how we feel when others boast about their achievements. Help us as a community to benefit from healthy competition whilst avoiding unhealthy competition. *(Amen)*



3.4 Competing Against Yourself

For many athletes it is very unlikely that they will become the best in the world for their particular sport. The Olympics only happens once every four years and there can only be one gold medal winner for each event. If you watch interviews with athletes after a race, many consider it a really good achievement if they are able to beat their own best time or score more in an event than they have ever done before. Trying to do something better than you have done it before is a great way of getting better at something. Playing a piece of music with less mistakes, being able to run the 100 metres slightly faster or being able to recall your times tables quicker than you did before are all ways in which competing against yourself can help you to improve.

Competing against yourself is a great way of getting better at something. Don't try to leap too far ahead of yourself, set yourself small targets and feel pleased with yourself when you achieve them. Once you've achieved it, set yourself another small target.

Time to reflect

- Think about a school skill that you want to become better at. What is your current target? What can be your next target?
- Think about a sport or some other activity that you want to become better at. What can you currently do well? What do you need to practise to become better?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Although we know that a person may never be the worlds' best footballer, guitarist or cook, it should never stop them from striving to be a better footballer, guitarist or cook. In whatever we strive to better ourselves at may we know patience, perseverance and persistence. May we look back and see that throughout the journey we competed against ourselves and won. *(Amen)*



3.5 Outdo One Another In Showing Honour

So far this week we have thought about the individual or small group benefits of competition. Competition can help all of us, there is one verse in the Bible that suggests that doing good to each other could turn into a competition. Romans 12:10 says "Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honour". The word love in this verse is the love we have for friends and family. The word honour means that we should put the needs of others before our own. The term 'outdo' turns doing good into a type of competition. Can you imagine what our school or our families would be like if we all tried to outdo each other in being kind and helpful.

Time to reflect

- Take time to think of examples of how we can 'outdo' each other in putting other people first.
- What would our school and families be like if we all tried to outdo each other's kindness?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we have thought about the achievements that come about through competition and how we can benefit from healthy competition. We have thought about how we can avoid unhealthy competition. We considered what it is to beat our own targets and how that can help us to improve. Today we have thought about what our school and families would be like if we all tried to outdo each other's kindness, putting their needs before our own. May we all, individually and as a community, benefit from healthy competition. *(Amen)*

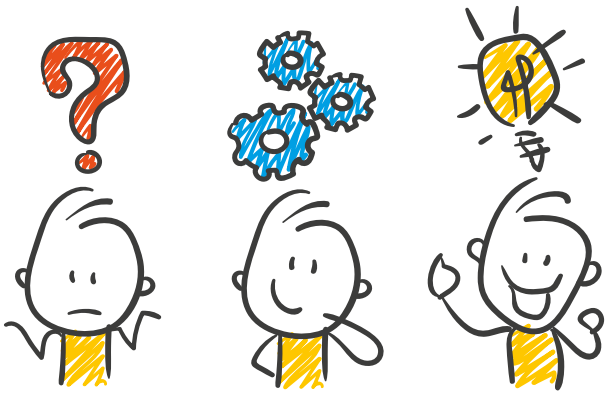


4.1 Problem - Solve it

How good are you at solving problems? There are lots of problems that we face every day. You could say that every choice that we have to make is a type of problem. From the moment we wake up we are faced with problems. What to have for breakfast? Electric or manual toothbrush? Should I be kind to the rest of my family? It is probably a bit extreme to think of these as problems, but just image the consequences of always choosing an unhealthy breakfast or never cleaning your teeth?

Problems come in all shapes and sizes and this week we are going to think about the various ways we can solve some of them. The Bible tells a story of how a Jewish man named Nehemiah solved a very big problem. His people had been exiled from their home city of Jerusalem. Exile means to be forced or taken away from your home land to live elsewhere. Years before Nehemiah was born, King Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Jerusalem and moved many of Nehemiah's people to the city of Babylon in modern day Iraq. Some Jews had made their way back to the city of Jerusalem, but they found the protective wall around the city "broken down and its gates burned with fire." (Nehemiah 1:3 NIV)

In Babylon, Nehemiah's job was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah had to choose and taste the king's wine to ensure that it wasn't poisoned. Once Nehemiah had heard the news about the city of Jerusalem he couldn't pretend to be happy but the king noticed that Nehemiah was sad. The king asked Nehemiah to explain his troubles, Nehemiah told the king about the city of his people and asked if he could be the one to rebuild Jerusalem. The king agreed that Nehemiah could go.



Before Nehemiah could solve the main problem of Jerusalem's walls he faced two other big problems. The first was that Jerusalem was about 1200 kilometres (approx. 745 miles) from Babylon. The second was that he'd agreed to fix a city that he'd heard a lot about but probably never visited. Nehemiah asked the king for letters to give to those in charge of the countries he was passing through on his way back to Jerusalem. Nehemiah had also realised that he couldn't rebuild a city if he hadn't anywhere to live, so he asked the king for building materials so that he could quickly build somewhere for himself.

We will find out how Nehemiah got on rebuilding the city of Jerusalem throughout the rest of this week. The example of Nehemiah can help us when we think of how we can solve problems. Firstly, Nehemiah knew what the problem was; the city, Jerusalem, was in ruins. Before we can think about possible solutions we need to know what the problem is. What problems will you be faced with today? It might be a maths problem or a task like writing a story or even a problem like a friend of yours who is not talking to you. If we know what the problem is, we can then start thinking about ways to solve it.

Nehemiah wanted to rebuild the city, but his first task was getting to Jerusalem and his second was building somewhere to live. Nehemiah began to break down the big problem into smaller problems. Nehemiah asked the king to help him solve the two smaller problems, getting to the city and building a house. I wonder if Nehemiah was tempted to ask the king for building materials for the whole city and men to help rebuild it? Nehemiah realised that if he was going to take on the huge task of building a city he had to do it one step at a time.

Breaking down a problem into smaller chunks can help a big problem to seem not as big. Breaking down the big problem can also help us to plan a better or easier solution. When writing a story, you could start writing and see what happens, or you can think of your characters, plan your beginning, middle and ending. Many difficult maths problems require you breaking down the sum into smaller parts making a difficult maths problem easier to solve. For the friend who isn't talking to you, you could find out why they are ignoring you and if it is something you have done or said then say sorry.

Time to reflect

- What was Nehemiah's main problem?
- What problems have you faced recently?
- How did you solve them?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we will come across problems of many kinds, we know that some will be easy to solve and others will take more time, effort and thought. Help us today never to think that a problem is bigger than it actually is, may we realise that we and the people around us have skills to overcome almost any problem. *(Amen)*



4.2 Thinking Time

Yesterday we heard about a man called Nehemiah. Can anyone remember the problem that he faced? Can anyone remember the first things he did? His city, Jerusalem, lay in ruins after Nehemiah's people had been forced out of the city. Nehemiah wanted to rebuild the city but first he had to travel to Jerusalem and make sure that he had somewhere he could live. When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem he spent three days resting after his long journey. He then began looking at the problem. Nehemiah went and had a walk around the city. The wall was an important part of many ancient cities. The walls provided protection for those living inside. Nehemiah knew that to make the city safe again, the walls and the gates within the walls had to be rebuilt. But those that had returned earlier had only started to rebuild their houses ignoring the walls.

In Babylon Nehemiah knew what the problem was. When he arrived in Jerusalem Nehemiah spent time looking at the problem, not solving it. He needed to make sure that he understood the problem. This is the same for many problems that we face. Do we dive straight in and use the skills we have to solve it, or do we sit back and ask ourselves do I have all the skills to solve it? Do I need to ask others for advice, are there more than one solution, which one is the best? Some problems are easy to solve and we will know the answers. Some are more difficult and require some thinking time.

Time to reflect

- Why did Nehemiah stop and think about the problem rather than try to fix it straight away?
- What problems have you had that you started to solve but then realised that you hadn't understood it properly?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we will come across problems of many kinds, we know that some will be easy to solve and others will take more time, effort and thought. Help us today not to rush in, but to take time to understand the problem before we decide how we are going to solve it. *(Amen)*



4.3 Solution Or Solutions?

Yesterday we thought about problems that require us to think before we try to solve them. Nehemiah spent time inspecting and looking at the ruins before getting the people of the city to help him. It would take lots of people to help rebuild Jerusalem's walls. People had built their houses next to parts of the ruined wall. Nehemiah encouraged some to rebuild the wall that was next to their own houses, this would have encouraged them to put more effort and care into building that part of the wall as those building it knew it would be protecting their own house. Taking time to think about the problem enabled Nehemiah to come up with better and more effective solutions.

Read the following quote and discuss the reflection questions. The quote is often attributed to Albert Einstein, but it is unlikely he said it. "If I had an hour to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions."

Time to reflect

- Can you think of examples for when it is important to think about the problem before thinking about the solution? (3 are given below)
- Are there times when you have used the wrong solution to a problem and either got it wrong, or made things worse?
- Is there more than one solution to some problems? How do you know which one will be the best?

– *Sometimes we say a nasty thing, thinking that it will make people stop and see things from our point of view, but actually it makes things worse. Knowing this can help us to try to think about other solutions to a problem in the future.*

– *We may see a maths problem and know the solution straight away, with others we might need to read it again to see if we understand what the question is really asking. Example: on a stall 1 apple costs 20p, 1 banana costs 30p and a grape costs 5p. Emily wants 1 of each apart from a banana, how much does she spend? This is quite an easy problem, but we need to read it all. Some of us may just want to add all the numbers together and say 55p, but it would be wrong, why?*

– *When making up a Lego model, (or flat pack furniture) do you check that you have all the parts first, do you know what the final object is going to look like? Realising that you have a bit missing at the beginning of the build is less frustrating than finding out half way through. Do you prepare your build area making sure you have enough space to make it or do you just dive in and hope it will be okay?*

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we will come across problems of many kinds, we know that some will be easy to solve and others will take more time, effort and thought. Help us today not to rush in, but to take time to understand the problem and to consider different solutions and may we have the wisdom to choose the right one. *(Amen)*



4.4 Sharpen Up

"If it takes two hours to chop down a tree, spend the first hour sharpening the axe."

Is this good advice? Why? Do you think this would save the lumberjack time in the long run? I wonder if those helping Nehemiah to build the city wall had to sharpen up their building skills, they may have asked others for advice or practised building a small wall to make sure that the real one was strong enough to prevent an attack. Many of the problems we face at school require us to use skills that we have already got. There are other problems that will need us to master new skills. Division problems in maths are far easier if we know our times tables. A story is far more exciting if we use amazing adjectives. Friendships are far more rewarding if we use the skill of thinking about others. At school, we will learn new skills that will help us to solve new problems but it is important to remember that we often start with the skills that we already have. Many problems require us to apply what we already know. A sharpened axe makes the job far easier, what skills do you need to sharpen up on?

Time to reflect

- What skills do you need to improve today?
- What new skills do you want to master?
- Have you heard the phrase 'master the basics', what does it mean and when would it be helpful?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we will come across problems of many kinds, we know that some will be easy to solve and others will take more time, effort and thought. Help us today never to think that a problem is bigger than it actually is. May we take time to improve the skills that we already have knowing that it will help us solve problems that we face. *(Amen)*



4.5 Advice

Once the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, people began returning to the city. The things that happened before Jerusalem had been destroyed started to happen again, life returned to the city. His actions in solving the problem of the broken city walls created a safe place for people to live and work. No two problems are the same, but the steps that Nehemiah took in solving his problem can help us when we think about the problems we face.

Nehemiah…

- realised that there was a problem
- took time to understand what the problem was
- thought about the solution or solutions
- asked others for help

We have also thought about other important tips when it comes to problem solving.

- use the skills that you have
- understand the skills that you need but don't have yet
- learn from others and how they use their skills to solve problems

Time to reflect

Thinking about the assembly and thoughts for the day from this week, what advice would you give others if they came across a new problem?

- a sad friend
- a maths problem they have never seen before
- a mad parent because they haven't tidied their room
- writing a story

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we will come across problems of many kinds, we know that some will be easy to solve and others will take more time, effort and thought. Help us today never to think that a problem is bigger than it actually is, may we realise that we and the people around us have skills to overcome almost any problem. *(Amen)*



5.1 Harvest Moon

Preparation

In a bag, hidden from view have a pair of summer shorts, a thin raincoat and hat and scarf set. Search and display an image of a Harvest Moon.

Can anyone think of activities that we only do in autumn, winter, spring or summer? The seasons play an important part in all our lives. The seasons will affect what we do and when we do them. So, for example, I'm sure that your teachers will already be planning their next summer holiday, or as the nights start to draw in you might be looking forward to Christmas or some other festival of light that will brighten up the winter. Spring is often a favourite time of year as trees start to regain their leaves and flowers begin to grow again. Those were just a few of the ways in which the seasons affect us but I'm sure that there are lots more. When would you wear or use the following items? ***Show the items from the bag and ask the pupils to suggest which season they would wear them.***

Seasons have always been extremely important to farmers. Harvest simply means gathering or collecting crops, fruits or vegetables. Autumn is often the time of year that farmers' harvest crops that were planted in the spring. All over the world successful harvests are celebrated with different festivals. The Harvest Festival celebrated in the United Kingdom is only 160 years old but is linked to the tradition of bringing in the harvest that goes back much further. The date of the Harvest Festival changes each year and is linked to the phases of the moon; it is a little complicated.

Our Earth travels around the sun, and the moon travels around the Earth. The Earth travelling around the sun creates the seasons and the moon travelling around the Earth changes the bit of the moon that we see each night. The Harvest Moon is a full moon that is closest to the day when we have exactly 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of night time. There are two of these days each year, and they are called an Equinox. So the Harvest Moon is the full moon closest to the Autumn Equinox and the Harvest Festival is the Sunday closest to the Harvest Moon. I presume you all got that!

The Harvest Moon helped farmers as they collected the harvest. The extra light from the big bright orange moon meant those collecting the harvest could work late into






the evening and collect more of the crop. As the farmers and those collecting the harvest could continue to see what they were doing, they were able to get much more done.

Often a good harvest means that there will be plenty of food for the months ahead but a bad harvest means that communities could go hungry. People from all around the world have celebrated the collection of a good harvest. These celebrations are often called 'Harvest Festivals' and can be very different depending on where in the world you come from. In the UK the traditional 'Harvest Festival' was introduced over 160 years ago by Reverend Robert Hawker. He was the vicar of a small town in Cornwall. He held a thanksgiving service and asked people to bring a few of fruit and vegetables that they had grown. After the service he gave the food that had been collected to the poor.

The Harvest Moon and the changes in the seasons remind us that nature has an important part to play in all of our lives. The seasons will affect the clothes we wear. You might play out in the light summer evenings or stay in on the dark winter nights and enjoy a hot chocolate. Harvest time reminds us of the way in which we work with nature to get food from the fields to our forks.

Reverend Robert Hawkers' first Harvest Festival encourages us to help those who don't have enough to eat and that often go hungry. Let nature remind us that we should never take our food for granted and let us try to share the resources that nature has provided for us all year around.

Time to reflect

- How do the seasons affect you?
- Why do you think it is important to be thankful for your food?
- How can you demonstrate that you are thankful for your food?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We think about the seasons and the way we as humans are affected by the world around us. We are especially thankful at this time of year for a good harvest of food. We think of those who don't have enough food in our own country and for those around the world. Help us at this harvest time to demonstrate our thankfulness in our generosity. *(Amen)*



5.2 Hunter's Moon

Can anyone remember, what is the name of the moon that was described yesterday? Can anyone remember why it was called the Harvest Moon? What is significant or important about the Harvest Moon? Different cultures have given the moon different names at different times of year. The Harvest Moon was the name given to the first full moon after the autumn equinox, the day in which we have exactly 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness. This morning we are going to hear about another name for the moon. The 'Hunter's Moon' is the full moon that appears a month after the Harvest Moon. Like the Harvest Moon, the Hunter's moon rises early in the evening and helps to light up the night sky. The Hunter's Moon gained its name as the light helped people track and hunt animals. Native Americans hunted deer that had fattened themselves over the summer. In Europe, the Hunter's Moon helped to light up animals on the edge of the harvested fields.

Other than using the darkness to sleep many of us probably don't think about how we use nature to help us in our daily lives, but we all benefit from our relationship with the earth. Have you ever picked strawberries in June? Traditionally we have eaten different foods at different times due to the plants that grow at certain times of year. Our knowledge about nature and how plants and animals grow make sure that we have food to eat all year around. Harvest time reminds us that we work closely with nature to provide us with enough food to eat. This time of year reminds us that we should be grateful for farmers, who work hard to grow and harvest the food we eat.

Time to reflect

- How do you benefit from nature?
- Why do you think it is important to be thankful for your food?
- How can you demonstrate that you are thankful for your food?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We think about nature and the way we as humans are affected by the world around us. We are especially thankful at this time of year for a good harvest of food and we are grateful to those who work hard to ensure that we all have enough food to eat. We think of those who don't have enough food in our own country and for those around the world. Help us at this harvest time to demonstrate our thankfulness in our generosity. *(Amen)*



5.3 Seasonal Moon

Can anyone remember the two names for the moon that we have heard about this week? Why did it get those names? Throughout the year the moon is known by many different names. When do you think the moon is called the following names?

– The Flower Moon? May
– The Strawberry Moon? June
– The Long Night Moon? December
– The Lenten Moon? March

For those of us that live in the Northern Hemisphere, that is the top half of the earth, the Lentern Moon is the last full moon of Winter. It is called the Lentern Moon as it usually happens during Lent when many Christians fast as they look forward to Easter.

The Harvest Moon and the Hunter's Moon are the names given to the moon in the Autumn. What season would we see the Flower and Strawberry Moon? What season would we see the Lenten Moon? In what season is the moon called the Long Night Moon? Autumn is the time when the nights' start to draw in, the temperature starts to drop and the leaves change colour. Some people like this time of year whilst others are already starting to look forward to Spring. The names of the moon are a reminder of the changing seasons and the differences between them. They can help to remind us of how important nature is in our lives, not only in what we eat, but also in how we feel.

Time to reflect (Class activity)

- What is your favourite season? Why?
- How do the different names of the moon make you feel? Why?
- What do you think about this time of year?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We think about nature and the way we as humans are affected by the world around us. We are especially thankful at this time of year for a good harvest of food and we are grateful to those who work hard to ensure that we all have enough food to eat. We think of those who don't have enough food in our own country and for those around the world. Help us at this harvest time to demonstrate our thankfulness in our generosity. *(Amen)*



5.4 Moonlight

All around the world, food harvests are celebrated with many different types of festivals. One harvest festival celebrated in India is called Sharad Purnima. It takes place during the September or early October full moon. Stories of Lord Krishna are retold and the goddess Lakshmi is worshipped. Both Lord Krishna and Lakshmi are very important gods in Hindu Dharma (Sanatan Dharma). On this particular night the moonlight is believed to be very important. The moonlight can bring peace and calm to those who ask for it. It is thought that Lakshmi goes around and blesses people that she finds awake, some play games all night just to make sure they don't fall asleep. Different rituals are celebrated across India, some focus on the importance of the moonlight. For example, a special mixture of fresh rice and milk may be left out to be blessed by the moonlight. Many couples spend time in the moonlight believing it will make their relationship better.

The Sharad Purnima festival reminds people to be thankful for the blessing of a good harvest and for the blessings in other areas of their lives like their relationships and finances. Harvest is a time to be thankful for our food but the Sharad Purnima festival reminds us to be thankful for more than just our food, we can also be thankful for our friends and families, we can even be thankful for fun and the good times we share as a community.

Time to reflect

- What are you thankful for?
- What could you be more thankful for?
- What could we do to remind ourselves to be more thankful?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We think about nature and the way we as humans are affected by the world around us. We are especially thankful at this time of year for a good harvest of food and we are grateful to those who work hard to ensure that we all have enough food to eat. Help us to be thankful for the other blessings in our lives, for our families, for our friends and for the fun we share. *(Amen)*



5.5 What's In A Name

Preparation

The aim of this thought for the day is to allow pupils to think about the different emotions they may feel at different times in their lives. Use yourself as the example. The Bible passage quoted is used to emphasise that everyone goes through similar experiences, both good and bad. You may want to omit the part about death and war, or on the other hand you may want to use it as a reassurance that pupils don't experience these on their own, please use your knowledge of the children and your discretion.

This week we have explored different names given to the moon at different times of the year. Can you remember the names of the moon and the month or season in which we would see them?

Like the moon we might give ourselves different names at different times depending on what we have done or how we are feeling. When I was young and started a new school I was a 'slightly nervous **Mr/Mrs/Miss (Your Surname)**'.

Use examples for some or all of the following for:

A happy **Mr/Mrs/Miss (Your Surname).**
A proud **Mr/Mrs/Miss (Your Surname).**
A sad **Mr/Mrs/Miss (Your Surname).**
An excited **Mr/Mrs/Miss (Your Surname).**
A disappointed **Mr/Mrs/Miss (Your Surname).**
A hopeful **Mr/Mrs/Miss (Your Surname).**
A scared **Mr/Mrs/Miss (Your Surname).**

Feeling different emotions and going through different experiences is very normal, there is a very famous passage of the Bible that reminds us that everyone goes through these different times.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (NIV)
There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,



a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

The Bible passage reminds us that we all experience times, some that are good and some that are not so good.

Time to reflect

Can pupils give examples of when they were:

- Happy
- Proud
- Sad
- Excited
- Disappointed
- Hopeful
- Scared

- How does it make you feel knowing that others have gone through what you have gone through? E.g. nearly everyone is nervous when starting a new school.
- What advice could you give to people going through difficult times?
- Should we still strive for the good even though we know we all sometimes experience the bad?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we have thought about the different names for the moon. Those names were used at different times, in different months and in different seasons. This morning we have reflected on the differences in our own lives, our different emotions and experiences. We know that many of us have experienced similar things and felt similar emotions. Although we know that we all experience bad times, may we all strive for the good in our own lives and the lives of others. *(Amen)*



6.1 Fishing - A Quiet Pass Time - Jonah

Preparation

Search and display an image of Jonah and the big fish.



Did you know that sitting quietly and not doing anything can actually make us cleverer? Being quiet isn't just something that you need to do because teachers say so; there are so many benefits from including a regular 'time out' in our lives. A 'time out' is sometime in the day when we are able to be quiet and calm. I've already said that a time out can make you cleverer and over the course of this week we are going to think about other ways in which we can benefit from a time out. We are also going to think about the things we can do to help us make the most of a time out.

There are many stories throughout history of people benefiting from taking a 'time out'. Over 700 years ago, Robert the Bruce, the king of Scotland is said to have sat in a cave hiding from the English and watched a spider trying to build a web at the entrance of his cave. The little spider inspired Robert to continue his quest to fight for the freedom of Scotland.

A man called Isaac Newton whilst sitting under an apple tree is said to have had an apple fall on his head. This enabled him to develop his theory of gravity. In reality, Newton saw an apple fall from a tree whilst walking through his garden.

Jonah is a famous character from the Bible, he had a very unexpected time out. Jonah was a prophet. A prophet is believed to receive messages from God and tell them to the people around them. Jonah was given the important task of telling the people of the city of Nineveh that God wasn't pleased with the way they were living and that God was going to punish them if they didn't change.

Jonah was scared of the people of Nineveh so he ran in the opposite direction, catching a boat to a place called Tarshish. But God sent a violent storm and the crew of the boat were scared. Jonah told his fellow travellers to throw him overboard, so they did and immediately the storm calmed down. Whilst in the sea God sent a large fish to swallow Jonah. The Bible says that Jonah was in the fish for three days and three nights. That's quite a long time out! Whilst in the fish, Jonah had time to think and pray about why he was there and what he needed to do next. The Bible says the fish 'vomited' Jonah onto dry land. Jonah went to Nineveh and gave his message, saving the city from God's punishment.

The benefits of these famous time outs are obvious. Robert the Bruce gained the



motivation he needed to continue to fight for freedom. Newton was able to make sense of the complicated but important theory of gravity. Jonah had time to think about what had just happened to him, he decided to make the best opportunity of a second chance.

The world in which we live doesn't make it easy for us to have a time out, it isn't that easy to find peace and quiet. If we're not at school, we're doing homework, if we're not doing homework then we're on the computer, if we're not on the computer we're watching the TV, if we're not watching the TV we're on the iPad, if we're not on the iPad we're playing a game, if we're not playing a game we're listening to music, if we're not listening to music we're doing our chores (possibly listening to music), and if even if we're quiet then someone else is watching TV or listening to music… And if we're not doing all that we are asleep.

There are many dangers of a very noisy and busy life. More people than ever before in the UK are reported to suffer with anxiety and stress related problems. Anxiety and stress are both linked to worry and an overly busy lifestyle. When you are ill, you may have the day off to get better. Stress and anxiety are a couple of reasons why adults may have a day off work. A regular time out will not guarantee that we don't suffer from anxiety or stress but it certainly helps. ***(Note for teacher only: Anxiety in children can be seen in the form of stomach aches.)*** This week we are going to think about the benefits we gain from a regular time out and we are going to think about ways we can encourage a regular time out in our own lives.

Time to reflect

- What do you think Jonah thought about during his unexpected time out?
- How did a time out help Sir Isaac Newton and Robert the Bruce?
- Do you make time to stop, be quiet and think about the day?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

In our community, our school and our families we know that life can be noisy, busy and sometimes stressful. Today may we be reminded of the importance of quiet times. Help us to remember the benefits of silence and help us to build these times into our busy and often noisy lives. *(Amen)*



6.2 Busy, Busy, Busy

This was included in yesterday's assembly.

The world in which we live doesn't make it easy for us to have a time out, it isn't that easy to find peace and quiet. If we're not at school, we're doing homework, if we're not doing homework then we're on the computer, if we're not on the computer we're watching the TV, if we're not watching the TV we're on the iPad, if we're not on the iPad we're playing a game, if we're not playing a game we're listening to music, if we're not listening to music we're doing our chores (possibly listening to music), and if even if we're quiet then someone else is watching TV or listening to music… And if we're not doing all that we are asleep.

I'm sure you have heard the advice, don't play on a tablet or phone thirty minutes before bed. Your body knows when it needs rest. It will tell you that you need to rest by making you feel tired. The problem with devices is that the light they produce can stop your body from telling you it is time to rest. The device messes with our bodies' natural rhythm. What would happen if your body never told you you were hungry or thirsty? Our bodies need rest and have been programmed to tell us so, if we stop our bodies from telling us what it needs then it can lead to other problems like worry, loss of concentration or illness.

Time to reflect

- Does any of the above describe you?
- What are the distractions that stop us from being able to take a 'time out'?
- Do you obey the 'no screen time rule' thirty minutes before bed?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

In our community, our school and our families we know that life can be noisy, busy and sometimes stressful. Today may we be reminded of the importance of quiet times. Help us to remember the benefits of silence and help us to build these times into our busy and often noisy lives. *(Amen)*



6.3 Benefits Of A Regular Time Out

Read through and discuss the benefits of a regular time out.

The benefits of regular silence and time outs:

- To do more – time out can make us feel more energetic.
- Shutting off speech will make the other senses work better.
- Realise and think about what is important.
- Improve memory.
- Develops your imagination.
- Increases self-awareness.
- Grows your brain (10 minutes sitting in silence thinking about peaceful scenery can actually thicken grey matter in your brain).
- To make sense of it all (in Psychology this is called Incubation).
- Get some useful advice – think about a problem as if we were someone else looking at the problem.

Time to reflect

- How could you benefit from a regular time out?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

In our community, our school and our families we know that life can be noisy, busy and sometimes stressful. Today may we be reminded of the importance of quiet times. Help us to remember the benefits of silence and help us to build these times into our busy and often noisy lives. *(Amen)*



6.4 How To Take A Time Out

Read through and discuss how to take a time out.

How to take a time out:

- Listen to yourself breathing.
- Listen to your heart beat.
- Think about now, not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow, but now.
- Take a walk. (*might not always be possible*)
- Realise what you think about – think about what you think about.
- Visualise a peaceful scene.
- Try drawing a peaceful scene, it doesn't need to be perfect.
- When a 'but I must… (finish my game)' thought appears, wait for it to disappear.
- If thoughts about a problem appear – tackle them.
- Think about a problem as if we were someone else looking at the problem.

Time to reflect

- Do you think it is a good idea to take a time out?
- From the list above, are there any that you might do?
- Can you think of any others?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

In our community, our school and our families we know that life can be noisy, busy and sometimes stressful. Today may we be reminded of the importance of quiet times. Help us to remember the benefits of silence and help us to build these times into our busy and often noisy lives. *(Amen)*



6.5 Switch Off The Noise

If we think about it, a time out is the opposite of doing something, it is doing nothing. Like darkness is light that has been removed, peace and quiet is the noise switched off. If it is as simple as turning off the noise or stopping and doing nothing, you would have thought that peace and quiet is easy to find. There are so many distractions around us that will want to fill our time. Unless we take a time out, purposely want and create a time out, it is unlikely that they will just happen. This week we have learned about how time outs can help us physically and mentally. We have discussed how we can take a time out, but to benefit from them we just need to decide and regularly take a time out by switching off the noise.

Time to reflect

Ask pupils to give a good piece of advice for someone wanting to take a time out, can they give at least one 'what to do' and one 'why to do it'.

- How can we take a time out if everyone else in the house is busy or noisy?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

In our community, our school and our families we know that life can be noisy, busy and sometimes stressful. Today may we be reminded of the importance of quiet times. Help us to remember the benefits of silence and help us to build these times into our busy and often noisy lives. *(Amen)*



7.1 Habit Of Silence

Preparation

Search and display a monk wearing a habit.

Today's assembly is a recap of some of the key points of last week's assembly and thoughts for the day.

There are groups of people to whom silence is very important. Monks and nuns are men and women who live in a religious community and promise to live simply. They will use silence to pray, read and think about important questions about life. Can anyone tell me what a habit is? The word habit has a couple of meanings. Firstly, a habit is something that we have done so often that it becomes hard not to do. Secondly, the word habit means something that a Monk wears. For a monk or nun, silence is more than just a habit in the doing sense, it is a way of life.

Last week we spent some time thinking about the benefits we gain from a regular time out, we also thought about the ways in which we could encourage a regular time out in our own lives. When we think of habits we probably think of things like picking noses or biting nails, but habits can be all sorts of things, good or bad. Being noisy can become a habit. Being busy can become a habit. Saying nasty or nice things can become a habit. Having a regular time out can become a habit.

Can anyone remember any of the benefits that we gain from a regular time out? ***Ask pupils to act out a benefit of a time out, other pupils guess which benefit is being acted out. You may want to suggest***



the ones that are acted out. In the list below, the ones that are easier to act out are in bold.

I will read the benefits again, as I read them think about each one and try to imagine it happening.

The benefits of regular silence and time outs:

- **To do more – time out can make us feel more energetic.**
- **Shutting off speech will make the other senses work better.**
- Realise and think about what is important.
- Improve memory.
- Develops your imagination.
- Increases self-awareness.
- **Grows your brain** (10 minutes sitting in silence thinking about peaceful scenery can actually thicken grey matter in your brain).



- To make sense of it all.
- Get some useful advice – think about a problem as if we were someone else looking at the problem.

Can anyone remember how we can take a time out? ***Ask pupils to act out a way you can take a time out, other pupils guess which way is being acted out. You may want to suggest the ones that are acted out. In the list below the ones that are easier to act out are in bold.***

I will read the list again, as I read them think about each one and try and imagine it happening.

How to take a time out:

- **Listen to yourself breathing.**
- **Listen to your heart beat.**
- Think about now, not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow, but now.
- Take a walk. (*might not always be possible*)
- Realise what you think about – think about what you think about.
- **Visualise a peaceful scene.**
- Try to draw a peaceful scene, it doesn't need to be perfect.
- When a 'but I must… (finish my game)' thought appears, wait for it to disappear.
- If thoughts about a problem appear – tackle them.
- Think about a problem as if we were someone else looking at the problem.

Knowing what to do and how a time out can help us is important, but the only way we can benefit from a time out is by actually taking a time out. The challenge is making a time out a habit in our lives. Good habits formed when you have more time will make it easier to get through the times when life gets busier.

Time to reflect

- Do you think taking a regular time out would be hard to do?
- How would making a time out into a habit benefit you later in life?
- How would you turn taking a time out into a habit?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

In our community, our school and our families we know that life can be noisy, busy and sometimes stressful. Today may we be reminded of the importance of quiet times. Help us to remember the benefits of a regular time out. Help us to form good habits, building these times into our busy and often noisy lives. *(Amen)*

7.2-5 Practise Silence

The thoughts for this week will allow the pupils to practise being silent by taking a time out. Each day you may want to focus on a different 'how to' from the list, or you could project the list and allow the pupils to choose. For younger children do 1,2, 4 and 5 each for 30 seconds then ask the children to talk about what they just did. It is understood that this will be difficult for some pupils but it is a skill that all pupils (and adults) will benefit from. You may want to use a peaceful scene to focus on or even have the school motto visible for the pupils to think about.

How to take a time out:

1. Listen to yourself breathing.
2. Listen to your heart beat.
3. Think about now, not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow, but now.
4. Realise what you think about – think about what you think about.
5. Visualise a peaceful scene.
6. Try to draw a peaceful scene, it doesn't need to be perfect.
7. When a 'but I must… (finish my game)' thought appears, wait for it to disappear.
8. If thoughts about a problem appear – tackle them.

Time to reflect

In pairs or as a whole group discuss what the pupils thought.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

In our community, our school and our families we know that life can be noisy, busy and sometimes stressful. Today may we be reminded of the importance of quiet times. Help us to remember the benefits of a regular time out. Help us to form good habits, building these times into our busy and often noisy lives. *(Amen)*



8.1 Spit And Polish

Preparation

Search and display an image of soldiers on parade.

If you are, or have ever been involved in Beavers, Cubs, Brownies, Girl Guides or Scouts you may have taken part in a parade. Parades often involve a procession celebrating a special day or event. In a couple of weeks there will be a parade in many towns and cities across the United Kingdom to mark Remembrance Day. Before a parade, uniforms will be washed, ironed and shoes will be polished to make sure that those on parade will look their best.

During their training and throughout their time in the army, soldiers will take part in another type of parade. Soldiers gather together on a parade ground and practise marching and lining up. Parades allow soldiers to practise following instructions and to work as a team. Parades also allow officers to inspect the soldiers' uniform. Scouts and other organisations will also have similar types of parades. On some parades, the soldiers may not only be inspected by their officers, but they may also be inspected by members of the royal family.

Have you ever heard the term 'spit and polish'? Does anyone know what it means? The phrase comes from the way soldiers clean their boots before a parade. Soldiers' boots are expected to shine whilst on parade. There are many videos on YouTube teaching new cadets how to get their boots to shine using polish, cloth and their spit. A 'Buller' is the name given to a soldier who is experienced at polishing their boots. On the



British Legion website, one Buller describes how to polish a set of boots using spit and polish, in preparation for the Remembrance Day parades.

The Buller explains, that first a solider will apply polish to get a smooth surface on the boot. The soldier will do this by building up layers of polish using their finger and a rag. The polish builds up, covering scratches on the boot until the surface is perfectly smooth. Moistening the rag with the right amount of spit will help the solider work the polish on to the boot. This is only the first part of polishing, once all the cracks and scratches have been covered, the smooth surface needs to be polished until the solider gets a 'black mirror' effect when you look at the toe cap. The Buller explains that to do this, more layers need to be added, each time reducing the amount of polish until the boot 'starts to gleam'.

The Buller said that a new cadet can expect to polish one boot to what he calls a 'smooth state' in about ninety minutes, that's three hours for a pair of boots. An experienced 'Buller' can polish a pair of boots in about two hours. That is a long time to polish a pair of boots. Using spit and polish to get a pair of boots ready for a parade will take a lot of time and effort



as well as lots of polish and a bit of spit. Preparing for a parade will involve much more than cleaning and polishing a pair of boots. A soldier's uniform will need to be spotless. Soldiers will need to know the 'drill', or in other words, know the right way to march, turn and stand when they're on parade.

We may think that a soldier will not gain much from polishing boots, but imagine how impressive a lot of soldiers look whilst on parade. Think about the amount of time and effort it has taken for all those soldiers to clean and polish their boots? There is a proverb in the Bible that says 'all hard work brings a profit'. The phrase profit means 'what we gain'. We probably don't think that a soldier will gain much from polishing a pair of boots for two to three hours. During a parade, soldiers learn many important skills like team work and the ability to follow orders quickly. A parade will help a soldier to take pride in themselves and their fellow soldiers. A parade will build stamina and discipline. All of these skills are improved by a soldier putting in a bit of spit and polish. To put it another way, a soldier will profit from putting in the hard work.

The proverb says that 'all hard work brings a profit'. We may feel at school that we don't see the benefits from our hard work especially when we are stuck on a maths problem or are struggling to learn new spellings. Learning at school is a little bit like building up the layers of polish on a boot. The skills and information we learn at school builds up. One skill leads onto the next. One target helps to move you on to the next. Mastering the two times tables makes the 4 four times tables easier to learn. Times tables make dividing easier to learn. Reading small books with short words is an essential layer that is needed so that you can soon begin to read larger books with bigger words. All the problems that we can go through being a friend can help us to be a better friend. We all benefit from hard work.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever polished shoes? Did it take three hours?
- Are you amazed that polishing a set of boots could take that long?
- Think about the benefits you have gained from hard work?
- What do you need to put a bit of spit and polish (hard work) into?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for examples of hard work. We are also thankful for the benefits that we gain from a bit of spit and polish. Help us to build up the stamina to see our efforts build up and up until we see them shine. *(Amen)*



8.2 Fruit Of Your Labour

Can anyone remember the meaning of the phrase spit and polish? Yesterday we heard about the benefits we can gain from working hard. The Bible gives an example of what can happen if a person doesn't work hard.

I walked through the fields and vineyards of a lazy, stupid person. They were full of thorn bushes and overgrown with weeds. The stone wall around them had fallen down. I looked at this, thought about it, and learned a lesson from it: Go ahead and take your nap; go ahead and sleep. Fold your hands and rest awhile, but while you are asleep, poverty will attack you like an armed robber. Proverbs 24:30-34 (GNT)

Using the example of a farm and a vineyard, this Proverb explains what could happen if we don't put in the work. We could use an example of a garden to think about what this proverb is trying to teach us. There are many jobs that require work in a garden. Fences will need painting to stop them from rotting. Flower beds will need weeding. Grass will need cutting. A gardener will tell you that if you regularly keep on top of the work in the garden, then it will require less work than if you ignore them. Re-fitting a rotten fence is harder than painting an old one. Cutting grass that is only a few centimetres high is easier that cutting grass that is twenty centimetres high. The proverb used the example of a vineyard. A vineyard is a type of farm that will grow grapes. With hard work and effort, the vineyard owner will benefit from a grape harvest and will see the fruit of their labour.

Time to reflect

Discuss the example given in the Proverb. Example questions:

- What is the opposite of hard work?
- What is the result of being lazy in this example?
- What is the result of working hard in this example?
- What is the difference between going home and learning spellings and going home, ignoring your spellings and watching TV instead?
- What does 'fruit of our labour' mean?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for examples of hard work. We are also thankful for the benefits that we gain from reaching our targets. Give us the stamina to see our efforts build up and up until we see the fruit of our labour. *(Amen)*



8.3 Behind The Scenes

Can anyone remember the example we heard yesterday about working hard? There are lots of sayings that help us when we are thinking about hard work. Have you heard the phrase 'behind the scenes'? Imagine the amount of work that goes into a school or theatre production. Discuss the jobs that would need doing in preparing for a show:

- learning lines
- rehearsals
- costumes
- makeup
- lighting and media
- sets
- selling tickets
- publicity

If we were going to see a show at a theatre, we will not have seen all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes. We will not have seen the hours that have been used to prepare for the show. We, as the audience, will benefit from the finished production. If we are impressed and entertained by a parade, a garden or a production it is only because of the hard work that goes on behind the scenes.

Time to reflect

- What does the term behind the scenes mean?
- How much work goes on to put on a play?
- Would you like to be a person on the stage or a person behind the scenes?
- Would you be proud to be involved in a production that other people will enjoy?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for examples of hard work. We are also thankful for the benefits that we gain from other people's hard work. Help us to understand and appreciate the hard work that goes on behind the scenes for many of life's achievements. *(Amen)*



8.4 Elbow Grease

Can anyone remember the phrase we thought about yesterday? Can anyone tell me what it means? There are lots of examples of hard work that goes on 'behind the scenes'. Work that we may never see, but that is very important. Take this school. When it was built, an architect would have designed what it would look like. A quantity surveyor worked out the different types of building materials that were needed and how much it will cost to build. Builders, glaziers, carpenters, electricians and plumbers would have been involved building the school. Decorators would have painted it. There would be lots of people involved in making the tables and chairs and all the furniture would then be delivered to the school. Even today, to keep the school going there are lots of people 'behind the scenes', governors, cleaners, caretakers and even headteachers.

This morning we are going to think about one more phrase. Have you heard the term 'Elbow Grease'? Does anyone know what it means? Elbow grease has been used for hundreds of years to refer to the effort that goes into physical work. You might imagine that polishing a pair of boots might be tiring work for your hands, arms and elbow. You might tell someone that it took a lot of spit, polish and elbow grease to get those boots to shine. In a book published in 1785 called 'A classical dictionary of the vulgar tongue', Elbow Grease is described as 'Labour, elbow grease will make an oak table shine'. Many languages have similar phrases and in Denmark, 'knofedt' literally means knuckle fat. You may include elbow grease in a list of ingredients to suggest that something may require hard work. To clean this school, you will need: A bucket, polish, water, bleach, a rag and some elbow grease.

Time to reflect

- What hard physical work have you done that needed some elbow grease?
- Who at school needs elbow grease? (Cleaners)
- What can we do to show our appreciation to those who look after the school? (Buy them some elbow grease?)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for examples of hard work. We are also thankful for the benefits that we gain from other people's hard work, especially those who work to keep this school clean and tidy. Help us to understand and appreciate the hard work that goes on behind the scenes. *(Amen)*



8.5 You Get Out What You Put In

Preparation

Get a range of books for different abilities.

We have heard four phrases this week that all refer to working hard. Can we recall what they were and why we might say them?

- Spit and Polish
- Fruit of your labour
- Behind the Scenes
- Elbow grease

We are going to finish off our thoughts for this week by thinking about one last phrase. 'You get out what you put in.' During our time at school, we will set ourselves many targets for our learning. Those targets will require work and hopefully much of that work will be enjoyable. The teachers will help us as we learn, but the speed at which we learn and the progress that we make will be down to the work that we put in trying to reach our targets. Imagine that I set myself the target of eventually being able to read a difficult book like... the last book in the Harry Potter series. But I am currently struggling to read… Mr Tickle. To be able to read Harry Potter, I am going to need to practise my reading, I will need to get better at recognising words and sounds and I will need to learn lots of new words. I will need to read lots of books, each one slightly more difficult than the one before. ***Use the range of books as an example of the progression needed to build up your reading skills.*** The more I read the better I will become, the better I become the more books I can read.

Time to reflect

Discuss how 'you get out what you put in' can be applied to:

- Other school skills
- Sports
- Instruments
- Friendships
- Goals and dreams

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the sayings that remind us of the benefits of working hard. May we know that one day we will benefit from the work that we put in today. *(Amen)*



9.1 Remember, Remember The 5th Of November

Preparation

Search and display an image of the gunpowder plot.

Many occasions throughout the year have their beginnings in events that took place many years ago. In the UK and around the world, a number of celebrations take place during Autumn remembering events of the past. Sukkot is a Jewish festival that remembers Jewish ancestors living in tents looking for a land to call their own. Diwali is celebrated by a number of religions including Hindu Dharma (Sanatan Dharma) that recalls the story of Rama and Sita. Some festivals like Sukkot and Diwali are on a different date each year. Other occasions like Halloween and All Saints day are celebrated on the same day each year. What day is Halloween? (31st October) When is All Saints' Day? (1st November)

Celebrations are a link to the past; they are a reminder of events that took place many years ago and provide an opportunity for communities to celebrate and remember together. Most celebrations will remember a specific event in the past with people today performing certain actions or rituals. During Sukkot, many Jews remember their ancestors living in tents by making a makeshift shelter in their back garden and sleeping and eating in it. During Diwali, the story of Rama and Sita is retold with the use of puppets.

The 5th of November has its own unique events that remind us of the past. What is the 5th of November commonly called? What events in the past does it remember? What happens today?



The original event that is remembered took place in 1605. The details as to why a number of people wanted to blow up King James I and the House of Lords are slightly complicated, but on the 5th November, the state opening of parliament, Guy Fawkes was found in the cellars of the Houses of Parliament with barrels full of gunpowder. The plot to blow up the King and his government had been stopped and it is said that celebration fires were lit across London. In January, the same month of the trial of Guy Fawkes and the other conspirators, Parliament passed the 'Thanksgiving Act'. The 5th November was declared as an annual celebration. Originally celebrated with prayers and bell ringing it soon developed the practices that we still use today.

Many folksongs were written about the event, one that you may recognise goes like this.

Remember, remember!
The fifth of November,
The Gunpowder treason and plot;
I know of no reason
Why the Gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot!
Guy Fawkes and his companions



Did the scheme contrive,
To blow the King and Parliament
All up alive.
Threescore barrels, laid below,
To prove old England's overthrow.
But, by God's providence, him they catch,
With a dark lantern, lighting a match!
A stick and a stake
For King James's sake!
If you won't give me one,
I'll take two,
The better for me,
And the worse for you.
A rope, a rope, to hang the Pope,
A penn'orth of cheese to choke him,
A pint of beer to wash it down,
And a jolly good fire to burn him.
Holloa, boys! holloa, boys! make the bells ring!
Holloa, boys! holloa boys! God save the King!
Hip, hip, hooor-r-r-ray!

Bonfire night is a reminder of an event that happened over four hundred years ago. Guy Fawkes had his part to play in the plot to blow up the houses of parliament, but he is just a small part of a much bigger story. The events of the original bonfire night would make a great film; they give us an insight into what people believed and how they lived. For some people, it is important to find out as much as they can about the events that are celebrated today, for others the celebration is about spending time with family and friends. This week we are going to explore some of the traditions that take place during bonfire night.

Time to reflect

- What events in the past do you celebrate?
- What customs do you practice that directly remember an event in the past?
- Do you know the full story of events that you celebrate?
- Do you think it is important to remember the past in this way?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for events and celebrations that take place in our communities. They are times when we can spend time with our families and our friends. They are also times when we can reflect on what is important to us. Help us to enjoy our celebrations of the past. *(Amen)*



9.2 Robert Catesby

Does anyone know who came up with the gunpowder plot? Robert Catesby. He thought up the plan and found others that wanted to help meeting in a pub called the Duck and Drake in London. The 5th of November 1605 was the state opening of parliament, this was the day when the members of the government met in the houses of parliament for the first time after a break. The explosion would have killed many important people of the time. Guy Fawkes was involved as he was an expert in explosives. Robert Catesby and others had planned to start an 'uprising' across England that would change the way England was ruled.

Those that were involved in the plot had friends who would have been at the state opening of parliament. A letter was written and given to one parliamentarian ten days before the state opening warning him to stay away. The letter made its way to an important member of parliament. Inspecting the cellars, barrels of gunpowder were found and so was the only member of the group Guy Fawkes.

Time to reflect

- Why do you think it is Guy Fawkes that is remembered rather than Robert Catesby?
- Do you think it is important to know the whole story?
- Do you know the stories behind the events you celebrate?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for events and celebrations that take place in our communities. They are times when we can spend time with our families and our friends. They are also times when we can reflect on what is important to us. Help us to enjoy our celebrations of the past. *(Amen)*



9.3 John Johnson

Who was the person that came up with the plot to blow up the House of Lords? What was the name of the pub that he and others met in?

Guy Fawkes joined the group because he was an expert at using explosives. The group rented a house in London under Guy Fawkes' false name of 'John Johnson'. They also were able to rent a cellar under the Houses of Parliament. In the months leading up to November, the cellar was filled with 36 barrels of gunpowder. On the evening of the 4th November, two men, Sir Thomas Knyvett and Edward Doubleday found the gunpowder and John Johnson. Even though the gunpowder had been found, Robert Catesby decided to continue with their plan and try and start an uprising to see an end to King James I rule over England. Robert and others rode to Warwick Castle and then on to Holbeche house in Staffordshire where they were all either killed in a gun battle or caught and sentenced to death.

Knowing more about the events in the past can help us to understand why we do some of the things that we do today. Bonfire night celebrates Sir Thomas Knyvett and Edward Doubleday stopping Guy Fawkes from blowing up the houses of parliament.

Time to reflect

- Have you learned something about the 'gunpowder' plot that you didn't know before?
- Does it make bonfire night more interesting? Why?
- Do you need to know the original story to be able to enjoy bonfire night?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for events and celebrations that take place in our communities. They are times when we can spend time with our families and our friends. They are also times when we can reflect on what is important to us. Help us to enjoy our celebrations of the past. *(Amen)*



9.4 Penny For The Guy

Preparation

Search and display an image of 'penny for the guy'.

What will you be doing (or what did you do) around the 5th November this year?

The story of Guy Fawkes has been remembered for over 400 years but over the years, certain traditions have become an important part of bonfire night whilst others have come and gone.

Bonfires
It is said that bonfires were lit on the 5th November 1605 as people heard about Guy Fawkes and the failed plan to blow up the houses of parliament. Bonfires have been a way of bring communities together long before the time of Guy Fawkes. Nowadays, there are organised bonfires and firework displays in towns and cities across the UK.

Penny for the guy
Have you heard the phrase 'penny for the guy'? People have been making 'guys' since the late 1600's. Old clothes were filled with straw to make them look like a person. The 'guys' were then carried through the streets with children carrying them shouting "penny for the guy". Money collected would be used to buy sweets (or fireworks when they became popular). The burning of the guy became an important part of bonfire night celebrations in the 1800's, although making and burning figures of people goes back much further. Making and burning guys is still popular in some places of the UK today.

Bonfire night food
Do you have any foods that your family likes to eat around bonfire night? Over the years different foods have been connected with this time of year. Potatoes cooked in the bonfires are popular, as is bonfire toffee or a special cake called 'parkin'.

Time to reflect

- Discuss traditions that pupils' practice during this time of year.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for events and celebrations that take place in our communities. They are times when we can spend time with our families and our friends. They are also times when we can reflect on what is important to us. Help us to enjoy our celebrations of the past. *(Amen)*



9.5 Same Event, Different Traditions

The bonfire plot was organised to take place during the state opening of parliament. The state opening of parliament is when the King or Queen starts what is called the 'parliamentary year'. We have the school year; MP's have the parliamentary year. In 1605 the state opening of parliament took place on November 5th, the state opening of parliament now takes place around May. Each year, before the state opening of parliament, the houses of parliament are searched by the Queen's bodyguard looking for any potential Guy Fawkes.

This week we have explored the first bonfire night and we have looked at some of the modern-day traditions. Different towns and cities around the UK may have different traditions around bonfire night. In the town of Ottery St Mary in Devon, the men of the town carry flaming tar barrels. Lewes in Sussex boasts the largest November 5th event in the world. ***There are some good photos online – but remind pupils 'not to try this at home.'***

Yesterday we talked about the different traditions that pupils in this class celebrate at this time of year. Traditions connected to bonfire night have developed over time, some traditions have faded away whilst others are quite new. Some traditions like penny for the guy make us think of the original event whilst others like bonfire toffee have nothing to do with story of Robert Catesby or Guy Fawkes. Traditions no matter what they are celebrating are an important way for communities and families to come together.

Time to reflect

- What family traditions do you have that others don't?
- Do you know how some of the traditions started?
- There are not that many countries that celebrate bonfire night, what would you say if someone asked you, 'why is bonfire night celebrated?'

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for events and celebrations that take place in our communities. They are times when we can spend time with our families and our friends. They are also times when we can reflect on what is important to us. Help us to enjoy our celebrations of the past. *(Amen)*



10.1 In Flanders Fields The Poppies Blow

Preparation

Ask a volunteer to read the poem 'In Flanders Fields'. Search and display an image of a poppy.

This/or last Sunday is/was a very important day in our country. Can anyone tell me what it is/was called? Last week we thought about events that take place now to remember events in the past. We thought about how bonfire night is celebrated across the UK. The 11th November is called Remembrance Day. But it is probably wrong to think of Remembrance Day as a celebration. Instead, we use a different word. 'Commemorate' means that we think something in the past is important, but it may be too sad to celebrate. Can anyone tell me what Remembrance Day commemorates? World Wars One and Two are important events that our country has been involved in. We may want to remember particular battles or specific soldiers and what they did. We commemorate or remember the events that took place, so that we can be thankful for those who gave their lives to protect us and as a reminder to work hard to avoid war in the future.

Can anyone tell me what sort of things we do to commemorate Remembrance Day?

- Remembrance Day Parades
- Brass bands may march in the Parades
- There is a festival of Remembrance
- There is a two-minute silence



- Church services are held to remember soldiers who fought in different wars
- Poppies are worn around the time of the11th November
- Poppy wreaths are put in special places in villages, towns and cities all over the UK
- The Last Post is played
- **Mention if your school is or was involved in a Remembrance Day parade.**

This week we are going to explore why some of these are used to commemorate Remembrance Day. Poppies are worn at this time of year, but why do we wear them and what are they for? Before we answer these questions, we are going to hear a famous poem written during World War One.

In Flanders fields by John McCrae

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.

Flanders is an area of Belgium known for fierce fighting in World War One. In the fields where battles had taken place and soldiers had been killed, the bright red flower of the poppy could be seen growing in large numbers. Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, a soldier in the Canadian Army noticed the poppies and he wrote the poem we just heard.

The poem was published in an English magazine called Punch in December 1915. The poem was very popular and was used to raise money to help the families of soldiers in Canada in 1917. The poem inspired an American lady called Moina Belle Michael and in 1920 the poppy became a symbol of an organisation in the USA helping American soldiers.

The first Poppy Appeal in the UK was held in 1921 by The Royal British Legion. Red silk poppies were sold raising £106,000 to help soldiers find jobs and housing after World War One. The following year, Major George Howson set up the Poppy Factory giving jobs to disabled soldiers. The factory in Aylesford in Kent makes millions of poppies each year.

The poppy has become an important symbol of Remembrance and hope and it is worn by millions of people across the world at this time of year. It is a symbol of Remembrance because it reminds us of the poppies that grew on the battle fields of World War One where many soldiers lost their lives. It is a symbol of hope because the beautiful flower grew quickly after the horrors of war. It is a reminder that good things happen after or even at the same time as really bad things.

Time to reflect

- Why is the poppy a symbol of remembrance today?
- Why is the poppy a symbol of hope today?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that Remembrance Day is the day we set aside to think of those who died in war. We are thankful for the relative peace we have enjoyed in the UK in the years after World War 2 up until now. We pray for peace in places around the world that are at war now. Help us all to learn the lessons from the actions of the past. Help us to change the bad and repeat that which is good. *(Amen)*



10.2 Two Minute Silence

Ask the pupils what they think 'act of remembrance' means. The act of remembrance on either Remembrance Sunday or Remembrance Day involves a two-minute silence. The first Remembrance Day took place in 1919, the year after the end of World War One. The war ended on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month or 11am on the 11th November, 1918. An Australian Journalist, Edward George Honey suggested that the end of the war was remembered with a respectful silence. King George V agreed and called for a two-minute silence saying,

"All locomotion should cease, so that, in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead."

The 11th November 1919 was the first Remembrance Day. It was given the name 'armistice day'. The word 'armistice' means an agreement between two sides to stop fighting. The first Remembrance Sunday took place on the second Sunday in November 1919 and a two-minute silence has taken place at war memorials, cenotaphs (where the names of soldiers who died during the World Wars One and Two are written) and church and religious services across the UK.

Time to reflect

- Can you work out what King George V was saying?
- Does that still happen today?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we remember during this time of remembrance the importance of silence. Help us to remember the cost of war. We ask that those in positions of power across the world strive for a real and lasting peace in areas of unrest and trouble. Help us also to act to bring about peace and understanding in our own communities. *(Amen)*



10.3 Why Silence?

Time to reflect

Listen to, think about and talk to a partner…

- The guns fell silent on the 11th November 1918.
- Imagine just how quiet it must have been compared to the noise of years of shelling, explosions and rifles firing.
- Imagine how a soldier on the front must have felt knowing the gunfire had come to a permanent end.
- The silence must have brought back a confidence in life; it meant the fear of death was over.
- Silence also gives us the opportunity to think about what is important. Silence must have seemed extremely important to the soldiers on that first Armistice Day.
- Today, we remember family or friends that are involved in the armed services (The Army, Navy and Air Force) or think about how important it is for us to live in a country without the constant fear of war.

- What would you think about in a two-minute silence?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for this time of year when we remember those that have fought in war. We think of those who lost their lives in war and for those that have fought so that we may live in relative peace. We ask that we may live lives that help bring an end to conflict and wars. *(Amen)*



10.4 The Last Post

Preparation

Play a web video of the Last Post.

Has anyone heard a piece of music called the Last Post? When would it normally be heard? The Last Post is used as part of the Act of Remembrance. The Last Post is played just before the two-minute silence at Remembrance services all around the world. But the Last Post hasn't always had such a sad role. Before watches and alarm clocks, soldiers would hear trumpet or bugle calls so they knew what time of the day it was and what they needed to be doing. There were many bugle calls and the first bugle call of the day was called the Reveille. What do you think the last bugle call was called? The Last Post was played in the evening after an officer had inspected the army camp to tell everyone that the camp was safe and closed until the morning. In the morning, the soldiers would hear the Reveille and so it would go on.

Around 160 years ago the Last Post started to be played over the graves of soldiers who had died overseas. The Last Post was used to mark the end of the day, but now it began to mark the end of a soldier's life. After a few moments of silent reflection and prayer, the Reveille would be heard. The Reveille was the morning call, but now it marked the soldier's new life in Heaven.

The Last Post and Reveille are used during Remembrance services around the world along with the following words:

"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning
We will remember them."

Time to reflect

- Why was/is the Reveille played?
- Why was/is the Last Post played?
- How does the Last Post make you feel?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for this time of year when we remember those that have fought in war. We think of those who lost their lives in war and for those that have fought so that we may live in relative peace. We ask that we may live lives that help bring an end to conflict and wars. *(Amen)*



10.5 Memorials

The 'Commonwealth' is the name given to the countries that used to be part of the British Empire. Can anyone name a commonwealth country? There were many soldiers fighting on the side of the British during World Wars One and Two that came from commonwealth countries. 1,700,000 commonwealth men and women died during the two wars. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is an organisation that looks after cemeteries, burial plots and memorials for those who died in 154 countries across the world.

Before the 20th Century the traditional British way of commemorating a victory was to create a statue of the general or officer who won the battle. But at the beginning of the 1900's instead of making a statue, a monument was created listing the names of the soldiers who had died during the battle.

Many communities across the United Kingdom contributed to fund the building of a memorial or cenotaph to remember those that died during the World Wars. ***Ask the pupils if they know where their local cenotaph is.*** You can see these in most towns and cities and at this time each year poppy wreaths will be placed on them as an act of remembrance. Memorials along with plaques in schools, churches and in community halls have the names of those who gave their lives during times of war. We have set aside this time in November to remember as a community, but the memorials stand as lasting reminders throughout the year. They remind us that we should be working for peace all year round, not just once a year.

Time to reflect

- How can remembering make things better?
- How can we make remembrance last?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

At this time of remembrance, we remind ourselves of the importance of peace. We are reminded that it is our responsibility to make the world a better place. Help us to be thankful and continue to work for peace throughout the year. *(Amen)*



11.1 The Flying Problem

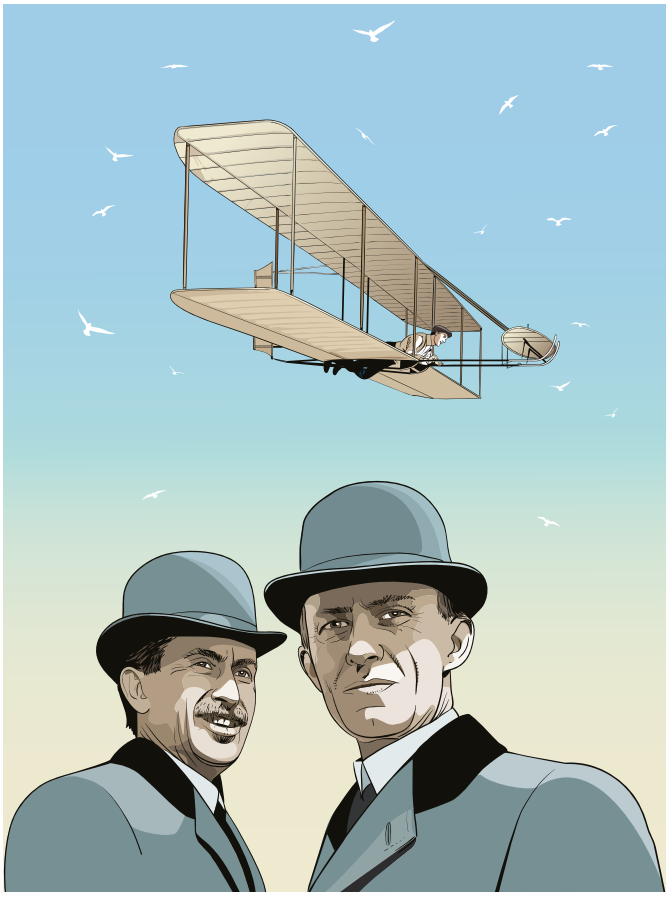
Preparation

Search and display an image of The Wright brothers' 'Flyer 1'.

Have you ever looked up on a clear day and seen the white wispy lines that crisscross the blue sky? Does anyone know what creates those lines? Has anyone been on an aeroplane recently? It is amazing to think that every day millions of people fly in planes at speeds of over 500 miles per hour, thousands of metres above our heads.

It is only about one hundred years that passengers have been able to fly on an aeroplane. But mankind has long shown an interest in flight. The first kite was probably created in China between 2500-3000 years ago. 2500 years ago a Greek philosopher is said to have created a 'steam powered pigeon'! 500 years ago Leonardo da Vinci, a famous artist and mathematician, created designs for flying machines and parachutes. In 1783 a hot air balloon was flown across Paris by the Montgolfier brothers. Gliders have been flying since the 1850's, they are a type of aircraft that can fly but they don't have an engine (like a large paper aeroplane). By the end of the 1800's there were a number of people that were trying to create an aeroplane that could move itself forward carrying a human being.

On the 17th December 1903 two American brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright, flew a 'fixed wing' aeroplane that could carry a person. Orville was first; whilst sitting on the plane he took off, flew for about 53 metres, (about the length of half a football pitch) and landed the plane. Wilbur then flew about 60



metres. They quickly became more confident with their invention and Orville flew about 260 metres (over two football pitches).

The Wright brothers had spent a number of years trying to solve what they called 'the flying problem'. Whilst many other inventors were focused on what powered their aeroplanes, Wilbur and Orville focused on control. Before turning their attention to creating a working aeroplane the brothers had designed and created a printing press and then opened a shop fixing bicycles. They knew that anyone who rode a bicycle needed balance, they felt that balance was important when it came to flying.

The brothers spent four years making and testing kites and gliders before their first powered flight on the 17th December.

They travelled over 700 miles from Dayton in the American state of Ohio to Kitty Hawk in North Carolina to try out their new aeroplane, Flyer 1. After the fourth flight whilst on the ground, a strong gust of wind caught the aeroplane, turned it over and damaged the plane. The brothers returned to Dayton. They had learnt a lot from their first flight and began working on a new aeroplane. In September 1904, Wilbur was not only able to fly the new aeroplane, but he was able to control it, flying it around the airfield close to their home in Dayton. They again took what they learned from this second successful aeroplane and created a new one in 1905. The 1905 aeroplane was so successful it flew nearly 25 miles and reached 15 metres (50 feet) off the ground.

Problems come in all shapes and sizes. The Wright brothers solved what they called the 'flying problem'. The word 'inspired' means to do something because you have seen other people doing it. The Wright brothers were inspired by the work other people had done. They were able to use the research of others to help them design and build their own gliders and aeroplanes. After the Wright brothers' had successfully flown their aeroplanes there were other people that built powered aircraft including a famous inventor called Alexander Graham Bell. In 1907 the Wright brothers sold aeroplanes to the American army, they also sold their planes in Europe.

Wilbur and Orville are known as the Wright brothers. They worked well together to solve what they called 'the flying problem'. This week during our thoughts for the day, we are going to think about how we can solve problems. We will think about what we can learn from the example of the Wright brothers.

Time to reflect

- What problem did the Wright brothers solve?
- What problems do you need to solve today?
- Who can help you solve the problem?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for people and inventions that have made a positive impact on our world. We are thankful for the example of the Wright brothers, they worked together to achieve what seemed impossible. May we be able to work together at school and at home to be able to solve the problems that we face. *(Amen)*



11.2 'Ears Open For Knowledge'

What was the name of the two brothers that we heard about yesterday? The Wright brothers began trying to solve their problem four years before their first flight. They researched the work of other people who had created gliders. The Wright brothers knew what they wanted to do and they were able to use the experience of others to help them. At school we have many problems, they come in all shapes and sizes. Some problems are about our work like maths problems or the writing of a story using the new skills we have just learned. Other problems may involve trying to fix our friendships after a falling out. In the Bible, it says "Intelligent people are always ready to learn. Their ears are open for knowledge." (Proverbs 18:15, NLT). Wilbur and Orville were ready to learn from the work and mistakes of others. We have many people around us that can help us to learn and solve our problems. Do we ask their advice? Obviously we can ask our teacher but there will be skills that you are good at that others are not so good at and there are skills that other people will be better at. When you face a problem do you ask for the help and advice of others?

Time to reflect

- What problems have you solved with the advice from others?
- What problems have you helped other people solve?
- Do you need to ask other people for help more often?
- Do you need to ask other people for help less often?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the people that are around us, for those that help us. Like it says in the Bible, may we be intelligent, keeping our ears open and learning from the work of others. *(Amen)*



11.3 Own The Problem

Yesterday we thought about solving our problems by using the skills and experiences of others. The Wright brothers used the experiences and skills of others to inspire them to create their own solution. The word 'solution' is the word we use to describe the way of fixing the problem. Although other people wanted to create a powered aeroplane, the Wright brothers saw it as their problem, it was the problem they wanted to solve. Many of the problems or tasks that we face in school can help us to master a skill. We may need to solve the problem before we can move onto more difficult problems. Think about a maths problem. If we master the skill of adding, it will help when we take away (subtract). If we master our times tables, it will help when we divide. We can ask a teacher for the answer, but it won't always give us the solution, it doesn't help us master the skills needed to solve our problem. Yesterday we said that we can use the skills and experiences of others to help us solve our problems, but like the Wright brothers we need to own the problem, then we can learn to solve it.

Time to reflect

- If someone else solved a problem for you, one that you could learn to solve, what would happen if you came across the same problem again in the future?
- Do you try to solve the problems you come across in your school work, or do you try to get others to solve them for you?
- How can you 'own the problem'?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the people around us that want to help us, but help us to own our problems, may we see that our targets and our tasks help us to improve and master skills that we can benefit from throughout our lives. *(Amen)*



11.4 The Wright Team

Successful pairs or teams work well together to solve a problem. Imagine two rowers in an Olympic race, their task (or problem) is that they need to get to the finish line. What would happen if one rower decided they weren't going to put much effort into rowing, instead they open a book and start to read whilst the other rower is working as hard as they can? When we work with others in pairs or in teams, we both own the problem. It is the problem that we should both be aiming to solve, or it is the task that we should both be aiming to complete. If you and a partner are given a task to complete or a problem to solve together, you both need to work together to complete it. Working in a pair when one person isn't helping is hard work but we can do much more when we work together. In a book of the Bible called Ecclesiastes it says that "Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble." (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 NLT). The Wright brothers worked together, researching and making models before they were able to successfully fly. When you read about Wilbur and Orville Wright, they are always talked about together. Even on their first flight they took turns so that they both could fly their new aeroplane.

Time to reflect

- I wonder how much the Wright brothers would have achieved if they worked separately?
- Have you ever worked in a pair, where your partner doesn't do anything? How did it make you feel?
- Have you ever worked really well in pair, did you do more than if you worked alone?
- What do you need to do to become a good partner?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for teamwork and those around us that want to help us. May we understand the importance of working together. May we try our best to help ourselves, our partners, our teams and ultimately our communities. *(Amen)*



11.5 Wright Example

We can learn a lot about how to solve problems and working together from the example of the Wright Brothers.

1. They worked well together, each taking responsibility to help solve what they called 'the flying problem'.

2. Resilience is the ability to continue even though times are tough or you have failed in the past. The Wright brothers were resilient, they spent 4 years working on their first powered aeroplane. After their fourth flight on the 17th December 1903 their aeroplane was blown over and they had to travel back home and start on their next aeroplane.

3. They were committed to solving the problem. The Wright brothers travelled over 700 miles from Dayton where they lived and worked to Kitty Hawk to try out their aeroplane.

4. After making their first successful flight, they didn't pack up and call it a day. Instead they used what they had learned to start making a new and improved aeroplane.

Time to reflect

- What can we learn from the example of the Wright Brothers?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for the lessons we can learn from the example of others. Help us to take responsibility for our work and the problems that we face. Give us the resilience to complete the tasks even though we find it hard and get things wrong. Help us to be committed to succeed in what we do. Finally help us to understand that the problems and tasks that we solve now will help us to achieve greater things in the future. *(Amen)*



12.1 Advent

Preparation

Check the planning document or the internet to confirm the date of this year's Advent Sunday.



Have you ever really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really wanted something to happen? What was it and how did you feel when it actually happened? Around the UK at this time of year trees, decorations, sparkly lights, party food and presents start appearing in shops (they have probably been in the shops since just after Halloween). Does anyone know why? Christmas. Will anyone be getting an advent calendar this year? The word 'Advent' means waiting for and getting something really important.

Why do the 'normal' advent calendars that are bought before Christmas have twenty-four windows on them? It is because there are twenty-four days in December leading up to Christmas. Some calendars are now including a 25th window but some people think that these are not really Advent calendars, because the season of advent is supposed to celebrate the lead up to Christmas, it doesn't include Christmas itself.

For many Christians, Advent doesn't start on the 1st of December. Churches will hold a special service to celebrate the beginning of Advent on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. The fourth Sunday before Christmas is not only the beginning of Advent, it is also the beginning of the Christian year. The school year starts in September because that is when you start a new year group in school. Can anyone suggest why Advent is the beginning of the Church's year? Jesus is the founder of Christianity and the Church year starts with Christians celebrating the events in the Bible that lead up to the birth of Jesus. We said that Advent means waiting for and getting something really important. Advent is the time Christians celebrate the coming of Jesus.

Advent starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. The length of Advent changes each year. Sometimes it can be as short as 22 days and sometimes it can be as long as 28 days and yes you can buy Advent Calendars that have 28 windows on them. Although Jesus lived around 2000 years ago the date for Christmas wasn't set until about 300 years later. The date chosen for Christmas wasn't actually Jesus' birthday, the Bible doesn't say on which day, month or year Jesus was born. The Roman Emperor Constantine used the 25th December to celebrate the Birth of Jesus in 336AD/CE. A few years later Pope Julius 1 declared that

Jesus would be celebrated on the same date although not all Christians celebrate Jesus' birth on the 25th December.

The events that take place during Advent have developed and changed over 1400 years. Christians would have fasted during part of Advent, going without food and remembering the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. Some Christians continue to fast during Advent today. These are some of the traditions that are practiced in traditional churches during Advent:

- The Vicar or Priest will usually wear purple or royal blue clothing.
- There are no flowers used to decorate the church.
- It is usual to have an Advent crown made of evergreen plants like holly or ivy.
  - Around the Advent crown are 4 coloured candles, one is lit on each Sunday throughout Advent. The candles represent: hope, peace, love and Joy.
- A white Candle in the middle of the Advent crown is lit on Christmas day representing Jesus.
- Children make Christingles, to represent Jesus as the light of the world.
- Passages from the Bible are read out from the Old and New Testaments about the events leading up to the birth of Jesus.

Today Advent and Christmas is celebrated by Christians and non-Christians. Can you think of some of the things people do in the lead up to Christmas?

- Buy a Christmas Tree.
- Decorate a Christmas Tree.
- Use an advent calendar.
- Decorate the house.
- Light an advent candle.
- Make/buy and send Christmas cards.
- Clean the house.
- Sing Christmas carols and songs.
- Give money to charity.
- Watch school Nativity plays.
- Buy and wrap presents for others.
- Write letters to Father Christmas.
- Make sure you are not naughty, but nice.

Advent is a time when waiting is celebrated. The birth of Jesus is very important for Christians, but Christians consider the waiting to be important as well.

Time to reflect

- Do you ever think it is too hard to wait for something exciting? Why?
- Why do we get excited waiting for some events to happen?
- What does the word patience mean? Why is it helpful?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We all experience times of waiting. This morning we have thought about the things that we get excited waiting for. Advent is a season that people celebrate the waiting before they celebrate Christmas. In all that we wait for, help us to be patient. May we not miss the good times that are available now by being too excited about what is to come. *(Amen)*

The following passage is often read out in church services during Advent. They were written hundreds of years before Jesus was born, but many Christians believe they are talking about the birth of Jesus.

Time to reflect

Which part of the Nativity story do you think the following passage is referring to?

Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him 'Immanuel.' (Isaiah 7:14 GNT)

Immanuel means God with us, Luke 1:26-38 is often read at Christmas services or acted out in nativity plays. Mary was told by the Angel Gabriel that she was going to give birth to God's son, Jesus.

Luke 1:26-33 GNT
In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!"

Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!"

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Advent is a time when Christians look back to the events that help shape their beliefs. Events in history are important for all of us as they remind us of who we are and help us work out what we think is important. Help us to respect the history of all the people around us whether they are remembering the events of Advent or not. *(Amen)*



The following passage is often read out in church services during Advent. They were written hundreds of years before Jesus was born, but many Christians believe they are talking about the birth of Jesus.

Time to reflect

Which part of the Nativity story do you think this passage is referring to?

The Lord says, "Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in Judah, but out of you I will bring a ruler for Israel, whose family line goes back to ancient times." (Micah 5:2 GNT)

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Nativity stories have Mary riding to Bethlehem on a donkey.

Luke 2:4-7 GNT
Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger—there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Advent is a time when Christians look back to the events that help shape their beliefs. Events in history are important for all of us as they remind us of who we are and help us work out what we think is important. Help us to respect the history of all the people around us whether they are remembering the events of Advent or not. *(Amen)*



12.4 Looking Forward, Looking Back: King David

The following passage is often read out in church services during Advent. They were written hundreds of years before Jesus was born, but many Christians believe they are talking about the birth of Jesus.

Time to reflect

What stories or teachings do you think this passage is referring to?

Isaiah 9:6-7 GNT
A child is born to us!
A son is given to us!
And he will be our ruler.
He will be called, "Wonderful Counsellor,"
"Mighty God," "Eternal Father,"
"Prince of Peace."
His royal power will continue to grow;
his kingdom will always be at peace.
He will rule as King David's successor,
basing his power on right and justice,
from now until the end of time.
The Lord Almighty is determined to do all this.

Two books in the Bible that describe the life of Jesus start with a list of names linking Jesus with King David; in the Bible, David killed the giant, Goliath.

In the passage we read on Tuesday (12.2) the angel Gabriel told Mary that Jesus would be a king just as King David was, this is often included in Nativity stories or passages read out in Christmas services.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Advent is a time when Christians look back to the events that help shape their beliefs. Events in history are important for all of us as they remind us of who we are and help us work out what we think is important. Help us to respect the history of all the people around us whether they are remembering the events of Advent or not. *(Amen)*



12.5 Looking Forward, Looking Back: John the Baptist

Christians read many passages from the Bible that prepare them for Christmas. Over the past few days we have heard verses that Christians believe described the birth of Jesus, written hundreds of years before he was born. There is one passage that describes the coming of a person that told everybody else about Jesus' coming. The Bible describes John the Baptist as the messenger that was sent ahead of Jesus to prepare the way for him.

The Bible tells the story about the birth of John. A relation of Mary's called Elizabeth was going to have a son around the same time Mary (Jesus' mother) was pregnant with Jesus. Zechariah, Elizabeth's husband, was a priest and worked in the temple. Whilst working in a very important part of the temple, an angel visited Zechariah and told him that he and Elizabeth were going to have a baby boy, and they were to call him John. When Zechariah told the angel he needed proof because he was too old to have children, the angel said that Zechariah wouldn't be able to talk until after the baby was born. When Zechariah and Elizabeth came to name the baby, friends and family were shocked when Elizabeth said his name was to be John. In Bible times, it was the tradition to name a son after someone else in the family, but there wasn't a relative called John. When they asked Zechariah if this was correct, he wrote "John" on a writing tablet and immediately found he could talk again!

When John grew up he became known as John the Baptist and he was described as the messenger preparing a way for Jesus. Many people will be using this time of year to prepare for Christmas. For many the preparation and build up to Christmas is just as exciting as Christmas itself.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever been excited waiting for something?
- Do you think that waiting is exciting?
- How do you feel about waiting?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for the good things we have this Advent, for school, for our community, for family and friends. Help us to remember other people this Advent, may some of our actions make a positive difference to those that are in need. *(Amen)*



13.1 Prepare To Wait

Preparation

Search and display an image of an oil lamp.

Can anyone remind me of the theme of last week's assembly and thoughts for the day. For many people in the United Kingdom they are busily preparing for Christmas. If I had a Christmas to-do list, what sort of things do you think might be on it?

- Order turkey
- Buy partner/friends/children presents
- Find a nice gift for **Insert teacher's name**
- Book a nice Christmas get away in the Bahamas (Only kidding)

For many Christians, Advent is a sort of practise for something they believe will happen in the future. Advent remembers the time before Jesus was born and Christmas celebrates his birth. Many Christians believe that Jesus will come back to earth some day and Advent helps them to remember and prepare for his return.

For Christians and many non-Christians, Advent is a time of waiting, but it is certainly not a time for sitting and not doing anything as if you were waiting for a bus. It is a time for preparation for what is coming. What does the word 'prepare' mean? To prepare means to get something ready. For example, you might prepare a meal by making sure you have all the correct ingredients. You might need to peel and chop the ingredients before cooking, only then can you eat the meal. You probably prepare your school bag the night before putting in



the things you need for the next day. Even waiting for a bus requires some sort of preparation – you will need to research the route and make sure you have some way of paying for your trip.

Ask the teachers... Have any of the teachers finished buying all the presents they need this year? Have you written your cards and sent them yet? Every year you will meet or hear of people who have already bought all the presents and sent all their cards very early in the run up to Christmas. Those people can enjoy the run up to Christmas without worrying that they will run out of time or the shops haven't got what they need.

Matthew 25:1-13 is called the Parable of the Ten Virgins. The ten virgins were probably part of the bridal party, although some think they may be the brides. For the purpose of this story they have been called 'bridesmaids'.

There is a parable in the Bible that Jesus uses to teach about preparation.



The parable goes something like this. At a wedding ceremony there were ten bridesmaids waiting for the groom to arrive and marry his new bride. In ancient Jewish weddings, the bride had to wait for the groom to come and collect her and take her to his family home. The wedding would also traditionally take place in the evening or during the night. The ten bridesmaids had oil lamps and waited for the groom to arrive. The groom was late and the bridesmaids fell asleep whilst they were waiting. Their lamps used oil to keep them alight, but because the groom was later than the bridesmaids were expecting the oil was beginning to run out. Five of the bridesmaids had prepared and bought along extra oil, they refilled their lamps and their lamps kept burning. The other five hadn't. They left the wedding procession to find a 24-hour oil seller so that they could buy some more oil. By the time they came back they had missed the wedding.

Jesus calls the bridesmaids that prepared the oil before the wedding 'wise'. They didn't know when the groom would arrive, and the groom often arrived late, so the wise bridesmaids made sure they had some spare oil just in case. The bridesmaids that weren't prepared are called 'foolish'. Waiting and preparation are important at Advent, but they are also important skills that we use throughout our lives. Schools are places of preparation. Nursery prepares us for infant school, infant school prepares us for junior school. Junior school prepares us for secondary school. Secondary school prepares us for whatever comes next. In the story the wise bridesmaids made the most of their time before the wedding preparing the oil for their lamps. You could say that all of us are waiting for whatever is going to happen next, whether at Christmas, at school, in our jobs or at home. So, the question is how well do we prepare. Do we put in the effort now knowing that we will benefit from it later?

This week, in our assemblies and thoughts for the week, we are going to explore what it means to prepare.

Time to reflect

- What did the wise bridesmaids do to be called wise?
- What did the foolish bridesmaids do to be called foolish?
- What are you waiting for? (Christmas? Another important festival?)
- Do you need to prepare for it?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the events celebrated in our communities. We are reminded that preparation is something that can make our lives a little easier and can help us make the most of the events that are ahead of us. May we be wise in our decisions and help us to make the most of the opportunities we have now at school, knowing that they are preparing us for the future. *(Amen)*



13.2 Tortoise And The Hare

Can anyone recount the story of the wise and foolish bridesmaids? Why were five of them wise? Why were five of them called foolish?

Once upon a time there was a tortoise and a hare. The hare was the fastest animal in the woods and he challenged all the other animals to a race. No animal would volunteer because they thought the race was unfair. The hare kept asking until the tortoise accepted. The tortoise took a week training and preparing for the race. The race started and the hare shot off but even though the tortoise was walking as fast as he could the hare was just too quick. The hare thought to himself, I'm so fast and the tortoise is so slow, I could take a rest and still beat him. Not far from the finish line the hare sat down, it was a hot and sunny day and he soon felt drowsy and fell asleep. When the hare awoke he looked towards the start line, but the tortoise was nowhere to be seen, turning to the finish the hare spotted the tortoise. He ran as fast as he could, but the tortoise won the race.

Who has heard this story before? As it is Advent we have been thinking about the words 'waiting' and 'preparation'. Both 'waiting' and 'preparation' happen in this story. The tortoise took a week to prepare for the race. I wonder how he prepared? I wonder if he thought I'll get fitter training for the race even though I don't think I'll win it? Even though I think the tortoise didn't think he would win I'm sure he benefitted from the preparation. The hare 'waited' when he should really have kept going. Sometimes it is good to wait, like when we wait with an open door for someone else. Sometimes it isn't good to wait, like when the hare was showing off in front of the tortoise. Sometimes we might wait for the teacher to give us the answer to a question, although we would benefit more if we could find the answer for ourselves.

Time to reflect

- How do you think the tortoise would benefit from preparing for the race?
- When is it good to wait?
- When is it not good to wait?
- What skills would you improve if you worked out or researched the answer to a question rather just asking the teacher?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the events celebrated in our communities. We are reminded that preparation is something that can make our lives a little easier and can help us make the most of the events that are ahead of us. May we be wise in our decisions and help us to make the most of the opportunities we have now at school, knowing that they are preparing us for the future. *(Amen)*



13.3 What's Next?

Can everyone touch their nose? Do you think a new born baby can touch their nose if I asked them? Why?

As babies move their arms and legs they begin to learn how to control them. Have you ever watched a baby lying under a mobile? They will try to touch the toys hanging above them. This movement is all good preparation. It is building up their muscles and helping them to control their arms and legs. There are lots of ways in which we prepare for the future without realising that we are preparing for the future.

In Physical Education we may learn and practise the skill of catching. Can you think of games that you will need to use the skill of catching: netball, basketball, rounders, softball, cricket, dodgeball (my favourite), football (goalkeeper). Learning and practicing how to catch will prepare us to be better at playing these games. Learning to add will prepare you to takeaway/subtract, learning your times tables will prepare you to use the skill of division.

Many skills that we learn prepare us to be able to learn other skills or to solve harder problems and challenges.

Time to reflect

Think of the skills that would prepare a person for the following:

- Working on a fair ground ride
- A paper-round
- Accountant
- Doctor or nurse
- Teacher
- Shop keeper
- Soldier
- Working on a market stall
- Fireman or Firewoman
- To achieve your potential in school

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are mindful that what we do now and what we have done in the past is preparing us for the future. We are thankful for those around us that want to help us prepare to be the best we can be. At Advent as many people are busily preparing for Christmas, remind us that what we do today will help us with whatever we face in the future. *(Amen)*



Discuss the phrase 'We must learn to walk before we can run!'

Time to reflect

Can pupils come up with similar phrases, share the ideas and discuss how the preparation helps in each phrase.

e.g.

'We should learn to times before we can divide!'

'Build the walls before putting on the roof!'

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are mindful that what we do now and what we have done in the past is preparing us for the future. We are thankful for those around us that want to help us prepare to be the best we can be. At Advent as many people are busily preparing for Christmas, remind us that what we do today will help us with whatever we face in the future. *(Amen)*



13.5 Wise and Foolish Preparation

Preparation

Bookmark Matthew 7:24-27 or download the video 'The Parable of the wise and foolish builders (2 minutes 4s) http://www.max7.org/en/resource/WiseFoolishBuilders These videos can be downloaded on memory sticks and kept as a permanent resource in the school courtesy of www.max7.org

In the first assembly this week, we heard the parable about the wise and foolish bridesmaids. Can anyone remember why five were called wise and five were called foolish? There is another parable in the Bible that starts with the words 'wise and foolish,' does anyone know what it is? Show the video or read the story. The wise builder in our story built his house on rock. He would have needed to work hard to make sure that his house was fastened to the rock, the foolish builder wouldn't have needed to work hard because securing his house to the sand would be as easy as putting a tent peg into soft earth. The storm came and the house on the rock stood firm but the house on the sand didn't have the foundations it needed to withstand the wind and the rain.

Jesus reminded his followers that the wise man was like a man who listens to his teachings and acts on them, the foolish builder was like a person who listens but ignores Jesus' teachings. We will hear lots of teaching, advice and words from our teachers and our family. If we act on that advice it will help us to prepare for the future.

Time to reflect

- What is a piece of good advice that you've heard recently?
- How would you act on that piece of advice?
- What could you do today that will help you in the future?
- What could you put a bit more effort into that will ensure a better result?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are mindful that what we do now and what we have done in the past is preparing us for the future. We are thankful for those around us that want to help us prepare to be the best we can be. At Advent as many people are busily preparing for Christmas, remind us that what we do today will help us with whatever we face in the future. *(Amen)*



14.1 Qualities Of A Friend - Trust

Preparation

Choose one of the following trust games:

1) Prepare a suitably able teacher to catch a volunteer pupil or teacher falling backwards.

2) Set out 4 chairs 1 metre apart and guide a blindfolded volunteer either by your voice or by hand to slalom through the chairs and back.

Ask a volunteer to read the account of Peter.



This week we are going to think about a quality that is really important in our friendships. I am going to see if you can guess which quality it is. Present one of the trust games.

Can anyone tell me what quality we were practicing just then? We are going to hear a story from a person called Peter all to do with trust.

Hi, my name is Peter. I am one of Jesus' friends, they call me one of his disciples. I have been following him for a while now, travelling around with him, listening to his teachings and watching his miracles. Well you will never believe what happened to me last night. We were helping Jesus feed this huge crowd of people with only five loaves and two fish, which is an amazing story in itself. Once all the crowd had eaten, Jesus asked the other disciples and I to get into our boat and he would meet us on the other side of the Sea of Galilee in a place called Bethsaida. He was going to wait for the crowd to go and then have his own time out.

Although the Sea of Galilee is called a 'Sea' it is actually an enormous lake and it takes a while to cross. There was a strong wind coming straight at us and we were straining at our oars to keep the boat moving. Just before dawn, we could see a shadow on the water walking past the boat. Some of the other disciples panicked thinking that they could see a ghost. I looked closer and realised that it was Jesus walking, yes I said walking. He was walking on water. Jesus confirmed that it was him. I don't know what came over me, but the first thing I said was "Jesus if that's you, tell me to come to you on the water." Well he did. He's done so many miracles that I thought this is my turn. I climbed out of the boat and placed one foot on the water, and well, it stayed on top. I placed my other foot on the water and it did the same. I was looking at Jesus all the time, placing one foot in front of the other. It was amazing! As I got closer to Jesus I could hear the wind around me and I was getting further away from the safety of the boat. As I looked around me I became scared and started to sink. I cried out to

Jesus to save me. He reached out and caught me and we both climbed into the safety of the boat.

Trust appears in many places in this account of Peter. Firstly, Peter believed that Jesus was going to meet him and the other disciples on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Peter and the other disciples placed their trust in the boat, confident that it would carry them on the water. They trusted in their ability to row across the large lake of water. Probably the most important part of the story is when Peter got out of the boat to walk on the water.

Ask a pupil to sit on a normal chair, make it seem as if the chair is broken, is the pupil confident that it will take their weight without breaking or will they be a little hesitant sitting down?

Trust and confidence go hand in hand. If I trust that the chair will carry my weight I will sit down confidently. If I don't trust the chair will carry my weight I will sit down carefully. Peter lost his confidence and started to sink. That can happen to us in lots of things that we do. Imagine if you thought that your bicycle would break up if you were riding it fast even if you knew it is in good working order. What if you were in a test and didn't believe you could use a maths skill that you had been taught and were using just a week earlier. Like Peter, losing our confidence can make us feel as if we are beginning to sink.

Friendships are built on trust. We should be able to trust that friends won't hurt us, that they want the best for us. Trust is believing that friends will do what they say they will do. Confidence in those around us will allow us to work well as a team or a class or a community. This week we will explore why trust is important and the impact it can have on our friendships.

Time to reflect

- Do you think a cyclist could win a race if they didn't have confidence in their bike? Why?
- Do you have trustworthy friends?
- Are you a trustworthy friend?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We have heard this morning about the important part trust and confidence has on our actions. We know that trust is an important part of friendships and many of the other relationships we have with those around us at home and at school. Help us today to be a trustworthy friend so that others can place their confidence in us. *(Amen)*



14.2 The Boy Who Cried 'Wolf'

Preparation

There are many animated videos telling the story of the boy who cried wolf available on the internet. Please preview any video that you are going to show in class. There is an audio version available on the BBC website.



Can anyone recall the account of a man called Peter that we heard yesterday? What happened to him? Can anyone remember the theme or value that we thought about yesterday? Well this morning we are going to think about one of Aesop's fables that will help us to think about trust.

Once upon a time there was a boy whose job was to look after sheep for a small village. He was there to look out for dangers like wolves and other dangerous animals that roamed the countryside and occasionally attacked the flock. The village had given him a bell and he was told that he should ring it if ever he saw such a beast. The boy had performed his job perfectly for weeks, but he hadn't seen any sign of a beast and now he was bored. Bored of sitting and watching, bored of sitting and listening and bored of sitting and waiting for something that might never happen. A thought appeared in his head, 'I know that there is no wolf around but what if I shouted 'wolf', I wonder what would happen?' At that the boy jumped up, grabbed the bell and ran into the village shouting 'wolf wolf', at the top of his voice and ringing the bell as loud as he could. Well the village was in uproar, the men of the village ran out with their guns to see off the dangerous wolf. The boy walked behind them laughing to himself. "The wolf must have run off," said the boy to the villagers.

A few days later the boy was again bored of sitting and watching, waiting and listening and he again decided to alert the villagers even though no danger had presented itself. "Wolf wolf," the boy shouted at the top of his voice running into the village ringing his bell. The villagers were in uproar once again running out to see off the wolf. Again, they found nothing but grazing sheep and again the boy walked behind. "Honestly" said the boy, "it must have run off again."

It was only a few days later when the boy again ran into the village shouting and ringing his bell. The villagers didn't seem quite as urgent this time, but went to see if the danger was real. This time the boy couldn't keep it in, he laughed as he walked behind them. He received no thanks from the villagers as they walked past him grumbling.

A few weeks past and the boy was again in the fields looking after the sheep when he heard a wolf creeping through some long grass. He looked hard and he saw a wolf heading towards the sheep. He picked up the bell and ran into the village shouting

wolf, but to his dismay the villagers ignored his cry! It didn't end well for the boy or the sheep.

Trust is being able to rely on someone to do what they say they will do or do what they have been asked to do. The actions of the boy meant that the villagers did not trust what he said. When he didn't need their trust, the villagers believed him, but because he lied, the villagers didn't trust him when it really mattered. Our actions are important if we want others to trust what we say.

Time to reflect

- Was the boy in this story trustworthy? Why?
- Could the villagers have confidence in the boy to look after the sheep?
- In the future will the boy have the confidence that the villagers will listen to his warning? Whose fault is that?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

For a healthy community, it is important that we can trust others and it is important that others can trust us. Help us earn the trust of others in what we say and what we do. *(Amen)*



14.3 Who Do You Trust?

Can anyone summarise the 'boy who cried wolf' in ten words or less. What was the moral of the story?

Explain the following task to the class and then ask for a volunteer. Ask the volunteer to choose a partner they trust.

Task: Ask a volunteer to stand at the back of the classroom and close their eyes. Their partner should call out instructions so that the volunteer can navigate their way from the back of the classroom to the front.

Ask the volunteer to explain why they chose their partner. Ask pupils if they think that they themselves are trustworthy? Would others pick them as a partner for this activity?

Time to reflect

- Ask pupils to talk about what makes a person trustworthy?
- Ask pupils to talk about what might make a person not trustworthy? (Pupils are likely to use examples. Agree with all pupils that they don't use names)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

For a healthy community, it is important that we can trust others and it is important that others can trust us. Help us earn the trust of others in what we say and what we do. *(Amen)*



14.4 Can You Be Trusted?

Imagine you have two friends. When you hurt yourself one likes to laugh whilst the other wants to help. When you're round at a friend's house, one makes you do what they are doing, the other asks you what you want to do. When it's your birthday one friend buys you the album they like, the other buys you the album you like. On a day out one friend buys ice-cream for themselves, the other buys all their friends an ice-cream. If you were to choose a partner to lead you blindfolded around an assault course which of the two friends would you choose? Why?

Time to reflect

What about you? Are you the type of friend that helps or laughs when others hurt themselves? Do you do what your friends want or do they always have to do what you want to do? At birthdays, would you buy your friends what you want or what they want? I asked you which of the two friends would you trust to lead you blindfolded around an assault course, but would your friends consider you trustworthy enough to lead them?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

For a healthy community, it is important that we can trust others and it is important that others can trust us. Help us earn the trust of others in what we say and what we do. *(Amen)*



14.5 Friendly Confidence

At the beginning of the week we heard the account of St Peter walking on water. It was all going well until he saw the wind and waves around him. Peter lost his confidence and started to sink. Trust and confidence go hand in hand. We were given the example of riding a bicycle and using a maths skill. What would happen if you thought your bike was going to break whilst riding really fast even though it is in good working order? Or what if you were in a test and didn't believe you could use a maths skill that you had been taught and were using just a week earlier? Like Peter, losing our confidence can make us feel as if we are beginning to sink.

For a healthy friendship, it is important to have trust. We should be able to trust our friends and our friends should be able to trust us. We have imagined what it feels like if we don't have confidence in a bicycle but what would happen if our friends lost their confidence in us. To have good friends first it is important to be a good friend. To be able to trust others, first they need to be able to trust us.

Time to reflect

- Is it better to be a friend or have a friend?
- Have you ever lost confidence in a friend?
- Have friends ever lost their confidence in you?
- How do you regain that confidence?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

For a healthy community, it is important that we can trust others and it is important that others can trust us. Help us earn the trust of others in what we say and what we do. *(Amen)*



15.1 Christmas

Preparation

Search and display and image of St Nicholas.



When does Advent finish? ***(Christmas Eve)*** Does anyone use an advent calendar to count down the days to Christmas? Can anyone work out how many days of Advent are left? Do you start your Advent calendar at number one or at twenty-four? Most people, me included, will open the first window of an advent calendar on the first of December, my calendar tells me what day of December it is. There are people who open the twenty fourth window on the first of December, then the twenty third window on the second of December. Why do you think they open the calendar this way? Opening a calendar this way will help them to know how many days are left till Christmas.

Has anyone heard the poem 'Twas the Night Before Christmas'? This is the first verse:

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

Although many people know the poem as "Twas the Night Before Christmas", it was originally called "A Visit from Saint Nicholas". It was first published in 1823 but it could have been written as early as 1807. Over the centuries, Father Christmas has worn a variety of Christmas outfits. It is thought that this poem inspired him to re-style himself into the Santa Claus that many know and love today. The poem includes the name Saint Nicholas. There are many traditions and legends as to how Father Christmas began his now world-famous gift giving visit around the world. One of these traditions includes Saint Nicholas. Saint Nicholas was a Christian leader (a Bishop) who lived about 1700 years ago. He was born and lived in what is now the country of Turkey.

Saint Nicholas was a very good man and there are many stories that tell of his care and kindness for those in his community. The most famous of these stories involved a very poor family. A father had three daughters, his daughters were old enough to marry, but the father couldn't afford to pay a dowry to the future husbands of his daughters. A dowry was a traditional gift given to the husband or the husband's family to help look after the new bride. Marriage was an important way to make sure that

the daughters were looked after when they left home, without the dowry the father was worried about the future of his three daughters. On three different occasions, while Saint Nicholas walked past their house, he threw bags of gold down the chimney and they landed in stockings that were drying by the fire place.

There are many other kind and amazing acts that Saint Nicholas is said to have done. These stories show Saint Nicholas as a kind and caring person who went out of his way to help those in need. He often tried to hide his acts of kindness so that people didn't know it was him. Saint Nicholas died on the 6th December 343AD/CE and many Christians remember the life of Saint Nicholas on this day each year. Some countries celebrate Saint Nicholas day on the 19th December, this is because the calendar that we follow today is different to the calendar in the time of Saint Nicholas.

Over the years, different countries developed their own Saint Nicholas day traditions. In Germany boys used to dress as Bishops and collect money, sometimes for charity and sometimes for themselves. In Holland it is said that Saint Nicholas rides around on a white horse giving gifts and children leave carrots and hay in their shoes for the horse. Many people will go to church on Saint Nicholas day and it is a day for giving and receiving gifts.

There are many different traditions that take place around the world at this time of year. Some are common to most people, like giving and receiving presents, others are practiced by those living in one or two countries. We often learn about celebrations and customs that are very different to those of our own, but it is very interesting finding out how people celebrate similar events in very different ways.

Time to reflect

- What traditions do you have now that reflect aspects of the stories you have heard today? - Gift giving, stockings by the fire, Chimney?
- Do you know of any traditions celebrated at this time of year that are different to the traditions celebrated by your family or community?
- Are you surprised that people celebrate similar events in very different ways?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the diversity in our own communities. We know that people celebrate similar events in very different ways. We are thankful for the traditions that are celebrated by our families and our communities. Help us to respect those around us as we learn about the customs and celebrations of others. *(Amen)*

15.2 Father Christmas

What are the different names used for Father Christmas? Different countries call Father Christmas by different names and some of these names have changed over the years. In the United Kingdom 'Father Christmas' was his popular name. In Welsh, he is known as 'Siôn Corn'. 'Daidí na Nollag' is the Irish gaelic term for Father Christmas. In the Netherlands, he is called 'Sinterklass'. Sinterklass is supposed to arrive in Holland from Spain a few weeks before Saint Nicholas day. After he arrives, Sinterklass visits schools and hospitals. In the United States of America he was known as Kris Kringle which comes from the German name 'Kristkindl' meaning Christ Child. In the USA the most popular name for Father Christmas now is Santa Claus which sounds very similar to Sinterklass. Other names for Father Christmas include 'Pere Noel' used in France and in Belgium and 'Ded Morozm' or 'Grandfather Frost' in Russian.

If we were to type these names into google, which ones would have the most results? ***At the time of writing the following are the number of results in google for:***

Father Christmas – 905 million
Santa Claus – 162 million
Siôn Corn – 8.2 million
Daidí na Nollag – 29.7 thousand
Kris Kringle – 578 thousand
Sinterklass – 14.7 million
Pere Noel – 3.2 million

Time to reflect

- What term is the most popular for Father Christmas?
- Did any of those results surprise you?
- Have you learned anything new today? (about Father Christmas)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the diversity in our own communities. We know that people celebrate similar events in very different ways. We are thankful for the traditions that are celebrated by our families and our communities. Help us to respect those around us as we learn about the customs and celebrations of others. *(Amen)*



15.3 Baboushka

This week we have been thinking about Christmas traditions from around the world. Over the next few days we are going to hear the Russian Christmas story about Baboushka. Baboushka was an old lady who lived alone, she was an extremely tidy woman who spent most of the day tidying, cleaning and polishing her house. One winters night, whilst passing a window, Baboushka spotted a bright shining star, but she didn't stop and admire it as she was too busy cleaning. The next morning just as it was getting light she heard knocking at the door. She opened it to find three kings and one servant. The three kings told her that they had been walking through the night following a bright star and they needed to rest throughout the day so they could continue their journey when the star would appear again in the evening. Baboushka welcomed them in. As they rested, Baboushka got to work baking bread and making all kinds of pies and cakes. When they awoke the kings feasted on all that Baboushka had made. Whilst eating the kings told Baboushka about the star. They told her that they were following the star to find a baby that would grow up to be the most important king of heaven and earth.

Time to reflect

- Who do you think the kings were?
- Who do you think the baby was?
- What do you think is so important that you would go to great lengths to search for it? (friendship, pets?)
- What stories do you retell at this time of year? (discuss favourite festive films)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the diversity in our own communities. We know that people celebrate similar events in very different ways. We are thankful for the traditions that are celebrated by our families and our communities. Help us to respect those around us as we learn about the customs and celebrations of others. *(Amen)*



15.4 Baboushka continued...

Can anyone remember the main character in our story yesterday? The kings asked if Baboushka would like to continue with them on their journey to meet this very important baby. One king said that this new born baby could be her king too. Baboushka wasn't sure, after all that baking there was much tidying up to be done. The wise men were all dressed in their fine clothes and Baboushka hadn't anything nice to wear. The wise men had fantastic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, but she hadn't got anything. The kings prepared to leave and asked again if Baboushka wanted to join them. Baboushka thought about it but the house needed her attention, she waved them off and returned to clean the house.

Christmas is a time to celebrate. Christians celebrate the coming of Jesus. Many people celebrate Christmas as a time to be with family and friends. Some people find Christmas a stressful time. The preparation can make people forget about what is important at Christmas.

Time to reflect

- Did Baboushka miss out because she wanted everything to be clean and tidy?
- Can we miss out on a joyful occasion by trying to make everything perfect?
- Riddle… Can a happy occasion become an unhappy occasion because we work too hard to make it a happy occasion?
- What can we do to make sure that we enjoy the preparation of events that we think are important?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that this time of year can be a busy time of year. For many it is an exciting and joyful time. Help us all to not miss the important times with our families, our friends and our communities by worrying about making everything too perfect for those important occasions. *(Amen)*



15.5 Baboushka continued...

Can anyone recount the story of Baboushka? We will now continue the story. A few hours went by when she decided that she had to see the important baby. Baboushka kept a few toys hidden away in a cupboard. She had bought the toys when she had been expecting a baby. They had never been used and were old and dusty and needed to be cleaned. She began cleaning the toys. The sun was rising and the toys looked like new. Baboushka had worked hard and she fell asleep. She woke as the sun was starting to set. She carefully wrapped the toys, then she wrapped herself up warm and left hoping to catch up with the three kings. Three kings passing through a village was certainly a sight to be behold, so she didn't have any problems asking people if they had seen them or in which direction they were travelling.

As she passed a city, she stopped at a palace. She asked the guards if she could see the new born prince, but she was told that no baby had been born in the palace. They said that three kings had also asked about a baby. Baboushka asked in which direction they left, 'Bethlehem' the guards answered. Baboushka continued on her journey, she entered the village and asked where she could find the new born king. An inn keeper told her that the new born king had been born in a stable, but Jesus, Mary and Joseph had to leave in a hurry, they had gone to Egypt. She was told that three kings had also visited but they had left on their long journey home.

It is said that Baboushka is still looking for the baby Jesus today. Each year she continues on her journey, each night before Christmas she wanders placing toys by the beds of babies and children.

This week we have heard stories and traditions all about Christmas. Some of them you may already know and some that may be new.

Time to reflect

- What parts of this story do you recognise from the nativity story?
- Are you surprised that Christmas is celebrated around the world with different stories and different traditions?
- What have you found interesting from this week's assembly and thoughts for the day?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the diversity in our own communities. We know that people celebrate similar events in very different ways. We are thankful for the traditions that are celebrated by our families and our communities. Help us to respect those around us as we learn about the customs and celebrations of others. *(Amen)*



16.1 Happy New Year

Preparation

Prepare two volunteers to read A Happy New Year #1 and A Happy New Year #2



Happy New Year! The first of January is the time of year when many people make new year's resolutions. Who can tell me what a new year's resolution is? A new year resolution is a decision to do something or not do something over the coming year.

At the beginning of 2025, in the UK, it was estimated that a quater of adults had made a new year's resolution.* Most of those said they broken the previous year's resolutions. In the survey, adults were asked if they had made a new year's resolution, they were also asked what the resolution was. Remembering these were adults, can anyone think of the top five resolutions?

1. Save money (21%)
2. Get fitter (33%)
3. Lose weight (16%)
4. Learn a new skill (7%)
5. Eat more healthily (5%)
   (give up smoking was 2%, drink less alcohol was 2%)

In a similar survey in the USA, the top new year's resolution was 'enjoy life to the full'. If you had to choose a new year's resolution what would it be? Do more homework? Work harder? Eat more fruit and vegetables? Enjoy life to the full? I like the idea of 'enjoying life'. Last month you may have heard the phrase "Have a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year". It will have been written in Christmas cards and said millions of times throughout December. The word 'Merry' means enjoyment and cheerful. Christmas should be a happy time of year, one in which people take time to celebrate what is important. The phrase 'merry Christmas and a Happy New Year' tries to help us take that joy into the new year, but I wonder how quickly it is forgotten. I wonder if people make new year's resolutions, hoping that the new year's resolution will help them to have a happier new year.

When we hear 'Happy New Year' I wonder if what we think is:

A Happy New Year #1 *"I hope the things that happen to me this year will make me happy. I hope my teacher gives me less homework then I will have a happy new year. I hope that there will be snow this winter, then it will be a happy new year. I hope that the weather this summer will be hot and sunny, then I will have a happy new year. I hope that* ***INSERT YOUR SPORTs TEAM/ INDIVIDUAL*** *win* ***THE CUP/ COMPETITION****, then I will have a happy new year. I hope that my parents buy a big house and I have the biggest room with a TV and all the games I want, then it will be a happy new year.*



I hope my brothers and sisters will be nice to me, then it will be a happy new year."

A Happy New Year #2 *"I am determined to be happy no matter what happens to me. I will be happy even if my teacher gives me more homework. I will be happy whatever the weather is this year. I hope my* ***INSERT YOUR SPORTs TEAM/INDIVIDUAL*** *win* ***THE CUP/ COMPETITION.*** *It would be nice if I could have some nice things this year and it would be good if my brothers and sisters are nice to me, but I have decided that I am not going to get annoyed about things that are out of my control. I have decided that no matter what happens around me I am determined to have a happy new year."*

I like the idea of good things happening to me to make me happy, but in that case my happiness will depend on what happens throughout the year. If I choose to be happy no matter what happens to me then I am more likely to be happy throughout the year. In the USA survey, people said they wanted to enjoy life to the full this year, what do you think this means? Can you enjoy homework? Can you enjoy bad weather? Can you have a year without these things?

There are many things that are outside of our control that can affect how happy we are. In the Bible, a man called Paul went through lots of difficult times, he also went through lots of good times. When writing to some friends Paul wrote, *"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."* (Philipians 4:12)

Paul describes himself as 'content', can anyone give me a definition of the adjective 'content'? One definition of content is 'a state of peaceful happiness'. Paul said that he had learned the secret of being content. It isn't something that comes naturally to most of us, we are often happy or unhappy because of the things that happen to us or things that happen around us. This week we are going to think about some of the things we can do to help us learn the secret of being content. This week we will think about how we can make sure that this year is a happy new year!

Time to reflect

- Have you made a New Year's Resolution? What was it?
- Does your happiness depend on what happens to you?
- Can you choose to be happy?
- Are you a content person?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for good times, for those times in our lives when everything seems to be going right. But we know that those times don't always last. At the beginning of this new year may we realise that we are an important part of our own happiness. Help us to be content with many of the things that go on around us. May we choose to make this year a happy new year. *(Amen)*

** YouGov UK.*



16.2 Content To Tell

How can you make sure that you have a Happy New Year this year? Yesterday we heard that we can learn to be happy despite what happens around us. Can anyone remember the meaning of the word 'content'? One definition of the word was 'peaceful happiness', do you like the sound of being peacefully happy. Over Christmas we may have heard phrases like 'peace and goodwill to all men' and 'peace on earth'. Yesterday we heard the words of St Paul, *"I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough. I have learned this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little."* (Philippians 4:12 GNT). If like Paul, lots of people could learn to have 'peaceful happiness' despite what happens around them then I'm sure it would make the world a happier place.

Even though Paul learned to be content no matter what happened to him, he was still determined to help others to live a better life. Being content doesn't mean that we should be happy with everything that happens to us and it doesn't mean that we should be happy to let bad things happen to other people. For example, we should never be content with bullying at school. Learning to be content may help us not to take too much notice of the nasty words of others, but school bullying is still wrong. Being content doesn't mean that we should live with bullying and it doesn't mean that we should let others live with bullying.

Time to reflect

- What should we do if we are bullied?
- What should we do if we see someone else being bullied?

You may want to discuss your schools bullying policy

Reflection (Prayer – Based on the 'Serenity Prayer')

(Dear God)

May I be content to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference. *(Amen)*



16.3 Well Happy Being

So far this week we have thought about the phrase 'Happy New Year'. Some people want things to happen to them to make this year happy and others are determined to be happy this year no matter what happens to them. Does anyone know what the term well-being means? It is a phrase that you might hear on the television or in school. One dictionary definition of 'well-being' is being healthy and happy. What does a person need to do to be healthy? Eating the right food and doing exercise will help us be healthier. Being healthy requires us to do something. Doing nothing can actually make us unhealthy. We often think of happiness as an emotion we feel, like laughing after a joke or the feeling we have after watching a funny film but happiness can be about how we approach a difficult problem or how we react when something bad happens to us. Can anyone remember the definition of being content? Peaceful happiness. Being content is as much a part of happiness as laughing out loud at a film or a funny joke. Like our health our happiness is not something that just happens to us, it is something that we can improve.

We all know the choices we need to make to become healthier, eat less unhealthy food and do more exercise, but do you know how to make yourself more content? To become happier, it is important to know how we feel and how we react when certain things happen to us. Anger is probably the opposite of being content, if we know what makes us angry we can try and avoid those situations. If we can't avoid those situations, then we can try thinking through ways in which we can calm ourselves down.

Time to reflect

- What sort of things make you happy?
- What things make you lose your happiness?
- What things make you angry?
- What can we do to make ourselves calm down?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for good times, for those times in our lives when everything seems to be going right. But we know that those times don't always last. At the beginning of this new year may we realise that we are an important part of our own happiness. Help us to be content with many of the things that go on around us. May we choose to make this year a happy new year. *(Amen)*



16.4 Think On These Things

Yesterday we thought about what makes us angry and what we can do to calm ourselves down. We have mentioned that a man called Paul wrote that he had found the secret to being content no matter what happened to him but he didn't say what that secret was. Throughout his letters, Paul gives us a hint at what his secret might be:

"Brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things… and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:8-9 NIV)

Our contentment can depend on what we think about. If we think too much about what makes us angry then we will probably be angry. If we think too much about things that worry us, then we will probably be worried. Paul knew that our minds will always think about something as it is very difficult to think about nothing. To help us get rid of the thoughts of anger and worry we need to replace them with good thoughts.

Time to reflect

Discuss the meaning of:

- true
- noble
- right
- pure
- lovely
- admirable

- Can you think of examples for each one?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for good times, for those times in our lives when everything seems to be going right. But we know that those times don't always last. At the beginning of this new year may we realise that we are an important part of our own happiness. Help us to be content with many of the things that go on around us. May we choose to make this year a happy new year. *(Amen)*



16.5 Half Empty Or Half Full

Preparation

Half-filled glass of water

What does well-being mean? What does contentment mean? ***Show the half-filled glass. Ask pupils to describe what they see, encourage the terms 'half empty' and 'half full'. Ask pupils to vote on whether the glass is half empty or half full or both.*** There is an important phrase that you may have heard that we are going to think about today. Do you see the glass half empty or half full? The phrase helps us understand that there are two ways that we can look at every problem.

"It is just not fair. I was thirsty and drank half of my glass of water, but now there is only half left. It's half empty, what happens if I become thirsty again? I'm not sure that I will have enough to drink."

"That's amazing, I was thirsty and drank half of my glass of water, there still half left. It's half full which means that when I become thirsty again I will still have enough to drink."

The glass has the same amount of water in it. The person that thinks it is half empty is worried that there isn't going to be enough left but the person that thinks it is half full is confident that it will provide them with another drink. The phrase glass half empty or half full is often used to help us think about the choices we have when we are faced with a problem. If you are given a new math problem, the glass half empty person will worry that they will get it wrong, the glass half full person will be thankful that they are learning a new math skill that will help them in the future. When you face a problem, do you immediately think that you can't do it or do you see it as an opportunity to learn something new? Is your glass half empty or half full?

Time to reflect

Think of 'glass half empty' and 'glass half full' reactions to the following:

Being bullied (example)

- Half empty – "it will never stop"
- Half full – "it will stop if I tell a teacher and it may stop others from being bullied."

Homework

- Falling off (learning to ride) a bike
- Getting stuck at a level on a computer game
- Getting your spellings wrong

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

At the beginning of this new year may we realise that we are an important part of our own happiness. Help us to be content with many of the things that go on around us. May we remember that with many of the problems and opportunities that we face this year, the glass is still half full. *(Amen)*



17.1 The Story Of The Butterfly

Preparation

Search and display an image of a butterfly.



Can anyone remember the theme for last week? We thought about what we can do to make this year a happier one. Can anyone give me a good piece of advice to help me make this a happy new year? Some people are happy because of the things that happen to them and other people are determined to be happy no matter what happens to them. What does the phrase 'glass half empty or half full' mean? The problems we face at school and at home can be opportunities to help us improve.

There was once a wildlife photographer. The photographer's job was to capture the change that a caterpillar would undergo in becoming a butterfly. The photographer found a caterpillar happily munching on some leaves. As the photographer watched, the caterpillar stopped eating and took itself off, away from the food and attached itself to the underside of a small branch. As it hung there, the caterpillar began shedding its skin and emerging from underneath the photographer could see a chrysalis. The photographer watched the chrysalis every day but it remained unchanged for about two weeks. Finally, she saw movement, the chrysalis began to break apart, a small slit had appeared and she was able to get some amazing photographs as the butterfly started to break free of its chrysalis. But the butterfly soon became exhausted as it struggled and pushed to break free of its self-made prison. The photographer couldn't watch the poor butterfly struggle any longer. With a pocket knife, the photographer cut open the chrysalis. The butterfly emerged. The photographer prepared the camera and waited to photograph the butterfly opening its wings. But the butterfly just stood with its wings folded unable to fly. The photographer soon realised what had happened. The butterfly was supposed to struggle. By forcing open the chrysalis, the butterfly was strengthening the wings for its first flight. In helping the butterfly to break free, the photographer had ruined any chance the butterfly had of flying.

This is a popular story and there are a couple of things we can learn from it. In the story the butterfly struggled to get free of the chrysalis. During the struggle the butterfly was strengthening its wings so that it could do what it was designed to do. The butterfly's struggle was exactly what it needed to be able to fly. Many of the problems we face at school and at home can seem like a struggle. A glass half empty person may see them as too difficult and give up, but a glass half full person may see them as an opportunity to get better. Imagine a baby trying to walk. What would happen if after a couple of tries the baby thinks "I'm not going to walk, it's just too hard, I'm going to give up"? By practicing the baby is building up the strength and



mastering the ability to balance. Standing up and falling over is actually helping them to master the skill of walking. Like learning to walk, when we learn a new skill, it is very unlikely that we will be able to do it straight away. We may struggle when learning a new math skill or struggle when we are learning our spellings. Seeing these struggles as an opportunity to help us improve is a useful way of understanding why we go through those struggles.

We can even learn from the struggles we have with our friends and with other people. Sometimes we can struggle with what we say and do to other people and we can struggle with what other people say and do to us. We learn from these struggles too. We can learn what words we should use and what words hurt other people's feelings.

There is a second lesson that we can learn from the story of the butterfly. Imagine if the mother of a baby boy learning to walk picked him up every time she saw him trying to standup. The baby would take longer to learn the skill of walking. Although the mother thinks she is helping, she is actually stopping the baby from building up the strength in his legs. In the story the photographer thought that what was helping was actually making things worse. When I am learning a new skill, it is important to know that I will benefit from practicing the skill. It is good to ask for the help of others, but there is a difference between other people helping and other people doing it for us. If you always ask the teacher for the answer or copy other people's spellings during a spelling test, you are only making it harder for yourself in the long run. If your parents did all your math homework, you may benefit from a good mark, but you would never master the skill it was helping you to practise.

The story of the butterfly is a reminder that we will all go through struggles. At school we will struggle with our learning and in our friendships. It is good to know that everyone else goes through similar struggles and it is also good to know that often those struggles are actually helping to make us better.

Time to reflect

- How did the story of the butterfly make you feel?
- Can learning new skills feel like a struggle?
- Can you struggle in your friendships?
- What school skill do you need to practise?
- What friendship skill do you need to practise? (Listening? Kindness?)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories that make us think about important lessons that can help us in our own lives. Help us to remember that the struggles we face often help us to master new skills or develop better friendships. Help us to develop the perseverance to see our struggles through to completion. *(Amen)*

17.2 Light At The End Of The Tunnel

Can anyone recount the story from yesterday's assembly? Have you heard the phrase 'light at the end of a tunnel'? For the average caterpillar, there is flight at the end of the chrysalis. To be able to fly, the butterfly in our story had to struggle and push its way out. The struggle was actually helping to strengthen the butterfly's wings. When we are learning any new skill, we can often feel as if we will never master it or that it is too difficult. What encouragement would you give to a butterfly in the middle of its struggle trying to break free of its chrysalis? I'm sure that we would tell it to carry on, because soon it will be off flying around tasting nectar from pretty flowers. The phrase 'light at the end of the tunnel' is used to help us think about the end of our own struggles. When you are struggling, just think about the things you can do now because of when you have struggled and practised something in the past. When you are struggling, think about the new skill that you will be able to do when the struggle is over.

Time to reflect

- What have you struggled with in the past that you can now do easily? (e.g. computer games, sports, school skills, riding a bike without stabilisers)
- What advice would you give yourself when you next learn something new or find a new skill difficult?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories and phrases that make us think about important lessons that can help us in our own lives. Help us to remember that the struggles we face often help us to master new skills or develop better friendships. Help us to develop the perseverance to see our struggles through to completion. *(Amen)*



17.3 Perseverance

One passage in the Bible states that we should *'Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds, because… [it] produces perseverance.'* James 1:1-2 NIV. What encouragement or advice would you give the butterfly in the middle of its struggle? Would you tell it to be happy and joyful? It seems strange to tell others to consider it pure joy when they face trials and struggles, but we know that many of the struggles are helping us to become better. The writer of this passage uses the word perseverance. Does anyone know what the word perseverance means? Perseverance can be thought of as a type of journey, you know where you are going and you will get there no matter what obstacles you face on the way. A baby learning to walk is on a journey, long before they try to stand up, the baby will be moving their legs and strengthening their muscles. If you want to be better at math, then you will need to persevere. If you persevere then you will become better at math. If you want to be a better friend, then you will need to persevere. If you persevere then you will become a better friend. The writer of this passage knows that if we persevere through our struggles, we learn how to persevere and if we learn how to persevere, we could probably do pretty much anything we set out to achieve.

Time to reflect

Think about the following advice to a baby…

- Consider it pure joy when you fall over learning to walk, because you know that at the end of it you will be able to run!
- Try and make some similar sentences of your own.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories and phrases that make us think about important lessons that can help us in our own lives. Help us to remember that the struggles we face often help us to master new skills or develop better friendships. Help us to develop the perseverance to see our struggles through to completion. *(Amen)*



17.4 It Always Seems Impossible Until It's Done

Read the following quotes and discuss what they could mean.

"If there is no struggle there is no progress."
Frederick Douglass

"Life's a climb, But the view is great."
Miley Cyrus

"It always seems impossible until it's done."
Nelson Mandela

Time to reflect

- What do you think the quotes mean?
- Which one do you like? Why?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories and quotes that make us think about important lessons that can help us in our own lives. Help us to remember that the struggles we face often help us to master new skills or develop better friendships. Help us to develop the perseverance to see our struggles through to completion. *(Amen)*



17.5 Pure Joy

This week we have thought about the struggles we go through. Can anyone recount the story of the butterfly? We will struggle as we learn a new skill. We will go through struggles as we learn how to make friends and work with other people. In the story about the butterfly, it was the struggle to escape from the chrysalis that would have enabled the butterfly to fly. Without the struggle it would just be a caterpillar with wings, walking up and down the branches as it had always done. To be able to do something new and to be able to achieve your next goal or target will probably require struggle. Whether that's in getting better at a sport or mastering a musical instrument, improving our school skills or completing a computer game, we will probably go through times where we struggle. So, if we know that we are going to go through struggles, we should think of those struggles as an opportunity to make us better. Without those struggles we wouldn't improve. "If there is no struggle there is no progress". If you know that struggles help you to get better, do you think that you could consider them as the Bible suggests, with 'pure joy'.

Time to reflect

- Do you consider it pure joy when you go through struggles?
- Do you think that seeing the positives in a time of struggle will help a person to be happier?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories and phrases that make us think about important lessons that can help us in our own lives. Help us to remember that the struggles we face often help us to master new skills or develop better friendships. Help us to develop the perseverance to see our struggles through to completion. *(Amen)*



18.1 Well-Being

This week is an adaption of week 38 in the Cycle 1. It continues the theme of happiness, joy and perseverance from weeks 16 and 17 in the current cycle. If you have used week 38 from Cycle 1, you may want to discuss and use the reflection questions highlighting and reflecting on what pupils said last time.

Preparation

Search and display an image of a PE lesson.

Does anyone know what the term well-being means? It is a phrase that you might hear on the television or in school. There are adverts that tell us that certain products or foods can help to improve our well-being. But do you know what your well-being is? Do you know how to improve it? This week we are going to think about the term well-being. This week we are going to think about and discuss the various things that we can do to help improve it. It can be quite a difficult thing to understand, but if we know what it is then we can do something to help our well-being and the well-being of others.

Can anyone remind us what we mean by the term well-being. The dictionary gives the meaning of well-being as being healthy and happy. What do we need to do to be healthy? What things make you happy? Can anyone tell me what the letters in PE mean? The P stands for physical and describes the types of skills that we focus on in PE. We can also talk about physical well-being. We have already agreed that staying healthy involves exercise and eating the right sorts of foods. Both of these will help us with our physical well-being.



Well-being linked to our happiness is a little more difficult to explain. Often we think of happiness as an emotion that we feel at one particular moment, like laughing at a funny joke or the feeling we get when we're given a present that we really wanted. But our well-being is much bigger than that. We are advised to eat some fruit and vegetables every day and do a bit of exercise most days. Imagine you asked me if I had eaten something healthy and completed some exercise and I replied that I had eaten an apple and did ten press ups two weeks ago, what would you say?

One bit of exercise or one bit of fruit doesn't mean that we are healthy. For our physical well-being to be good we need lots of exercise and a balanced diet. It is similar with the well-being linked to our happiness. Contentment and satisfaction are great words we use when trying to describe the well-being linked to our happiness. Can anyone tell me what contentment and satisfaction means? Are you a content person? Are you a satisfied person? This week, in our times for reflection, we will explore some of the many things that affect our well-being.

Well-being isn't a new thing. People have been concerned with health, happiness and contentment for thousands of years. It is obvious that our actions can improve our physical well-being, but people throughout history have understood that our own actions can not only improve our happiness, but they also understood that our actions can ruin our well-being. Many religious books provide advice on how to improve our well-being. In a book of wisdom, found in the Bible, it describes the link between our actions and our well-being. In the book of Psalms, probably written over three thousand years ago it states:

I have done what is righteous and just;
do not leave me to my oppressors.
Ensure your servant's well-being;
(Psalms 119:121-122a NIV)

'Righteous and just' simply mean 'doing the right thing'. The writer of this Psalm knew that other people could affect their happiness, but more importantly, they understood that their well-being was linked to living a life where they did and said the right thing. At school, we learn skills that will help us to get along with others in our community. If we are polite and put the needs of others first, then often, our well-being improves. If we call each other names and act selfishly, then it not only harms the well-being of others but it will affect our well-being as well. Jesus said that those who act on good advice were like a man who built his house on the rock. The house was able to stay up no matter what was going on outside. When it comes to how we should treat each other, if we act on good advice, then we will help to build a school with positive well-being for ourselves and the whole community.

Time to reflect

- Is your physical well-being good?
- Are you content and satisfied at school?
- Do you help to improve or limit the well-being of others?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that our physical well-being is linked to what we eat and how much exercise and physical activity we do. Our happiness, contentment and satisfaction are also connected to our actions and the actions of others. Help us as a community, to learn and to put into practise the things we can do to improve our well-being. *(Amen)*

18.2 Happiness

Read the following quotes and discuss what they could mean.

"Folks are usually about as happy as they make their minds up to be." Possibly Abraham Lincoln

"Most people are as happy as they choose to be."

"If you sow happiness you grow happiness."

"Happiness depends upon ourselves." Aristotle (a clever man who lived around 2400 years ago)

Time to reflect

- Is happiness something that we can control?
- How can we become happier people?
- What are the benefits of being a happier person?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that our happiness, contentment and satisfaction depend on what goes on around us, but more importantly, it depends on what goes on inside of us. Help us all to be happy people. Help us to be a happy learning community, a community that learns the essential skills to support and improve our well-being and the well-being of others. *(Amen)*



18.3-4 Improved Well-Being

The 14 statements below are broken down into aspects of Spiritual, Social, Emotional and Mental well-being, the headings are for the teacher's benefit. It is not an exhaustive list but can help pupils to reflect on the different aspects of their well-being. Today's reflection is repeated tomorrow. You may want to read some of the statements out today and the others tomorrow, just summarise the headings or break the class into small groups to discuss specific statements. It is not expected that pupils will know, learn or understand all of these statements, but discussing them may help pupils to identify one or two that they want to focus on or improve.

There are all sorts of things that can affect our well-being. The following is a list of things that can help to improve our well-being. As we read through them, I want you to think, which of the statements do you feel you are good at already? And which of the statements you need to improve?

Spiritual well-being

- Learn to be content with what we have.
- Learn to be content with what goes on around us.
- Being able to control our feelings of anger.
- Hang around good people (people who are friendly, happy, kind).
- Know why you are at school – understand the big picture.
- Accept and learn from the challenges and changes in life.
- (Knowing or considering your religious beliefs)

Social Well-being

- Being able to trust those around us.
- Feeling part of a bigger group.
- Having a few 'creally' good friends.

Emotional well-being

- Feeling confident inside.
- Know what situations make us start to feel angry or uncomfortable.
- Know what to do when we start to get angry or feel uncomfortable.
- Know when we shouldn't be content, for example, finding help when we are bullied.

Mental Well-being

- Knowing what we are good at and what we need to improve.

Time to reflect

- Which of the statements were you good at last time these were discussed?
- Have you improved on any others?
- Which of the statements do you feel you are good at already?
- Which of the statements do you think you could improve?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that our happiness, contentment and satisfaction depend on what goes on around us, but more importantly, it depends on what goes on inside of us. Help us all to be happy people. Help us to be a happy learning community, a community that learns the essential skills to support and improve our well-being and the well-being of others. *(Amen)*



18.5 When It All Comes Together

Mahatma Gandhi was a very wise man from India (who lived for the last half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century 1869–1948). He said "happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony". Over the past few weeks we have been thinking about our happiness. We have talked a lot about choosing to be happy. We have thought about how we can be content and satisfied even when things are not going our way. This quote by Mahatma Ghandi reminds us that our happiness involves what we think, it includes what we say and it is also about how we act and what we do. I would like my thoughts to be happy, my words to be happy and my actions to be happy.

Time to reflect

- Use the list from yesterday to discuss ways that they can be seen in our thoughts, our words and our deeds.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that our happiness, contentment and satisfaction depend on what goes on around us, but more importantly, it depends on what goes on inside of us. Help us all to be happy people. Help us to be a happy learning community, a community that learns the essential skills to support and improve our well-being and the well-being of others. *(Amen)*



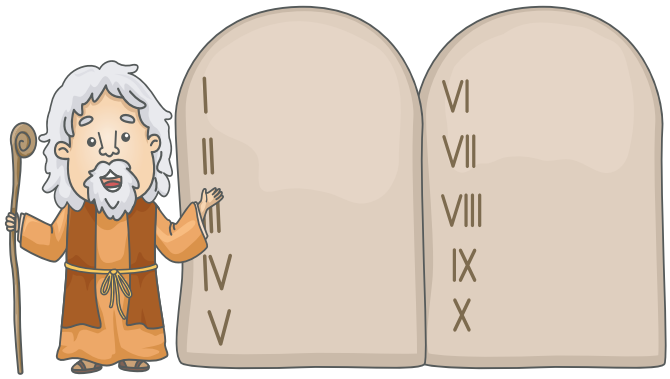
19.1 The Ten Commandments

This term we have been thinking about how we can continue to have a happy new year. Can anyone remind us of any advice we have heard over the past few weeks?

- Happiness is a choice – it's not just based on what happens to us.
- Think about good things – (whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable).
- Be a glass half full person – be positive, look for the good in a situation.
- Struggles are there to help us improve – the story of the butterfly
- There is light at the end of the tunnel - there are often easier times after hard times, so persevere.
- Happiness can help improve our well-being.

Has anybody heard of the 10 commandments? Can anyone tell me some of them? The Jewish holy book, called the Torah, gives an account of how the Jewish religion began. The Torah describes the life of an important Jewish leader called Moses. There are lots of stories in the Torah that describe the life of Moses, and many people remember these stories today. You may have learned about some of these stories in school. ***If pupils have learned about the events in the life of Moses, use the following and ask pupils to describe the event in a couple of sentences. If not, then continue to the paragraph below.***

- *Burning bush – (tree on fire, but not burning)*



- *Plague of locusts*
- *Red sea*
- *Tablets of stone*

Moses spoke to God through a tree that was on fire but wasn't burning. Moses was involved in sending ten plagues to make Pharaoh, the Egyptian ruler, set the Israelite slaves free. Israelites was a name used to describe the Jewish people. Moses split the mighty Red Sea in two so that the Israelites could escape from the Egyptian soldiers after the Pharaoh had changed his mind. But probably one of the most famous events that Moses is still remembered for today is that Moses received the 10 Commandments from God on two tablets of stone.

The 10 commandments are not the only rules that God gave the Israelites. Traditionally there are 613 Mitzvot or commandments that God gave the Israelites. There are laws about how a person should behave towards God. There are laws about what can and can't be worn. There are laws about how people should act towards each other. There are laws about marriage, about food, about business, about the festivals and seasons. There are laws about property and there are even



laws that outlined the punishments for breaking the law.

We described well-being as being healthy and happy. There were laws to protect the health of the Israelites and there were laws on how the Israelites should act towards each other. The way we act towards each other and the way others act towards us will have an effect on our well-being which means that our happiness is also effected by the way we act towards others and the way they act towards us.

Of all the laws that were given to Moses and the Israelites, the Ten Commandments are the most famous. Can anyone tell me any of the commandments?

1. Worship no god but God
2. Don't worship idols
3. Don't misuse God's name
4. Keep the Sabbath special
5. Respect your father and mother
6. Do not murder
7. Be faithful to your husband or wife (Do not commit adultery)
8. Do not steal
9. Do not lie
10. Do not be jealous

The first three commandments are religious rules. The fourth commandment reminds us that rest is an important part of our well-being. The fifth reminds us that our well-being is dependent on the relationship we have with our parents or guardians. The final five are the 'do nots'. It could be suggested that the first five commandments are more to do with a person's attitude than what a person does. If we respect our parents, we will act respectfully. If we don't respect our parents then we may act disrespectfully. If we rest and learn to take care of ourselves then we will be less likely to suffer from stress related illnesses. I wonder if those with a positive attitude would be less likely to break the 'do not' commandments like do not steal or do not lie?

One proverb in the Bible says 'young people who obey the law are intelligent' (Proverbs 28:7 GNT). ***You may or may not want to read the second part of this verse 'those who make friends with good-for-nothings are a disgrace to their parents'.*** The 613 laws that this proverb refers to affected the well-being of everybody in the community. The well-being of our community is dependent on the actions of everybody in our community.

Respect and
Understand the rules, so that we can
Live with
Everyone
Safely (or '**S**uccessfully' or and '**S**mile')

Time to reflect

- What rules do we have in school that protect our health and happiness?
- What is your attitude like toward the rules we have in school?
- How do you feel when someone breaks a rule that ends up with you being hurt?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for a school community that cares about our well-being. Help us as a community to be aware of how our actions can affect the health and happiness of others. *(Amen)*

19.2 The Golden Rule

The golden rule is the name given to an important piece of advice that is found in most cultures around the world. Jesus gave this advice to his followers, he told them to treat other people as you would like them to treat you (Matthew 7:12). Can you imagine what the world would be like if everyone was committed to acting on this piece of advice? I can tell people how I want them to act, but do I act that way myself? You may have heard the saying, 'be the change you want to see'. If we were to treat others as you want to be treated, it would act as an example that others can follow.

– Do you want to be respected? Then respect others.

– Do you want to be listened to? Then listen to others.

– Do you want to have fun? Then don't spoil the fun of others.

– Do you want to have friends? Then be a friend to those that don't have friends.

Time to reflect

- If you respect everyone, will everyone respect you? (Probably not)
- Do you think it would be good to be known as someone who is helpful and friendly?
- Do you think if everyone acted on the golden rule the world would be a better place?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Treating other people as you would like them to treat you is an important piece of advice that is given in most cultures around the world including ours. But we know that it isn't always obeyed by everyone. Help us and others to act on the golden rule today. *(Amen)*



19.3 The Wise Foundation Builder

The following link is to a 2 minute 4 second video of the parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders http://www.max7.org/en/resource/WiseFoolishBuilders This video can be downloaded and kept as a permanent resource in the school courtesy of www.max7.org

Can anyone remember the golden rule? After Jesus taught the golden rule to his followers he backed it up with the parable about the wise and foolish builders. He said that those who acted on his words were like a wise man who built his house upon the rock, when the storms came the house stood firm. Those who didn't act on his words were like a man who built his house on sand, when the storm came his house fell down.

The wise builder, although he worked hard he earned his happiness as he was able to live in his house during the storm. The foolish builder may have been happy not to work hard during the building of his house, but he wasn't happy when his house came tumbling down. Following the rules and doing the right thing now will affect how happy we will be in the future.

Time to reflect

- How can obeying the rules make us happy?
- What rules protect our happiness?
- What are you doing that is difficult now that will make you happier in the future?
- Is it hard to think that what we do now will affect us in 10, 20 or even 30 years?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories that help us to think about the choices we have. The wise man decided that he would benefit from the harder choice of building his house on strong foundations. Help us to understand that as we make the right choices, no matter how hard they might seem now, that they will be creating strong foundations for us in the future. *(Amen)*



19.4 The Boy Who Cried 'Trust Me'

The parable of the wise and foolish builders reminds us that if we follow the school rules and act on good advice it will help us to build our lives on good foundations that will help us in the future. Some of us act on the good advice and follow the school rules naturally and for others of us it may require a little more effort. Can anyone remember the story of the boy who cried wolf? What rules did the boy not obey? (He was building his house on the sand.) What happened because he decided to lie? (His house came tumbling down.) His actions of repeatedly lying to the townspeople resulted in the townspeople not believing him when he really needed it. The boy needed them to trust him, the people didn't believe him.

Time to reflect

What emotions do you think the boy felt at different points in the story?

You could create a simple emotion graph for the boy who cried wolf, events on the x-axis and emotions on the y-axis.

Why do you think he felt those emotions at those times?

What advice would you give to the boy who cried wolf?

Or… add to the following…

Building on sand (actions)
Boy lying

House falling down (consequences)
People didn't trust him

Building on rock (actions)
Tell the truth

House staying up (consequences)
People trust you

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories that help us to think about the choices we have. Help us to understand that as we make the right choices, no matter how hard they might seem now, they will be creating strong foundations for us in the future. *(Amen)*



19.5 ~~Buy Now, Pay Later~~ Obey Now, Enjoy Later

This week we have thought about how rules can protect and help improve the well-being of our community. We have thought about how our attitudes can help us to follow the rules and we have talked about the consequences of not obeying the rules. Over the past few weeks we have thought about how the troubles and struggles that we go through, often help us to be stronger, happier and healthier. Knowing that perseverance leads to happier times can help us to improve our attitude to those struggles. In the Bible, St Paul advises us to *'not become weary (or tired) in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up'* (Galatians 6:9 GNT). If we make the right choices now, obey the right rules and persevere through our struggles, then we will benefit from them. Remember the words of St James 'Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds, because… [it] produces perseverance.' James 1:1-2 NIV.

Time to reflect

- What rules can we act on now that will help us in the future?
- List the rules we can act on now and then think about the benefits we may have in the future?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for a school community that cares about our well-being. Help us as a community to be aware of how our actions can affect the health and happiness of others. *(Amen)*



20.1 Being Grateful

Preparation

Ask a child to read the account of Thomas.



Over the past few years there have been many studies into the effect being grateful has on a person's health and well-being. Can anyone tell me what being grateful means? These studies suggest that grateful or thankful people have fewer aches and pains, they sleep better, they get on with others and they are generally healthier than other people. Being grateful can also help us to be calmer and happier, which is good for our well-being. This week we are going to think about what it means to be grateful.

In most theme or amusement parks, the ones with big rides, you pay your entrance fee and then you can go on as many rides as you want (or as the queues will allow). Has anyone been to a theme park recently? What rides did you go on? At one of these theme parks, not so long ago, you could either buy an expensive wrist band that allowed you to go on as many rides as you wanted or you could buy cheaper tickets with each ride requiring a certain amount of these tickets. The popular rides used more tickets and the less popular rides used fewer tickets. Imagine if you went to this theme park, would you prefer tickets or a wrist band? There was also a zoo at this theme park.

If you had a wrist band you could obviously go on any ride you wanted, you could go on the same ride twice if so wished. If you had tickets, you may need to think carefully about which rides you'd go on. Has anyone been on a log flume ride? If two children went on the log-flume, one used a wrist band and one used tickets, who'd enjoy the ride the most? The one with a wristband may get off the ride and jump straight into the queue for the rapids to try and get the most out of their wristband. The child with tickets may want to take time to reflect on the log flume ride, before thinking about what ride they would really like to go on next.

Who do you think would enjoy the theme park more, a child with a wrist band or a child with tickets? The wristband may make a child just want to go on more rides, once one is finished it's onto the next. The zoo may just get in the way of getting on more and more rides. The child with the tickets may take time to enjoy the ride they are on, because they know that it is one of only a few rides that they are able to enjoy. Which children would enjoy the zoo the most, those with a wristband or those with tickets? The zoo would become part of enjoying what the theme park has to offer.

Happiness is not necessarily about getting everything we want, we will certainly be happier if we can enjoy what we have. At the beginning of this assembly I said that there have been many studies into the effect thankfulness can have on a person's well-being. One way of getting the most out of what we have is by being thankful.

In the Bible, there is a story that can help us to think about what it is to be grateful.

"Hi my name is Thomas, up until last week I had a terrible skin disease. It was very bad and other people were so scared that they would catch it that I had to live with other people who had the same disease outside of the walls to our village. Well one day, the ten of us heard that Jesus was coming to town. We knew the stories that he had been going around healing people and we thought that he may be able to heal us. Living outside the city walls isn't easy. It's hard to find enough food and to be honest there isn't much to do. The thought of being healed and being able to go and join our families again was so exciting!"

"One of the lads saw Jesus on his way to the village. When he was in shouting distance we all said, "Jesus! Master! Have pity on us!" Well there were no magic words, no lightning bolts from heaven, Jesus just told us to go and show ourselves to the priests to let them examine us. That's what we are supposed to do if we think that we are cured of the skin disease, the priest would then decide if we were safe enough to live in the village again. So the ten of us marched to the priests house. The villagers didn't know whether to run up to us or run away from us. With each step we seemed to be getting better and better and our disease seemed to get less and less until we were all fine. The priests gave us a clean bill of health.

Wow, we were clean, no more living outside the village living on handouts, we could become part of our community again, it was amazing. I had to thank Jesus, and let him know how grateful I was. I found him walking through the village, so I stopped and fell at his feet and thanked him. Out of the ten that were healed, I was the only one who came back to thank Jesus. Jesus seemed really pleased that I had come back to show my gratitude, but he was also disappointed that the other nine hadn't thought it was worth saying 'thank you'.

Time to reflect

- Was Thomas more thankful than the other nine?
- Is there anything you can be thankful for today?
- Are you thankful when you feel better after being ill?
- When you are ill are you grateful that you can see a doctor or nurse?
- How can we show that we are grateful?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the things in our lives that we can be grateful for. Sometimes we might need reminding that we can be thankful for our families, our friends, our school and our teachers, the food we eat and the water we drink. We also think of those around the world that don't have these. Help us to be thankful and to demonstrate our gratitude in our actions and in our words. *(Amen)*

20.2 What To Give Thanks For

Can anyone recount the story of Thomas, from yesterday's assembly? Was he more thankful than the other nine that were healed? This week we are thinking about what we can be thankful for and the ways that we can show our gratitude. Yesterday we were told that being thankful can actually improve our well-being. That doesn't mean that thankful people are only those that have lots of material things to be thankful for. In one study, people with lots of stuff were often less grateful than those who didn't have as much stuff.*

Imagine two children, both at their own home at Christmas, one sits in front of a big pile of presents and the other sits in front of a small pile of presents. If you were a toy, which pile would you rather be in? If you were a toy in the big pile of presents, is there much chance of you being played with and appreciated? It is often difficult to be thankful for something that is around us every day. Who is more thankful for water, those who have lots or those that don't have much? But both can be thankful that the water we have is keeping us alive. Being thankful starts by realising and appreciating what we have.

Time to reflect

- What do we have around us that we can be/should be thankful for?
- Why should we be thankful for them?
- How can we show that we are thankful for them?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the things in our lives that we can be grateful for. Sometimes we might need reminding that we can be thankful for our families, our friends, our school and our teachers, the food we eat the water we drink. We also think of those around the world that don't have these. Help us to be thankful and to demonstrate our gratitude in our actions and in our words. *(Amen)*

**happierhuman.com – The Science of Gratitude*



20.3 Grace

Many people around the world offer a prayer of thanks before they eat their meals to show (their) God appreciation for the food they are about to eat. Some Christians call this prayer 'grace'. Does anyone know what 'grace' means? One definition of the word 'grace' is 'receiving something that not everyone has' or 'receiving or giving kindness that is beyond what is expected or usual'. So, for example, if a homework needs to be handed in on the Friday but you haven't completed it, the teacher may give you a few days' grace and allow you to hand it in on the Monday. The teacher could have given you a bad mark for not handing it in, but instead they have given you the weekend to complete it. Wasn't that nice of them!

When people say grace before dinner, it can be a reminder that not everyone in the world will receive enough food today. It is a reminder that we should be thankful for the little things in life, like a full belly and a glass of clean water. Yesterday we suggested that some may think that only those that have lots can be thankful, but even your school lunch is a reason to be grateful.

Time to reflect

- How can a simple meal improve your well-being?
- How can we demonstrate our thankfulness when we have a meal?
- Can being thankful motivate us to help those who haven't got enough food or those that drink dirty water?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the things in our lives that we can be grateful for. Sometimes we might need reminding that we can be thankful for our families, our friends, our school and our teachers, the food we eat the water we drink. We also think of those around the world that don't have these. Help us to be thankful and to demonstrate our gratitude in our actions and in our words. *(Amen)*



20.4 Joy Is Thankfulness

Does being happy lead to being thankful, or does being thankful lead to being happy? The word 'joy' is often used to mean 'happy'. In the Bible, St Paul writes *"Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances"* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NIV). But how can you be happy all the time and how can we give thanks in all circumstances. Yesterday we thought about being thankful for the little things, those things that happen every day that don't seem that important. I'm sure that if we tried hard enough we can find something to be thankful for in most circumstances. Homework helps us to get better at skills we learnt in the class room. Illness can help to improve our immune system for the next time illnesses come around. Falling out with a friend can teach us important lessons about how to relate to others. Focusing on that what we can be thankful for can help us to be happier in difficult circumstances. Joy is a way of us being able to demonstrate our gratitude.

Time to reflect

- Does being happy lead to being thankful, or does being thankful lead to being happy?
- Can we be happy for things that sometimes seem 'bad'? ***You may want to stress that we shouldn't be thankful for, or accept all the bad things that happen to us.***
- How can we show our gratitude to some of the 'not so good' things that happen to us? (Joy)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the things in our lives that we can be grateful for. Sometimes we might need reminding that we can be thankful for our families, our friends, our school and our teachers, the food we eat the water we drink. We also think of those around the world that don't have these. Help us to be thankful and to demonstrate our gratitude in our actions and in our words. *(Amen)*



20.5 What And How

This week we have thought about how being thankful can help our well-being. We have thought about the things we can be thankful for and the ways we can show that we are grateful. Throughout the year there lots of days, weeks or even months that are set aside to help us remember things that we can be thankful for. On the United Nations website, there is a list of some of these days or weeks. Did you know that 22nd March each year is World Water Day? In April, there is a week to think about the importance of global soil and how it is important for the growth of food around the world. Remembrance Day falls in the international week of Science and Peace. There are reminders all around us that we have lots to be thankful for.

Time to reflect

- Make a list of some things that we can be thankful for.
- Next to each one, list how we can show our thankfulness.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the things in our lives that we can be grateful for. Sometimes we might need reminding that we can be thankful for our families, our friends, our school and our teachers, the food we eat the water we drink. We also think of those around the world that don't have these. Help us to be thankful and to demonstrate our gratitude in our actions and in our words. *(Amen)*



21.1 Shrove Tuesday

Preparation

Search and display an image of a pancake race.



Does anyone know what will happen on Tuesday of this (or next) week? Pancake Day is an important day for many people around the world. It is the day before Ash Wednesday which marks the beginning of the Christian season of Lent. For many people in the UK, this is the time of year to give up something that is important to them. Lent is a time of year when many Christian and non-religious people fast. Fasting means to go without something that you think is important. Some people may stop eating chocolate and others may stop watching TV during Lent. Lent is the 40 days (not including Sundays) starting on Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday.

The tradition of fasting during Lent comes from an event that is described in the Bible that happened before Jesus started healing the sick and using parables to teach people. The Bible describes Jesus being baptised and then going into the 'wilderness' for forty days. The Bible explains that Jesus went without food and was tempted by the devil.

During Lent, Christians have traditionally thought about the things they have done that they may need to ask forgiveness for. They may ask God to help them not to do them again in the future. The season of Lent is supposed to be a sad time, a time to go without and a time to think about how a person's actions may have hurt others or hurt God. Traditionally Christians would have gone without meat, eggs, milk and butter.

The celebration before Lent has a few different names. The most common in the UK is 'Pancake Day' but it is also called 'Shrove Tuesday'. The word 'Shrove' or 'Shrive' sums up the period of Lent. The word means to think about what we have done wrong and then to ask and receive forgiveness for those wrong things. Over time Shrove Tuesday became known as 'Fat Tuesday' or in French 'Mardi Gras'. It was the day to use up the fat and other ingredients that couldn't be eaten during Lent. Pancakes became a way of using up these ingredients.

Can anyone tell me what a 'carnival' is? (A carnival is often thought of as a procession of brightly decorated floats through a town or city.) The word 'carnival' comes from the name of the celebrations that traditionally took place in the week before the beginning of Lent. In many European countries and countries with large numbers of Christians and Roman Catholics, the time before Lent is still celebrated with a procession or 'carnival'. One of the largest processions is the Rio Carnival or Mardi Gras that takes place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Some Shrove Tuesday traditions in the UK have their origins that go back hundreds



of years. Many towns used to hold 'Mob Football' matches on Shrove Tuesday. Whilst many of these have died out a few of these football matches continue each year. Ashbourne in Derbyshire boasts the 'Royal Shrovetide Football Match'. There are few rules in the game which can last a few hours. In 2003 the annual game was started by Prince Charles. Other towns that carry on this tradition are Atherstone in Warwickshire, Alnwick in Northumberland and Sedgefield in County Durham. In St Columb in Cornwall, the game is called Hurling the Silver Ball. (Photos and details for all these games can be found on online.)

Another tradition that goes back hundreds of years is the pancake race. One famous pancake race continues in the town of Olney in Buckinghamshire. Tradition tells of a housewife busily making pancakes. When the church bell rang to call the towns people to the Shrove Tuesday church service, the housewife ran out of her house carrying the frying pan and flipping the pancake all the way to the door of the church. The Olney Pancake Race website states that the tradition dates back to 1445. Women from Olney (and men dressed as women) continue to race, flipping pancakes to the church door today. There is a traditional 'shriving' service after the race.

The Christian season of Lent is a sad time, one in which Christian's remember Jesus' struggles. Shrove Tuesday and other times of the year are happy ones. Festivals and special days throughout the year remind us that we will all go through times that are happy but some are also a reminder that we will go through times that are sad. Whilst it isn't something that we want to go through we will all go through times of sadness, you could say that they are a 'normal' part of our lives. In those times, it is important to remember that happy times are a normal part of our lives as well.

Time to reflect

- Did you know that Shrove Tuesday was traditionally a religious tradition?
- Why did people make pancakes on Shrove Tuesday?
- Did you know about any of the Shrove Tuesday Traditions described today?
- Can you think of happy festivals or special days?
- Can you think of sad festivals or special days? (Lent, Remembrance Day)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for our communities and we are thankful for the times when our communities are able to come together and celebrate. Help us to become involved in the celebrations of our own communities and learn from the celebrations of others. *(Amen)*

21.2 Rehab Parliamentary Pancake Race

In London, near Big Ben there is pancake race that takes place every year between members of Parliament, members of the House of Lords and the press. Since 1998, the Rehab Parliamentary Pancake Race has allowed politicians and journalists to compete whilst raising money for Charity. Rehab is "a charity that champions the value of diversity and inclusion for people with a disability or disadvantage, in their communities*."

Is there a parents or teachers' race in our sports day? (If not should there be one?) It is often fun to see someone doing something that's unexpected. Seeing MP's running around a park in suits, tossing pancakes, can remind us of the positive impact we can all have on our communities.

Yesterday we thought about happy and sad times. Some festivals in the church year focus on happy times, others like Lent and Good Friday focus on sad events. The Rehab Parliamentary Pancake Race, like many other charitable events, helps to raise money to improve the physical and mental well-being of others. It is a reminder that we can all do something to help improve the happiness of others.

Time to reflect

- What do you do to support your community?
- Could you do more to help your community?
- What charities does the school support?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for our communities and we are thankful for the times when our communities are able to come together and celebrate. Help us to become involved in the celebrations of our own communities and learn from the celebrations of others. *(Amen)*

* http://www.rehab.ie – *mission/vision*



21.3 Pancake Greaze

Preparation

Images of the Pancake Greaze are available on the internet.

Can anyone remember the three teams that make up the Rehab Parliamentary Pancake Race? Would you expect MPs and Lord and Ladies in their suits racing against members of the press?

The Westminster School in London is one of the oldest schools still open today. On Shrove Tuesday, pupils and staff gather together in the school hall. The chef tosses a large pancake over a metal bar about five metres high. Pupils representing houses or teams then try to grab a piece of the pancake. The pupil with the largest piece receives a reward. The pupils can end up in a pile in the middle of the school hall as they struggle to claim the largest piece.

Can you imagine what a person who is about to take part in the Pancake Greaze is feeling as they stand waiting for the pancake to be tossed into the air. What about the rest of the community, I wonder what they are thinking as they sit watching this age-old tradition.

Time to reflect

- Are those watching just as much part of the tradition as those who are taking part?
- Do we need to take part in community events to be part of the community? (We are part of the community anyway)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for our communities and we are thankful for the times when our communities are able to come together and celebrate. Help us to become involved in the celebrations of our own communities and learn from the celebrations of others. *(Amen)*



21.4 Skipping Day

Shrove Tuesday in Scarborough, North Yorkshire is known as 'Skipping Day'. Scarborough's Skipping Festival has taken place for just over one hundred years. The festival is thought to have originated from the games played by children during the Shrove Tuesday celebration. Today, roads are closed as children and adults gather together on the sea front. Long ropes are laid out and everyone joins in the fun.

Scarborough also has another Shrove Tuesday tradition. Before everybody had watches and clocks, a town bell was rung at six in the morning and six in the evening to let the townsfolk know what time it was. On Shrove Tuesday the bell was also rung at midday to let everybody know that it was time to start cooking pancakes. Today, the bell, known as the pancake bell, is rung to mark the beginning of the town's celebrations. Before the skipping festival there is a pancake race, those competing wear fancy dress.

Time to reflect

- Can more of the community take part in Scarborough's skipping festival than a pancake race?
- Do think this is a good time for the community? Why?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for our communities and we are thankful for the times when our communities are able to come together and celebrate. Help us to become involved in the celebrations of our own communities and learn from the celebrations of others. *(Amen)*



21.5 Taking part

The traditions that we have explored this week are all very different, but they have their roots in the Christian festival of Lent and Easter. Talk through the different traditions:

- A game of football with very few rules
- Pancake races
- Pancake Greaze
- Skipping festival

The celebrations this week remind us that we are part of our community whether we are involved in the events or not. Those standing and watching the football matches, pancake races, or even the Pancake Greaze can be just as much a part of the community as those taking part. They are community events, because the communities come out to support them.

The Christian season of Lent is a sad time, one in which Christian's remember Jesus' struggles. Shrove Tuesday and other times of the year are happy ones. Festivals and special days throughout the year remind us that we will all go through times that are happy but some are also a reminder that we will go through times that are sad.

Whilst they are not something that we want to go through, we will all go through times of sadness, you could say that it is a 'normal' part of our lives. In those times, it is important to remember that happy times are a normal part of our lives as well.

Time to reflect

- Can those watching be as much a part of the community as those taking part?
- Discuss the different traditions you have heard about this week. How do they help a person celebrate 'community'?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for our communities and we are thankful for the times when our communities are able to come together and celebrate. Help us to become involved in the celebrations of our own communities and learn from the celebrations of others. *(Amen)*



22.1 I Want It Now (The Marshmallow Test)

Preparation

You will need a table, a chair, a plate and marshmallows, please note that most marshmallows are not suitable for vegetarians. There are videos of the Marshmallow Test on 'Youtube'. Always preview all of a video before showing it to children.



Have you ever heard the phrase "I want it and I want it now!" I wonder how many of you think this phrase when you go shopping or look through the toy section of the catalogues? There are so many yummy looking sweets or shiny new toys it's hard not to want them and want them now. I wonder how many of the teachers think this phrase when they see a nice new pair of shoes, a designer handbag or even a power drill!

Can anyone remember any of the traditions that happen on Shrove Tuesday, the day before the season of Lent? During Lent many people in the UK will go without certain types of food or give up watching television. Probably the most popular foods that people will try and give up are sweets and chocolate. Years ago, many Christians would have given up eating meat and dairy products during Lent, some Christians still give up these products today. Going without food for religious reasons is usually called a 'fast'.

The tradition of fasting during Lent comes from an event that is described in the Bible that happened before Jesus started healing the sick and using parables to teach people. The Bible describes Jesus being baptised and then going into the 'wilderness' for forty days. The Bible explains that Jesus went without food for all that time and in one of the gospels it tells us that at the end of the forty days, Jesus was hungry! I bet! The Bible doesn't say why Jesus went into the wilderness, and it doesn't explain why he went without food for forty days. Many Christians think that Jesus was preparing himself for his time of teaching and performing miracles. The Bible says that whilst Jesus was fasting, the devil came to him and tempted him to eat. The word temptation is usually used to describe wanting to do something that we probably know is wrong or bad for us. The Bible says that Jesus was hungry, but he was able to resist temptation and complete his fast.

There are lots of benefits to waiting, but waiting takes self-control. Self-control is the ability to be able to control our thoughts and actions even if our minds or the people around us are telling us to do the opposite. It is the ability not to give in to temptation. A professor at Stanford University carried out a study on how self-control can benefit our lives. In a famous experiment known as the Stanford Marshmallow Experiment, Professor Walter Mischel wanted to test self-control in children between three and five years old. To show you what he did,

I need a volunteer. ***Ask the volunteer to come to the front and do the following…*** He sat a child on a chair in a room in front of a table, on the table was a plate and on the plate, was a single marshmallow. He then told the child that he was going to leave the room, they could eat the marshmallow if they wanted, but if they waited until he got back and didn't eat the marshmallow he would give them another one. He then left the room, sometimes for up to 20 minutes. I'm not going to leave the room. **Thank the volunteer with a marshmallow. If you are going to show a video clip of the Marshmallow test, show it now.**

About half of the children ate the marshmallow before he came back in the room with some children eating the marshmallow straight away. The other half were able to wait until he came back. Walter also studied the progress of children throughout their time at school, college and university and he found that those children who had better self-control had a better chance of achieving higher grades and were less likely to get into trouble. If you were to eat the marshmallow too soon it does not mean that your grades would automatically be lower and that you would misbehave, but the results showed that those with more self-control were more likely to achieve better grades and be better behaved.

Improving our self-control can help in lots of different areas in our lives. Self-control can help us to be healthy. Lots of foods are not good for us and it takes self-control to eat the right foods. Exercise takes self-control. Completing your homework to the best of your ability, revising for a spelling test or learning your times tables requires self-control. Walter not only discovered that those with more self-control did better at school, he also found that self-control is a skill that children and adults can improve. The Bible describes self-control as a fruit that can grow. Lent is a time that can help those that fast and go without something that is important to them, grow self-control in their lives. Our targets in school, practising an instrument or going to sports practise even on a cold and wet day are other ways that we can grow our self-control.

Time to reflect

- Could you pass the 'Marshmallow Test'?
- Is it good to know that you can 'grow' your self-control?
- What can you do to grow self-control in your life?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Lent is an important reminder of the need for self-control. We are thankful that we can grow self-control in our own lives. May we all get better at the skill of self-control, improving our well-being and helping us to live healthy and happy lives. *(Amen)*



22.2 Can Self-Control Make You Healthier?

This week we are thinking about how we can benefit from and improve our self-control. In a normal day, there are lots of choices that we can make that will help us to improve our health. We may choose the foods we eat or decide which snacks we have. We have the choice to move more or sit and relax. In the study by Walter Mischel, he found that people with more self-control were generally healthier. We heard the word temptation yesterday, when dieting some people call the unhealthy but tasty foods a temptation. It takes self-control to tell yourself that you are not going to eat too much unhealthy food, it takes self-control to pick up a piece of fruit rather than to give into the temptation of a biscuit.

We all know that exercise is good for us, but the temptation to sit down and play on a games console or sit and watch YouTube is often more tempting than going with your parents to take the dog for a walk or to join a sports team at the weekend.

Time to reflect

- Discuss what choices will help us to become healthier?
- How can we increase our self-control to improve our health?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Lent is an important reminder of the need for self-control. We are thankful that we can grow self-control in our own lives. May we all get better at the skill of self-control, improving our well-being and helping us to live healthy and happy lives. *(Amen)*



22.3 Can Self-Control Make You Intelligent?

This week we are thinking about how we can benefit from and improve our self-control. In a normal day, there are lots of choices that we can make that will help us to improve our ability to learn new information and get better at applying our skills. Think about the steps we go through as we learn to read. We need to know the sounds that make up different words. We need to know the letters that go with those sounds. We start to blend the sound of these letters into short words. We begin to recognise our sight words and learn new longer words. We start to learn that the same letter may sound different in different words. Eventually with practise we are able to read. To help us to improve our reading we could choose books that introduce us to new words or new ideas. Reading takes practise and practise takes self-control. Lots of the skills we learn at school like reading, writing and times tables we will need to practise. We are given the time at school to practise, but do we practise those skills when we are not at school? It takes self-control to practise the skills when there isn't someone around encouraging you to practise, but we all know the benefits of practising.

Time to reflect

- Discuss what choices that will help us to improve our ability to learn new information and get better at applying our skills?
- How can we increase our self-control to improve our 'cleverness'?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Lent is an important reminder of the need for self-control. We are thankful that we can grow self-control in our own lives. May we all get better at the skill of self-control, improving our well-being and helping us to live healthy and happy lives. *(Amen)*



22.4 Can Self-Control Make You Kinder?

This week we are thinking about how we can benefit from and improve our self-control. Can anyone tell me what kindness means? One definition uses the words 'friendly', 'generous' and 'considerate' when describing the word kindness. We all know what it is to be friendly but what does it mean to be generous? What does it mean to be considerate? **Discuss the meaning of generous and considerate.**

Possible definitions…

Generous – giving away more than you need to, including your time, energy and stuff.

Considerate – thinking about the needs of others and putting them before your own.

Discuss

How can we show others generosity? Helping your teacher tidy up during break time?

How can we show others consideration? Opening a door for someone (even if you don't need to go through it)?

Kindness isn't something that we often think of as a skill. Do you think that the more we are generous and considerate the better we will become at being generous and considerate?

Time to reflect

- What are you going to do to become more generous?
- What are you going to do to become more considerate?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Lent is an important reminder of the need for self-control. We are thankful that we can grow self-control in our own lives. May we all get better at the skill of self-control, improving our well-being and helping us to live healthy and happy lives. *(Amen)*



Lent is a time when many people improve their self-control, or at least try to by giving up something important for forty days. There are many benefits a person can gain from fasting.

Appreciation

If you give up eating chocolate or sweets for forty days, how do you think you would feel when the fast is over and you are able to taste chocolate again? Do you think the chocolate will taste better than it did before the fast? Do you think you would appreciate or enjoy the chocolate more than you did before?

You can

Those that complete a fast can feel proud of themselves because they have achieved something that was difficult. They met their target of going without. It may help a person realise that they can do something that they first thought was impossible.

Professor Walter Mischel discovered that we can improve our self-control. Those with better self-control have a better chance of achieving higher grades, are less likely to get into trouble and have a better chance of improving their well-being. Practising self-control is often about making the right choices. We choose to eat the right food, we choose to finish that book or put in the extra effort on a piece of work. We choose to open the door or help someone when we don't need to. As we start to make the right choices, right choices become easier to make.

Time to reflect

- How do you think self-control can help you to improve your well-being?
- What can you do to improve your self-control?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Lent is an important reminder of the need for self-control. We are thankful that we can grow self-control in our own lives. May we all get better at the skill of self-control, improving our well-being and helping us to live healthy and happy lives. *(Amen)*



23.1 Reap What You Sow

Preparation

Search and display an image of the 'Six Nations' Rugby Tournament.



So far this year we have focused a lot on how we can improve the happiness part of our well-being. We started by thinking about the phrase 'a happy new year'. Do we still think we can have a happy new year now we are a few weeks into it? We are often hopeful at the end of one year and looking at the next. The new year can seem like a blank page on the table before us ready to be turned into a great piece of artwork. But a few weeks in we can sometimes think that the new year is not going like we expected. The struggle to motivate ourselves to work and arguments with family and friends may start to make us give up on the hopeful feelings we had at the start of the year. It is like making mistakes on our clean page.

We have already suggested that happiness can be a decision, we can decide to be happy no matter what happens to us. Whether we have a clean page or whether it has a mistake that has been crossed out, we can still choose to be happy. Some of the happiest people in the world are those that can go through difficult times and still focus on the positives. We have talked about choosing to be happy, but this week we are going to think about the actions and decisions that we do now that will help us to be happier in the future.

Have you heard of the phrase 'you reap what you sow?' Like many phrases and proverbs, 'you reap what you sow' came from the Bible. To sow is a verb that means to plant seeds or crops. To reap is a verb that involves gathering and harvesting the crop once it has grown. What do you think the phrase 'you reap what you sow' means? It means that the things that you do now will have an effect on what happens in the future. When a crop is planted, it will take time to grow before it is ready to eat. Whilst it is growing it will require the right conditions to grow properly. The weather can't be too cold, or too hot. The crops will need the right amount of water. If grown outside some potatoes, called 'first earlies', can take as little as fourteen weeks (just over three months) from being sown to being harvested. 'Maincrop' potatoes will be ready eighteen to twenty weeks after planting.

The Six Nations rugby tournament takes place in February each year. It is a popular tournament which brings together six national rugby union teams. Does anyone know which six countries are involved? (England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Italy and France.) Like any sport at this level, the players will have spent years playing the game and improving their skills. As a spectator, we see the rugby players at the top of their game. We haven't seen the hours of training that the players will have gone through. We probably don't

know about the strict diets they will have had to endure to keep their bodies in the best condition. What we get to see is the result of all that hard work. Players on the national teams are able to reap the benefits of the hard work that has gone on behind the scenes.

What we sow now will have an effect on the future. Imagine a spelling test, if you revise and practise your spellings, you will have a better chance of spelling most of them correctly in a spelling test. Imagine if you have been set the task of creating a model of an Egyptian pyramid. When you are set the homework, you want to create a masterpiece in cardboard, glue and yellow paint. The homework requires research and the time to make this object of greatness. The day before the homework is due, you realise that you have forgotten all about it. You can't find any cardboard in the house so you make do with a bit of paper. You don't have any glue so you stick it together with sellotape and you've ran out of yellow paint so you colour it in with a yellow felt-tip pen that is running out. The final creation isn't what you expected. You also forgot to research what a pyramid looks like and your finished model is a cube. Ooops!

The advice 'you reap what you sow' can be used for so many different areas in our lives. If we eat too much and don't exercise, we reap what we sow. If we call each other names and are nasty to each other, we reap what we sow. If you ignore and don't practise the skills that you learn in school, then you reap what you sow. If you practise an instrument regularly or carry on going to hockey club on a cold and wet Saturday morning, then you reap what you sow.

We have already suggested that happiness is a choice, but happiness is also something that we reap because of our actions. Think of the joy the rugby players who win the Six Nations tournament will feel. How happy will a musician feel when they master a piece of music? Will you be pleased if you get all your spellings correct? 'Reaping what we sow', reminds us that we may benefit or struggle in the future because of the choices we make now.

Time to reflect

- What have you done in the past that has helped you recently?
- What can you do today that will help you in the future?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that we often benefit from the hard work of others and we are grateful for the joy that we can have from our actions. Help us to think about how our actions will benefit us in the future and may it be the motivation to make the right choices now. *(Amen)*



23.2 Sowing Happiness, Growing Happiness

Yesterday we thought about the phrase 'we reap what we sow'. When farmers sow potatoes what do they expect to grow? When farmers sow runner beans, what do they expect to grow? If someone doesn't sow seeds, what do they get at the end of it? Nothing. If someone sows weeds, what will they grow? We have thought a lot this week about the good seeds that we sow, but we can also sow and reap bad things. If we sow nastiness, it is quite likely that people will not be very nice to us. If we sow laziness, it is likely that we won't reap very much at all. If we keep eating unhealthy foods and not doing very much exercise, then it is very likely that we will reap an unhealthy future. Smoking is dangerous, a cigarette when you are young might seem harmless, but the consequences will be damaging. The phrase you reap what you sow, suggests that you get out what you put in. If you put in good things then you would hope that you get good things at the end of it. If you put in bad things, then just imagine what you will reap.

Time to reflect

- What sort of things do we mean by good?
- What sort of things do we mean by bad?
- Can you think of an example of how a good action can affect our future for the better?
- Can you think of an example of how a bad action can affect our future for the worse?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that we often benefit from the hard work of others and we are grateful for the joy that we can have from our actions. Help us to think about how our actions will affect us in the future and may it be the motivation to make the right choices now. *(Amen)*



23.3 Sowing Opportunities

Preparation

An animated version of the Parable of the Sower is available for free download from http://www.max7.org/en/resource/ParableSower courtesy of www.Max7.org – the parable can be found in Luke 8:1-15.

Can anyone remember the phrase we have been thinking about this week? If we sow good things we will reap good things. Can anyone give me an example of something that you might do now that will help you in the future. In school and at home we will be given the opportunities to learn and practise lots of new skills. Some of those opportunities we may make the most of, whilst others we may not be keen to practise. **Watch or read the parable of the Sower.** The Parable of the Sower reminds us that we will only benefit from the opportunities if we are prepared to put in the effort. Some opportunities we will completely ignore, like seed that fall on the path. Some opportunities we will start but will quickly give up, like the seed that fell in the rocky soil. Some opportunities we may feel too embarrassed to carry on with because we are worried about what our friends or family will say, this is like the seed that fell in the weeds and thorns. The weeds choked the life out of the poor seed. Finally we can be successful in growing the opportunity into something that benefits ourselves and the people around us like the seed that fell on good soil.

Time to reflect

Make a list of the opportunities that we have at school and at home…

E.g.

- Sports clubs
- Instruments
- Creative skills – drama and art
- School skills – literacy, numeracy, history etc…
- Social – teamwork, meeting new friends, trips and visits (outdoor pursuits etc…)
- Life skills – cooking

Which opportunities would you like to benefit from later?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that we often benefit from the hard work of others and we are grateful for the joy that we can have from our actions. Help us to think about how our actions will benefit us in the future and may it be the motivation to make the right choices now. *(Amen)*



23.4 Sowing Time

The seed that fell on good soil will not automatically grow to be the perfect crop. The seed will need sunshine, water and the right nutrients from the soil to grow properly. Yesterday we thought about the opportunities that we have at school and at home. Each one of those opportunities is like a seed that in the right conditions will grow, but how much it grows is up to us, the amount of effort we put in will affect how much we get out of those opportunities. A musician will only be as good as the amount of practise they are prepared to put in. Training is very important if you want to get better at a sport. You may sow an opportunity by spending time revising, practicing or training. The more time we sow at an opportunity, the better we will get. Choosing what to do with your time is important. In the parable of the wise and foolish builder, the wise man took time to secure his house to the rock. It would have been difficult and would have required more effort than putting up his house on sand. He would need to prepare the rock, making it flat removing the rough edges, and securing the walls to the rock. The foolish man on the other hand would have found the ground flat and soft and ready for his house. But when the storm came there was only one man left dry, warm and happy. We will naturally spend time doing what we think is important.

Time to reflect

- What do you spend a lot of your time doing? (What are you good at?)
- What would you like to get better at?
- What do you need to spend more time doing?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that we often benefit from the hard work of others and we are grateful for the joy that we can have from our actions. Help us to think about how our actions will benefit us in the future and may it be the motivation to make the right choices now. *(Amen)*



23.5 Sowing Patience

What would you think if you saw a new born baby running across a sports field? What steps will a baby or child take in being able to go from lying in a cot to being able to run. They will need to start to move their legs, then sit up, then crawl, then stand up, then walk and then become strong and confident enough to start running. Can anyone remember how long it takes to grow potatoes? From sowing to harvesting, some potatoes take eighteen to twenty weeks. It takes time to get better at most of the things that we do. Many of us want to see the benefits of what we sow now, but the example of a baby walking and the example of nature growing our food suggests that we need to wait to see what we do now grow into what we hope for in the future. Giving up because we struggle to do something now is like the seed that fell in rocky soil. The success of those around us whether they are in a band or in a sports team or whether they are simply running, they remind us that we reap what we sow. We need to make the most of the opportunities that we have been given to see them grow, but we also need patience.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever given up on something that you first thought was exciting because you got bored of waiting?
- How can we learn to be more patient?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that we often benefit from the hard work of others and we are grateful for the joy that we can have from our actions. Help us to think about how our actions will benefit us in the future and may it be the motivation to make the right choices now. *(Amen)*



24.1 Bouncing Back - Moses

Preparation

Search and display an image of a someone riding a bike.



How do you deal with failure? We all get things wrong. We all make mistakes as we learn and master new skills. The process of mastering a new skill is as much about learning what not to do as it is about learning what to do. How many of you here can ride a bicycle? When you first got on your bike, were you able to ride it straight away? What process did you go through? After you learn to peddle you then need to master balancing. After you master balancing you still need to master starting and stopping. Those of you that can ride a bike, what advice would you give to someone who is about to give up after half an hour of trying and failing to ride a bike?

Swimming is another good example of the learning process. How many of you here are able to swim the length of a swimming pool? Swimming is an important skill to learn, but like learning to ride a bike, it is something that needs to be mastered. Riding a bike can really only be learnt by riding a bike and swimming can really only be learnt by swimming. You can read about how to ride a bike, but unless you actually climb on to a bike without stabilisers I doubt that you'll be able to master it.

Many things that we go through in life may make us feel like giving up. Falling off a bike and struggling to keep ourselves afloat whilst in the swimming pool are just as much part of the learning process as riding without stabilisers and swimming a length of the swimming pool. We often forget that failing is a part of succeeding. Getting back onto the bike once you have fallen off, is the only way that you will eventually be able to succeed. Getting into the pool after weeks of not quite 'getting it' is still the only way that you will 'get it'.

Has anyone heard the phrase 'bounce back'? It is often used to describe how a person has come back from an accident, illness, blow or defeat or how they have overcome their defeat or disability. When we struggle to learn to spell a new word or apply a new maths skill, bouncing back may require us to practise it until we are happy we have mastered it. When we fall out with our friends, bouncing back may require us to be the first person to say a kind word. When we do something that we know is wrong, bouncing back might be saying sorry and making it right.

There are many stories of people who have bounced back from difficult times. The Bible gives an account of a man called Moses who wanted to free his people from slavery in Egypt. Many Jews celebrate this story each year with a festival called Pesach. Over the course of this week we are going to hear the

story of Moses told by different people that were involved in the story.

Jochebed

"Hello, my name is Jochebed. I am the wife of a man called Amram and I have two sons called Aaron and Moses. Both of my sons are important in the story of my people, the Israelites. Our people are slaves in Egypt. The Israelites were in Egypt because one of our ancestors, named Joseph, was good at interpreting dreams. One of the previous Egyptians ruler's, called Pharaoh's, had a dream and it was Joseph that told him that it meant that Egypt was going to have seven years of plenty, with huge harvests and lots of food to eat. After the seven years of plenty would come a seven-year famine, where there would be very little rain and the crops would fail. Pharaoh asked Joseph to manage the food in the seven years of plenty to help get through the seven years of famine. Joseph was successful and Egypt managed the seven years of famine, they had enough to sell their grain to neighbouring countries. After the famine, Joseph's family including his father and eleven brothers moved to Egypt. A new Pharaoh came to power in Egypt and forgot about what Joseph had done. That all happened a few hundred years ago and it is the reason my people are slaves to the Egyptian empire now."

"A few years after my son, Aaron, was born and while I was pregnant with Moses, the new Pharaoh was so concerned that the Israelite population was growing and worried that we would take over his land, he decided to throw all the new born boys into the river Nile. Aaron was safe as he wasn't a baby, but as soon as Moses was born, he was going to be taken away from me and thrown into the river. I gave birth in secret and placed Moses in a basket and hid him amongst the reeds along the bank of the Nile. Miriam my daughter would stay and keep an eye on him."

How a person bounces back often depends on the way they think and what they do. Moses mum was determined to save Moses, she could have given up but she decided to act, saving her sons life. If you fall out with a friend, bouncing back may involve deciding to make friends again, or even making new friends. Bouncing back after a test may need you to decide to do better next time then spend time practicing the skills you need to work on. There is probably no easy wasy to bouncing back, it will require determination and action.

Time to reflect

- What did Jochebed bounce back from?
- How did Jochebed bounce back?
- What have you bounced back from recently?
- How did you bounce back?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we all go through tough times and we know that often the tough times make us stronger. May we this week think of ways in which we can bounce back from our own setbacks or failures. Help us to take strength from the past and the examples of others. *(Amen)*



24.2 Pharaoh's Daughter

Can anyone remember the topic that we discussed yesterday? Who was Jochebed and what did she do? Today we are going to hear from the Pharaoh's daughter.

"Hello, I'm Pharaoh's daughter. A number of years ago, I went down to the Nile to bathe, which I do regularly. I heard what sounded like a baby crying in the reeds along the bank of the river. When I went to investigate, I found a basket that was made from the reeds that grow by the river. The basket had a lid also made of reeds. I lifted the lid and found the source of the crying, a small Hebrew baby. I felt so much pity for this helpless baby boy, he must have been so scared left floating on the river Nile. As I was thinking about what to do with what I had just found, a young girl was signalling to me from the side of the river. It was a girl called Miriam, she asked me if I wanted her to go and fetch a Hebrew woman to nurse and look after the baby. I agreed."

"His mother looked after him for the first few years of his life, but when he was old enough, he came to live in the palace with me as my son. I named him Moses which sounds like a Hebrew word that means 'out of' as I rescued him out of the Nile, I also rescued him from my dad's plan."

I'm not sure I saw that coming, I couldn't imagine the daughter of the Pharaoh helping Jochebed and Moses. For some situations bouncing back may not always happen in the way you expected. If you fall out with a good friend, you may expect bouncing back to involve becoming friends again. But if you spend time with other people, you may find you have more in common with others and as a result find some other really good friends. It is probably not what you expected, but it is certainly bouncing back.

Time to reflect

- What do you think Miriam thought when Pharaoh's daughter first found Moses?
- Was there a positive outcome?
- Have you bounced back with an outcome you weren't expecting?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we all go through tough times and we know that often the tough times make us stronger. May we this week think of ways in which we can bounce back from our own setbacks or failures. Help us to take strength from the past and the examples of others. *(Amen)*



24.3 Moses Growing Up

Can anyone recount the story so far? Do you think Jochebed and Miriam thought something like this would happen? Today we are going to hear from Moses.

"Well this week you have heard from my real mum and my adopted mum. You have also heard about the Pharaoh's horrible way to reduce the numbers of the Israelites. Although I spent the first few years of my life with my real mother, most of my memories are here in the palace. It is a weird life. I've spent that last twenty years having everything that I could ever want here, knowing that my people are being used as slaves by Pharaoh, my adopted Grandad. I live in luxury whilst my people have nothing."

"My sister and my real mum often tell me stories about how God promised our ancestor Abraham, that we would have a land of our own one day. They tell me the stories of Abraham's kids, grand kids and great grand kids. My favourite is the story of Joseph and his brothers and how we came to be in Egypt. Did you know that Joseph was Abraham's great great grandchild? How is a group of people, who are slaves in Egypt, supposed to get their own land? I can't help thinking that I might have something to do with it. I'm the only Israelite that isn't currently being used as a slave and I live in the Egyptian palace. I don't think I can carry on living like this for much longer."

Moses is living in luxury with everything he could possibly need but he can't carry on living like he is. Sometimes situations might make us think of ways in which we may need to change. If we repeatedly getting spellings or times tables wrong, we may need to ask ourselves the question 'am I really practicing them enough or am I spending too much time on my Xbox?' None of us like to fail, but sometimes it's easier doing nothing than doing something. Bouncing back often requires 'doing something'.

Time to reflect

- Is there something getting in your way when you need to bounce back?
- What 'something' do you need to do to achieve your next goal?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we all go through tough times and we know that often the tough times make us stronger. May we this week think of ways in which we can bounce back from our own setbacks or failures. Help us to take strength from the past and the examples of others. *(Amen)*



24.4 Hebrew Slave

Can anyone recount the story so far? Was Moses happy living in luxury? Today we are going to hear from John, a Hebrew Slave.

"Well, have you heard what happened this week? You know Moses, the bloke who's not quite sure if he's Egyptian or Hebrew. Well he was out in his fine clothes watching the Hebrews hard at work. Apparently, he saw an Egyptian beating up a Hebrew, I'm not sure what happened exactly, but it's said that Moses killed the Egyptian and tried to bury the body in the sand. Word quickly spread around the Hebrews, but obviously, we weren't going to tell the Egyptians."

"The next day Moses was watching us again, hard at work. I got into a fight with another Hebrew. Another slave had nicked my shovel leaving me with one that was broken. Moses came over and asked me why I was arguing with a fellow Hebrew. Well I'm ashamed to say it but even though I was already angry, a red mist came over me. I couldn't believe that Moses, who'd probably never lifted a shovel in his life had the cheek to try and sort out problems between two Hebrew slaves. I sarcastically asked him if Pharaoh had made him ruler and judge over us now. I said "are you thinking of killing me like you killed that Egyptian?" We've not seen him since, some say that they saw Moses running off towards Midian."

Acting and reacting are two different things. We often react when things are not going well. We may say or do something that in the heat of the moment probably didn't help a situation. We have suggested that doing something is an important part of bouncing back, but that probably doesn't include reacting with a nasty word when we are hurt or feeling angry. It is important to remember that we all go through failures and we all go through times when things are not going well. These times help us to learn about how to control how we react. If you say something hurtful in the heat of the moment and it doesn't make things better, then try saying something positive next time and see what happens.

Time to reflect

- When have you reacted badly, did it help the situation?
- Have you acted positively to a bad situation? Did it help?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we all go through tough times and we know that often the tough times make us stronger. May we this week think of ways in which we can bounce back from our own setbacks or failures. Help us to take strength from the past and the examples of others. *(Amen)*



24.5 Moses Running Away

Can anyone freeze frame a part of the story so far? We will try to guess which part of the story it is. Today we are going to hear from Moses again.

"I'm sure you have heard what happened back in Egypt by now. I'm afraid I did kill that Egyptian. I had seen so many beatings, of Egyptian guards attacking my people, that I think something in me snapped. I think it even crossed my mind that this was the beginning of some sort of revolution and that I would start a fight for the freedom of the Hebrews. But as soon as that Hebrew asked me if I was going to kill him, like I had killed that Egyptian, I got so scared. This wasn't going to be a revolution, this was going to end up with me losing my head, literally. So I ran away. I just kept running and running not sure where I was really going. Eventually I sat down by a water well. Some women arrived looking to draw water from the well. They had come to draw water for their father's sheep. Soon, more shepherds arrived, the shepherds tried to chase the women away from the well. I know I'm a bad man, but I couldn't let that happen so I helped the women and stopped the shepherds. Once the shepherds had gone, I drew enough water for their flock. It turns out that the women were the daughters of the priest of a place called Midian."

"That happened a few years ago now. I had taken a liking to one of the daughters, her name was Zipporah. I asked Jethro, the priest, if we could get married. We now have a son called Gershom. I look after Jethro's sheep. I am starting to really enjoy life. I don't miss my life back in Egypt, but I often think about my people."

The story doesn't end there and we will find out if Moses goes back to Egypt next week. For Moses has bounced back, he's married with a family and he's happy shepherding sheep. The Bible suggests that Moses is a shepherd for 40 years before the next part of the story. When things are going well we can often convince ourselves into thinking that things will always be that way.

Time to reflect

- Will there always be something to bounce back from?
- Do you think you can become good at bouncing back?
- What skills do you need to become good at bouncing back?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we all go through tough times and we know that often the tough times make us stronger. May we this week think of ways in which we can bounce back from our own setbacks or failures. Help us to take strength from the past and the examples of others. *(Amen)*



25.1 Bouncing Back Again

Can anyone remember the character that we heard about last week? We will be continuing to hear about his story this week. Can anyone remember the theme of last week? The term resilience is another word that can be used when we are thinking about bouncing back. Can anyone tell me what resilience means? Resilience is the ability to continue even though times are tough or you have failed in the past.

Moses' life has so far consisted of his mother saving his life by placing him as a baby in a basket on the river Nile. The Pharaoh's daughter found him and when he was ready, he lived as her son. He killed a guard who was beating a Hebrew slave and he ran away from Egypt fearing for his life. When we heard from him last, Moses had married Zipporah, they had had a son called Gershom and he was working for his father in law, Jethro, tending after his sheep. I'll let Moses tell you what has been happening recently.

Moses

"Well it's been a long time, its nearly forty years since I left Egypt. The last time I spoke to you I had recently married and our first son had been born. We soon had our second, we called him Eliezer. I like being a shepherd. I wander around the wilderness looking for good places for the sheep to graze. It is a quiet life but has its moments, I need to protect the flock from any animals that want to eat them."

"Well it was a quiet life until yesterday. You won't believe what happened to me. I had taken the sheep as far from my home as I had ever been before looking for food. I saw a bush on fire, although the bush wasn't burning, the leaves were still green and the branches weren't turning black. I went over



to have a closer look. If you thought the first part was weird, wait until you hear what happened next! There came a voice from inside the bush. The voice said that I was not to go any closer and that I had to take my sandals off. The voice said "I AM the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." Jacob was Joseph's father, and Joseph was the one who interpreted Pharaoh's dreams and the reason the Israelites were living in Egypt. God said that he had seen the suffering of the Israelites in Egypt. He said he wanted to rescue them and give them their own land."

"I was pleased that God wanted to rescue the Israelites, but I wasn't expecting the next bit. God said that he was going to send me to Pharaoh to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. I said that I didn't think I was the man for the job, I said "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" God said that I should go to the Israelite leaders and tell them of God's plan. "What if Pharaoh and the Israelite leaders don't believe me?" I said. God told me to throw my staff, the shepherds crook on the ground, immediately it turned into a snake. I ran, but God said pick it up by the tail, as I did, it turned back into the staff. Then he told me to put my hand into my cloak,

I brought it out and it was diseased, he told me to put it back in my cloak again, as I brought it out, it was fine! He said I should show them these signs. He said that the Pharaoh wouldn't believe these signs so he would send plagues upon Egypt."

"I still made my excuses, I told God that I'm not good with words. I struggle to find the right words to say at the best of times. God said that he would help me to speak and teach me what to say. Well you would of thought after all this I would be convinced; a burning bush that wasn't burning up, the voice, a staff that turned into a snake and my hand but still I said to God "Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else." I don't think God was pleased, God said that I was going to meet up with my brother Aaron. Aaron had always been good with words. He is going to be with me as I meet with the Israelite leaders and the Egyptian Pharaoh."

"I took the sheep back to Jethro and I asked him if I could return to Egypt to see my people. I think, secretly, I was hoping that he would say 'no'. Jethro said that I should go and he wished me well. Zipporah, Gershom, Eliezer and I are now on our way to Egypt. I'm worried and I keep playing the conversations in my head. God said that those people that wanted to get rid of me have passed away, as it was 40 years ago and I am nearly eighty."

It doesn't sound like Moses is particularly resilient. Forty years ago, Moses ran away after killing an Egyptian guard whilst he was trying to rescue a Hebrew slave. He quickly ran away. He has the opportunity to rescue all the Israelites from slavery, but said to God that he wasn't good enough and that he wanted God to go and find someone else. Really Moses just didn't want to go. There are probably many times when we just don't want to do something. I don't want to exercise because I'm comfortable just playing on the Xbox. I don't want healthy food because I like eating fatty unhealthy food. I don't want to play with the new kid in school because I'm used to playing with the friends I've already got. I don't want to try playing the instrument because it means I'll probably need to practise it. I think Moses knew what the right choice was, but still he made his excuses. We often know the right choice, but when the right choice is hard we can settle for the easy choice. Revision, practise, quiet time outs, exercise and healthy food are all good choices. Failure in the past and being comfortable not doing something now are barriers to making choices that will help us in the future. They are barriers to helping us bounce back!

Time to reflect

- Was going back to Egypt the right choice? Why?
- Why didn't Moses want to go back to Egypt? (There are probably a few reasons)
- What do you know you need to do but you would rather not do?
- What have you done recently that you know you needed to do, but didn't want to start? How do you feel now?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we all go through tough times and we know that often the tough times make us stronger. May we this week think of ways in which we can bounce back from our own setbacks, failures or even in times when we just don't want to. Help us to take strength from the past and the examples of others. *(Amen)*

Can anyone recount the story of Moses so far? What did God ask Moses to do? Did Moses want to do it? Today, we are going to hear from Aaron.

Aaron

"Hi I'm Aaron, I'm Moses' older brother. I was praying yesterday as is our custom, when I heard God say that I should go into the wilderness to meet Moses. I was so pleased to hear God say that I was going to see him again. I ran to meet him, I saw that he had bought his wife and my two nephews, Gershom and Eliezer. I told Moses that God had told me that he was on his way to Egypt. Moses told me about the burning bush that wasn't really on fire. About God's voice, the staff and the diseased hand. He also told me that God said that I would help him to speak to Pharaoh. That all sounded amazing. I know Moses will be able to do it and I think it's great that I can help him. We brought all the Israelite leaders together and I explained what God had said to Moses. They believed us, especially when the staff turned into a snake again and then back into the staff. We need to go and see the Pharaoh next, I can definitely say I'm very nervous!"

Aaron was really pleased to see Moses and although Aaron was older than Moses, he was keen to help him explain God's plan to the Israelite leaders. We all need people around us that can encourage us and help us both in the times that we struggle and in the good times. Good friends and people around us that encourage and help us can make us more resilient and more determined to bounce back in those tough times when we struggle.

Time to reflect

- Do you have encouraging friends?
- Are you an encouraging friend?
- How can we be more encouraging to those around us?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we all go through tough times and we know that often the tough times make us stronger. May we this week think of ways in which we can bounce back from our own setbacks. May we be an encouraging friend and help our friends to support us when we need it. Help us to take strength from the past and the examples of others. *(Amen)*



25.3 Hebrew Slave

Who met with Moses yesterday? Was he pleased to see Moses? Today we are going to hear from Ben, another Hebrew slave.

Hebrew Slave

"Moses is back in Egypt. I wasn't born when he did what he is said to have done to the Egyptian guard. There are many around here that wished he'd never come back. He and his brother, Aaron, have gone to see the Pharaoh. They said "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness." Apparently, God told him that we are supposed to take a three-day journey into the wilderness. It didn't go down very well with the Pharaoh. Pharaoh immediately ordered the Egyptians to stop supplying us with straw to make our bricks. You see, the Egyptians would bring us straw and we would use the straw to make the bricks. We now have to find our own straw and make the bricks! We are still expected to make as many bricks as we did before! The beatings have started. If we don't manage to make our quota of bricks, the guards have been ordered to, erm, well let's say, motivate us. Who does Moses think he is coming here after running away and living for years in the back of beyond. I've been crying out to God to help us for ages, I didn't expect someone to make things worse! I hope God judges Moses and his brother for what he has done to our people."

Oh dear, another setback for Moses. He did what God expected him to do, but I don't think it went as Moses would have hoped. I'm wondering if Moses ever thought "I knew this would happen, this is why I wanted God to choose someone else in the first place." When we start something new, begin learning a new skill or playing an instrument, very often we can think "I wish I hadn't started!" When it becomes difficult or things aren't going to plan we can quickly become disheartened and annoyed. We need to hear the next part of the Moses' story to see if he is resilient and continues or whether he backs out completely.

Time to reflect

- What school skills or other activities have you thought about giving up on? Why?
- Have you ever said or thought… it's just too hard? How did it make you feel?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we all go through tough times and we know that often the tough times make us stronger. May we this week think of ways in which we can bounce back from our own setbacks. May we be an encouraging friend and help our friends to support us when we need it. Help us to take strength from the past and the examples of others. *(Amen)*



25.4 Pharaoh

Can someone recount the story so far. Are the Israelite slaves happy that Moses has come back to help them? Today we are going to hear from Pharaoh.

Pharaoh
"I know they call me stubborn, but I will not allow the Hebrew slaves to leave. I have an empire to build. I want people to know that I, Pharaoh, have the power to build and protect Egypt. My father killed the Hebrew baby boys to stop this from happening. Moses and Aaron came back, Aaron threw a staff on the floor and it became a snake. My magicians did the same, but Aaron's snake swallowed up our snakes. They again told me to let the Hebrews go. I refused. Then Moses's God turned the river Nile and rivers around it to blood for seven days. A plague of frogs came next, they were everywhere! I told Moses that if he prayed and got rid of the frogs, I'd let the people go into the desert. Although I said they could go, I still couldn't let them win. Who do they think they are coming here and ordering me about? I am Pharaoh! And this is my empire! There were more plagues after the frogs. Gnats, flies, the death of our farm animals, boils on my peoples' skin, hail, locusts, and darkness all followed the frogs. After the plague of flies, hail and locusts had destroyed my land, I told them they could go, but as they were leaving, I changed my mind. They need to rebuild what their God had destroyed."

"The last plague was worse than all the other plagues put together. Moses said that all the Egyptian first-born sons would die, it happened just as Moses had said. I was struck with grief the next morning when Moses came again. I was grieving for my own son, I wasn't thinking straight. I told him that he and his people could go and they could take whatever they wanted. They have all gone! Every last one of them! But I am Pharaoh, I need to build my empire, I need everyone to know that I am the one with the power. I will get together six hundred of my best chariots. I and the rest of my army will show them who is boss. We will chase after them."

Stubbornness and resilience can often be thought of as being similar. Does anyone know what being stubborn means? Resilience is the ability to continue even though times are tough or you have failed in the past. Stubborn is not changing your attitude even when there are plenty of good reasons to change your mind. The word 'stubborn' is often used to describe a negative quality. Was Pharaoh stubborn or resilient? Imagine you have tried to do a maths problem using a method that doesn't work, resilience suggests that you have the mindset to choose to have another go but you can stubbornly refuse to try another method. Resilience may suggest that you have another go at making friends with a new pupil in class, or you may stubbornly refuse because it's never worked with other pupils that have started school in the past.

Time to reflect

- What's the difference between resilience and being stubborn?
- Discuss the meaning of this famous and popular prayer.

Reflection (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. *(Amen)*



25.5 The Exodus

Can someone freezeframe a part of the story so far? Today we are going to hear an important part of the story of Moses. Many people call this the exodus, the word is used to describe a large number of people leaving.



Moses
"God told me to explain the last plague to Pharaoh, I was convinced that he would let us go. But he was so stubborn, all he needed to do was let us celebrate our festival in the wilderness and the Egyptian first born sons would have survived. I can't help thinking back to the time his father ordered the Hebrew baby boys to be thrown into the Nile."

"Once Pharaoh had refused to let our people go, God told me to tell the Israelites to prepare a special meal. We had the special meal on the evening before the plague affected the Egyptians. We had to take a one year old lamb. It sounds disgusting, but once we had slaughtered the lamb and prepared it for cooking, we had to take some of the blood and paint it onto the door posts of our houses. We also had to make bread without yeast. If we put yeast in the bread we would need to wait until the dough had risen, but God said that we hadn't got time for that, so we needed to make the bread and cook it without letting it rise. God called it the 'Passover'. He said that when the plague came over Egypt, he would see the blood on our doorposts and everyone inside the house would be okay, but it wasn't like that for the Egyptians."

"The next morning, we heard the Egyptians crying, they urged us to leave. We collected our belongings and left Egypt. There were about six hundred thousand men as well as the women and children leaving Egypt and it was quite something seeing us leave. It had taken us a while, but we had walked from Egypt to the red sea, and we camped on its banks and baked our bread without yeast. We received word that Pharaoh had once again changed his mind and he and his army were on their way. The people panicked and I heard that some had complained that we had left Egypt in the first place. I lifted my staff over the Red Sea and a strong easterly wind turned it into dry land. The people went through the sea on dry ground with a wall of water on their right and on their left. Once we had crossed safely, the Egyptians followed, but the sea flowed back and covered Pharaoh's army. We had finally left Egypt."

This week we have heard the story of Moses and thought about how we can be resilient and how we can bounce back after difficult times. I wonder how many of the Israelites ever thought they would leave Egypt whilst they were working as slaves. I wonder if Moses whilst in the wilderness tending after his father-in-law's sheep ever imagined himself leading the Israelites out of Egypt and into a land of their own. Jewish people remember this event today with the festival



of Pesach or the Passover. When researching our own family history I'm sure we will find stories of resilience and of those that can inspire us that hard times can make us strong, sometimes we need to work hard to bounce back.

Time to reflect

- Why was this event called the exodus? – because the Israelites left Egypt
- What can we learn from the story of Moses that we have heard over the past two weeks?
- What do we need to bounce back from?
- Who do you need to encourage to be more resilient?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we all go through tough times and we know that often the tough times make us stronger. May we this week think of ways in which we can bounce back from our own setbacks. May we be an encouraging friend and help our friends to support us when we need it. Help us to take strength from the past and the examples of others. *(Amen)*



26.1 Passover

Preparation

Download and print the following 11 events in Moses' life.

The story of Moses and the Israelites leaving Egypt is remembered by Jewish people all over the world. The Jewish festival of Pesach or Passover is a festival that takes place every year around March or April. ***Ask for volunteers to freezeframe or act out events from the story of Moses. Give volunteers one of the 11 events printed as part of the preparation for this assembly to act out. Make sure no one else can see what is written on the page. Can the audience guess which part of the story it is?***

1. Moses is born
2. Moses is rescued by the Pharaoh's daughter
3. Moses grows up in the Egyptian palace
4. Moses kills an Egyptian guard
5. Moses runs away
6. Moses marries Jethro's daughter, Zipporah
7. Moses finds a bush on fire, but not burning
8. Moses is asked by God to rescue the Israelites from Egypt
9. Moses returns to Egypt and is joined by Aaron
10. Moses tells Pharaoh to let the Israelites go
11. Pharaoh refuses to let the people go even after 9 different plagues

For many Jews the Passover is one of the most important festivals in the year. Not all Jews will celebrate the Passover in exactly the same way but we are going to look back at the story of the Passover and how it has influenced some Jewish traditions that take



place today. Can anyone tell me what the Jewish holy book is called? The Torah is the first part of the Jewish holy book called the Tanakh. The Torah contains five books that some Jews and Christians believe were written by Moses. They are often called the 'Books of Moses' and they are the first five books that make up the Jewish and Christian holy books. The story of the Passover is in the second book called Exodus.

Either read the paragraph below and/ or ask for 11 pupils to hold up the events printed as part of the preparation for this assembly, not in the correct order, and ask the audience to order the story correctly.

The book of Exodus starts with the birth of Moses and describes how Moses was rescued by the Pharaoh's daughter and grew up in the Egyptian palace. It explains that Moses killed an Egyptian guard trying to defend an Israelite slave. Moses ran away to Midian, where he met Jethro and Jethro's daughter, Zipporah. Moses and Zipporah married and they had two sons. Whilst tending Jethro's sheep, Moses found a bush that was on fire but not burning. God spoke to Moses from within the bush and told him that he would rescue the Israelites from Egypt. Moses made excuses as to why it shouldn't be him that God should use. Eventually Moses made his way

back to Egypt. He and his brother, Aaron, stood before Pharaoh and asked him to let the Israelites go. Pharaoh refused, Egypt received nine plagues, but after each, Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites go.

All of this leads us onto the events of the Passover. Exodus explains that God gave instructions to Moses about a meal the Israelites had to prepare and eat on the night that the 10th plague killed all the first born sons of Egypt. Specially selected lambs were slaughtered for the meal and God commanded that some of the lambs' blood be painted onto the door posts so that the plague would 'pass over' the Israelite homes.

God commanded the Israelites to remember this event by celebrating the festival of Unleavened Bread. Unleavened bread is bread that is made without yeast. Unleavened bread doesn't need time to rise and so is quicker to make. The Israelites hadn't much time as the Pharaoh sent the Israelites away after the 10th plague. They were in a hurry to leave.

The book of Exodus includes the command God gave the Israelites to hold the festival, which is called Pesach or Passover. If I read the command, can you try and answer three questions: 1) How long is the festival? 2) What must be eaten? 3) What do you think happens to the yeast before the festival?

"Celebrate this Festival of Unleavened Bread, for it will remind you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on this very day. This festival will be a permanent law for you; celebrate this day from generation to generation. The bread you eat must be made without yeast from the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month until the evening of the twenty-first day of that month. During those seven days, there must be no trace of yeast in your homes." Exodus 12:17-19a (NLT)

How long is the festival? What must be eaten? What do you think happens before the festival starts? Before the festival of Passover, many Jewish families will give their house a thorough clean and tidy. Can you guess what they may also be searching for? All traces of yeast or 'leaven' or 'chametz' is removed from the home. Some Jews may temporarily sell their chametz or even sell the utensils that they use to prepare food with chametz. Some websites allow you to sell your chametz before each Passover. During the festival of Passover special bread called Matzo is eaten. Matzo is a type of bread made without yeast.

We will explore the traditions of the Passover in this week's thoughts for the day. The story of Moses is one of resilience and can inspire us to bounce back after setbacks or tough times. The opening tradition before the festival, starts the unfolding of the story of the Passover. The festival of Passover is not only a reminder of the importance of individual resilience, but it is a reminder of how a whole nation can bounce back.

Time to reflect

- What actions are linked to the story of the Passover?
- Why do many Jewish families clean the house before Passover? Why?
- What traditions do you or your family have?
- Do you know why you do them?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those festivals and important occasions that help us to remember the past. Help us to understand that many of the traditions, actions and beliefs that we have are linked to people, stories and events in history. *(Amen)*

26.2 The Fast Of The Firstborn

There are many activities that we all do that link us to stories in the past. In the story of the Passover, all the first-born males of Egypt including the animals died as a result of the tenth plague. The first-born sons of the Israelites were saved from the tenth plague because they painted lambs blood on the door posts of their houses. The plague passed over them. God gave a specific command to the Israelites leaving Egypt that would continually remind them that the first-born sons of the Israelites were saved.

Many first-born sons of Jewish families will go without food on the day before the first day of the festival. Fathers of baby boys who are too young to fast, may fast instead. This has become known as the 'fast of the firstborn'. It is a reminder that God rescued the first born Jewish males during the events of the first Passover.

Time to reflect

- Why do some first born male Jews fast on the day before the Passover starts?
- Who here is a first-born male in their family? A boy with an older sister wouldn't be expected to fast.
- What traditions do you think links you to the past?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those festivals and important occasions that help us to remember the past. Help us to understand that many of the traditions, actions and beliefs that we have are linked to people, stories and events in history. *(Amen)*



26.3 The Seder Meal

In the book of Exodus, God tells Moses "Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. When you enter the land that the Lord will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'" Exodus 12:24-27

During the festival of Passover, many Jewish families share a special meal called the Seder meal. The meal re-enacts the events of Passover. The word Seder means 'order'. Rituals, words and foods are done, said or eaten in a certain order. The order helps the family to remember the story of the Passover? Many Jews follow the order of the Haggadah, which means 'telling' and is a book that breaks the Seder meal into fourteen steps guiding the family through the story and meaning of the Passover.

Time to reflect

- What festivals do you and your family celebrate?
- What foods are important in your celebrations?
- What actions are important in your celebrations?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those festivals and important occasions that help us to remember the past. Help us to understand that many of the traditions, actions and beliefs that we have are linked to people, stories and events in history. *(Amen)*



26.4 Matzo

"In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day." Exodus 12:17

Food is a very important part of the Passover celebrations. The Passover meal contains certain foods that are a direct a reminder of the Israelite slaves in Egypt, the 10th plague and God's rescue plan for the Jewish people.

Can you guess what these foods or items represent or why they are eaten?

Matzo or unleavened bread – a command to make bread without yeast to represent the Israelites hurrying to leave Egypt

A **bone of a lamb** – to represent lamb eaten on the first Passover meal.

An **egg** – the egg can represent new life and new beginnings. An egg may represent sacrifice. Lots of foods go soft when cooked but an egg hardens representing the Israelites' resilience under pressure.

Green vegetable (usually lettuce) – represents new life.

Salt water – represents a slave's tears.

Four cups of wine – God promised freedom to the Israelites four times.

Charoset (a paste made of apples, nuts, cinnamon and wine) – represents the cement used by the Israelites slaves.

Time to reflect

- Can you think of foods that are eaten on special occasions?
- Are there any other foods that you can think of that represent an event?
- Is the Seder meal the only meal that recreates events from history?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those festivals and important occasions that help us to remember the past. Help us to understand that many of the traditions, actions and beliefs that we have are linked to people, stories and events in history. *(Amen)*



26.5 Four Questions

The Haggadah contains songs, prayers as well as four questions that are said during the Seder meal.

Question 1: Why is it that on all other nights during the year we eat either bread or matzo, but on this night, we eat only matzo?

Answer: Matzo is the name of bread made without yeast, made in a hurry by the Israelites leaving Egypt.

Question 2: Why is it that on all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs, but on this night we eat only bitter herbs?

Answer: The bitter herbs are a reminder of the bitter times of slavery.

Question 3: Why is it that on all other nights we do not dip our herbs even once, but on this night we dip them twice?

Answer: Potatoes, onions or other vegetables are dipped in salt water, a reminder of the tears. A paste made of nuts and paste is also used as a reminder of the cement used to make the bricks in Egypt.

Question 4: Why is it that on all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining, but on this night we eat in a reclining position?

Answer: Reclining and relaxing is a reminder of freedom and how royalty would have eaten their meals.

Many of the actions, rituals, foods and words that are done and said during the Passover and the Seder meal act as a practical reminder of an event that is very important in the history of the Jewish people. There is a Chinese proverb that goes: Tell me and I will forget, show me and I will remember. Involve me and I will understand. The Passover is one of many festivals that doesn't just retell the story it involves those who celebrate it.

Time to reflect

- How does the Passover involve those who celebrate it?
- How involved are you in the festivals or events that you celebrate?
- Are those involved in St David's Day or St George's Day parades and events much more likely to understand the history of those days compared to those who just hear about them in a school assembly?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those festivals and important occasions that help us to remember the past. Help us to understand that many of the traditions, actions and beliefs that we have are linked to people, stories and events in history. *(Amen)*



27.1 Easter

Preparation

Search and display and image of leaves and flowers – Spring. You will need eight volunteers for this assembly.

- The King
- The servant
- The servant's wife
- The servant's two children
- The fellow servant
- Two other servants



Many people look forward to the coming of spring. It is the time when new leaves and flowers appear after the long winter. The days start to get longer and warmer. Many animals, including sheep, give birth to their young in spring. This allows the offspring to grow over the summer months and be strong enough to survive the following winter. Many religions and cultures celebrate the coming of spring. Easter is a festival that celebrates new beginnings and new life. Easter is the most important Christian festival in the year, it celebrates the central theme of Christianity which is forgiveness and hope. To forgive someone means to stop feeling angry towards someone for something they have done wrong to you, it may mean that you no longer want to punish the person for their wrongdoing. Easter is the most important Christian festival because many Christians believe that humans can only be forgiven because Jesus was prepared to take their punishment and was put on the cross. The event is remembered on Good Friday. It is called 'Good' Friday, for the very reason that it is good news for Christians. It was through Jesus' death that they can find forgiveness for the wrong things they have done in their life. Easter Sunday is important as it celebrates Jesus' resurrection two days later. The theme of resurrection and new life is remembered in many of the traditions associated with Easter. Lamb is traditionally eaten, and lambs are a sign of spring. Eggs and chicks are also signs of new life.

Forgiveness is a central theme in Christianity. The Lord's prayer states 'Forgive us our trespasses (or wrongdoings) as we forgive those who trespass (do wrong) against us.' One of Jesus' disciples once asked Jesus "Shall I forgive a person up to seven times before I don't need to forgive them anymore?"

Jesus replied "Not seven times, but seventy times seven". He then told them a parable about how and why we should forgive.

We are going to hear the parable this morning, but before I start telling the story, I need eight volunteers ***(possibly including a teacher or two)***. I need a king, a servant, the servant's wife and the servant's two children. A fellow servant and two other servants.



The volunteers are going to use their faces as real life 'emojies'. As I read the story, the volunteers are going to show the different emotions on their face that the various characters would have felt throughout the events. ***Throughout the parable, stop to discuss the emotions with the various volunteers.***

Matthew 18:22-34: The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (GNT & NIV v25 only)

Once there was a king who decided to check on his servants' accounts. He had just begun to do so when one of them was brought in who owed him millions of pounds. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he owned had to be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before the king. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay you everything!'

The king felt sorry for him, so he forgave him the debt and let him go. Then the man went out and met one of his fellow servants who owed him a few pounds. He grabbed him and started choking him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he said.

His fellow servant fell down and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back!'

But he refused; instead, he had him thrown into jail until he should pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were very upset and went to the king and told him everything. So he called the servant in. 'You worthless servant!' he said. 'I forgave you the whole amount you owed me, just because you asked me to. You should have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you.'

The king was very angry, and he sent the servant to jail to be punished until he should pay back the whole amount."

Well there was lots going on in that parable. A servant who owed millions of pounds to the king. A fellow servant who owed only a few pounds. A kind king who forgave the servant his large debt and the servant who wouldn't forgive the fellow servant of his debt. I wonder how the servant felt when he found out the king had written off the millions of pounds. It is difficult to imagine how he could have been so angry at the fellow servant who owed him only a few pounds. The morale of this parable is that I should forgive other people, because I have been forgiven by other people for the wrong things I have done.

When people do things to hurt us by saying something that they shouldn't, we can often feel as if we are never going to talk to that person again. But do we say and do things that hurt other people? Imagine what our school or our families would be like if we never forgave the wrong things that other people did to us, and they never forgave us for the wrong things that we did. Eventually no one would talk to anyone else! It is easier to forgive others when we know that other people forgive us and give us a second chance. Parents, family members, carers, teachers and our friends will have all forgiven you for some of the things that you have done. We all make mistakes or bad choices. It is probably true that some people make more mistakes or bad choices than others, that just means that we need to give them more chances. I wonder how angry the servant felt when he met the fellow servant who owed him only a few pounds? We can't control what other people do and say, but we can certainly make a choice to protect how we feel inside when other people hurt us.

Time to reflect

- What have you done recently that may have hurt someone else?
- When have other people forgiven you?
- Can you think of a time when a friend has wronged you, was their friendship too important to keep punishing them for it?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the times when our friends and family have forgiven us for the times that we have hurt them. As others forgive us, help us to forgive those who do wrong against us. *(Amen)*



27.2 The Golden Deer

The following story has been adapted from Buddhist teachings called the Jakata Tales. Once upon a time there was a beautiful golden deer. The deer knew that men would want to hunt him, so the deer remained hidden in the forest. The wise deer became respected by the other animals and became the king of the forest. One day whilst walking through the forest, the deer heard a cry for help. The deer ran in the direction of the cry and saw a man being carried away in the strong current of a fast-flowing river. The deer, although anxious not to be seen, decided to rescue the man. Once he had pulled the man clear of the water, the deer asked the man in a human voice not to let anyone know that the deer lived in the forest. The man agreed and returned to the city.

Meanwhile, in the city, a queen began dreaming about things that were real. One night she dreamt of a wise and beautiful deer that could talk living in the forest. She asked her husband the king to catch the deer and bring it back to help the king and queen lead the country with wisdom. The king decreed that anyone who helped to find the deer would be given more wealth than they could imagine.

The rescued man was a very poor man. With all that money, he thought, he could do lots of good things to help overcome breaking the promise to the deer. The rescued man quickly led the king to the deer. With hunters surrounding him and concerned for his life, the deer walked up to the rescued man and the king. The deer asked the king how he had found him. The king pointed to the rescued man. The deer told the king about the rescue and the promise the rescued man had made not to tell anyone about his whereabouts. "Truly, it is better to take a log out of a flood than to save an ungrateful person from it", said the deer.

The king was angry and loaded his bow with an arrow in order to punish the rescued man. The deer moved between the king and rescued man and asked the king to lower his bow. The king was moved by the deer's compassion. "If you can forgive him", said the king, "so can I."

The king asked the deer if he would come to live in the palace to help the king and queen lead the country wisely. The king kept his promise and made the rescued man extremely wealthy for helping the king to find the beautiful golden deer.

Time to reflect

- Was the deer right to wish he'd never rescued the man from the river? Why?
- If you were the deer, would you have forgiven the rescued man? Why?
- What is this Buddhist story trying to teach us?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the times when our friends and family have forgiven us for the times that we have hurt them. As others forgive us, help us to forgive those who do wrong against us. *(Amen)*



27.3 Saying Sorry

Have you ever done something wrong and immediately regretted it? The word guilt is the word we use to describe the uncomfortable feelings we have when we know we have done wrong. In life, we all make mistakes, and we all do things wrong. I'm not talking about misspelling words or getting a maths sum incorrect, I mean saying something nasty or stealing another person's belongings. Guilt is an important feeling, and it should remind us that it is time to say sorry for the wrong thing that we did and that we probably shouldn't do it again. Guilt is a feeling that can help us to make the right decision when we are faced with those choices again in the future. Some people try to hide their guilt by pretending that someone else did it or saying that it was an accident when they knew it wasn't. Think about the unforgiving servant from the parable we heard on Monday, do you think the unforgiving servant felt guilty? What about the rescued man in the story about the Golden Deer? The best way of making things right is by quickly owning up, saying sorry and meaning it. It will help to make things better with the person that you wronged and also solve your feelings of guilt.

Time to reflect

- Can you think of a time when you felt guilty about something you did?
- Did saying sorry make the situation better or worse?
- Did you feel better for saying sorry?
- Has the feeling of guilt in the past, helped you to make the right choices?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We think of times when we have wronged others and they have forgiven us and for times when others have wronged us and we have forgiven them. This Easter may we remember and celebrate new beginnings and fresh starts. Help us to continue to say sorry and forgive others for the benefit of our own community. *(Amen)*



27.4 Scales

Imagine a balanced set of scales, both sides are equal. What would happen if you were to put something heavy on one side of the scales? Are they still balanced? What would you need to do to balance the scales again? Some people have suggested that doing wrong, saying sorry and being forgiven are similar to a set of balance scales. If you do something wrong, it is like putting a weight on one side of the scales, they are no longer balanced. Whilst the scales are out of balance it can affect our feelings of guilt, it can ruin feelings of trust, joy, happiness and well-being. To be able to restore and make those feelings better we need to rebalance the scales. Repentance (an old-fashioned word for saying sorry) and forgiveness are tools that we have to be able to reset the scales when we or someone else has done something wrong.

The parable of the unforgiving servant ended with the scales unbalanced, the unforgiving servant wouldn't forgive his fellow servant and he and his family had to live with the consequences. In the story of the Golden Deer, the deer forgave the rescued man and so did the king. They all went back to the palace and you could say the scales were rebalanced. I can imagine the story of the Golden Deer ending with the well-known phrase… they all lived happily ever after.

Time to reflect

- What emotions and feelings can be affected by the scales being unbalanced?
- When you have said sorry or forgiven people, has it made the situation better?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We think of times when we have wronged others, and they have forgiven us, and for times when others have wronged us, and we have forgiven them. This Easter may we remember and celebrate new beginnings and fresh starts. Help us to continue to say sorry and forgive others for the benefit of our own families, friendships and communities. *(Amen)*



27.5 Forgiveness

This week we have talked about feelings of guilt that follow the things we say and do that we know are wrong and that possibly hurt others. When we are wronged, that is, when someone does something nasty or hurtful to us, we may feel angry or upset. This is a natural feeling that we have, but what can we do with those feelings. In Monday's assembly, we learned that the word 'forgive' means to stop feeling angry towards someone for something they have done wrong to you. Guilt and anger are natural feelings, but they are not what we want to focus on in our school community ***(what is your school motto, talk about how guilt and anger may get in the way of those values)***. Saying sorry and forgiving others when they have wronged us are a good way of dealing with those uncomfortable feelings and will stop them from growing and causing bigger problems. Easter is a time of hope and new beginnings, it is a good time to remind us that we have a new beginning when people forgive us and that we should do the same and forgive others.

Time to reflect

- Have you had a good friend that has done something nasty to you, but when they said sorry, and you forgave them you were able to have fun again?

Remember, guilt is a reminder to say sorry quickly, and forgiveness is not holding onto feelings of anger.

Remind pupils that there are times that they will need to 'speak up' if they are wronged or continually wronged by someone. Some people may need help to change their behaviour.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those that commit their time and energy to helping each of us, both at school and at home. We are grateful for their commitment, and we ask that as we have discussed and thought about commitment this week, we would all continue to be committed to our learning and supporting and strengthening our community. *(Amen)*



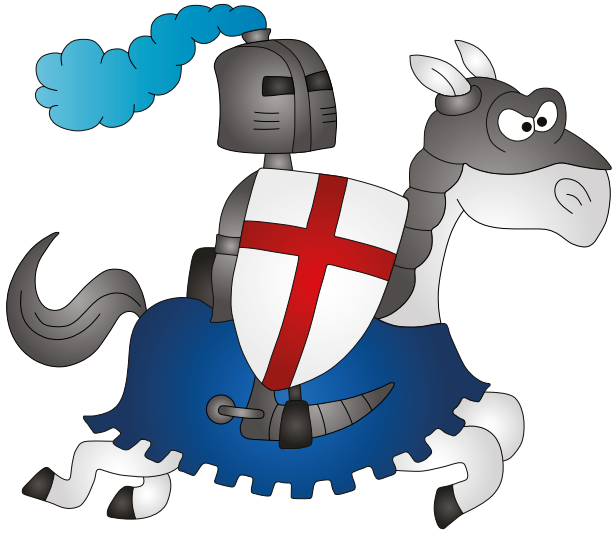
28.1 St George's Day

Does anyone know what the UK or the United Kingdom is? The UK is the collective name we give the four nations of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. What is Great Britain? Great Britain refers to the three nations of England, Scotland and Wales. What are the British Isles? The 'British Isles' is a geographical term relating to the whole group of Islands of Great Britain and Ireland, including Northern Ireland. According to Wikipedia there are over 6000 separate islands that make up the British Isles. The nations in the United Kingdom each have a patron saint. Can anyone tell me the name of the patron saints for England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales?

England's patron saint is St George, Ireland's patron saint is St Patrick, Scotland's patron saint is St Andrew and Wales' patron saint is St David. Can anyone tell me what a patron saint is? A patron saint is a person regarded as the special guardian of a group of people. Two more notable patron saints are Saint Ambrose the patron saint of learning and Saint Gregory the Great the patron saint of teachers, students and musicians.

This week we will be thinking about St George, the patron saint of England. St George's Day is on April 23rd each year and is England's national day. St George, however, was not from England. He was chosen to represent bravery and loyalty. It is believed that St George was born to a Greek Christian noble family in Cappadocia, modern day Turkey in about 280AD/CE. George joined the Roman Army and soon rose to be a leader.

The Roman Emperor, Diocletian, began to persecute and kill those who refused to give up their Christian faith in 303AD. George



was put into prison and then killed in Palestine on April 23rd of that year. George's Christian faith was strong right up to his death and the Emperors wife, Alexandra, was so inspired by George's bravery that she was able to live out her Christian faith before she too was executed. A person who dies for their faith and what they believe is called a Martyr. In 1222, King Edward III made St George the patron saint of England. The day would be celebrated on the anniversary of his martyrdom on the 23rd April each year.

St George's day is celebrated in English Cities, towns and villages. In London, the Feast of St George takes place in Trafalgar Square with activities to do with St George, live music, family games, dance and storytelling. In Liverpool, St George's Day is celebrated in St George's Quarter with lots of family activities. St George is also the patron saint of Scouts due to St George's good example of faith, courage and perseverance for future generations. Scouts, cubs and beavers often celebrate St George's Day with parades, where they march through the streets and end with a Church Service.



The Union Jack is the national flag of the United Kingdom. Does anyone know what England's flag is called? England's flag is the St George's Cross which is a red cross on a white background. Today, during international football, cricket, rugby and other sporting tournaments, people display the St George's Cross to show their support to the English teams. St George's coat of arms, the red cross on a white background, can be seen in other countries and cities across the world. Places including Portugal, Lithuania, Romania, Germany, Greece, Istanbul and Ethiopia also celebrate St George.

There is a legend (story) about St George that has been passed down through generations. The legend came from the town of Silene in Libya which was thought to be guarded by a ferocious dragon that would only let the town folk get water to drink if they offered the dragon their sheep to eat. Once the sheep had all gone the towns people were going to give their princess to the dragon but a Christian Knight came riding on his white horse. At first he charged at the dragon with a spear, but the spear broke on the dragons hard scales and St George fell off his horse. St George determined to beat the dragon drew his sword, he saw that there were no scales under its wing and conquered the mighty beast. The legend continues, that the town's people were so grateful to St George that the king built a church and baptised all the people in the town. Water sprang up from the site where the Dragon had been killed. The water could make sick people better if they drank it.

The legend of St George and the Dragon has been told to millions of children down through the years. St George is the patron saint of England, and he is remembered for his bravery. Different Patron Saints are remembered for their different qualities. During the thoughts for the day this week we are going to think about the quality of bravery. I wonder what qualities people think of when they hear my name? What qualities do people think of when they hear your name?

Time to reflect

- What qualities is St George remembered for? Why?
- What influence has St George had on other people? (The St George's cross)
- What qualities do you have?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the stories that remind us of the good and important qualities and characteristics. St George was brave enough to be able to stay true to his beliefs. Help us to know what is right and may we be brave enough to be true to ourselves. *(Amen)*



28.2 The Lion And The Mouse

Once upon a time a lion was sleeping after he had eaten. While he was asleep a mouse walked up the lion's tail and jumped around on the lion's back. He boasted to the rest of the animals that mice shouldn't be scared of lazy lions. The mouse then jumped down and was going to play near the lion's foot when the lion woke up, picked up the mouse and roared very loudly. Although the mouse was scared, he boldly asked the lion if he would let him go and he also asked if he could be the lion's friend. He told the lion that if he let him go, then one day the mouse might be able to help the lion. The lion was still full from his meal and thought that the mouse was very small anyway. He thought the mouse was very funny to think he could help a lion! The lion let the mouse go.

There is another part to the story but we will hear that tomorrow. This week we are thinking about the quality of being brave. I'm not sure if the mouse in this story was brave or just foolish playing on the top of a lion. The example of bravery in films or cartoons is often strong people who have no fear. The mouse in this Aesop's fable will always be remembered as the brave mouse, but he felt fear when the lion woke up. Even though the mouse was scared, he asked the lion to be his friend. Bravery is an important quality that can help us to overcome situations that we may be fearful of. We might be scared of standing in front of the school doing an assembly, or starting a new club and meeting new people or we might be scared of starting and failing a new sport or playing an instrument. We all need a little bit of bravery at some point in our lives.

Time to reflect

- Do you think the mouse was brave or foolish?
- Can you be brave and scared at the same time?
- What fears have you overcome? (When were you brave?)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for bravery. When we face situations that make us feel fearful, help us to remember the story of the mouse and the lion. Help us to be brave and to overcome our fears. *(Amen)*



28.3 Feel The Fear And Do It Anyway

This morning we are going to hear part two of the story of the lion and the mouse. Can anyone recount the story of the mouse and the lion so far? Some time went by and the lion became tangled in a hunter's net. Now the lion was very scared. He roared and roared. The animals in the jungle heard lion roaring. Elephants, zebra's, monkeys all looked at each other and knew they dare not go near the net because the lion had eaten some of their friends. The mouse looked at them and said that the lion was his friend and he would free the lion. There was a lot of mumbling and laughing from the animals. How could a mouse help a lion trapped in a net, and if he could, why would he not think the lion would eat him. The mouse ran over to the trap and started gnawing through the net bit by bit. Eventually the lion was able to get out of the net. The lion remembered that he had laughed when the mouse said that one day the mouse might help lion. The lion wasn't laughing now, he was very grateful and was glad that he was the mouse's friend.

Yesterday we suggested that the mouse was brave, not because he climbed on the back of the lion, but rather he was able to ask the lion to be his friend even though he was scared. The mouse found the courage and boldness to ask the lion to be his friend.

What would have happened if the mouse hadn't been brave in the first place? Would he have been able to rescue his friend the lion? Would they have been friends? When fear stops us from trying new and exciting activities or stops us from making strong and lasting friendships, we need to be brave so that we can benefit from those experiences and those friendships. When we feel the fear we may need to do it anyway.

Time to reflect

- When can fear hold us back from experiencing good things?
- When can fear protect us from harm? (By not jumping off dangerous rocks into the sea, or by riding our bikes sensibly.)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for bravery. When we face situations that make us feel fearful, help us to remember the story of the mouse and the lion. Help us to be brave and to overcome our fears. *(Amen)*



28.4 But I'm Too Small

Can anyone recount the story of the mouse and the lion? The mouse overcame fear and asked the lion to be his friend. If the mouse hadn't been brave then he would not have been able to save the lion from the hunter's net. There are all sorts of reasons that we can use to talk ourselves out of being brave. What if they don't like me, what if I'm useless at playing an instrument, what if I look silly playing a new sport in front of my friends?

The Bible tells the story of a man named Gideon. God asked Gideon to lead his people, the Israelites, when an opposing army took over their country. Gideon said that he couldn't because he was the least important member from the least important family in his community. God told Gideon that he would help him and although Gideon agreed to lead a revolt against the opposing army, Gideon kept asking God for reassurance. The word reassurance means removing a person's doubt or fear. In one such request, Gideon left a woollen fleece out overnight and asked God to make the fleece wet with dew but leave the ground around it dry. It happened just as Gideon has asked. Still a little scared, Gideon asked God to leave the fleece dry whilst making the ground around it wet with dew. Again, God answered Gideon's request. The Bible continues to describe how Gideon defeated the enemy army with only one hundred men. 'Laying out a fleece' is a still a popular phrase that is still used today.

We often need reassurance when we are fearful and need some help to be brave. It is good to have people around us that can remind us that 'we can do it'. School is a great environment, there are teachers and friends that can remind us that we can do it if we try. It is also a place where we can reassure our friends to do something brave.

Time to reflect

- Can you think of examples of when reassurance from a teacher has helped you overcome a fear?
- Can you think of a time when you have been able to reassure someone else?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for our teachers, family members and friends that reassure us when we need it. Help us all to help each other overcome fears that may be stopping us reaching our potential. *(Amen)*



28.5 Bravery Synonyms

Can you think of 5 other words that could be used to help explain the word 'brave'? Out of the following list of 9 words, have you got any words that haven't been read out?

- Courage
- Fearless
- Daring
- Heroic
- Gallant
- Gutsy
- Confident
- Plucky
- Boldness

We have thought a lot about bravery this week. In our times for reflection this week we have thought about examples of when we have been brave and when others have helped us to be brave.

Time to reflect

Can we think and talk about examples of the fears that we can overcome and how we might overcome them?

Possible examples

- Courage to talk to a child that is being ignored.
- The fear of getting on a two-wheeled bicycle.
- A child may fear a bully and needs courage to be kind to that bully – a bully may not have experienced people being kind and loving very often.
- Fear of flying may require a good dose of courage to get on an aeroplane.
- Fear of failing may need courage to try something new like taking music lessons.
- Fear of lifts may need a lot of courage to get into a lift or into small spaces.
- Fear of what people might think of us may stop us from…

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

The example of St George reminds us to be true to ourselves. The story of the mouse and the lion encourages us to think about how bravery can help us to overcome our fears. The story of Gideon can help us to be thankful for the reassurance we get from others. Help us to see the opportunities to be brave today and help us to realise that every time we are fearful it is an opportunity for us to be brave. *(Amen)*



29.1 Kind And Generous (Going the extra mile)

Is there a difference between being kind and being generous? To help us think about this question I will need two volunteers. One of our volunteers will pretend to be really kind, the other we will pretend to be really generous. I will describe the qualities and actions of each volunteer and you have got to guess which one is kind and which one is generous.



(Don't read out the title) Kindness
(Name) is a lovely person, they always put other people first. Just the other day I was walking down the corridor with a handful of books and **(name)** saw me from the far side of the corridor, **(she/he)** saw me and even though **(she/he)** was going in the other direction, **(name)** came over and opened all the doors until we came to my office. **(Miss/Mr Teacher)** told me that **(he/she)** saw **(name)** in the playground playing with **(her/his)** friends. **(Name)** saw another child alone at the side of the playground. **(Name)** stopped what **(she/he)** was doing and went over to this other child. **(Name)** spent time talking to and listening to the other pupil and finally convinced this other child to come and join in with the game that **(name)** and **(his/her)** friends were playing. You might remember the skirmish of 2015, when a girl in **(name)'s** class went around gossiping about everyone in **(name)'s** class. Well you can imagine what **(name)'s** classmates thought. It was only **(name)** that went to the pupil in question and told her that **(she/he)** would forgive them and try to get all of the class to give her a second chance. **(Name)** always makes every new pupil in the school feel welcome, no matter what class they are in. **(Name)** is an example to all of us.

(Don't read out the title) Generous
I don't think I have ever met many people that are more giving than **(name)**. Last week we were in the dinner hall and I realised that I had forgotten my lunch. **(Name)** heard about it and came over with their lunch and offered to share it with me. I know this isn't the first time **(name)** has shared **(his/her)** lunch, because **(he/she)** had shared **(his/her)** lunch the week before with a pupil who had forgotten his lunch. I remember a few years ago, **(name)** had completed lots of chores at home to save up some spending money for a school trip to London. Whilst on the trip, **(Name)** gave most of **(his/her)** spending money to a girl on the trip who had forgotten to bring any spending money. **(Name)** is always the person to give the most money on other people's sponsorship forms and the money **(he/she)** gives **(he/she)** raises by doing odd jobs around the home. **(Name)** always gives more than is expected of **(him/her)**. **(Name)** is an example to all of us.

Can anyone tell me which of our two volunteers is kind? Why? That means **(name)** is generous. Can anyone tell me why **(name)** is generous? From those descriptions of **(name)** and **(name)** can anyone describe what kindness and being generous mean? Can anyone explain the difference?



Generosity describes the actions of a person giving more than they are expected to give. A generous person may give their time or money to help other people and they give it away without expecting anything in return. Kindness describes more than just giving. A kind person puts the needs of others before themselves, they are friendly and forgiving.

Kindness and generosity are important qualities that help improve the well-being of any community. Can you imagine what a community would be like if everyone put the needs of others before themselves all the time? In the Bible, Jesus challenged his followers to be kind and generous. He told them that it is easy to help our friends and those who are kind to us, but Jesus told them to be kind to those who hated them. He gave them this example, "if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles." This is where the phrase, 'going the extra mile' comes from. Going the extra mile means helping someone more than they were expecting. Being kind to people we like is easy, but would you open a door to someone who is mean to you? If you keep on being kind to a mean person do you think that over time they may become less mean?

Would you like to be friends with **(Name)** and **(Name)**? Kindness and generosity are good qualities in a friend. They are important qualities in a healthy and strong community. How could you become kinder and more generous? A long time ago, a Roman Philosopher called Lucius Annaeus Seneca said "Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness". Every person has the choice to be kind and everybody has opportunities to be generous. Can we act on those choices today?

Time to reflect

- What is the difference between being kind and generous?
- What choices will you have today to show your kindness?
- What choices will you have today to show your generosity?
- Is it hard to be kind and generous to those people who don't like us?
- What are the possible consequences of being kind and generous to people who don't like us?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for kind and generous people, people who put others before themselves. May we act on the opportunities to be kind and generous today, help us to be kind and generous even when we know we may not receive kindness in return. *(Amen)*



29.2 Generous Planning

Can anyone remember the difference between kindness and generosity?

Yesterday we thought about the choices that we have to show kindness and be generous.

Read the following wise sayings and discuss what they could mean.

Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness.
Lucius Annaeus Seneca
(Ancient Philosopher)

Generous people plan to do what is generous and they stand firm in their generosity.
Isaiah 32:8 (NLT)

Time to reflect

- What opportunities will we have to demonstrate kindness today?
- What opportunities will we have to demonstrate generosity today?
- Can we plan to be kind? How?
- Can we plan to be generous? How?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for kind and generous people, people who put others before themselves. May we act on the opportunities to be kind and generous today, help us to be kind and generous even when we know we may not receive kindness in return. *(Amen)*



29.3 Wearing Kindness

Read the following Proverb (wise saying) and discuss what it could mean.

Never let loyalty and kindness leave you!
Tie them around your neck as a reminder.
Write them deep within your heart.
Proverbs 3:3

Time to reflect

This proverb suggests that we can remind ourselves to be kind.

- What can we do to remind ourselves to be kind?
- How can we remind others to be kind?
- How can we encourage our school community to be kind?
- What can we do to remind ourselves to be generous?
- How can we remind others to be generous?
- How can we encourage our school community to be generous?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for kind and generous people, people who put others before themselves. May we act on the opportunities to be kind and generous today, help us to be kind and generous even when we know we may not receive kindness in return. *(Amen)*



Time to reflect

Read the following Proverbs (wise saying) and discuss what they could mean.

Be generous, and you will be prosperous. Help others, and you will be helped.
Proverbs 11:25 (GNT)

Blessed are those who are generous, because they feed the poor.
Proverbs 22:9 (NLT)

Kind words are like honey, sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.
Proverbs 16:24 (NLT)

Remember this – a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop.
2 Corinthians 9:6 (NLT)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for kind and generous people, people who put others before themselves. May we act on the opportunities to be kind and generous today, help us to be kind and generous even when we know we may not receive kindness in return. *(Amen)*



29.5 Kind Actions

If a person thinks they are kind, but they are not kind to others, are they actually kind at all? Is it really kindness if we expect to get something in return? The Sikh holy book says 'be kind to all beings, this is better than bathing at the sixty-eight sacred shrines of pilgrimage and donating money (Guru Granth Sahib Ji, 136). The Bible says that the 'religion' that God accepts is looking after orphans and widows. The passages in these two holy books suggest that kindness is a very important part of religious people's actions. For some religious people it is even more important than some of the more religious rituals like pilgrimage. We all know that being kind and generous is an important part of a healthy community. The benefits a community gains from kindness and generosity are obvious. This week we have explored the benefits we gain from being kind and generous. Remember the phrase 'going the extra mile', can we go the extra mile for everyone in our community?

Time to reflect

- Is it really kindness if we expect to get something in return?
- How can you be kind to someone who is mean to you?
- How can we go the extra mile for our community?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for kind and generous people, people who put others before themselves. May we act on the opportunities to be kind and generous today, help us to be kind and generous even when we know we may not receive kindness in return. *(Amen)*



30.1 Weather The Weather

Preparation

Search and display images of the weather – rain, sun, snow etc

Have the following in three separate plastic bags.

1) Summer clothes – Sun glasses, sun cream and a sun hat.
2) Rainy clothes – Wellies, rain coat and an umbrella.
3) Winter clothes – Big thick coat, gloves and a woolly hat.

Possibly ask a pupil to be ready to read the part of Mrs White

Have you heard the phrase 'weathering the storm'? The phrase can be used to explain our resilience when it comes to the weather. Can anyone remind me what resilience is? Resilience is the ability to continue even though times are tough or you have failed in the past. We can't change the weather and in the UK we talk a lot about the weather, probably because we have lots of different types of weather. In the UK the snow can close schools and the rain can postpone school sports days. Rain can flood homes and the wind can bring down trees. Listen to this poem. ***As this is a tongue twister you may want to show the poem on a digital projector.***

Whether *the weather be fine,*
Or whether the weather be not,
Whether the weather be cold,
Or whether the weather be hot,
We'll weather the weather,



Whatever the weather,
Whether we like it or not.
(Author: Unknown)

How many weather conditions can you name? (e.g. sunshine, windy, rainy, snowing, tornado, hurricanes). What weather do you think of when you think of this country? How do we weather the weather in the UK? ***Ask for three volunteers. Give each volunteer a plastic bag with the clothes for the different types of weather and ask the volunteers to put on whatever is in the plastic bag.*** We often weather the weather by simply wearing the right clothing or in the case of rain or snow, staying inside where it is warm and dry. There is another saying, 'there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing'.

Around the world including the UK there are many occasions where weathering the weather is not as simple as wearing the right clothes. The results of extreme weather conditions can affect the lives of people from around the world in different ways. This week we are going to hear about experiences of different people around the world as they live with the effects of the weather.

Mrs White

Hello, I'm Mrs White and I live in a town in North Yorkshire. I am quite elderly and find it hard to walk. I use the aid of a walker with wheels. In the winter we often have heavy snow fall and I am unable to get out of my house. My neighbours are very kind. Adults and children come with spades and shovels to clear the snow from my path, they seem to have some fun as well. I see them throwing snowballs at each other and the children build snowmen. They fetch my shopping and even make me a few hot meals. I am very grateful. A few years ago in the winter it rained so much that it caused flooding. Firemen and volunteers helped me and my neighbours get to a dry community hall where we were fed and were able to sleep until the water receded and we could go back to our homes. People can be very kind when emergencies arise, giving of their time, resources and money. The bridge over the river in the middle of town collapsed splitting the town in two. It took them two year before it was reparied.

This morning we have heard an example of how severe weather conditions can affect us in the UK. In 2025, floods in Bangladesh damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and left thousands of people homeless. Flooding is caused by too much rain but many countries suffer from droughts caused by not enough rain. Millions of people across several countries in North Africa have been affected by drought. In northern and eastern Ethiopia, the lack of rain caused severe droughts, whilst in southern Ethiopia flooding has affected hundreds of thousands of people.

The phrase 'weathering the weather' is often said to a person who might need a bit of encouragement to get through a difficult time. This morning we have heard of examples of when people need help from other people to literally weather the weather. There are many charities that help people in emergencies and disasters including those caused by extreme weather. Can you name any charities? (Oxfam, Red Cross, Save the Children, Water aid). A lot of people give up their time to help take much needed food, shelter (by way of tents) and medicines to people that lose their homes and crops all around the world.

Time to reflect

- When have you given something or done something for charity?
- Have you ever been helped or given something you need?
- How can we help other people weather the weather?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God),

This morning we have heard examples of people who need help because of severe and extreme weather conditions. We all need help sometimes for all sorts of reasons. Help us to ask for help when we need it and also may we be kind enough to offer help to those that need it. *(Amen)*



30.2 Drought

Can anyone remember the theme of yesterday's assembly? Weathering the storm or weathering the weather is a saying that is often used to encourage a person to get through tough times. Yesterday we heard from Mrs White who explained how others helped her to weather the weather when floods affected the town of Tadcaster in 2015. Charities are a way that many people are helped to weather the weather. This morning we are going to hear from a boy called Rayan and how he and his family have been helped by a charity called Water Aid.

Rayan

Hello! My name is Rayan, I am 8 and I live in Tanzania. We have had very little rain for a long time so our crops have not grown and we were very short of water to drink. We were walking up to eight hours a day to collect water from marshes, ditches and hand-dug wells. We were often getting very sick and poorly from the dirty water. We were very hungry because most of our crops were not growing. A group of people from a charity called Water Aid came to our village and used big drills to dig deep into the ground. We now have 2 wells. In one well we put a bucket onto a hook that is at the end of a rope. We wind the rope down until the bucket is in the water at the bottom of the well. We then wind the rope back up so that we can get the bucket of water. The other well has a pump. We move a handle up and down and water pours from a tap into our bucket. We are now able to drink clean water and grow crops from seeds, watering them with the water from the well.

Time to reflect

- What would happen if we didn't have sun, rain and wind?
- What happens when people drink dirty water?
- How is Water Aid and other charities helping people to weather the weather?
- How can we help other people weather the weather?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the sun, wind and rain that help produce lots of food to be grown around the world and provides water for people, animals and plants. Please help us to remember there are those in other countries that have been affected by drought and need our help to provide them with water and food. *(Amen)*



30.3 Hurricanes

Preparation

Search and display a weather map – hurricane with the eye.

Can anyone tell me what a hurricane is? A hurricane is a big storm and some hurricanes are so big that one storm could cover the whole of the UK at the same time. In the middle of the hurricane is the 'eye of the storm'. The eye is usually calm and the strong winds, sometimes up to 200 miles an hour, circle around the eye making hurricanes clearly visible on satellite images. When compared with an average storm in the UK, hurricanes last a very long time and some can last over a week. For hundreds of years, names have been given to hurricanes. The Roman Catholic church remember particular saints on different days throughout the year. People living in the Caribbean Islands often named storms after the saint's day that the storm started. In 1979, meteorologists, scientists that study the weather, started naming hurricanes each beginning with a different letter of the alphabet, first starting with A then B and so on.

Jodie

Hi, I'm Jodie, I'm 10 and I am from the Louisiana in the United States of America. The weather report told us that Hurricane Rafael was on its way. We were to expect a ferocious storm in the very town we lived in. We were told to prepare by leaving our homes. All the schools, shops and businesses had to close. We were scared but we were glad that we knew about the storm in time so that we could go and stay with relatives, many miles away. When the hurricane got to our state it was so strong that thousands of houses were damaged or destroyed. Trees were blown down and thousands of flights had to be cancelled. After the hurricane we went to look at our house, the windows had been smashed, the roof was damaged and there was debris all around it. We were lucky because lots of other people lost their homes. Many houses had been damaged so badly that the roofs had been blown off or walls had been destroyed. The president came to see the damage and promised to provide money to help repair the damage to all the roads, bridges and buildings. Lots of people from different charities came to help and provide food, shelter and provisions until we were able to rebuild our lives again. It was amazing to meet such lovely, helpful people that didn't even know us.

Time to reflect

- Can you remember a time of high winds and heavy rains, were you scared?
- What things do people need during and after a hurricane?
- How did other people show charity?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Thank you for the sun, wind and rain that help produce lots of food to be grown around the world and provides water for people, animals and plants to drink. Please help us to remember there are those in other countries that have been affected by hurricanes and need our help to provide them with food and shelter. *(Amen)*



30.4 Charity

This week we have been thinking about the effects of the weather and how communities from around the world deal with the effects of severe and extreme weather conditions. People often use the phrase 'weathering the weather' to encourage a person to carry on through tough times or when they are struggling, but in the examples we have heard this week people have helped others to literally weather the weather. In the floods experienced in the UK, the drought in Africa and hurricanes in the United States, communities and charities helped those that had been affected by the severe or extreme weather.

Time to reflect

- What are the different reasons why people give to charity?
- What charities do you know and how do they help people in need?
- Have you been involved in helping a charity?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the work of charities and we know why they are so important in helping and supporting people all around the world. May we all put the needs of others before our own so that we can reduce the problems and suffering caused by our own actions. *(Amen)*



30.5 A World Without Charity

Charities do important work helping and supporting people all around the world. The need for charities suggests that there are some problems in our world. If we need to raise money for drought victims, then it highlights that there has been a drought. If we need to raise money for the those that are suffering in war then it highlights that there is a war going on. Sicknesses, disease, war and natural disasters are all reasons that we have charities. Wouldn't it be nice to live in a world where there isn't sickness, disease, war and natural disasters? Wouldn't it be nice to live in a world where we don't need charities? Whilst there are lots of charities that help the victims of these events, there are many people around the world working hard to stop the problems happening in the first place. Some work hard to try and stop war and improve the relationships between different groups of people or nations. Others try to share the resources we already have, like food and medicines. Some campaign to reduce the huge gap between the rich and poor people in our world. Some design technology and install water pumps that reduce the famines in the first place. If we all, and I mean everybody in the world, put the needs of other people first then the only charities we would probably need are the ones that help people to weather the weather.

Time to reflect

- Which charities do we need because of natural causes?
- Which charities do we need because mankind has created the problem?
- What problems would stop or reduce if everybody put the needs of others before their own?
- What can we do to help stop or reduce the problems in our family, community or world?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the work of charities and we know why they are so important in helping and supporting people all around the world. May we all put the needs of others before our own so that we can reduce the problems and suffering caused by our own actions. *(Amen)*



31.1 Our Sun

Preparation

To show the relative size and distance of the Earth to the Sun you will need to arrange the following: If using a 60cm beach ball for the Sun, the Earth would be a blueberry 35 metres away. If using a 30cm football for the Sun, the Earth would be a coriander seed or a tiny bead 12 metres away.



Today we are going to think about some amazing facts about our Sun. First, have you ever thought about how big the Sun is? If you were to take a tape measure and measure the length around its circumference, its middle, then your tape measure would need to be 4.3 billion metres long.* To measure the Earth you would only need a tape measure that is 40 million metres long. The tape measure to measure around the Sun would need to be more than 100 times bigger than the tape measure used to measure around the Earth. So how many Earths could we fit in the Sun? It would take 1.3 million Earths to fill up the Sun.

The Earth is about 150 million kilometres away from the Sun.* Which means if you were travelling at 70 miles an hour (112kph) it would take about 134,000 hours or 5,580 days or just over 15 years to get there. In 1969, the Apollo 10 space capsule reached a speed of nearly 25,000mph (40,000kph) on a return trip from the Moon. At this speed, we could reach the Sun in 16 days.

The temperature on the surface of the Sun is 5,500°C.* The temperature at the centre of the Sun could be as much as 15 million degrees Celsius. If we were able to make a spacecraft that could travel as far as the Sun and could withstand temperatures at the surface of the Sun, there would still be nowhere to land. The Sun is a big ball of gas. About 92% of the Sun is made up of a gas called Hydrogen and just under 8% is made up of a gas called Helium. There are also small amounts of other gases like oxygen and nitrogen.

Even though the Sun is so far away, we can see it and we can feel its heat. The light and heat from the Sun's surface takes just over 8 minutes to travel to the Earth. If you could view the Sun from space it would be white. On the surface of the Earth the Sun appears yellow, orange and red because the light changes colour as it travels through our atmosphere.

It is difficult to imagine just how big, or hot or just how far the Sun is away from the Earth, but without it, there would be no life on Earth. The Sun determines much of what we do on Earth. The heat from the Sun creates the weather systems. It generates clouds which give us rain. It enables trees



to create the oxygen that we breathe. The movement of the Earth around the Sun creates the seasons which affects what and when we can grow and eat different types of food. The rotation of the Earth affects the way the light reaches the Earth and separates the day from the night. The rotation of the Earth and the place the Sun is in the sky can help us to tell the time. Our sleep patterns are affected by the light we have on Earth. Knowing how much the Sun affects the different parts of the Earth can help us to decide where we go on holiday. We may go and visit a country which benefits from the heat of the Sun much more than in the UK.

It is important that we respect the power of the Sun. The Sun is so bright that if you look directly at the sun, it can damage your eyesight. Leaving litter, like glass in hot and dry countries can magnify the light and heat causing fires to start. Staying safe when we are out on a Sunny day is also very important. If you have ever been sunburnt you will know just how uncomfortable and painful the Sun can make you feel. To stay safe in the Sun it is important to remember to use Sun protection, Sun screen or Sun tan lotion. Sun screen comes in different factors, the higher the factor the better the protection from the power of the Sun. Remember to put Sun screen on before going out into the sunshine and put it on again after swimming or playing in water.

Covering up with loose fitting clothes will help to protect your skin from the harmful effects of the Sun. A brightly coloured t-shirt will reflect the Sun's rays away from you. Wearing a hat and Sun glasses will help to protect your head and eyes. We sweat in the heat of the Sun, so it is important to drink water when playing outside on a sunny day. Without regular drinks of water, we may start to feel faint, dizzy or even sick. If you do you need to get out of the Sun, tell an adult. There is a saying 'only mad dogs and English men stay out in the midday Sun'. During the day, the Sun is at its hottest from 12-3pm, getting out of the Sun and finding shade is another way we can protect ourselves from the harmful effects of the Sun.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever thought about how big the Sun is, or how far it is away from the Earth?
- Have you ever thought about how hot the Sun is?
- What are the dangerous effects of the Sun?
- What can we do to protect ourselves from the dangerous effects of the Sun?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the Sun, for its power to support life on the Earth. We are thankful for warm summers and hot and sunny days. May we be wise when we enjoy being outside in the sunshine, help us to remember to respect the power of the sun. *(Amen)*

**NASA*

31.2 Naming The Sun

Our Sun is one of many different types of stars. Our Sun is a G-Type main-sequence star (G2V), also known as a yellow dwarf. The type of star refers to the way it creates its heat and light and the temperatures at its surface and core. Other types of stars are red giants, white dwarfs, neutron stars and supergiant stars. Some stars like the red hyper giant star is about 1500 times bigger than our Sun making our Sun look like a dot in comparison.

The word 'solar' is an adjective that we use when describing something that comes from the Sun. When the Sun is in the sky, we receive solar radiation, or in other words we receive solar light and solar heat. The word solar comes from the Latin word solaris, which literally means 'from the Sun'.

The Sun is so important to our existence that many cultures have worshipped the Sun. Many cultures gave a name to a god represented by the Sun. Ancient Egyptians called him Ra. The ancient Greeks called him Helios and the Romans, Sol or Solaris. Apollo was another Roman god associated with the sun. The Celts called the Sun god Lugh. Surya is the Hindu god of the Sun. Statues or images of Surya often have him sitting on a chariot pulled by seven horses, to represent the seven colours of the rainbow.

There are many stories that include these gods and explain how and why the Sun lives in the sky today. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all teach that the Sun is not to be worshipped because God created all that exists including the Sun. Worshipping the Sun will take the focus away from worshipping the one true God. For many people the theory of the Big Bang helps to explain how and why the Sun is in the sky, it also explains why there are so many stars in the sky.

Time to reflect

- Why do you think that so many cultures worshipped the Sun?
- Do you know any stories that explain why the Sun lives in the sky?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the Sun and for its power to support life on the Earth. We know that the Sun has inspired mankind as it has sought to answer big and important questions about our existence and the beginnings of our universe. May the Sun continue to inspire us as we think about the same questions. *(Amen)*



31.3 Mr And Mrs Sun and Moon

Today we are going to hear a West African tale as to how the Sun and Moon came to live in the sky.

Once upon a time Sun and his wife, Moon, both lived happily together in a house on the Earth. Sun was good friends with Water, and Sun would visit Water and the fish and creatures that lived in him. On one visit, Sun remarked that Water had never visited Sun or Moon's house. Water replied that Sun's house wasn't big enough and that Sun would need to create an area that was really really big if Water ever came to visit. The Sun returned home and started to create an area that could contain Water. Sun and Moon both agreed that they were ready for Water's visit. Sun found Water and told him of their new room ready for Water's visit. Next day, Water knocked on Sun and Moon's door. Sun and Moon welcomed Water in. Water asked if they were sure that they had enough room for him. 'Come in' they continued and Water started to flow in the Sun and Moon's house. Soon Water covered the floor, then he covered the furniture. Fish and other creatures were swimming around Sun and Moon's house. Soon Water had reached the ceiling, both Sun and Moon climbed on the roof of their house. But Water kept rising and soon Sun and Moon's feet were getting wet. Eventually Sun and Moon both had to leap into the sky where they still live to this day.

Time to reflect

- What does this story try to explain?
- What questions about the sun and moon do you want answering?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for Sun and for its power to support life on the Earth. We know that the Sun has inspired mankind as it has sought to answer big and important questions about our existence and the beginnings of our universe. May the Sun continue to inspire us as we think about the same questions. *(Amen)*



31.4 Brothers Sun And Moon

Can anyone recount the story that included the Sun, Moon and Water? This morning we are going to hear another tale about the Sun and Moon, this story is from Kenya in East Africa. In this story, the Sun and Moon are not husband and wife like in the story we heard yesterday, instead, in this account, they are brothers. The Moon was a star much bigger and brighter than his younger brother, the Sun. The Sun, jealous of his bigger brother would pick fights and call his brother names. One day, things got out of hand, and the two brothers started fighting. The Moon and the Sun wrestled and fought like only brothers can. Eventually they came to a large area of mud, the fighting continued. At the edge of the mud the Sun pushed the Moon, the Moon lost his balance and fell face first into the mud. God eventually made them stop fighting. To keep them apart, God ordered the Sun to shine during the day and the Moon was ordered to shine at night, but by now he was covered in mud dimming much of his brightness.

Time to reflect

- What does this story try to explain?
- Are the Sun and Moon more like husband and wife, brothers, or brother and sister?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for Sun and for its power to support life on the Earth. We know that the Sun has inspired mankind as it has sought to answer big and important questions about our existence and the beginnings of our universe. May the Sun continue to inspire us as we think about the same questions. *(Amen)*



31.5 The Power Of The Sun

This week we have heard lots of facts and a couple of myths about the Sun. The Sun has shone over every human being that has ever lived on this Earth. The stories that help to explain where it came from and why it lives in our sky shows us that human beings throughout history have been interested in how and why we have the Sun and Moon in the Sky. The Sun is powerful and without it there would be no life on Earth. The power of the Sun isn't just in its heat and light to our planet. The power of the Sun can also be in how it makes us feel. The Sun can also improve our health and well-being in a number of ways:

- Being in the Sun increases the amount of vitamin D we get. In some countries where there is less sun, children take vitamin D tablets.
- The Sun can cheer us up. Have you ever felt SAD? There is a feeling of sadness and depression called Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD that is caused by the lack of sunlight. People in countries with less sunshine can use lightboxes that increase the amount of UV light they receive in a day.
- The Sun gives us more energy, we need less sleep in the summer compared to the winter to gain the same amount of energy.
- The Sun has inspired countless poems, art and songs.

Time to reflect

- Can you think of ways that we benefit from the Sun?
- What would you miss the most if the Sun stopped shining, and presuming that we were able to stay alive?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for Sun and for its power to support life on the Earth. We know that the Sun has inspired mankind as it has sought to answer big and important questions about our existence and the beginnings of our universe. Help us also not to forget the ways in which the Sun can improve our mental and physical well-being. *(Amen)*



32.1 Charity

Preparation

Search and display a positive image of father with child.



When you hear the word charity, what do you think of? I am going to read out three definitions of the word charity, I want you to put your hand up when you hear the definition closest to the one you were just thinking of. We will see which understanding of charity is most popular.

Definition 1:
An organisation that raises money to help people who are in need. Example, James gave money to a charity that helps victims of famine.

Definition 2:
An act of kindness to someone in need. James gave money to help the victims of famine as an act of charity.

Definition 3:
This definition isn't used very often today. The word charity could mean 'love' as in the love of a father to his child.

I think that the most popular understanding of the word charity is the organisations that help people who are in need. Was that confirmed with the show of hands? In school, we often raise money for a particular charity. Red nose day and Children in Need are both popular 'charitable' events. The first definition is an organisation that may receive money in order to help those in need. Can you tell me the name of a charity and how the charity helps people? The second definition describes an action. A person may give help to someone else as an act of charity. We may give to charity as an act of charity. The third definition, charity as a feeling, comes from the meaning of older words that we get the modern word charity from. The English word "charity" comes from an older French word "charité". The old French word "charité" is derived from the Latin "caritas". The Latin word "caritas" means *precious, esteem and affection* or *dearness*. Can anyone explain what those words mean? Would a loving father let his son go hungry? No, the feelings or love the father has for the son will probably mean the father will go without food before he lets his son go hungry. If you think that other people are important, or precious, then you may need to help them when they are in need. The word charity can describe the feelings you have to another person, as well as the action you do to help them. Mother Teresa was a Roman Catholic nun who spent her life helping and caring for other people, she summed up the third definition of charity by saying "It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving."

In the Bible, Saint Paul uses the Greek word 'agape' which is often translated as either

'charity' or 'love'. In an old English version of a very famous passage about love that is read at many weddings, Paul writes 'If I bestow (give) all my goods to feed the poor… and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing'. (1 Corinthians 13:3 King James Version) Paul here is making a point, you can give to charity, but that doesn't mean you are a loving person. A loving person is not just someone who does a kind act, a loving person cares for other people and will look for opportunities to put the needs of others before their own.

An organisation called the Charitable Aid Foundation (CAF) have produced a yearly report looking at how individuals gave to charity in the UK since 2004. They found that in a survey of over thirteen thousand people, one in two (50%) had given to charity in 2024. One in ten people had volunteered and given their time to help others. The survey highlighted that giving money directly from a bank account is the most popular way of giving to charity and that people who are involved in helping their communities are also most likely to help charities in different ways.* I wonder what those different ways are?

This week we are going to think about the reasons people are charitable. The following are two examples of people who are charitable because they have benefitted as a result of another person's charitable acts.

"Hi, my name is Molly. My mother suffers from Multiple Sclerosis and we have received a lot of help from a charity that helps those with Multiple Sclerosis and a charity helping young carers like me. I have decided to try and raise money for these charities by running a mile. There is a sponsored run taking part in the park in a few weeks and I thought it would be a good way to raise money for these charities that have helped my mum and our family as we have come to terms with living with Multiple Sclerosis."

"Hi, I'm George, I was a solider in the army. Two years ago I lost one of my legs during a battle. The doctors and medical staff were amazing, they saved my life and helped me to learn to walk again using my new prosthetic leg. I have set up a 'just giving page' and will be climbing Snowdon with other soldiers who have been through a similar experience to me. The money will help other soldier's hurt in battles, just as I was."

Time to reflect

- Which definition did you think of when you heard the word charity?
- Have you or anyone you know benefitted from charity?
- Can charity and genuine care be the same thing?
- Have you or anyone you know benefitted from the love shown by another person?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for charities and the work they do helping and supporting people all over the world. Help us to understand that charity can affect the way we think as well as what we do. By caring for others may it increase our kind and charitable actions. *(Amen)*



Time to reflect

Discuss how the following quotes help to motivate people to be charitable.

"I have worked hard to build up my business and I have a few big houses and expensive cars. I have had a few lucky breaks in my time. I give large sums of money to charity because I feel that I need to give a bit back to my community. I have received so much in my life, it is my turn to give some of it back and help others."

If we are rich and see others in need, yet close our hearts against them, how can we claim that we love God? My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action. 1 John 3:17-18 (GNT)

"You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you." John Bunyan

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for charities and the work they do helping and supporting people all over the world. Help us to understand that charity can affect the way we think as well as what we do. By caring for others may it increase our kind and charitable actions. *(Amen)*



32.3 Religious Duty

Time to reflect

Discuss how the following quotes help to motivate people to be charitable.

"I believe that I am made in God's image and so is everyone else. I have been giving to charity all my life because I believe it is a way of showing care and compassion to those that are around me. I believe it is my religious duty to help others. I don't believe that I will be rewarded for the way I treat others because it is what we all should do anyway. I do believe that we will be judged if we don't help mankind because God loves everyone and like I said before, we are all made in his image."

"I follow the five pillars of Islam. The third of these is called Zakat. I give 2.5% of my savings each month to the mosque and they give it to help the poor. Giving money helps me to realise that all that I own belongs to Allah anyway. It helps me to be thankful for the things that I do have and it helps me to want to help those that are in need."

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for charities and the work they do helping and supporting people all over the world. Help us to understand that charity can affect the way we think as well as what we do. By caring for others may it increase our kind and charitable actions. *(Amen)*



Time to reflect

Discuss how the following quotes help to motivate people to be charitable.

"I don't believe in a God, but I do believe that humans can improve the lives of other humans whilst we live out our time on this earth. I think that science and technology has helped to improve the health of many and I believe that science and technology can help to feed and support many others around the world. If humans won't help other humans that are in need, no one else will."

"The simplest acts of kindness are by far more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer." Mahatma Gandhi

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for charities and the work they do helping and supporting people all over the world. Help us to understand that charity can affect the way we think as well as what we do. By caring for others may it increase our kind and charitable actions *(Amen)*



Time to reflect

(take time to discuss the following questions)

Discuss how the following quotes help to motivate people to be charitable.

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

"Love is not patronizing and charity isn't about pity, it is about love. Charity and love are the same -- with charity you give love, so don't just give money but reach out your hand instead." Mother Teresa

And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples."
John 13:34-35 (GNT)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for charities and the work they do helping and supporting people all over the world. Help us to understand that charity can affect the way we think as well as what we do. By caring for others may it increase our kind and charitable actions. *(Amen)*



33.1 The Wise Old Owl

Preparation

Search and display an image of an Owl and a Rabbit.

A wise old owl lived in an oak
The more he saw the less he spoke
The less he spoke the more he heard.
Why can't we all be like that wise old bird?

The fox may be sly, a dog may be man's best friend and a bee might be busy, but the owl has long been considered wise. For centuries, cultures around the world have used owls to symbolise wisdom from ancient Greek Myths of owls with large eyes through to the only creature in the woods that could read in A. A. Milne's 'Winnie-the-Pooh'. The nursery rhyme or poem I read out at the beginning of the assembly was used in the late 1800's and early 1900's to encourage children to be quiet. Wisdom is the ability to use the experiences we have had, and the experiences others have told us about, to make the right choices. Wisdom is not just about being quiet as suggested in the poem, it is being able to listen to what other people say and see what other people do and use that information with our own experiences to make the most of the opportunities we have. What you have learnt, done, heard and seen can all be used to help you decide what to do, what to say and where to go and even what to ask for.

An old Native American story suggests that the owl wasn't always wise. Once upon a time, a long time ago the Everything-Maker was busy making all the creatures and plants that covered the earth. The Everything-Maker started making Owl. The Everything-



Maker made Owl's head, eyes, body and wings. Owl had also been given a voice. Before the Everything-Maker had finished, Owl said to the Everything-Maker, "I want a long neck like Swan and I want red feathers like Cardinal (a bright red bird from North and South America) and a strong, sharp beak like Hawk."

The Everything-Maker agreed but insisted that Owl must wait his turn. The Everything-Maker put Owl down facing the wall unfinished and continued making Rabbit. The Everything-Maker insisted that Owl didn't open his eyes until Owl had been finished. The Everything-Maker turned to the nervous Rabbit and asked "what do you want, little rabbit?"

"I have already received my long legs and my long ears, but I would really like fangs, and claws. Yes! I would really like claws."

The Everything-Maker agreed, "I think we can manage claws and fangs."

"Silly Rabbit!" Owl said loudly. "Why don't you ask for something useful, like wisdom? I demand wisdom"

The Everything-Maker told Owl to be quiet but Owl turned his head right around and demanded that the Everything-Maker give them both what they asked for. The Everything-Maker was so angry with Owl. The Everything-Maker shoved Owl's head so hard that his neck disappeared, the Everything-Maker then shook Owl, Owl's eyes nearly popped out of his head. The Everything-Maker then pulled Owl's ears making them stand out from Owl's head.

The Everything-Maker said, "I have made your neck short to hold up your head, your eyes big to make sure that you can see better and big ears so that you can hear better. I have also given you wisdom. Now use your wisdom and fly away before I take away what you have been given."

Owl, being wise, quickly flew away. The Everything-Maker returned back to finish making Rabbit, but Rabbit had gone, too scared of the Everything-Maker to wait. To this day, Owl tries to avoid the Everything-Maker, only coming out at night when the Everything-Maker is asleep.

This Native American tale suggests how the owl may have gained its wisdom. There is a verse in the bible that says: Happy is the person who finds wisdom. And happy is the person who gets understanding. Proverbs 3:13 (ICB – International Children's Bible). How do we find wisdom and how do we get understanding? We learn from our experiences, but we also learn from the experiences of others.

A wise old owl lived in an oak
The more he saw the less he spoke
The less he spoke the more he heard.
Why can't we all be like that wise old bird?

Wisdom is often connected with being old, wisdom grows as we grow. The people around us have often been through experiences and situations that we go through. By listening to the way other people have dealt with problems in their life, it can help us to think about the right decisions in ours. Sometimes it is simply helpful to know that other people face the same problems that we face. Wisdom maybe accepting the instructions that are given to us by someone who cares.

Time to reflect

- Why do you think children in the late 1800's were encouraged to be quiet?
- What lessons have you learned from watching and listening to other people?
- Do you think teachers and parents/ carers are wise?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Thank you that we can learn lessons from stories of the past. May we listen, watch and learn from the wisdom of others. Help us to be wise, in our choices and decisions. Help us to find wisdom and gain understanding. *(Amen)*



33.2 Wise And Safe

Read the following Proverb (wise saying) and discuss what it could mean.

Use wisdom, and it will take care of you.
Love wisdom, and it will keep you safe.
Proverbs 4:6 (ICB)

The proverb suggests that wisdom can take care of us and wisdom can help to keep us safe. Wisdom is using our experiences and experience and advice of others to help make the right choices. Can you think of any advice you have been given that can help to keep us safe? You may have heard people tell you not to speak to strangers. If someone at the gate after school, or in the street talks to you and perhaps offers you sweets, you would be very wise if you ignored the person and quickly went to an adult that you know and told them that a stranger has spoken to you and offered you sweets. What about the advice, be careful around deep water. When you are near a pond or a river, it is wise not to go too near the edge of the water. It is too easy to fall into a river or pond where the edge of the water can be slippery.

Time to reflect

- When can wisdom keep you safe?
- Why can wisdom take care of you?
- What pieces of advice would you be wise to act on?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we listen, watch and learn from the wisdom of others. Help us to be wise, in our choices and decisions. Help us to find wisdom and gain understanding and may wisdom keep us safe. *(Amen)*



33.3 Old Wise Owl

Read the following Proverb (wise saying) and discuss what it could mean.

Let the wise listen and add to their learning.
Proverbs 1:5 NIV

Fossils of owls have been found dating back 60 million years, showing that owls have changed very little in all that time. Owls are one of the few birds that have been found in prehistory cave paintings. The nursery rhyme called the owl, 'wise old owl'. Wise characters in films are often represented as older people. Gandalf from Lord of the Rings and Professor Dumbledore are both old men with long grey beards. The wise old owl in the nursery rhyme was considered as being wise because he spent time looking and listening and as he was old he may have spent a lifetime looking and listening.

As we look and listen we learn about the consequences of our actions. The more we learn about the consequences of our actions, the more we can use what we learn to make better choices and improve the consequences. Wise people make choices based on what they have learned throughout their life and the longer their life, the more they will have learned. Young people are wise people in training, acting on the advice of others, experiencing the consequences of their own actions and the actions of others all of which are helping to guide their choices in the future. Our communities will benefit from the wisdom gained by older people, sometimes we just need to ask. **(Have you had homework to get some good advice off Grandparents or other older people, could you write a letter to a retirement or nursing home?)**

Time to reflect

- Does getting older make everyone wiser?
- What do you need to do to become wiser? (learn from your experiences)
- What do you want to ask an older and wiser person?
- What can you learn from an older and wiser person?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we listen, watch and learn from the wisdom of others. Help us to be wise, in our choices and decisions. Help us to find wisdom and gain understanding and may we seek the wisdom of those that are much wiser than we are. *(Amen)*



33.4 Common Owl

One proverb in the Bible suggests that *'Wisdom will make your life pleasant. It will bring you peace.'* Proverbs 3:17 (ICB).

There are between 150 to 220 different species of owl. Can anyone name some of them? Long eared owl, short eared owl, spotted owl, barn owl, tawny owl, snowy owl, little owl, burrowing owl, eagle owl, barred owl, and even an elf owl. There are short owls, tall owls, brown owls, white owls, owls that live in hot countries and owls that live in cold countries.

Tolerance is the ability to accept other people that have beliefs and practices that are different to your own. Bad things can happen when we do not accept the differences of others, these may include name calling, excluding others from playing in our games or worse. There are many differences in the many species of owl, but they are also known for the things that they have in common. Owls symbolise wisdom and they are known for their incredible eyesight and hearing no matter which species. Like owls, humans have many differences, these differences can be within families, within people of the same culture as well as between people of different cultures. But we also have our similarities. Both the differences and similarities can be celebrated. If wisdom is learning from experiences to help make life pleasant, and brings about peace, then it is certainly wise to practise tolerance and respect.

Time to reflect

- How can you demonstrate respect to people with beliefs and practices that are different to your own?
- If you know what a person believes, will it help you to understand them and their actions?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we listen, watch and learn from the wisdom of others. Help us to be wise and practise tolerance in our school and our communities. May wisdom make our life pleasant and may it bring us peace. *(Amen)*



33.5 Wise Action

This week we have thought a lot about what it is to be wise. We have suggested that wisdom comes by learning from our experiences and the experiences of others. It is also listening to and acting on the wise advice from other people. 'As a tree makes fruit, wisdom gives life to those who use it. Everyone who uses wisdom will be happy.' Proverbs 3:18 (ICP). In this proverb, using wisdom will help a person to be happy. It is wise to save a little bit of money each week, but simply knowing this will not help you to save money. You will only benefit from this wisdom if you put a little bit of money aside each week. Knowing that practising the piano a little every day will not help you to improve playing the piano. Using that knowledge and actually practising the piano will make you better at playing the piano. The proverb states, wisdom gives life to those who use it. This proverb suggests that we need to act on the knowledge that we have. Everyone who uses wisdom will be happy. In the nursery rhyme, the wise old owl may gain wisdom as he spends time looking and listening to what others are saying and doing, but he will only benefit from his wisdom if he acts on that wisdom.

Time to reflect

- What good advice do you need to act on?
- What good advice have you had that meant that you had to stop doing something? (eating too much chocolate?)
- Is knowledge useful if you never act on it?
- Is wisdom wisdom if it is never used?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

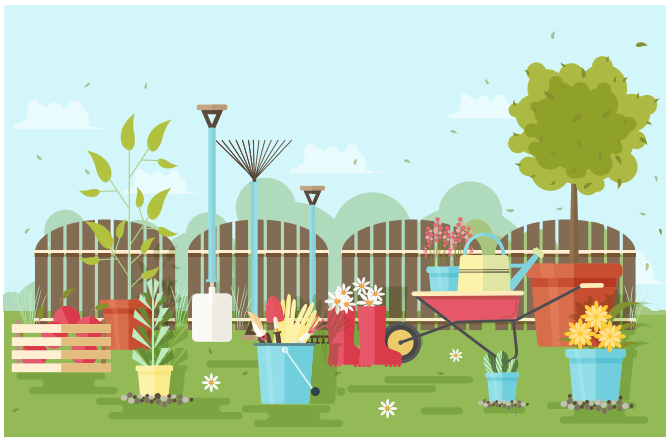
May we listen, watch and learn from the wisdom of others. May we use wisdom to help us in our lives to make the right choices, to bring us life and to help us to be happy. *(Amen)*



34.1 The Right Skill At The Right Time

Preparation

Search and display a variety of farm equipment.



Depending on who you ask will depend on what answer you get to this very important question. When does summer begin? If you study the temperature of the earth, measure the rainfall and try to predict the weather, then you may say that summer begins on the 1st June. If you watch the stars and are interested in the rotation of the earth and the position of the sun and stars in the sky then you may say that summer begins on the day of the summer solstice. Does anyone know what the summer solstice is? It is also known as the longest day, but that doesn't mean that there are any more hours in the day, it means that the sun is visible in the sky for longer on this day than any other day in the year. Depending on where you are in the world the summer solstice will happen between the 20th – 22nd June. A meteorological summer starts on the 1st June and ends on the 31 August. An astronomical summer starts on the summer solstice and ends late September.

During the summer, there are many country and agricultural shows. Country shows are a way of getting a glimpse at what happens in our countryside. There may be competitions to find the best of various breeds of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs. Sheep dog trials and other farming skills may be on display. There will be many stands and presentations from a range of countryside or traditional activities. Food will play an important part in many country and agricultural shows. There may be the largest vegetable or best pie competition. A large array of farm vehicles and machinery may also be on display. Can anyone give me the names of any farm machinery or vehicles? Tractors, combine harvesters, Land Rovers, quad bikes, hedge cutters, sprayers, spreaders, ploughs… the list goes on.

This morning I want us all to imagine that we are working on a farm. We are going to think about the jobs that might need to be done on a farm and the various bits of machinery that a person would need to do all those jobs. Different types of seeds will be sown during different times of the year. The ground will need ploughing, which means that the earth will need turning and breaking up before the seeds are sown. Many years ago, horses would help the farmer to plough the field, but now it will be done by large ploughs that attach to the rear of a tractor. What skills would you need in order to plough the fields? You would need to be able to drive a tractor and you would need to know how to use the plough. We would also need to know when to plough and sow the different types of vegetables and grains. A tractor and various spreaders would be needed to sow the seeds depending on the type of vegetable you want to grow.



Different types of vegetables and plants will take different amounts of time to grow and may need more than just the rain in order to keep them healthy. A farmer's knowledge of what feeds or sprays to use on which plants is very important. A tractor and a sprayer would be used to feed or protect the vegetables or grains. When it comes to harvesting the crops, different machinery may harvest different crops, each needing different skills in order to operate them. Have you ever seen a combine harvester collecting wheat and filling up a trailer behind it? Impressive demonstration of teamwork.

Different equipment and skills would be needed for the variety of jobs on the farm. Hedge cutting, milking cows, shearing the sheep all require different knowledge, skills and equipment and the farmer knows which skills and equipment to use for the different jobs. Pretend you are a farmer and you have just run out of feed for feeding your pigs. You need the feed now, so you can't order some and have it delivered, it would take too long. What are you going to do? You decide to go and fetch some from a farming supplies shop, presuming it is open and sells pig feed. As a farmer, you have a range of skills. You can drive a tractor, a combine harvester, a forest harvester, a digger, a dumper truck, an excavator, a quad, a hay baler and the farm Land Rover, and probably some others. With all those skills, you need to choose which one to use, which vehicle are you going to use to pop into town for the pig food. Will you need a trailer? This all seems obvious doesn't it. The farmer will know which skill is needed and which vehicle to use.

There are so many different skills needed on a farm. A farmer will know which ones to use for the various jobs that are done on the farm. Selecting the right equipment and applying the right skill makes the job of the farmer easier than it might be if he or she didn't use the right equipment or skill. Imagine if you decided that a very wide, combine harvester was the right vehicle for driving into town and collecting the pig food. It is quite slow and very wide, driving around the tight roads in town might be difficult if not impossible. Selecting the right piece of equipment and applying the right skill is in itself an important skill.

Let's try and apply what we have just thought about a farm to our lives in and out of school. Just as farmers learn and apply their skills to their daily lives, all of us will continue to use the many skills we learn as children throughout our lives. I have 10 hay bales and I am going to need 6 to feed my cattle over the winter. I'm going to sell the remaining bales. Which skill am I going to use? How many can I sell? It is important to know how to use a skill, but is just as important if not more important to know which skill to use in which situation.

Time to reflect

- Is knowing which skill to use as important as being able to use the skill?
- What skills are you learning now? (Social, Maths, Languages)
- When will you need those skills?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we are at school to learn many skills that we will need throughout our lives. May we not only learn them, but have the understanding to use them at the right time. *(Amen)*

34.2 A New Piece Of Equipment

Imagine you are a farmer and you decide to try something new. You have decided that you would like to grow a new variety of potato but you have never grown potatoes before. What do you need to find out? How many potatoes could you grow in your field? Is your soil good enough? How much will it cost to set up? How much can you sell the potatoes for? What machinery will you need? You find out that you can make a profit and that soil in your field is good enough. Now it's time to buy the machinery that you will use to plant the potatoes. The new potato planting machine will attach to the back of your tractor but it is very complicated. Amongst other things you can set the depth at which the potatoes are sown and you can set the distance between each plant. It comes with a large instruction booklet which you read carefully because it would be too costly to get wrong and you ask your friend that has a similar piece of equipment for some advice.

Do you think that you would research and buy the equipment to plant potatoes if you didn't want to plant potatoes in the first place? Growing the potatoes is the 'motivation' the farmer needed to learn all about growing potatoes. What does motivation mean? Sometimes in school, we can feel as if we will never use the skills that we are learning. The skills you learn when you are a child, in school and at home, you will use throughout the rest of your life. As a farmer growing potatoes you would need to be able to read and understand the instruction manual. You would need to work out the area of your field, how many seed potatoes you need and the profit you will make by selling them. You will also use your social skills to be able to ask your friend for some advice. If you are struggling to learn a new skill or feel as if you will never use the skills that you are learning at the moment, knowing that you will use the skills that you gain at school throughout your life, may be just the motivation that you need.

Time to reflect

- Can you think of examples of how you will use the skills you are learning now?
- How can you motivate yourself to learn the new skills?
- What new skills would you like to learn? (Sports, instruments, ICT?)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we are at school to learn many skills that we will need throughout our lives. Help us to understand this and may it be the motivation we need when we struggle. *(Amen)*



34.3 Don't Despise The Day Of Small Beginnings

There are many skills that we will learn and use at school. If we break reading down, there are a number of skills that are needed. Firstly, we need to recognise what the letters are. We need to know the different sounds the letters could have. We will need to know various rules like a P and a H together make a f sound. Then we need to blend the letters to make words. As we start to see and use the words regularly, we will get to know what they are. Once we have mastered this with small words we can move onto larger words. The more we read the more words we will recognise by just looking at them. We will still use our skills when we find words that we haven't met before because the same rules apply. As you master the skill of reading you will read bigger books with longer words and more difficult story lines. As you read these bigger books, what do you think about the books with three letter words in? Too easy, boring?

There is a saying that comes from the Bible that is used as a reminder that we should appreciate and be thankful for the things in our lives that began with something small and seemingly unimportant. 'Do not despise the day of small beginnings.' (Zechariah 4:10) One way in which we can despise small beginnings is by thinking that those times are worthless. The farmer knows that the food on our table comes from a small seed, which is so small but without it, we couldn't survive. Once upon a time, the greatest footballers started by kicking a ball with their mates, the greatest singers started singing in school assemblies and the greatest musicians started practicing their scales.

Time to reflect

- What skill are you good at?
- How did you start that skill?
- How could you appreciate the day of small beginnings?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we are at school to learn many skills which we will need throughout our lives. May we appreciate and be thankful for the skills we have and how they began. Help us to realise even small beginnings are great achievements that may lead to even greater success. *(Amen)*



34.4 Small Beginnings Are Big Achievements

A farmer plants many small seeds and from those seeds, food is grown that will feed many people. What would happen if the farmer didn't sow the seeds? Nothing! Nothing would happen. All of our achievements start with small beginnings. Yesterday we heard a saying that comes from the Bible, 'Don't despise the day of small beginnings.' What does that phrase mean? There is another very old saying that is used to help us appreciate how important small beginnings are. A Chinese philosopher called Laozi said "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

Imagine two children, one is in reception class and is learning her letters and sounds, the other child is in year 6 and is reading large books. Which takes more effort, learning your letters and sounds or reading a book of 200 pages or more. For the reception child, it probably requires the same amount or even more effort to learn their letters and sounds as it does for the year 6 pupil to read a large book. If you think about the effort that is needed to learn something new, we will realise that the small beginnings are our big achievements.

Time to reflect

- Do small beginnings feel like a great achievement?
- What small beginnings have you recently started?
- Does it require a lot of effort?
- Where could your small beginning lead you?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we are at school to learn many skills which we will need throughout our lives. May we to appreciate and be thankful for the skills we have and how they began. Help us to realise that even small beginnings are great achievements. *(Amen)*



34.5 Appreciate The Day Of Small Beginnings

This week we have been thinking about how we apply and grow the skills that we learn at school. We have heard that we shouldn't despise the day of small beginnings. Today we are going to think of ways in which we can appreciate those small beginnings.

Practise.
Once we have started to master various skills, we need to be able to work out which is the best skill to use in different situations. One way of showing that we appreciate and are thankful for learning a new skill is by practising and using it regularly. Just as the farmer knows which piece of machinery to use depending on the job the farmer needs to do, so we will apply the different skills we have learned to the various problems we face. Farmers who have experienced many years of growing crops and raising animals will be able to use that experience to help them select the right skills to use. The more we use and practise our skills, the better we will get at knowing which problems need which skills. Practising when we don't feel like practising is a way of showing that we appreciate the importance of those small beginnings.

Appreciate that others have started from small beginnings
It is good to ask for advice from others who have learned the same skills we are practising. It is useful to remember that those who are good at an instrument, at playing a sport or many of the other skills we learn at school started from small beginnings. If we appreciate the effort that other people have put in mastering what they are good at, it may help us to find the motivation to continue to develop our own skills.

Time to reflect

- How important are small beginnings?
- Do they feel small at the time?
- How do you feel when you master a new skill that may have started from a small beginning?
- What can we do to show that we are thankful and appreciate our small beginnings?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that we are at school to learn many skills which we will need throughout our lives. May we to appreciate and be thankful for the skills we have and how they began. Help to realise that even small beginnings are great achievements. *(Amen)*



35.1 Hajj

Preparation

You will need an apple. You may also want to check when Hajj begins before using this assembly. Hajj is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar; the Islamic calendar is based on the lunar cycle, unlike the Gregorian calendar that follows the cycle of the sun. Due to the different number of days in different calendars, Hajj starts 10 to 12 days earlier each year.



People in the UK like to go abroad. According to the Office of National Statistics, in 2023, there were 86.2 million visits abroad. Which means that people left these shores to visit other countries 86.2 million times. The population in the UK in 2024 was 68.5 million people. That means in 2024 there were more visits abroad than the number of people living in the UK. The United Kingdom is an island, what are the possible ways that we can travel to visit other countries? Boat, aeroplane and train (channel tunnel).

Can you think of different reasons why we in the UK would go and visit another country? To go on holiday, to visit relatives, to go on a business trip or meeting and to study are all possible reasons. This week we are going to think about another reason that people would visit another country. Does anyone know what a 'pilgrimage' is? Pilgrimage is a word used to describe a special journey that is often taken for religious reasons.

I have an example to help us understand what a pilgrimage is. I need a volunteer to go to the back of the room/hall. The volunteer will need to come and collect this apple from the front of the room/hall. On their journey, the volunteer will need to make up a few different actions, that may involve stopping, sitting, hopping, crawling, our volunteer will decide. Once they have completed their journey, they may keep and eat the apple. ***Choose a volunteer and have them complete their journey.*** I now need a second volunteer. Our second volunteer we are going to call a pilgrim and they are going to go on a pilgrimage. Our second volunteer needs to copy all the actions and follow the route of our first volunteer. ***Choose a second volunteer and have them complete the pilgrimage.*** Of the two journeys that we have just seen the first was a journey by a very special person. The second was more like a pilgrimage. On a pilgrimage, a person may visit or recreate the actions to help them remember important events of the past.

A pilgrimage called Hajj is one of five important actions that most Muslims complete, these are called the 'Five Pillars of Islam.' Pillars are used in buildings, they are strong posts that help to keep buildings up



and something to hold up the roof. You can find pillars in many old buildings like parish churches. The Five Pillars of Islam aren't actually pillars, but things that Muslims do that will make their faith strong. They are a way that a Muslim will demonstrate their commitment to Allah. The five pillars require Muslims to commit their time, money and actions to the worship of Allah. Some pillars are done daily like the five daily prayers called Salat. Other pillars are done once a year like the fast during the month of Ramadan. Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam and it is expected that a Muslim would go on Hajj at least once in their lifetime as long as they are healthy and can afford it.

Every year, about 3 million Muslims go on the pilgrimage of Hajj. It takes place between the 8th-13th in the ninth Islamic month of Dhul-Hijjah. The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar cycle, unlike the Gregorian calendar that follows the cycle of the sun. Due to the different number of days in the different calendars, Hajj starts 10 to 12 days earlier each year. The Hajj takes place in Saudi Arabia, in and around a city called Makkah. The founder of Islam, Muhammad was born in Makkah in 570AD/CE. After he had received the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, he began teaching others the message he had received from Allah. He moved to Madinah in 622AD/CE. This move is very important and the Islamic calendar begins from this year. While Muhammad was living in Madinah, there were battles with the people of Makkah. This was because Muhammad was trying to stop them doing the things that were wrong. At last, Muhammad and his followers won the battles, and the people of Makkah became Muslims. Muhammad returned to Makkah in triumph, Muhammad declared that from then on, only Muslims may enter the city of Makkah. This rule continues today and during the Hajj, only Muslims are allowed to enter the city of Makkah.

Whilst on Hajj, male pilgrims wear two sheets of white cotton called Ihram, the Ihram represents that those attending the Hajj are equal before Allah. Muslims should go bare foot or wear open toed sandals. Women don't have to wear any special clothes, but nobody should wear jewellery or perfume. Male Muslims who complete the Hajj are called Hajji and the women Hajjah. When a person completes the Hajj properly they may gain forgiveness for everything they have done wrong in their life.

This week we are going to think about the events that a Hajji and a Hajjah will have performed whilst on Hajj. There are many religious pilgrimages that take place all around the world. They are often completed so that a religious person can remember, visit or recreate the places and actions visited or done by important people within their religion. They may feel it will benefit them and their relationship with their God.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever felt, after a dark time, things getting brighter?
- What are you hopeful for today, for yourself?
- What are you hopeful for today, for the school community?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the power of hope, that it can lighten our lives and the lives of others. May we try and focus on the good in our lives and help those around us to do the same. *(Amen)*

35.2 Ibrahim

Can anyone remember the name of the pilgrimage that we learned about yesterday? On a pilgrimage, a person may visit or recreate the actions to help them remember important events of the past. This week we are going to think about the important people that are remembered whilst on Hajj and the actions that the pilgrims may recreate. Ibrahim, (or Abraham) is the founder of Judaism and he is believed to be one of the first people who recognised and worshipped the one true God about four thousand years ago but he is also very important in Islam. Tradition says Ibrahim and his son Ismàil (or Ishmael) were asked by Allah to create the first place of worship, called the Ka'bah. The Ka'bah is in the city of Makkah. A large mosque, called 'The Great Mosque' has been built around the Ka'bah. On the Ka'bah is a black stone that is said to have been given by the Angel Gabriel to Adam when he left the garden of Eden. Pilgrims will try and touch the black stone. The pilgrimage starts and ends with pilgrims walking around the Ka'bah. The Ka'bah is so important, that during the five daily prayers, no matter where a Muslim is in the world, they will pray facing the Ka'bah. The Hajj is an opportunity for Muslims to visit the place that they are facing every day in prayer.

Time to reflect

- How do you think a Muslim would feel visiting the place they have spent their life facing when praying?
- Have you ever been excited to see something or someone you have been longing to see?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for important people and important places in our own history and the history of others. Help us to think about the significance of our own journeys as we learn about the important pilgrimage of Hajj. *(Amen)*



35.3 Ibrahim And Ismàil

During the Hajj, pilgrims remember an event that is described in Muslim tradition and the Qur'an. The Christian and Jewish holy books also describe a similar story. In the Islamic version, Ibrahim had a son with his wife Hajar and they called him Ismàil. Allah tested Ibrahim's obedience by instructing Ibrahim to leave Hajar and their son Ismàil in the desert without any food or water. Hajar travelled between two hills called Marwa and Safa, she ran back and forth searching for water to save her and her son. She sat down at a place called Zamzam, exhausted. As she sat waiting to die, Allah made a spring of water appear, so Hajar and Ismàil were saved. Today pilgrims run, or walk, between Marwa and Safa and drink water from the spring at Zamzam.

Time to reflect

Think about the famous phrase, 'I hear, I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand'. A pilgrim will have heard the story of Ibrahim and Hajar. How will recreating Hajar searching for water and finally drinking from the spring of Zamzam help a pilgrim to understand the story?

Have you ever visited places that you heard about previously in stories, Stonehenge etc… How did the visit help your understanding?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for important people and important places in our own history and the history of others. Help us to think about the significance of our own journeys as we learn about the important pilgrimage of Hajj. *(Amen)*



35.4 Stoning The Devil

During the Hajj, the pilgrims will travel to a place called Mina. Before arriving at Mina, the pilgrims will have collected lots of stones. There are three walls in Mina and pilgrims will throw their stones at the three pillars. The stone throwing helps the pilgrims to remember another event in the life of Ibrahim and Ismàil. Allah visited Ibrahim in two dreams and told him to sacrifice his son Ismàil. Ibrahim, knew that this was a test of his obedience to Allah. Ismàil agreed and they both went to a place called Mount Arafat. On their way, at a place called Mina, the devil tried to talk Ibrahim out of sacrificing Ismàil. Three times the devil approached Ibrahim and three times Abraham threw stones at the devil. Although Ismàil agreed to be sacrificed, Ibrahim still tied him up and so that Ibrahim wouldn't see Ismàil suffer, Ibrahim placed a blindfold on himself. Taking the knife, Ibrahim did what Allah asked him to do. Ibrahim removed the blindfold and in front of him, where Ismàil was supposed to be, was a dead ram. Ismàil was standing next to Ibrahim unharmed. Throwing the stones is a reminder that the pilgrims have their own times when they are tempted to do things that they know are wrong, stoning the pillars is a way of 'stoning the devil' and encouraging themselves to do what is right.

Time to reflect

- Why do the pilgrims throw stones at the three pillars?
- What can we do when we are tempted to do something that we know is wrong?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for important people and important places in our own history and the history of others. Help us to think about the significance of our own journeys as we learn about the important pilgrimage of Hajj. *(Amen)*



35.5 Eid-Ul-Adha

Eid-ul-Adha is an important festival that is celebrated by Muslims from all over the world. Can anyone recount the story from yesterday involving Ibrahim and Ismàil. The festival of Eid-ul-Adha is also called the Sacrifice Feast. In Muslim countries, Eid-ul-Adha is a public holiday. A sheep or goat is sacrificed as a reminder of Ibrahim doing what Allah had asked him to do. During the four day festival, many Muslims will give money to charity and help those that may not be able to afford it, to celebrate the festival.

For those that are on the Hajj, Eid-ul-Adha starts about half way through the pilgrimage. On the first day of Eid-ul-Adha, pilgrims throw stones at the three pillars as a reminder of Ibrahim, stoning the devil. Once the stones have been thrown at the three pillars, many male pilgrims have their heads shaved. A sheep or goat will then be sacrificed. Pilgrims will go back to The Great Mosque. On the second and third day of Eid-ul-Adha, pilgrims will stone the pillars at Mina. At the end of the pilgrimage, the pilgrims may go back to Makkah and walk around the Ka'bah. Water from the well at Zamzam may be collected and bought home.

The Hajj, along with many pilgrimages is an opportunity for the pilgrims to act out and experience events that happened in their religions or cultures history. On *Wednesday* we thought about the phrase 'I hear, I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.' Pilgrimages allow people to 'do and understand.'

Time to reflect

- Do you think that the festival of Eid-ul-Adah is a reminder for those who have attended the Hajj in the past?
- How can experiencing a pilgrimage help a person live out their beliefs?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for important people and important places in our own history and the history of others. Help us to think about the significance of our own journeys as we learn about the important pilgrimage of Hajj. *(Amen)*



36.1 The Air We Breathe

Preparation

Search and display an image of an inhaler.



Have you ever thought about the air you breathe? You cannot see it, you cannot touch it, you cannot smell it and you cannot taste it, but without it nothing would live. Think about how you breathe in and out. Take a deep breath. Inhale, now breathe out, exhale. Can you breathe if you close your mouth and squeeze your nose? When you inhale, oxygen in the air travels through your lungs into tiny air sacs called alveoli. The alveoli in your lungs are covered with tiny blood vessels called capillaries. The oxygen you breathe in is transferred to your blood through the capillaries. All of your body's cells need oxygen, which means every bit of you benefits from the air we breathe. The capillaries in the lungs pick up oxygen and the heart pumps the blood with the oxygen to the rest of the body. When you exercise, your body's cells need even more oxygen. That's why your heart beats faster when you exercise and you breathe faster to provide more oxygen to your lungs and on to your body's cells. Your blood and lungs also help to get rid of waste products your body doesn't need, such as carbon dioxide. The capillaries bring the carbon dioxide to the alveoli in the lungs, where they are pushed out when you exhale.

The amount of times you breathe depends on your age. Babies need to breathe between 30-60 times a minute and toddlers might need to breathe 16-20 times a minute. Older children and adults, when resting, usually breathe about 12-20 times per minute. How many times do you think you breathe air in and out during a day? A lot, is the right answer. On average, we may take between 17,000 – 30,000 breaths per day. When we exercise, like running, walking and even taking the dinner dishes to the sink or dishwasher, we need more oxygen for our muscles and organs, therefore we breathe quicker. On days that include lots of exercise we can even breathe up to 50,000 times a day. We breathe a lot more than we eat, yet we probably never think about breathing in the same way as we think about food and drink. Perhaps that's because we can't taste, smell, see or touch the air we breathe. The speed at which we breathe changes to make sure that we have enough oxygen in our blood for whatever activity we're doing. Doctors sometimes measure the level of oxygen in our blood (called the blood oxygen level) to make sure your lungs are working properly.

For most of us, we probably don't spend too much time thinking about our breathing, but that is not true for everyone. Asthma is a condition that affects the breathing of 8 in 100 people in the UK. 7.2 million people have asthma.* Asthma can affect our airways making it difficult to breathe. For some that suffer from asthma, the muscles around their airways tighten, for others their airways become swollen and for others sticky

phlegm can build up in the airways. This morning we are going to hear an account from a girl called Natalie on what it might be like to live with Asthma.

Natalie

"Hi, I'm Natalie. I am nine and I have Asthma, which means I sometimes have difficulty in breathing, especially early in the morning and at night. I have to take medicine every day. The doctors tell me that they know it is asthma as the walls of my airways become sore and swollen. Sometimes, my chest feels very tight, I feel like I need to cough and start wheezing. When my breathing gets very difficult it is scary. Last month I had an Asthma attack. I just could not seem to breathe, I felt as if my lungs were closing up and I got very scared. I was playing with my friend Josie when it happened and suddenly I couldn't speak. Josie quickly told our teacher, Mrs Davies. Mrs Davies rang 999 and very quickly an ambulance arrived. In the ambulance I was put on a bed and a mask providing oxygen and medicine to help open my lungs was put over my nose and mouth. It helped a bit but I was still struggling hard to breathe in and out. The ambulance took me to hospital where I was still struggling to breathe. The nurses told me the thick mucus in my airways was stopping the oxygen and medicine get to my lungs. I was very scared as I felt that I just couldn't breathe at all by now. A needle was put in my arm and medicines put into my veins that would relax my airways, opening them enough for air and oxygen to get to my lungs. I was very relieved. I was in hospital for a few days. I have an inhaler with me all the time now which I am to use when I feel like I can't breathe again, but I have been told if ever the inhaler doesn't help my breathing I must go back to the hospital for treatment immediately."

Asthma will not affect everyone like it affects Natalie. It will depend on how bad the swollen airways, phlegm or the tightening of the muscles in the airways are. If you have Asthma it is important to listen to what the doctor says. You could let your friends know what having Asthma feels like. You could let them know what signs to look out for just in case you did have an Asthma attack. If you know someone with Asthma and see them struggling to talk, or struggling to catch their breath, it is important to try and stay calm and get a teacher.

There are other diseases that affect the airways. Emphysema and COPD are diseases that can affect a person's ability to breath easily. Lung diseases are caused by lots of different things like allergies, pollen, cigarettes, cigarette smoke, air pollution, cold air, changes in the weather, infections, flu, and the common cold. We have suggested that many of us can take the air around us for granted. Thinking about those to whom breathing can be a problem can help us to be thankful for something that we can't see, feel, taste or smell and yet is so important to all of our lives.

Time to reflect

- Do you take air for granted?
- Have you or anyone you know ever had breathing difficulties?
- Would you know what to do if you saw someone suffering from the effects of Asthma?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the air we breathe, help us not to take it for granted. Today we think of those who suffer from conditions that affect their ability to breathe. Help us to know what to do if we see someone suffering from the effects of these conditions. *(Amen)*

**Statistics from www.asthmaandlung.org.uk (Data from 2024)*

36.2 What Is Air?

Preparation

See text in bold

It is strange to think that even though we can't see, touch, taste or smell the air we breathe, it actually takes up space and has weight. Have you ever blown up a balloon? At first the balloon is small, flat and deflated. However, when you blow air into the balloon, it grows in size and is heavier than it was before you blew it up. ***You can test this by weighing an empty balloon on a set of electric kitchen scales; the scales need to show grams. Then blow the balloon up and weigh it again. It will be one or two grams heavier. You could ask the pupils whether an empty balloon or the slightly heavier filled balloon will fall to the ground first if you let them go at the same time from the same height.***

Can you remember what we thought about yesterday? Natalie's asthma attack was quite scary. Yesterday we heard why we need the oxygen in the air we breathe, we also heard that there are many people who can have difficulty breathing that air. As many as 1 in 5 people in the UK have lung diseases* that make it difficult for them to breath. Breathing air is vital for our life. What other things can you think of that need air to exist? Yes, all living things; plants, trees, animals, insects and even fish need oxygen, which is in the air (or water).

What is air? To breathe, our lungs need oxygen, but is air just oxygen? Air is made up of a mixture of different gases, 21% is oxygen, 78% nitrogen and 1% other gases. We heard that we breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. Trees are vital to the quality of the air. Although trees technically don't breathe they take in carbon dioxide and give out oxygen. We breathe about seven or eight tree's worth of oxygen each year. Therefore, we help the trees and the trees help us.

Our lungs are precious and the air we breathe can affect our physical and emotional well-being. The term 'air pollution' is used to describe harmful gases in the air as well as oxygen and nitrogen. Air pollution can cause headaches and sore eyes. Pollution can affect our brain's ability to develop and work properly. Some scientists are looking into the effect pollution has on our abilities to learn. Air pollution damages the environment including trees, lakes and buildings. Lung diseases and other breathing problems increase when there is more pollution in the air. Most of the lung diseases humans suffer from are a result of human activity – we will explore this further during the rest of this week.

Time to reflect

- Why do trees help us breathe?
- How can pollution affect our physical wellbeing?
- How can pollution affect our emotional wellbeing?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the air we breathe, help us not to take it for granted. This week we think of those who suffer from conditions that affect their ability to breathe. Help us to do what we can to protect the quality of the air around us. *(Amen)*

**The British Lung Foundation*



36.3 Air Pollution

This week we have learned that air is vital to all living things and we have learned that air is made up of oxygen, nitrogen and other gases. Today we are going to think about air pollution and the problems that air pollution can cause. We know that air is made up of different gases, sometimes harmful gases can be added causing the air to become polluted. Air pollution can harm the animals and plants that breathe the air. Air pollution can also harm things that can't breathe like buildings, lakes and rivers.

We as humans have been increasing the amount of air pollution we create for about the last 300 years. A common cause of air pollution is too much carbon dioxide in the air. Can you think of things that can contaminate our air? The smoke from forest fires, volcanos, vehicle exhausts, factories and firewood can all pollute the air that we breathe. The more the smoke mixes with the air the more pollution we begin to breathe. Areas with greater air pollution can mean that people are more likely to suffer from breathing difficulties. The pollution in the air can also mix with rain. The pollution in the rain can harm buildings. Even marble which is a very hard stone, on buildings like the Taj Mahal is being damaged by this type of pollution.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a way of measuring and comparing how much pollution there is in the air. The AQI is different in different countries. Why do you think that is? Countries with less vehicles and factories have better air quality than those that have more vehicles and factories. For most of the people in the world it would be hard or even impossible to live without cars or factories, but it is amazing to think that there are still tribes of people in the world today that have never seen a car or heard of a factory.

Time to reflect

- Have you been affected by air pollution?
- What can we do about it?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the air we breathe, help us not to take it for granted. This week we think of those who suffer from conditions that affect their ability to breathe. Help us to think about the consequences of our actions and do what we can to protect the quality of the air around us. *(Amen)*



36.4 Effects Of Smoking

Can you give me some examples of some things that pollute the air we breathe? E.g. cars, motorcycles, lorries and factories. Today we are going to think about the damage that smoking cigarettes can do. Smoking not only pollutes the air, it also damages our lungs.

On Monday, we heard from Natalie who had suffered from an asthma attack. The cause of Asthma is unknown and is more common in children. It is difficult to prevent a person from having Asthma, but it can be treated and managed with inhalers. Some lung diseases are preventable. COPD or Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease including Emphysema are diseases that also make it difficult for a person to breathe. It is thought that 1.2 million people are living with COPD and is the second most common lung disease in the UK. The first is Asthma.

For many people with COPD, smoking is the main cause. We said that it is difficult to prevent a person from having Asthma, but many people could avoid COPD by simply not smoking. Our bodies are not designed to cope with air pollution, smoking directs that air pollution straight into our lungs. Many, many years ago people did not know the effects of smoking but now we know the damage smoking causes to our lungs and the rest of our bodies.

Smoking reduces the amount of oxygen that the lungs pass into the blood. This means that the heart has to work harder to pump enough oxygen to the parts of the body that needs it. Smokers will find it harder to exercise as their bodies will have to work harder to get the same amount of oxygen.

As the damage to the lungs increase the less oxygen we get and the more out of breath a person will feel.

Smoking is very addictive which means that once someone starts smoking cigarettes they feel the need to smoke more and when they decide not to smoke anymore they find they cannot stop smoking. You may find that when you get older someone may try to tempt or get you to smoke a cigarette, or maybe you have already been offered a cigarette. It is always important to remember the damage that smoking will do to your lungs and therefore say no. Imagine yourself as an adult with problems like COPD or lung cancer caused by smoking. If as an adult you could give the young you some advice, what would it be?

Time to reflect

- Which parts of your body are affected by cigarette smoke?
- What can you do now to make sure you don't smoke in the future?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the air we breathe, help us not to take it for granted. This week we think of those who suffer from conditions that affect their ability to breathe. Help us to think about the consequences of our actions and do what we can to protect the quality of the air around us. *(Amen)*



36.5 Helping The Air Quality

What have we thought about this week? We need air to breathe to get the oxygen our bodies need. We know that trees produce oxygen that we need in the air. What do we use the wood from trees for? We use the wood from trees to make paper, furniture, buildings, heat energy from burning it. We heard the phrase, taking it for granted. Many of us rarely think about the very thing that keeps us alive. Breathing is so important, but because it is taken for granted, we probably don't think about the negative consequences our actions are having on our breathing.

If we know the causes of air pollution, we can start to do something about it. Can we list the causes of air pollution?

- Industry and manufacturing – factories and power plants that make the things and electricity that we use.
- Burning of fossil fuels – for example petrol in cars and gas in homes.
- House and farming chemicals – like paints and cleaning products.

Time to reflect

What can we do to protect our air quality?

- We can use buses and trains instead of cars, as they can carry a lot more people in one journey.
- Walking or cycling whenever you can.
- If you do come to school in a car you share a lift with a friend that lives close by.
- Most of the energy in the form of electricity in our homes and school has been made by burning fossil fuels. We can use less energy by turning the lights off. (In 2022, just over 75% of our energy came from non-renewable sources.*)
- Recycling used materials uses less energy than making new ones.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the air we breathe, help us not to take it for granted. This week we think of those who suffer from conditions that affect their ability to breathe. Help us to think about the consequences of our actions and do what we can to protect the quality of the air around us. *(Amen)*

*gov.uk



37.1 Flogging A Dead Horse

Preparation

Search and display an image of a horse.



Do you know any sayings with animals in them? See if you, or the teachers, can finish these sayings. A bird in the hand is worth… ***two in the bush***. A dog is man's… ***best friend.*** A fly in the… ***ointment.*** A leopard cannot change its… ***spots.*** As busy as a… ***bee.*** As mad as a… ***March hare.*** As snug as a… ***bug in a rug.*** Have you heard any of these phrases before? There are lots and lots of little sayings involving animals and each of them have their own meaning. This morning we are going to think about some sayings that involve horses. Can anyone think of sayings or phrases that include horses? We have, hobby horse, hold your horses, don't put the cart before the horse, hungry horse. See if you, or the teachers, can finish these sayings. Flogging a… ***dead horse.*** You can lead a horse to water… ***but you can't make it drink.*** Locking the gate after the ***horse has bolted.*** I heard it straight… ***from the horse's mouth.***

This week we are going to think about change. In a few weeks, some of our school family will be moving on to a new school. There are a few pieces of advice that I would like us to think about as we think about growing, learning and changing. Can anyone explain what the phrase 'flogging a dead horse' means? Flogging a dead horse means wasting effort and time on something when there is no chance of succeeding. Flogging means to whip or hit. In horse racing, jockeys carry whips, they may use these whips to encourage the horse to run faster. There are rules as to how and why a Jockey can use a whip, and there are punishments if a Jockey uses it incorrectly. Do you think flogging a dead horse will make it work harder or run faster? No, flogging a dead horse is a waste of time. The phrase is often used to refer to something that is broken and can't be fixed like an old car and it just won't pass its MOT. Fixing it is like flogging a dead horse.

We could apply the phrase when the same skill is being used again and again but it isn't getting the results we wanted. Imagine you have learned to solve a particular type of maths problem in a particular way. To solve this particular problem, you need to apply the skill of addition. You like addition and think that you are very good at it. To move on you need to learn the skill of subtraction, but subtraction is difficult. It requires a new way of thinking. You don't like subtraction, so you decide to continue to apply the skill of addition to every new problem that you come across. But you seem to get all the subtraction problems wrong. You are flogging a dead horse! You carry on putting effort into a method that, for this problem, has no chance of succeeding.

Knowing when to stop flogging a dead horse may seem like an easy thing to do. In the example we just heard, it can be easier to carry on doing the things that are easy

and comfortable than it is to try or learn something new. It can be easier to carry on as we are, even if it isn't helping us to improve. Someone once said, "If you do what you have always done, you'll get what you have always got." If we want to improve, but we refuse to try something new, then we are flogging a dead horse.

The phrase flogging a dead horse encourages us to move on, it helps us to realise that putting our effort into some things is a waste of time. There are things that require resilience, for example our learning, our friendships, our hobbies and dreams will require us to have another go and take another chance. How do we know when to try again and when to carry on? Well, a dead horse will not move! It doesn't matter how much flogging it receives, it won't move. There are some things that no matter how much time and effort we spend on them, they will not improve. We may need to stop it completely. The second way that we can stop flogging a dead horse is to get on a different horse, or try to solve it a different way. In the example of the maths problem, using addition to solve every maths problem is not going to work, you will need to learn how to subtract.

Wisdom is the ability to use the experiences we have had, and the experiences others have told us about, to make the right choices. A famous prayer, called the serenity prayer, encourages us to use our experiences and the experiences of others as we think about the things that we can and cannot change.

"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."

For those of us that are moving onto high school, there will be new experiences and new ways of doing things. We may need to do things that we are used to in new ways. You will learn new skills and have new experiences. Secondary schools will be full of problems that require new skills, you will not always be able to carry on using the methods that you have used at primary school, but there are experiences, dreams and skills that you will take with you.

Time to reflect

- What does the term flogging a dead horse mean?
- Have you ever flogged a dead horse? Not literally?
- Are you currently flogging a dead horse?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change. May we know when to move on. Give us the courage to change the things we can, especially when we know that our old methods and ways just won't work. Give us the wisdom to know the difference. Help us to learn from our experiences and the experiences of others, may we seek advice as we make wise choices. *(Amen)*



37.2 Forgetting What Is Behind

Wisdom is the ability to use the experiences we have had and the experiences others have told us about, to make the right choices. Sometimes bad experiences in the past may stop us from making the choices that will help us in the future. If you have had a bad experience in the past you may think that when you try and do something similar in the future then it will not work.

Making friends and trusting people can sometimes go wrong. We may be hurt by the things other people may say. You may think that it is not worth trying to be a good friend, because you only get hurt. There is a verse in the Bible that reminds us that sometimes it is important to forget the hurts of the past if we want good things in the future. Saint Paul writes, 'Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize.' (Philipians 3:13-14) Saint Paul's prize in this passage is the reward he believes he will receive from God. What reward do you want? Do you want good friendships? Do you want to be good at playing your instrument or competing in your sport? To do that you may need to forget those times that you have been hurt, or the times you have been told you are not good enough. Hurts and failures can sometimes make us think that we are flogging a dead horse, when actually, the horse isn't dead. We may think a friendship is over when in fact it isn't. We may think we will never be a good friend when in fact you can be someone's greatest friend.

Yesterday we thought about times when it is important to move on and today we have thought about times when we need to try again. As we learn from our own experiences and listen to the experiences of others, it will help us to make wise choices. Sometimes we need to forget the negative words that have been spoken to us as we strive toward the goal that we have set ourselves.

Time to reflect

- Have people said things to you in the past that have stopped you doing something that you know was right?
- How did that make you feel?
- Have you been unkind to others, stopping them from doing what was right? Do you need to say sorry?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change. May we know when to move on. Give us the courage to change the things we can, especially when we have been hurt in the past. Give us the wisdom to know the difference. Help us to learn from our experiences and the experiences of others, may we seek advice as we make wise choices. *(Amen)*



37.3 Locking The Gate Once The Horse Has Bolted

Have you ever heard the phrase 'Lock the gate after the horse has bolted'? Imagine you have a horse in a small field and you are told to keep the gate closed. You keep on forgetting or you even tell yourself that leaving the gate open is fine. The horse eventually bolts, which is another way of saying the horse runs away. Is there any point closing and locking the gate now? The phrase 'locking the gate after the horse has bolted' is used for a person who hasn't thought about the consequences of their actions until it is too late and then when things go wrong they try to change their behaviour. Thinking about the consequences of our actions can help us to make the right choices. Thinking about the consequences of leaving the gate open would change this phrase to 'locking the gate before the horse has bolted!'

Time to reflect

- Does this phrase help us to think about the consequences of our actions?
- Can you think of examples of a person changing their behaviour when it is too late?
- Revising after a test?
- Completing a homework after it has been handed in?
- Trying to be a good friend after you have been really nasty?
- Giving up smoking after a person has been diagnosed with a lung disease?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change and may we know when to move on. Give us the courage to change the things we can and may we think about the consequences of our actions. Give us the wisdom to know the difference. Help us to learn from our experiences and the experiences of others, may we seek advice as we make wise choices. *(Amen)*



37.4 You Can Lead A Horse To Water

Have you heard the phrase, 'You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink'? This phrase is often used when you want someone to do something, but as much as you try to convince or persuade them, they refuse to do it. This phrase reminds us that everyone has their own freewill. There are some choices that are unwise and it is good to try and convince our friends to make the right choices, especially when it comes to things like bullying or smoking. There are times when our friends may choose to do something that we do not want them to, even though it is okay. For example, your friend may go and play with another friend.

This week we heard the serenity 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." The word serenity means calm and peaceful. When friends don't do what we want them to do, it can often leave us feeling the opposite of calm and peaceful, it can make us feel annoyed and angry. This phrase, 'You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink', is a reminder that your friends can and will make their own choices. Knowing this can help us to stay calm and accept the things that we cannot change.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever fallen out with a friend because they didn't do what you told them to do?
- How did you feel?
- How could this phrase help you in the future?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change. Give us the courage to change the things we can. Give us the wisdom to know the difference. *(Amen)*



37.5 Don't Put The Cart Before The Horse

Can anyone tell me the three phrases about horses that we have thought about this week? The last phrase we are going to think about is 'Don't put the cart before the horse'. Does anyone know what that means? It is a simple reminder to do things in the correct order. We started this week by thinking about examples of flogging a dead horse. Using the skill of addition for every problem you come across because you like addition is like flogging a dead horse. Subtraction, multiplication and division are the next steps that you will need to learn to be able to solve the various problems you will face. Learning to add will help you to subtract. Learning your multiplication tables will help you to divide. Subtracting without knowing how to add and dividing without knowing how to multiply is a bit like putting the cart before the horse. The horse will find it easier if the cart is behind it. You will find certain skills easier to do if you learn them in a specific order.

The phrase is often used to get us to think about the solution to a problem, rather than rushing in and making a mess of it. Imagine you are asked to create a presentation about an important person that you have never heard of. Researching and finding out who they are and what they have achieved is the best place to start. Designing where the information will go on the presentation would be next and finally you will create the presentation. What could happen if you missed out the first two steps and went straight into making the presentation? Or imagine you have been given the homework to create a model of a butterfly. You have a great imagination and know exactly what it will look like and the things you want to use to make it. You start making it and soon realise that you haven't got any cardboard, tissue paper, glue, or scissors. Making sure you had the right equipment before you started making your model, would help you to avoid disappointment.

Time to reflect

- Is this phrase similar to 'run before you can walk'?
- Can you think of examples of putting the cart before the horse?
- How do phrases like the ones we have heard this week help us?
- Can you think of other helpful phrases?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for reminders and wise sayings that can help us to make wise choices. Help us to use our experience and the experience of others as we seek to make wise choices both at school and at home. *(Amen)*



38.1 Habit Of Silence - Revisited

Italics taken from Cycle 2 6.2



In the Autumn Term, we explored the benefits that we can get from regularly being quiet and taking a time out. We heard about three famous 'time outs'. The first involved Robert the Bruce and a spider, the second starred Isaac Newton and an apple and the third found a man named Jonah in a big fish. Can anyone explain how a time out helped each of these people?

During the Spring term, we explored the term happiness and looked at what we could do to help improve our own well-being. Time out and silence was discussed in the Autumn Term and can be an important way to help improve our well-being. Has anyone been using the advice and regularly taking a time out? In today's assembly, I want to remind us of the dangers of an overly busy and noisy life and remind us of the benefits we can gain from taking a regular time out.

The world in which we live doesn't make it easy for us to have a time out, it isn't that easy to find peace and quiet. If we're not at school, we're doing homework, if we're not doing homework then we're on the computer, if we're not on the computer we're watching the TV, if we're not watching the TV we're on the iPad, if we're not on the iPad we're playing a game, if we're not playing a game we're listening to music, if we're not listening to music we're doing our chores (possibly listening to music), and if we're not doing our chores someone else is watching TV or listening to music… And if we're not doing all that we are asleep. Am I describing anyone's lifestyle here?

There are many dangers of a very noisy and busy life. More people than ever before in the UK are reported to suffer with anxiety and stress related problems. Anxiety and stress are both linked to worry and an overly busy lifestyle. When you are ill, you may have the day off to get better. Stress and anxiety are a couple of reasons why adults may have a day off work. A regular time out will not guarantee that we don't suffer from anxiety or stress but it certainly helps.

Can anyone remember any of the benefits that we gain from a regular time out?
Ask pupils to act out a benefit of a time out, other pupils guess which benefit is being acted out. You may want to suggest the ones that are acted out. In the list below, the ones that are easier to act out are in bold.

I will read the benefits again, as I read them think about each one and try to imagine it happening.

The benefits of regular silence and time outs:

- **To do more – time out can make us feel more energetic.**

- **Shutting off speech will make the other senses work better.**
- Realise and think about what is important.
- Improve memory.
- Develops your imagination.
- Increases self-awareness.
- **Grows your brain** (10 minutes sitting in silence thinking about peaceful scenery can actually thicken grey matter in your brain).
- To make sense of it all.
- Get some useful advice – think about a problem as if we were someone else looking at the problem.

Can anyone remember how we can take a time out? ***Ask pupils to act out a benefit of a time out, other pupils guess which benefit is being acted out. You may want to suggest the ones that are acted out. In the list below the ones that are easier to act out are in bold.***

I will read the list again, as I read them think about each one and try and imagine it happening.

How to take a time out:

- **Listen to yourself breathing.**
- **Listen to your heart beat.**
- Think about now, not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow, but now.
- Take a walk. *(might not always be possible)*
- Realise what you think about – think about what you think about.
- **Visualise a peaceful scene.**
- When a 'but I must… (finish my game)' thought appears, wait for it to disappear.
- If thoughts about a problem appear – tackle them.
- Think about a problem as if we were someone else looking at the problem.

Knowing what to do and how a time out can help us is important, but the only way we can benefit from a time out is by actually taking a time out. The challenge is making a time out a habit in our lives. We have revisited the benefits of a time out because like the builder who built his house on the rock, extra effort to form good habits now will make it easier to get through the times when life gets busier.

Time to reflect

- Is your physical well-being good?
- Are you content and satisfied at school?
- Do you help to improve or limit the well-being of others?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

In our community, our school and our families we know that life can be noisy, busy and sometimes stressful. Today may we be reminded of the importance of quiet times. Help us to remember the benefits of silence and help us to build these times into our busy and often noisy lives. *(Amen)*



Practise Silence

Back to themes
Back to Summer

The thoughts for this week will allow the pupils to practise being silent by taking a time out. Each day you may want to focus on a different 'how to' from the list, or you could project the list and allow the pupils to choose. For younger children do 1,2, 4 and 5 each for 30 seconds then ask the children to talk about what they just did. It is understood that this will be difficult for some pupils but it is a skill that all pupils (and adults) will benefit from. You may want to use a peaceful scene to focus on or even have the school motto visible for the pupils to think about.

How to take a time out:

1. Listen to yourself breathing.
2. Listen to your heart beat.
3. Think about now, not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow, but now.
4. Realise what you think about – think about what you think about.
5. Visualise a peaceful scene.
6. When a 'but I must… (finish my game)' thought appears, wait for it to disappear.
7. If thoughts about a problem appear – tackle them.

Time to reflect

In pairs or as a whole group discuss if pupils have practised silence since the Autumn term.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

In our community, our school and our families we know that life can be noisy, busy and sometimes stressful. Today may we be reminded of the importance of quiet times. Help us to remember the benefits of a regular time out. Help us to form good habits, building these times into our busy and often noisy lives. *(Amen)*



39.1 Memories (Leavers Service)

Preparation

BEFORE THIS ASSEMBLY

Photos:

- Place digital photographs of pupils in one folder, open the folder, and double click on the first puicture. To start a slide show double click on 'play' (the 'triangle' icon). It is important for pupils' self-esteem that photos of all pupils are included (follow the guidelines from your safeguarding policy, for example, some photos may be used within school, but not shared externally e.g. on websites etc.)

Prepare the following for year six pupils to read out at various points during the assembly:

Memories: (you may have photos to accompany particular memories such as trips and residential visits, arrange these in the correct order)

- Some pupils to write down what they can remember from their first day at school.
- Some pupils to write down a lasting memory of their time at school.
- Some pupils to write down a funny story (in no more than five sentences) that they remember from their time at school.
- Some pupils to write down a lasting memory about a staff member.

Advice:

- Some pupils to write down a piece of advice for others in your school, based on their experience.

School motto:

- Some pupils to write down how the values in the school motto will help them in the future.

Looking ahead:

- Some pupils to write down what about secondary school are they looking forward to.

Prayer

- Some pupils to write a short Prayer about leaving primary school and starting secondary school.

Whilst pupils and parents are entering, show the digital slideshow.

Welcome to our year six leavers assembly. This is a day to celebrate the achievements of our year six pupils and to remember their time at **(School name)**. Often, at times like this we say, "hasn't time flown?" I'm sure some of your parents will be thinking, 'it only seems like yesterday that I was bringing you to the reception class' and now look at you, all grown up and ready to move onto secondary school. We all have memories of our time at school. Today year six are going to tell you about some of their memories of their time at **(school name)**.

First let's go back to the first day of school. I have asked some pupils to write down what



they can remember from their first day at (**school name**). I wonder if it is the same as the memories your parents have of your first day at school.

- **Some pupils to read their memories from their first day at school (show the appropriate photos).**

School, especially thinking about primary school, will leave a lasting impression on all of us. Some of our year six will now share some of the memories that they will be taking away with them.

- **Some pupils to read their lasting memory of their time at school (show the appropriate photos).**

I'm sure that whilst at school, there were certain events that bring a smile to your face. **Share a funny story that happened during your time at school.** Our year six pupils are going to share some of the funny stories that I'm sure that they will pass onto their children, or at least share in a school hall when they are head teachers.

- **Some pupils to read their funny stories from their time at school.**

It's now time to make our staff cry. I've asked some pupils to write down some of what will be their lasting memories of the staff at (**school name**).

- **Some pupils to read their lasting memories about a range of staff members**

A lasting memory is something that makes a lasting impression on us. The theme so far of this assembly is certainly the memories that we make, but the memories and experiences of school can help us to advise others to make the most of their time at school. Some of our year six pupils are now going to produce some pearls of wisdom that they have gained from their time at (**school name**).



- **Some pupils read a piece of advice for others in the school, based on their experience.**

If the school has a motto…

Here at (**school name**), our motto is… (**school motto**). Throughout a child's time here we believe that what happens here, their experiences and what they learn, will leave a lasting impression and help them prepare for the future. I have asked some pupils to think about how the school motto has helped them prepare for their future.

- **Some pupils to read out how the values in the school motto will help them in the future.**

And now we come to thinking about moving on to secondary school. During your time at (**school name**), the staff and I have seen you all grow and grow as you have prepared for the next stage in your learning. Some of you have written down what you are most looking forward to as you move onto the secondary school.

Looking ahead:

- **Some pupils to read out what they are looking forward to about secondary school.**

As we bring this assembly to a close, I think it is an appropriate place to give a little advice to the year 6's about their time at secondary school. The advice is also important for those of us that will be returning here to **(school name)** in September. The advice is simple. If I were to give you a list of ten do's and don'ts then I'm sure you'll forget most of them, so I've reduced it to one phrase that is easy to remember. The advice is this, 'make good memories'. One day as we all look back on our time at school we will think about the bad as well as the good. Make the decision today to make good memories. Take advantage of the opportunities the secondary school has to offer. Take part in the clubs, go on the trips, ask visitors difficult questions. Try and make the most of every opportunity and you never know where it might lead, but know that you are making memories for the future. For the rest of us, 'make good memories' is a piece of advice that reminds us to make the most of whatever we are doing, where ever we are. Make the most of your school, your job, your family and your friends and I'm sure that as you try to make good memories, you will be making the most of now.

Time to reflect

- Year 6, what memories are you going to make whilst at secondary school?
- Rest of the school, what memories are you going to make with the time you have left in **(school name)**?

Reflection (Prayer)

- *Some pupils to read out their Prayers.*

Or

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for the time we have had as a community this year. We are thankful for the year 6's and what they have brought to our school. We ask that we would remember the good times and focus on those positive memories. Help the year 6 to make good memories as they move on to secondary school, may they make the most of the opportunities that are before them. May we all make good memories as we make the most of the opportunities that we have. *(Amen)*



39.2 A Lasting Journey

Preparation

The thoughts for the week this week involve pupils writing down memories and pieces of advice as they think about the past year at school.

If this set of assemblies and thoughts for the week are used each year in the last week of the summer term, pupils will create a set of memories that will build up over their life at your school.

The pupils can re-read them at this time each year and take it with them at the end of their time at primary school. Possibly get the memories professionally copied and bound, then present them to the pupils with the school logo when they move up to high school. You could even use them in your school's self-evaluation as part of 'pupil voice'.

Time to reflect

If you have done this previously, take time for pupils to read their memories from last year.

Yesterday we heard the piece of advice, make good memories. Write down one good memory you have made this year. (You could video or record pupils reading out their memories).

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for the time we have had as a community this year. We ask that we would remember the good times and focus on those positive memories. May we all make good memories as we make the most of the opportunities that we have. *(Amen)*



39.3 A Funny Story

Time to reflect

If you have done this previously, take time for pupils to read their funny stories from last year.

This week we are thinking about making good memories. Write down one funny story that happened to you or a friend this year. (You could video or record pupils reading out their memories.)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for the time we have had as a community this year. We ask that we would remember the good times and focus on those positive memories. May we all make good memories as we make the most of the opportunities that we have. *(Amen)*



39.4 The School Motto

Time to reflect

If you have done this previously, take time for pupils to read what they wrote concerning the school motto last year.

Our school motto helps us to think about the values that focus on what is important about our school. Write down how the school motto has helped you this year and how it could help you next year.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for the time we have had as a community this year. We ask that we would remember the good times and focus on those positive memories. May we all make good memories as we make the most of the opportunities that we have. *(Amen)*



Time to reflect

If you have done this previously, take time for pupils to read their advice from last year and think about whether or not they have acted upon it.

At the end of the leavers' assembly, we were given a good piece of advice. Write down one piece of advice that you will give yourself for next year.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for the time we have had as a community this year. We ask that we would remember the good times and focus on those positive memories. May we all make good memories as we make the most of the opportunities that we have. *(Amen)*



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