Simply Collective Worship

Cycle 3
(Part of a 4-year cycle)

Saints, Sayings and Seasons of Celebration

2026-27 Edition



Assemblies and thoughts for the day

For 7-11 year olds

By Phil Lord

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1.1 Greetings

How do you greet someone? Would anyone like to act out their greeting? Do you shout Hi-5 or confidently stick out your hand for a handshake or grab them and give them a big hug? Do you quietly say 'hi' and wait for them to say 'hi' back? Do you greet a stranger in the same way that you greet people that you have known for years? Do you greet a friend in the same way that you greet an adult, like a teacher? There are many ways that we greet each other and we may greet different people in different ways. Around the world there are many different types of greetings. **You may want volunteers to act out each of these greetings.**

Japan: People bow from the waist when they meet, the angle and length of each bow will change depending on who you are greeting. **(If acting this one out, make sure both people are standing far enough apart.)**

Polynesia: In countries off the east coast of New Zealand, it is common to take your friend's hand and use it to stroke your face.

Oman: In the middle east men often greet each other by pressing their noses together.

France: It is common for people to greet someone by kissing them on both cheeks.

Tibet: Tibetan monks press their hands together in front of their chest and stick their tongue out to greet people.

New Zealand: The hongi is a traditional Maori greeting. When two people meet they place their foreheads together and look each other in the eye.

Philippines: You may greet an older person



by taking one of their hands and placing it on your own forehead.

Malaysia: To show that you are greeting someone from the heart you may stretch out your hands and touch the others persons finger tips and then bring your hands back to your heart.

Thailand: People put their hands together bringing them to their chest and slightly bowing their heads.

When greeting others it is important to make them feel at ease. Understanding other people's customs is important to show them that we are respectful. All of these greetings would be 'normal' within the countries and cultures that use them, just as shaking hands is 'normal' in the UK. For people who are not used to them, they can seem strange. Understanding others is an important part of greeting them as it helps others to feel accepted. I hope that people would want to greet and show me understanding when I go to new places and join new groups.

Can you remember the first words that you said to your best friend or someone in this school that you have known for a long time? Can you remember the first words they said



to you? Can you remember the last words they said to you, possibly this morning? The words we say are an important way of welcoming new people, but what we say to them every day is just as important, if not more important.

We can often think that our words don't matter or that they can't really hurt someone else. I wonder if you have heard the saying, "sticks and stones can break your bones, but names will never hurt you." It is(was) a saying that people use(d) to suggest that name calling doesn't really matter because name calling can't hurt you physically. But words have the power to affect someone for a very long time.

The Bible likens the tongue to the bit in a horse's mouth or the rudder of a huge ship, even though they are so small they have a huge impact. Our tongue and our words are small, but the effect they can have is massive. What you say at home and in school is far more powerful than you probably think. A kind word at the right time can make someone feel so much better and a harsh word at the wrong time can lead to all sorts of trouble. Proverbs is a book in the Bible that talks a lot about the power of our words. One proverb states *'Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword, but wisely spoken words can heal'* (Proverbs 12:13 GNB). This proverb isn't even talking about the unkind words that we use, just thoughtless ones. I wonder if the writer of this proverb is writing this because he is the one who said something thoughtless or if someone has said something thoughtless to him and he feels the pain of their words. The proverb ends with a reminder that wise or caring and kind words can make things better. Another proverb that reminds us of the positive power of words states: *'Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.'* (Proverbs 16:24 NIV).

You probably know the phrase 'treat others how you yourself want to be treated', I think we could change that to 'talk to others as you would want them to talk to you'. If you have ever been hurt by the words of others, you will know just how painful it can feel. You will have hopefully experienced how positive words can be too. We will explore the advice given in the book of Proverbs about how we can use our words in the thoughts for the day this week.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever been hurt by the power of someone else's words?
- Have you ever hurt someone else by using hurtful words?
- Why does the writer of the proverb think pleasant words are like honeycomb?
- Proverbs 18:4 says 'A person's words can be a source of wisdom, deep as the ocean, fresh as a flowing stream.' (GNT) What do you think the writer is trying to say?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that pleasant words are like honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Help us to talk to others as we would want them to talk to us. May our words be wise and as fresh as a flowing stream. *(Amen)*

1.2 Kind Words

Can anyone remember the proverb that we heard yesterday about the power of our words? 'Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword, but wisely spoken words can heal' (Proverbs 12:13 GNB). Many of the proverbs contain advice about what we could do along with advice about things we shouldn't do. What is this proverb advising us to do? We should choose our words wisely as they can help to make someone feel better. What is the proverb advising us not to do? Use thoughtless words! The consequences of thoughtless words can hurt someone. Can anyone give me an example of wise or kind words? Can anyone explain why thoughtless or unkind words can 'hurt' us?

Time to reflect

There are many similar proverbs. What advice are these proverbs suggesting we do and what are they suggesting we do not do?

- *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but hard words stir up anger.* Proverbs 15:1 (NIV) Can you give advice to someone in a kind way? Can you give advice to someone in a nasty or bad way?

- *It is foolish to speak scornfully (angrily) of others. If you are smart, you will keep quiet.* Proverbs 11:12 (GNT) This proverb is talking about how we react when we are angry. Have you ever said anything when you are angry that made a situation worse?

- *Kind words bring life, but cruel words crush your spirit.* Proverbs 15:4 (GNT) What do you think 'crush your spirit' means?

- *You do yourself a favour when you are kind. If you are cruel, you only hurt yourself.* Proverbs 11:17 (GNT) A kind person is often known for being a kind person and other people will like them, a cruel person will be known for doing and saying unkind things and good people may avoid them.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that pleasant words are like honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Help us to talk to others as we would want them to talk to us. May we encourage others and show kindness with the words we speak. *(Amen)*



1.3 Gossip

This week we are thinking about the way we talk to each other. The book of proverbs has lots to say on the subject of words. The writer of proverbs warns us about the effects of a particular type of talk called 'gossip'. Does anyone know what the word 'gossip' means? Gossip is when we talk about someone else, we may exaggerate parts of a story to make it seem more exciting. We may tell a story about someone else even though it might hurt or embarrass them. We may pass on secrets that they said they didn't want anyone else to know. It is not very nice to gossip about others and it isn't very nice to be gossiped about by others. People gossip for different reasons, some of them are clearly wrong like telling lies to get someone into trouble. Many of us like being listened to. We may think that adding and exaggerating bits of a story may sometimes make an ordinary story seem more exciting. Passing on other people's secrets is a sure way of being listened to. Gossip can hurt peoples' feelings and it can break apart close friendships. Our words have the power to harm, but they also have the power to heal.

Anyone who spreads gossip is a fool. Proverbs 10:18 (GNT)

A gossip tells everything, but a true friend will keep a secret. Proverbs 11:13 (CEV)

Without wood, a fire goes out; without gossip, quarrelling stops. Proverbs 26:20 (GNT)

Time to reflect

Think of times when the following will a) help someone and b) hurt someone: (examples are given below)

1. Our words can get others into trouble.
   a) *Telling a teacher when you are being bullied.*
   b) *Saying someone had done something naughty when they haven't.*
2. Our words can make us feel better about ourselves.
   a) *Telling a friend about your achievements.*
   b) *"I am so much better at football than… because he's rubbish!"*
3. Our words can get us what we want.
   a) *Mum said I can have an ice cream when I've finished my homework. (Truth)*
   b) *Mum said I can have an ice cream when I've finished my homework. (Lie)*
4. Our words can stop others from getting what they want.
   a) *Telling your mum that dad has forgot to put the circular saw away and your baby brother is trying to get it.*
   b) *Saying that someone is rubbish at netball to keep them out of the team.*

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that pleasant words are like honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Help us to talk to others as we would want them to talk to us. May we avoid gossip and only focus on talk that builds other up. *(Amen)*



1.4 Flattery Friends

Can anyone remember the type of 'talk' that we thought about yesterday? What is gossip? The writer of Proverbs compared gossip to the wood that we use to keep a fire burning.

The writer of Proverbs also warns us about another type of talk. Flattery is when someone praises you for something but they don't really mean it, they are only doing it to get something they want. Have you heard the phrase a 'pat on the back'? The word flatterer comes from a French term that means 'to pat or smooth down'. A flatterer will give you a pat on the back because they want something in return. Imagine if you won a big bag of sweets at the school fair, and someone who you don't really know very well comes up and starts talking to you as if they are your best friend. What do you think they might be doing? One version of the Bible puts it like this: 'A flattering neighbour is up to no good; he's probably planning to take advantage of you' (Proverbs 29:5 MSG). In the parable of the Prodigal Son, when the youngest son had lots of money he had lots of friends, when he spent and lost all his money he lost all of his friends. Do you think they were real friends or flattery friends? What would a real friend do?

Time to reflect

Discuss the meaning of the following proverbs:

Friends mean well, even when they hurt you. But when an enemy puts his arm around your shoulder--watch out!
Proverbs 27.6 GNT

Those who flatter their neighbours are spreading nets for their feet.
Proverbs 29.5 NIV

- Has anyone tried to flatter you with their words?
- Have you tried to flatter others? Why?
- What is the opposite of flattery?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that pleasant words are like honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Help us to talk to others as we would want them to talk to us. May we avoid using words to take advantage of others. *(Amen)*



1.5 Feedback Or Flattery

This week we are thinking about the way we talk to each other. The book of Proverbs has lots to say on the subject of words. The writer of Proverbs warns us about the effects of a particular type of talk called flattery. Can anyone remember what flattery means?

What is the opposite of flattery? Proverb 28:33 says 'Correct someone, and afterward he will appreciate it more than flattery' (GNT). Imagine you have a friend watching you whilst you are practising a skill like reading, writing or even kicking a football. Whilst practising you make lots of mistakes, you misread words, don't use capital letters or full stops or you kick the ball at the goal, miss and trip over your own feet again and again. Once you finish you ask your friend how well they think you did. What do you think they should say? The friend may not want to hurt your feelings so they may try to flatter you by saying you did really well, but would that help you to get better? The proverb says correct someone, and afterward they will appreciate it more than flattery. Why is it important that we can be honest with our friends?

Do you like to be told that you are doing something wrong? How do you know how to do something better unless someone tells you? What could your friend do to help you to improve? Constructive feedback is a phrase that is often used when someone helps us to improve. Helpful, encouraging and useful are all synonyms of the word constructive. We can be helpful and encouraging if we use our words to help others improve. How should we tell a friend about what they need to do to get better? One proverb reminds us that kind words bring life and that cruel words can make us feel worse. We don't want to make someone feel worse by trying to help them improve.

Time to reflect

Discuss possible kind ways of delivering feedback.

- Make sure a person is ready for the feedback, you can't help someone who doesn't want to improve.
- Praise the progress your friend has already made, highlighting a skill that they have already improved.
- Focus on the skill your friend wants to improve.
- Don't use cruel and unkind words like 'rubbish'.
- Make suggestions for small next steps that are clear and achievable.

Discuss how you could give feedback in these three examples:

- Improving the writing of someone who makes lots of mistakes in their punctuation.
- Improving the reading of someone who misreads words with a 'th' sound.
- Improving kicking a ball when someone misses the ball and trips up.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that pleasant words are like honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Help us to talk to others as we would want them to talk to us. May we be able to give and receive constructive feedback. *(Amen)*



2.1 Hello and Welcome

Can anyone tell me the language of the following greetings?

Bonjour – French; **Hola** – Spanish; **Guten Tag** – German; **Ciao** – Italian; **Namaste** – Hindi; **Salaam** – Iranian (Persian); **Konnichiwa** – Japanese; **Marhaba** – Arabic; **Hujambo or Habari** – Swahili; **Ni Hau** – Mandarin; **Aloha** – Hawaiian; **Olà** – Portuguese; **Cześć** – Polish.

'Hello and welcome' is a greeting that we hear often. 'Hello and welcome' to school, 'hello and welcome' to today's assembly are just a couple of examples. Can you think of other times you have heard the phrase 'hello and welcome'? (TV game shows, arriving at a hotel or holiday villa, going into someone else's home.) The phrase 'hello and welcome' contains two greetings. 'Hello' is the first greeting and 'welcome' is the second.

Can anyone tell me the difference between these two greetings? The word 'hello' is used as a greeting so often that you may be surprised to hear that it has only been popular for the past 150 years. The word developed from similar sounding words like holla and hollo that were originally used to get someone's attention. Hello's popularity increased with the increased use of the telephone in the 1880s. Hello was the word that was suggested to be used when answering a phone call. Hello is often the first word you will say to someone when you first meet them. 'Hi', 'hi-ya', 'hi-there' are all similar greetings.

Welcome is a much older word. Definitions of the word welcome often include 'gladly received' and 'grateful'. Other welcomes might be 'it's a pleasure to see you' or 'I'm glad to meet you'. When going somewhere new, you may feel 'welcome' but you won't



feel 'hello'. Hello is a way of acknowledging someone, making someone aware that you have noticed them. A welcome is making someone feel at ease, showing them that you are glad they are there. You can say 'hello' and not make someone feel 'welcome'. 'Hello' is easy to say and doesn't require much effort. A 'welcome' requires thought, time and energy. A 'warm welcome' will make a person feel grateful that they have met you and spent time in your company.

Adapted from Cycle 1 – 35.1

There was once a boy who started at a new school. Thomas really enjoyed his old school and if it wasn't for his dad's promotion at work, Thomas and his family wouldn't have had to move. Thomas had left his friends and grandparents, uncles, aunties and cousins to live in a new town and start at a new school. He started his new school just after the October half term. Thomas' parents thought it was an old but posh looking school with arched windows, high ceilings and ivy growing wherever it could. To Thomas, the school looked cold and unwelcoming.

The teachers were welcoming and most of the pupils were kind but Thomas felt like it



was difficult to fit in. Trying to make friends with new children was hard and the work was even harder. Thomas was missing his family and friends. To make things worse winter was coming, each day was dark and dreary. His mum kept going on about looking forward to spring and how she hated the long nights and the short amount of light during the day. Thomas was increasingly arriving at school whilst it was still dark and with the grey skies, his mum's words didn't help.

Winter came and went, and the promise of summer along with Thomas having made lots of new friends made Thomas feel the warmth of being accepted into his new community. One day during the summer, Thomas arrived in front of the school entrance. The large doors, which were surrounded by the green ivy, looked open and welcoming. Thomas looked forward to his day, the challenges of the school seemed so much easier to face than it did when he started back in October.

Even if you have never changed schools, we have all experienced starting a new school. Can you remember how you felt? Were you nervous? Were you confident? Did you feel welcome or did the strange new building look cold and uninviting? The story about Thomas reminds us why it is important to say more than just 'hello'. We all have a responsibility of providing every one that comes to this school with a warm welcome. **You could explain how a warm welcome relates to your school motto/vision statement.**

Time to reflect

- How could the pupils in Thomas' new school make Thomas feel welcome?
- How could Thomas help himself feel more welcome?
- What sort of things have made you feel welcome?
  - A tour of the school before you start?
  - Starting school with friends that you have already made?
  - Being able to tell others what you like or don't like?
  - Receiving the attention of others?
- What sort of things have made you feel unwelcome?
- What can you do to make new pupils feel welcome?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for times when we are made to feel welcome. We may also know what it means to be ignored or made to feel unwelcome. Help us to 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 Thomas

On the morning of Thomas' first day at his new school he had woken up with a tightness in is belly. He didn't want to tell his dad that he was nervous, well he was in year 5. In his last school he was a lunchtime monitor and the class representative on the school council. He felt like all that was for nothing and he was starting all over again. Thomas thought that no one in his new school would care about what he did at his old school.

Thomas and his mum walked through the school gates, he looked up at the big old-fashioned door with a huge arch above it, surrounded by red brick. Entering the building, he heard his name. "Hello Thomas", said Miss Williams his new teacher, smiling, "welcome to your new school." Thomas didn't expect anyone to know his name. Miss Williams walked with Thomas to his new classroom, it was empty apart from a boy called Simon standing by the door. "Do you prefer to be called Thomas or Tom," said Simon with a smile. Miss Williams introduced Thomas to Simon and said that Simon would look after him until Thomas had settled in. Miss Williams told Thomas that if he had any questions, he could ask Simon. If Simon didn't know the answer, Miss Williams reassured Thomas that he could always ask anyone in the class including her.

It turned out that Simon had started the school last year having moved into the area after his mum got a promotion at work.

Simon asked Thomas about being lunch monitor and school council representative at his previous school. Thomas' first day at school wasn't as bad as Thomas had first imagined. He spent the day with someone who had been through what he was going through. On the whole, most people had made Thomas feel welcome.

Time to reflect

- How did Miss Williams and Simon 'welcome' Thomas?
- Was Simon able to understand how Thomas would be feeling? Why?
- How can we make other people feel welcome?
- Do we only need to make new pupils feel welcome or should we welcome everyone?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

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



2.3 Unwelcome First Impressions

Can anyone remember how Miss Williams and Simon made Thomas feel welcome on his first day at school? This morning we are going to think about some of the things we might do that make people feel unwelcome.

Only a couple of days after starting the new school, Thomas met Kirsty in the playground. Kirsty did her best to make Thomas feel unwelcome. She didn't like someone new being at school. All her friends wanted to find out about Thomas and Kirsty was jealous. Kirsty said unkind words and tried to stop her friends and other pupils from playing with Thomas.

On the same day that Thomas met Kirsty, he also came across Stephen. Miss Williams had paired Thomas and Stephen for an afternoon research task on myths and legends. Stephen decided which legend they were going to research, Stephen decided which websites they were going to use to research and Stephen decided how they were going to present their information. Thomas felt left out. Stephen wasn't trying to be horrible he even thought that he was helping Thomas. Thomas didn't like the thought of working with Stephen again.

Time to reflect

- How do you think Thomas felt after meeting Kirsty?
- Why did Stephen think he was helping Thomas settle in?
- What advice would you give Stephen and Kirsty?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

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



2.4 Familiar Welcome

This week we have been thinking about how we can make new pupils feel welcome in our school. In yesterday's examples, selfishness led to Thomas feeling unwelcome. Kirsty and Stephen didn't think about how Thomas was feeling. Kirsty wanted to be popular and Stephen wanted to create a good presentation on the theme of Myths and Legends.

Miss Williams and Simon both put in time and energy to ensure that Thomas felt welcome to the new school. Miss Williams could have spent the morning getting her classroom ready and Simon could have been outside playing with his friends, but they both gave up their time to make Thomas feel welcome. A welcome will often involve thinking about what would make the other person feel welcome. Miss Williams and Simon had found out Thomas' name. They both gave Thomas their attention, they showed Thomas that he was valued and demonstrated that he was cared for.

We may feel that a welcome is not important but for Thomas, the welcome was very important. If Thomas feels welcome he is more likely to welcome others. A warm welcome will help Thomas to enjoy school, if he enjoys school he will be more likely to do well at school and go on to do well later on in life. Who knows what affect a warm welcome can have?

Time to reflect

- How will Thomas benefit from his warm welcome? (In 1 week; 6 months; in a year?)
  - Friendships
  - Well-being
  - Learning and practising skills
  - Community
- How do we all benefit from a warm welcome? (In 1 week; 6 months; in a year?)
- How does a warm welcome relate to our school motto/vision statement/values?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for times when 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 when 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



3.1 Democracy Day

Preparation

Find and display image(s): Your MP; Local Councillor; Mayor; Chair of Governors; Student Council Representative.



The 15th September each year is the United Nations' 'International Day of Democracy'. Today we are going to explore what we mean by democracy. To do this we are going to think about the meaning of a few other words. Before we start I am going to ask you to name a few people who are involved in democracy. Do you know the name of our MP (and/or Welsh Assembly Member)? Does your town have a mayor? Do you know who your local councillor is? Who is the school's chair of governors? Can you name a student council representative?

Govern – Does anyone know what the word 'govern' means? To govern means to control and make decisions that affect the lives and actions of other people. Could anyone give me any synonyms for the word 'govern'. Lead, manage, oversee, regulate. The school governors are an example of some people who 'govern'. They are responsible for setting the overall aims of the school, they are also responsible for choosing the teachers that allow the school to run effectively. The headteacher is responsible for organising the day to day management and control of the school. The headteacher needs to make sure that the school is achieving the aims set by the governors. Can you think of other people who 'govern'? Who are they and what do they do to govern?

Government – Does anyone know what we mean by the word 'government'? A government is a group of people that have the authority to govern a town, county or whole country. The government is responsible for making laws and collecting and spending money that will affect the lives of everybody in the UK. In the UK we have 'a party' system of government. This doesn't mean that those with authority play pass the parcel and eat cake! It means that those involved in government belong to a group of people, known as a party, who have similar views on how they think the county or country should be governed. Can anyone tell me the name of a political party? Which political party is currently in government?

Politics – Politics is a word that is often used on the TV and radio and especially in the news. Politics means the activities that go along with the governance of a county or a country. A politician is a person who is often voted to be part of the governance of this country. Politics affects lots of different areas of our lives. Politics affect the cost of the fuel that goes into a car, the curriculum that is taught in schools, the amount of money parents get to help them look after their children, how old you need to be to learn to drive amongst many many others things.

Parliament – In the past, Kings and Queens, made the rules that affected the lives of everybody in the country. Today the rules or laws are made by government and voted on by parliament. In the UK the parliament is made up of three groups. The King or Queen, The 'House of Commons' (made up of 650 MPs Members of Parliament) and over 750 members of the 'House of Lords'. The King or Queen will sign their name on every act of parliament before it can become a law of the land.

Election – In the UK we vote for people that we think will be able to govern our towns, counties and country. People who want to help govern will explain to others why we should vote for them or their party. Every British and Northern Irish citizen who is over the age of 18 will then be able to vote for the people they want to govern in an election. In a general election I vote for the person or party that I want to represent me in Parliament. There are 650 members of parliament because the UK is divided up into 650 areas called constituencies. The people who live in a constituency is called a constituent. Each constituent can vote for the person they want to represent them in their constituency. The person who gets the most votes will represent their constituents and their party as a Member of Parliament. The government is the party that can get more than half the number of MP's (or seats) in the House of Commons, that is 326 or more.

Democracy – Democracy means a system of government that allows everybody to have a say about how a town, county or country is governed. Democracies may be organised in different ways in different countries. The words that we have thought about this morning help to explain how democracy is organised in the UK. Although the Politicians at the top of this system will ultimately make the decisions about what new laws are introduced, the system is designed to allow everybody to have a say in the decisions our country makes. Our MPs are our representatives in Parliament, our councillors are our representatives in local government. For a UK citizen, the UK isn't just the country you live in, it's a country you can help govern.

The UK hasn't always been democratic and there have been many changes to improve the democratic process in the UK. Changes to the law over the past 200 years have allowed more and more people to vote. In 1969 the law was changed to lower the voting age from 21 to 18 and before 1928 only certain groups of people were allowed to vote. We are going to explore the history of democracy in the UK in our thoughts for the week.

Time to reflect

- What does govern mean?
- Who makes the rules in the UK?
- Who do we go to if we want to improve…
  - our school?
  - our local communities?
  - our country?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those people in the past that have enabled more and more people to have a say in how the UK is governed. May politicians have the wisdom to make decisions in the best interest of all of those that live in the UK. Amen

3.2 Local King

Yesterday we thought about the meaning of the word democracy. Can anyone remember what the word means? We also explored how democracy in the UK is organised. Can anyone remember any words that help to explain the way democracy is organised in the UK?

In the UK today, the King is the chief representative of the country. The King is the head of state but our laws are made by the government and agreed by parliament. What do you think of when you hear the word King or Queen? For some people the term means a person with ultimate power, a person who can rule and make people obey their every command. The King is the king of the whole of the UK, but it hasn't always been that way.

My name is Egbert and I want to be the first king to rule the whole of England. It is 825AD. After the Romans left Britain, about four hundred years ago, migrants from Europe moved and spread throughout England living in different tribes. There were lots of tribes across England and leaders of these groups began calling themselves kings. Some tribes joined together and others fought over land creating bigger kingdoms. Today there are only about 5 kingdoms left covering much of England. Each kingdom is ruled by its own king. I, like my father before me, rule the Kingdom of Wessex (sometimes called West Saxons) in the south of England. There is lots of arguing and fighting between the kingdoms as the different kings want to take control of other kingdoms and rule over larger areas of land. I have just battled the king Beornwulf of the kingdom of Mercia and won, now my kingdom is the most important in England.

In the middle ages, Kings developed as leaders of small tribes that over time got bigger and bigger. During the time of Egbert, England and Britain was divided up into different kingdoms. The kings had the power to make the laws. Many were focused on raising armies from their people to protect or gain more land.

Time to reflect

- Has there always been one king or queen of England (or the UK)?
- What do you think it was like to be a king in early Medieval Britain?
- When do you think England and Wales were united with one monarch? (1284)
- When do you think England and Scotland were united with one Monarch? (1603)

Irish and British parliaments united in 1801. In 1922 Ireland became a free state, leaving the current four countries of the United Kingdom or Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those people of the past that have enabled more and more people to have a say in how the UK is governed. May politicians have the wisdom to make decisions in the best interest of all of those that live in the UK. *(Amen)*



3.3 Parliament

Yesterday we heard about what it was like to be a king of one of the kingdoms in England during the Middle ages. Why do you think there became less and less kingdoms in England and Wales? Today we are going to hear from a king that ruled over all of England and Wales. King Edward was one of the first kings to develop and organise meetings of Parliament.

I am King Edward the first. I became king of England in 1272 after the death of my father. England has a history of Nobles and Churchmen meeting to discuss matters that are important to England. I have continued and improved this practise increasing the number of people in my parliament. I ordered the election of two representatives from each county (the old kingdoms). These representatives I called Knights of the Shire. I also had two representatives from each city or town. (These are called burgesses.)

Running a country is expensive. I am building castles across North Wales and I'm at war with Scotland and France. Building projects are expensive and raising an army costs a fortune. I haven't got enough money to pay for all that I have planned. My people benefit from my rule, so my people must pay for the improvements I am making. I call a meeting of Parliament at least once a year to discuss the need to impose new taxes. My nobles collect these from those living on their lands and I use them to protect or enlarge England.

Today parliament is made up of 650 elected MP's in the House of Commons, 750 members of the House of Lords and the King or Queen. King Edward developed a parliament that brought together elected representatives from the towns and cities, knights and nobles (including leaders of the church) and himself as king.

Time to reflect

- How is King Edward I's parliament different to parliament today?
- How is King Edward I's parliament similar today?
- Did the members of King Edward's parliament represent the people or the king?
- Was King Edward's England a democracy?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those people in the past that have enabled more and more people to have a say in how the UK is governed. May politicians have the wisdom to make decisions in the best interest of all of those that live in the UK. *(Amen)*



3.4 Vote For All

Can anyone remember the groups of people that made up Edward I's parliament? This week we have been thinking about democracy in the United Kingdom. King Edward I developed a parliament that bought together himself, nobles and knights (including leaders of the church) and elected representatives from towns and cities. Two hundred years later parliament had separated into two groups, representatives of the towns and cities began to meet as the House of Commons and the leaders or the church along with the nobles formed the House of Lords.

Today every citizen of the United Kingdom over the age of 18 has the opportunity to vote for who they want to represent them in the House of Commons. (Who is your MP?) Those over 18 are also able to vote for those they want to represent them in local council elections. (Who is your local councillor?) During the time of Edward I and those early parliaments, voting was a rich man's privilege. Only men over the age of 21 that had property over a certain value were allowed to vote. In 1832 a law called 'The Great Reform Act' was passed that allowed the vote to men who were shopkeepers and men paying £10 or more in rent each year (about £9,000 in today's money). During the 19th century the law continued to be changed allowing more men to vote.

In 1918 a law called 'The Representation of the People Act' gave the vote to all men aged 21 and over and women who were 30 and over and owned property or were married to a man who owned their own property. About 2 in every 5 women were allowed to vote. The 1918 law also allowed women to become Members of Parliament for the first time. Ten years later, in 1928, a law was passed, called 'The Equal Franchise Act', that allowed all women aged 21 and over to vote. In 1969 the voting age was lowered allowing all men and women that were 18 and over to vote.

Time to reflect

- How would you feel as a man or woman that was unable to vote?
- Why is it important to be able to vote?
- What do you think the voting age should be? Why?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those people in the past that have enabled more and more people to have a say in how the UK is governed. May politicians have the wisdom to make decisions in the best interest of all of those that live in the UK. *(Amen)*



3.5 A Good Debate

Democracy means a system of government that allows everybody to have a say about how a town, county or country is governed. The words that we have thought about this week help to explain how democracy is organised in the UK. We have explored a little bit of the history of Parliament and we have also thought about when different groups of people in the UK were given the power to vote for who they wanted to represent them in the House of Commons.

Can anyone think of laws or rules that affect what we can and can't do? Many of the decisions that affect how we live, like the age at which we start and finish school, the speed limit on our roads, when and how often our rubbish and recycling is collected, begin with councillors or MPs debating the issue. What is a debate? A debate is when people discuss their opinions. MPs may agree or disagree with a possibility of a change to the law and a debate will allow them to have their say. At the end of the debate, MPs will vote. If there are more votes for than against, then the new rule becomes law.

Although the Politicians at the top of this system will ultimately make the decisions about what new laws are introduced, the system is designed to allow everybody to have a say in the decisions our country makes. MPs are our representatives in Parliament and councillors are our representatives in local government. We can vote for the MPs or councillors that share our opinion on things like climate change or health care. We can also write to our MP or councillors to ask them to share our opinions in their debates. For a UK citizen, the UK isn't just the country we live in, it's a country we can help govern.

Time to reflect

- What have you learned about democracy this week?
- What laws would you like to introduce?
- How would you convince others to vote for you?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those people in the past that have enabled more and more people to have a say in how the UK is governed. May politicians have the wisdom to make decisions in the best interest of all of those that live in the UK. *(Amen)*



4.1 Gideon

This week we are going to be thinking about courage. One definition of the word courage is the ability to do something that you are frightened of. What other words could you use to describe courage? The word 'bravery' is often thought of when describing the term courage. You could say, to have courage means to be brave. The example of bravery in many films or cartoons is often strong people who have no fear. But it takes courage to do things that we are scared of. Courage and bravery are important qualities 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 courage at some point in our lives.

This week we are going to hear the Bible story of a man called Gideon that some believe may have taken place over three thousand years ago. He is a young man that overcame his fears to save his community from the attacks of a neighbouring country.



Hi my name is Gideon. Long before I was born, my people had left Egypt and settled in a new country, they called it Israel. I have lived in Israel all my life, in a small village called Ophrah, with my dad Joash. We used to have all we could ever need. We had crops, cattle, goats and donkeys. Before my people entered this land, God promised that if we obeyed his commandments, he would protect us. Some of the Israelites started ignoring the commandments, they were actually doing what God had told us not to do. I knew it would only lead to trouble. Midianites, from the country of Midian, just east of us, started to attack us. I can remember the day they came, thousands of them came on their camels. The dust as they rode towards us looked like a cloud of locusts. They took our animals and destroyed our crops. There was nothing we could do, we were helpless.

That was several years ago now. The Midianites have continued to attack us ever since. We have been hiding wheat and any other food we find. Last week I was in the winepress preparing flour. Why were you in a winepress preparing flour you ask? Well the winepress is a great place to hide from the Midianites. A winepress is a big hole in the ground that we would normally fill with grapes, we haven't made wine for years. If the Midianites knew I was preparing flour they'd have me!

I wasn't in the winepress long when I heard someone say "The Lord is with you, brave and mighty man!" I turned around to see who'd said it. A man I'd never seen before was standing there. I looked around to see if he was talking to someone else, but there was only me hiding in the winepress. I turned to him and asked him to explain why the Lord had abandoned us and left us



to the Midianites. He ignored my question and said, "Go with all your great strength and rescue Israel from the Midianites." I wasn't ready for that! You see, I'm Gideon, my friends like to remind me that I'm the least important member of my family and my family are the least important in our community. So, I said to him, "How can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least important member of my family."

The man said, "You can do it because the Lord will help you! You will defeat the Midianites as easily as if you were only one man."

I asked the man to stay while I prepared some food. I went to my house and prepared some meat and bread. When I came back out the man told me to place the bread and meat on a rock. He told me to pour some broth (a bit like gravy) over the meat and bread. Then he reached out and touched the meat and bread with the end of a stick he was holding. Fire flashed out of the rock and burned up the meat and bread. Then the man just disappeared. I nearly fell over backwards, I wasn't expecting that. I realised that it wasn't just an ordinary man I had been speaking to, it was an Angel from God. The whole thing had been like a story from the old times. I'm still not sure that he's got the right man as I said before, I'm the weakest member of my family and my family is the weakest in my community.

Does anyone know what the word 'reassurance' means? Reassurance is to remove someone else's doubts or fears. Not only was Gideon the least important member of his family which was the least important family in his community, but he used it as an excuse when the Angel met him. The Angel 'reassured' Gideon by saying Gideon would be able to free his country because the Lord would help him.

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'. It is good to have people around us that can help us. 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, to remind them to show courage.

Time to reflect

- Why was Gideon hiding in a winepress? How do you think he felt?
- What does reassurance mean?
- What do you need reassurance for?
- How can you reassure others?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We think of the times when we need a little bit of courage. Courage to be a good friend, courage to experience new and exciting activities and courage to do what we know is right. We are thankful for those around us that reassure us when we lack courage. May we in turn reassure those around us when they require courage. *(Amen)*

4.2 What Might the Neighbours Say?

Can anyone remember the words that we thought about yesterday. Courage, bravery and reassurance. Can anyone remember why Gideon needed reassurance? Gideon said that he was the weakest member of his family, and his family was the weakest in his community. God had asked him to save his people from the Midianites that had been attacking his country for around seven years.

Hi there, it's me Gideon again. Before I was born, God had given Moses and the Israelites lots of rules, some of them were about how we were to worship God. We had stopped obeying the rules and everybody started doing whatever they wanted. God said that I needed to rebuild an altar in the town, an altar is where we offer things to God. My dad had built an altar to Baal, a god that the Midianites worshiped. God said that I needed to tear it down and use the wood to create this new altar.

I did it, but I was so scared of what the people would say or do that I did it at night so that no one could see me. The next morning, the people of our town wanted to punish me for tearing down the altar to Baal. My dad, who built the altar in the first place, came to my defence. He reminded the people of the punishment for not obeying God's commands.

Gideon started by obeying the rules that God had given Moses many years earlier, but even then he was scared of what people would say. He made the altar to God in the cover of darkness so that no one would see him. Sometimes we need the courage to simply overcome what other people may think. To be a good friend, to experience a new activity or to do what we know is right may require the courage to simply overcome what we think others might say.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever stopped doing something because you were scared what others may think or say?
- Have you stopped others from doing the right thing?
- How can you overcome the worry of what other people think?
- When can 'what other people think' be beneficial?
- When can 'what other people think' stop you from doing the right thing?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We think of the times when we need a little bit of courage. Courage to be a good friend, courage to experience new and exciting activities and courage to do what we know is right. We are thankful for those around us that reassure us when we lack courage. May we in turn reassure those around us when they require courage. *(Amen)*



4.3 Laying a Fleece

Yesterday we thought about overcoming what we think others may do or say that stop us from doing the right thing. Gideon was worried about what other people would say, so he re-built the altar to God during the cover of darkness. Gideon will end up doing something really brave, but as we are going to find out, he still needs a lot of reassurance.

Not long after I re-built God's altar, the Midianite army camped outside my town. Feeling brave, I blew a trumpet to call all the men of my community together, I also sent a message to the men of other towns in Israel to come and help. But then I started to question what I had done. Was I really the right man for the job? I wanted reassurance that God would help me like he said he would. I told God that I was going to put woollen fleece on the ground. If in the morning the woollen fleece was wet with dew, but the ground around it was dry, then I would know I was the one God was going to use to rescue Israel. The next day when I went to check, the wool was wet with dew and the ground around it was dry. I was able to fill a bowl with the amount of water that was in that fleece.

Well you'd thought I'd get the message by now. A rock burning up some meat and bread. A woollen fleece wet with dew when the ground around it was dry. But I'm Gideon, the weakest member of my family, from the weakest family in my community. This time I told God that I was going to lay the fleece on the ground again. I asked him to let the wool be dry but make the ground around it wet with dew. The next morning the wool was dry, but the ground was wet.

The phrase, laying a fleece, is still used today to describe when someone needs a bit more reassurance. God has asked Gideon to save his people from the Midianites. Gideon started today's account by feeling brave, blowing a trumpet and calling for help from the men in other cities in Israel. But he soon lost his courage and he had to ask for reassurance not once, but twice.

Time to reflect

- Is there a time when you felt brave, but then lost your confidence?
- Did someone reassure you?
- What things do you need lots of reassurance for?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We think of the times when we need a little bit of courage. Courage to be a good friend, courage to experience new and exciting activities and courage to do what we know is right. We are thankful for those around us that reassure us when we lack courage. May we in turn reassure those around us when they require courage. *(Amen)*



4.4 Gideon's 300

Can anyone remember the meaning of the phrase 'laying a fleece' and where it came from? Today, we are going to hear how a reassured Gideon built up his army.

My trumpet call and the messages to the other towns had worked. Thirty-two thousand men came from all over Israel to help us fight the Midianites. We couldn't lose with all these men I thought. God disagreed, he said we had too many men. Too many men, you can't have too many men! God said that I should tell them that anyone who was scared and afraid could return back to their homes. Twenty-two thousand of them turned and went home. That left me with ten thousand men. I can honestly say that I was disappointed that all those men had gone, but at least we were left with ten thousand brave warriors. God again said that there were too many of us. He told me to take the men down to the edge of a river. I had to watch the men drinking, those that drank straight from the river lapping the water up like a dog could go home, whilst those that drank by lifting water with their hand would fight the Midianites. Guess how many of the men drank by lapping up the water like a dog? Seven thousand, three hundred! Only three hundred used their hands.

I'd gone from thirty-two thousand men to three hundred in the space of an afternoon, but it had been an odd week. First an Angel burnt some meat and bread. God called me a brave and mighty man and told me I was going to save my people from the Midianites. Then he asked me to build an altar in Ophrah, my hometown. Then there is the little episode with the woollen fleeces. After all that had happened, I was feeling more confident.

Gideon's going to need the reassurance from the events that have happened to complete the difficult task he is about to face. We will find out how the story ends tomorrow.

Time to reflect

- Can you think of a time where your confidence has grown?
- Is there something that you are good at now that you were scared of doing in the past?
- How did people reassure you?
- Have you been able to reassure others?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We think of the times when we need a little bit of courage. Courage to be a good friend, courage to experience new and exciting activities and courage to do what we know is right. We are thankful for those around us that reassure us when we lack courage. May we in turn reassure those around us when they require courage. *(Amen)*



4.5 The Trumpet Call

How many men did Gideon have to fight off the Midian army? How did Gideon's recent events reassure him to feel more confident? Today we are going to hear how the story ends.

In only a few days I'd gained thirty-two thousand men and then lost thirty-one thousand, seven hundred. That night God said that I should go and sneak into the Midianite army camp, he said that I would be strengthened. I'm not sure what that meant. Strengthened? Killed more like! He said that if I was afraid I could take Purah, my servant. Very slowly and very quietly, Purah and I made our way into the huge camp. There was no one around, but we could hear men talking in their tents. I listened as one soldier told his companion about a strange dream he'd had. He went on to describe a large loaf of barley bread rolling through the camp and knocking down a tent. His companion then said my name, he said that with a brave and mighty warrior like Gideon he wouldn't be surprised if the Israelite army would win. Well I couldn't believe it; how did the Midianite army know my name? They think I'm a mighty warrior. We went back to the camp and I certainly felt strengthened, I felt very confident indeed.

I organised the three hundred men into three groups and I gave each man a trumpet, a pitcher (large jug) and a flaming torch. I told the men to hide the torch inside the pitcher and sent them to surround the Midianite camp. At the sound of my trumpet all three hundred broke their pitchers, they held their flaming torches high in the air and blasted their trumpets as loud as they could. They then shouted 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!' You'll not believe what happened next. The whole army started panicking. They came out of their tents half dressed, running into each other and tripping over tents. It is as if the whole army had lost its confidence, the men ran back in the direction of their homes. We'd won, we had defeated the Midianites.

Not long-ago Gideon had been hiding in a winepress, (a hole in the ground) and now he'd just defeated a whole army with just three hundred men. He was surrounded by the confidence of his three hundred men and the knowledge that even the Midianite army had thought he was mighty and brave.

Time to reflect

- How do you think Gideon felt when he heard the Midian soldier describing him as brave and mighty?
- How do you feel when other people think you are good at something?
- Does it help you to feel more confident?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We think of the times when we need a little bit of courage. Courage to be a good friend, courage to experience new and exciting activities and courage to do what we know is right. We are thankful for those around us that reassure us when we lack courage. May we in turn reassure those around us when they require courage. *(Amen)*



5.1 Francis of Assisi

When I say the word 'saint', what does it make you think of? You may hear the phrase, 'you're a little saint' if you have been especially good. The term 'saint' is often used for a person who is recognised by the Christian church as being important because of the good life he or she lived.

This week we are going to explore the life of Saint Francis of Assisi. Saint Francis is the patron saint of the environment and animals. A patron saint is a person regarded as the special guardian of a group of people, or in the case of Saint Francis, animals as well. Saint Francis was born in 1182. Can anyone guess the name of the town where he was born? Assisi is a town in Italy. When he was born, and whilst his dad was on a business trip, his mum named him Giovanni Francesco Bernardone. Giovanni is an Italian form of John; his mum had named him after St John the Baptist. On his father's return, Pietro, Giovanni's father, was angry that his son was named after a man of God. Pietro wanted Giovanni to follow in his footsteps as a rich cloth seller, so he called his son Francis.

As Francis grew up, he lived the life of a rich, carefree young man. He wore expensive clothes and organised big parties. In 1202, when Francis was about 19 years old, he went into battle against the nearby city of Perugia. Francis was captured and lived as a prisoner for a year until his dad was able to pay a ransom for his release. Francis came back to Assisi and carried on living the life he had left a year earlier. Francis wanted to become a knight, he bought the finest armour and decided to join an army fighting in the East. Less than a day's ride from Assisi, Francis had a strange dream. He dreamt that God was telling him to return home. He



returned to Assisi, but people mocked him and his father was furious.

Francis returned to the family business, he would spend more and more time in prayer, much to the annoyance of his dad. Whilst praying in an old and ruined church close to his home, Francis had another dream. He dreamt that an icon in the church, an image of Jesus, began talking to him. Jesus told Francis to repair the Church. Thinking that God had commanded him to fix this local church, Francis sold cloth from his father's business and gave the money to the church. His dad, accused Francis of stealing in front of the towns officials and demanded that Francis pay back all that he had stolen. Francis paid back the money and took off the fine clothes that his father had given him. Wearing only a shirt made of animal hair, Francis told everyone that now only God was his father.

Francis started to beg for stones so that he could rebuild with his own hands the church in which he had had in his dream. Francis lived in the open, ate food that other people gave him or had thrown away and obeyed what he felt God was asking him to do. Even though Francis had lost everything, he was truly happy. He began sharing his

happiness with others, explaining how God had changed him. As people began to see the change in Francis' life they began wanting to follow his way of life. Francis didn't want people to follow him but more and more people were choosing his way of life. In 1209, Francis, dressed in his rags, approached the Pope to ask him if he would allow the start of a new Catholic Order. A Catholic Order is when a society of Monks, Nuns or Friars make promises or vows to live and act in a certain way. The first time the Pope saw Francis in his rags, he threw him out. The Pope had a dream involving Francis and asked to speak with him the following day. The Pope agreed to start the 'Franciscan Order'.

The Franciscan Order continues today and is the largest religious order in the Roman Catholic Church. 'Franciscan Brothers' continue to live and work in the same way they have done for hundreds of years. Vowing to live in poverty and to be an example to others. Franciscan Brothers are often called 'a Friar'. A Friar is similar to a Christian Monk, but instead of living in a monastery, a Friar will live and work in and amongst a 'normal' society. Friar Tuck from the legends of Robin Hood is a jolly Franciscan Friar.

In the last few years of his life Francis became ill and mostly blind. He died on the 4th October 1226 at the age of 45. Two years later the Pope made Francis a Saint. Saint Francis is the patron saint of the environment and animals. There are many stories that express his love of nature, some of which we will explore in our thoughts for the day this week. Many churches have a special time during their Sunday service nearest to 4th October to remember Saint Francis. This is called Saint Francis' feast day. Pets are often welcomed and blessed during this service.

Time to reflect

- Have you heard of Saint Francis?
- Why is he still remembered today?
- What can people learn from the life and example of Saint Francis?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the example of people who live out what they believe. Saint Francis was a good example of peace in his time. He lived out a life to bring the peace of heaven to earth. May we live lives that bring a lasting peace into our friendships, our communities and our world. *(Amen)*

5.2 Saint Francis and the Birds

Can anyone summarise the life of Saint Francis in five sentences or less? Saint Francis is remembered for his love of nature as much as his love for other people. Not only did Saint Francis share his message of good news to people, but he also shared it with birds.

One day Francis and some of his companions were out walking. Whilst they were walking a huge flock of birds of all kinds gathered around them sitting in trees by the road. Francis told his companions that he was going to preach to the birds calling the birds 'his sisters'. Francis stood in a field and began talking to the birds, the birds flocked to him landing all around as he spoke. Francis' companions wrote down what they saw that day. They wrote that the birds listened intently to everything Francis had to say, they opened their beaks, they stretched their necks and they spread their wings, bending their heads towards the earth.

"My sweet little sisters" Francis said to the birds, "you should be thankful that God has created you free to fly where ever you want. You don't sew but God clothes you and your offspring. Two of all your species he sent into the ark with Noah that you might not be lost to the world. God feeds you even though you don't reap or sow. He has given you fountains and rivers to quench your thirst, mountains and valleys in which to take refuge and trees in which to build your nests. God loves you so much that he gave you all this. Beware, my little sisters, make sure that you are grateful and sing your praises to God."

Time to reflect

- What does the story tell us about how he viewed the natural world?
- **Show the suggested Image: 'St Francis and the Birds (1935) Sir Stanley Spencer' and discuss the following questions:**
- Which part of the story has the artist painted?
- What do you think happened *just* before this picture?
- What do you think will happen *just* after?
- Can you describe what is going on in the painting?
- What colours has the artist used?
- Is this how you imagined the scene?
- What's happening in the background?
- What is the best part of the painting?
- How does it make you feel?
- Sum up the painting in one, two or three words.
- If you could ask the painter one question (about the painting) what would it be?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the example of people who live out what they believe. Saint Francis was a good example of peace in his time. He lived out a life to bring the peace of heaven to earth. May we live lives that bring a lasting peace into our friendships, our communities and our world. *(Amen)*



5.3 Saint Francis and the Wolf

Can anyone recount the story of Saint Francis and the birds. What does the story tell us about how he viewed the natural world? This morning we are going to hear the story of how Saint Francis tamed a fierce wolf.

Saint Francis moved to live in the city of Gubbio. Whilst living there a large wolf was spotted outside the town walls. The wolf was large and fierce. It began killing and eating the town's livestock. It wasn't long until the whole town was in uproar, men determined to hunt and kill the wolf were themselves killed by the fierce creature. The townsfolk went about their business dressed as if they were at war. They would not venture further than the town's walls through fear of the wolf.

Saint Francis felt sorry for the people of Gubbio, so he decided to go and meet the wolf. Putting his confidence in God, Francis left the safety of the town walls and went to the wolf. The townsfolk, carrying swords and wearing their armour watched Saint Francis and the wolf from a distance. The wolf saw the townsfolk and Saint Francis and charged at Saint Francis with his mouth open. Saint Francis made the sign of the cross and cried out to the wolf "come here, brother wolf, I command you in the name of Christ, neither to harm me nor anyone else." To the townsfolk's amazement, the wolf closed his jaws, stopped running and lay at Saint Francis' feet. "Brother wolf, you have done terrible things to the people of this town, killing and destroying creatures of God without his permission. You have not only killed animals but men, made in the image of God for which you should be killed like a murderer. The people of this town cry out against you as enemies. But I will make peace between them and you. If you no longer harm the people and animals of this town, they will forgive you of all that you have done." To show Saint Francis that he understood and agreed with what Saint Francis said, the wolf placed its paw in Saint Francis' hand.

Time to reflect (Class activity)

- What does the story tell us about how he viewed the natural world?
- Was Saint Francis brave?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the example of people who live out what they believe. Saint Francis was a good example of peace in his time. He lived out a life to bring the peace of heaven to earth. May we live lives that bring a lasting peace into our friendships, our communities and our world. *(Amen)*



5.4 Saint Francis and Actions

Our actions can tell us a lot about what we believe. If we think that we are a kind person, then we should be able to see it in our actions. What do the stories about Saint Francis, the birds and the wolf tell us about how he viewed the natural world? Saint Francis acted on more instructions from the Bible than many of the Christians that lived around him. The Gospel is another name for the teachings of Jesus Christ. Francis famously said "Preach or tell the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words". 'When necessary use words', what do you think that means? Saint Francis knew that we can tell a lot about a person from the way they act, not from what they say.

We can often tell other people to improve the way they act without thinking about our own actions. Jesus tells his followers that they shouldn't judge others, but if they do try to help someone else improve, they should think about their own actions and motives first. Jesus uses an extreme example: *"Why do you notice the little piece of dust in your friend's eye, but you don't notice the big piece of wood in your own eye? How can you say to your friend, 'Let me take that little piece of dust out of your eye'? Look at yourself! You still have that big piece of wood in your own eye. You hypocrite! First, take the wood out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the dust out of your friend's eye." (Matthew 7:3-5 NLT.)* Jesus taught his followers to think about their own actions before trying to improve the actions in others. Tomorrow we are going to hear an Aesop fable with a similar moral.

Time to reflect

- What do your actions say about you?
- What does living by example mean?
- When advising others, is it better to tell someone or show someone?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the example of people who live out what they believe. Saint Francis was a good example of peace in his time. He lived out a life to bring the peace of heaven to earth. May we live lives that bring a lasting peace into our friendships, our communities and our world. *(Amen)*



5.5 Two Crabs

Can anyone remember what we discussed yesterday about our actions? Saint Francis knew that we can tell a lot about a person from the way they act, not from what they say. Can anyone remember the 'mini parable' that Jesus told to help explain why his followers should be careful when wanting to try and improve the actions of other people? Jesus warned his followers to check their own actions and motives before wanting to change the actions of others.

There is an Aesop's fable that has a similar moral.

One fine day two Crabs came out from their home to take a stroll on the sand. "Child," said the mother, "you are walking ungracefully. You should accustom yourself to walking straight forward without twisting from side to side."

"Pray, mother," said the young one, "do but set the example yourself, and I will follow you."

Time to reflect

- Why wasn't the mother crab a good example to her son?
- Could she walk forward?
- Was it right for the mother crab to expect her son to be able to walk forward?

Saint Francis didn't want people to follow him, but people could see the happiness he had from living a simple Christian life that accepted the natural world around him. Saint Francis was a man who acted on what he believed. He didn't need to tell people how he thought they should act, he lived it out himself. The Franciscan Order began because people wanted to copy the actions of Saint Francis, they wanted to benefit from the same peace and happiness that Saint Francis had. The Franciscan Order is the largest Roman Catholic Order, an example that people still want to follow Saint Francis today.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the example of people who live out what they believe. Saint Francis was a good example of peace in his time. He lived out a life to bring the peace of heaven to earth. May we live lives that bring a lasting peace into our friendships, our communities and our world. *(Amen)*



6.1 Hannah the Harvest Mouse

Preparation

Show or project an image of a Harvest Mouse in a field of wheat.



This week we will be thinking about the process needed to prepare, sow and harvest wheat, but first, we will hear a short story about the smallest of all mice, the harvest mouse. The harvest mouse is the tiniest of all mice, just 5 to 7 centimetres long and weighing up to just 8 grams, less than a 2 pence coin. The harvest mouse has a blunt nose, short rounded hairy ears and golden-brown fur. The tail has no fur on it and is nearly as long as its body. The harvest mouse winds its tail around the wheat stalks, helping it to quickly climb the tall stems to find the seeds at the top.

Hannah, the Harvest Mouse and Farmer Goody

Once upon a time there was a teeny tiny harvest mouse called Hannah. Hannah lived in a wheat field amongst the long hollow stalks with their thin leaves. The weather had been good and the wheat had grown long and tall with lots of nice seeds at the top of the stalks. Hannah the harvest mouse would climb the tall stalks to get to the seeds at the top. Hannah enjoyed eating the seeds, but even more, she liked collecting seeds for other mice in the field and gave some seeds away especially to other female harvest mice with small babies.

Farmer Goody would regularly check his wheat field, bending down to say hello to Hannah, the teeny tiny harvest mouse. Farmer Goody liked Hannah because she was small and cute and so very kind. The harvest mice only needed a few seeds to eat and the amount of seeds the harvest mice ate didn't affect the farmers harvest at all. Blackflies, aphids and insects also liked to feed on the wheat, damaging it, which displeased farmer Goody. The harvest mice helped to protect the wheat by eating the insects and flies, which farmer Goody appreciated.

Hannah the teeny tiny harvest mouse was due to have babies herself. Hannah became busy building the family nest. Hannah's nest was the size of a tennis ball. She collected leaves and split them lengthways, weaving the thin strips with her front paws to make the outside of the nest. She chewed up some dead leaves and put them inside. After two busy days the nest was complete. She went collecting seeds to store for when she would be ready to give birth to her babies. Flocks of crows kept coming and eating the wheat and pinching Hannah's store of seeds. One morning farmer Goody came by to say hello to Hannah. Hannah said to Farmer Goody, "look, the birds are eating the wheat in my seed store, I need my store because I am soon to have my babies".



Farmer Goody felt sorry for Hannah. Farmer Goody said "I know, I'll scare the birds away" and started running around, flapping his arms and shouting "shoo, shoo, shoo." Hannah thought that farmer Goody looked very funny. Hannah the harvest mouse laughed so much she nearly fell out of her nest. The birds flew away. Farmer Goody burst out with laughter too. "That was fun" he said. Next time farmer Goody came by he brought a scarecrow and put it near Hannah's nest. He also gave Hannah a teeny tiny cap gun, with a very loud 'bang' for Hannah to scare any birds that came near.

That was just a tiny story about a tiny mouse with a big heart. There are many species of mice. The harvest mouse, the tiniest of all mice, doesn't always live in a wheat field, they can be found in hedgerows, reed beds and meadows. The harvest mouse got its name in the 18th century because it was mostly seen when the fields of crops were harvested and the mice were scurrying about.

During the month of September the wheat in the fields will ripen, ready to be harvested. When the weather has been good long enough for the wheat to be dry, and often when the moon is high and bright in the sky, the farmer will harvest the wheat and crops like barley and rye from the fields. The harvest moon is a bright full moon that appears in September or October. The name 'harvest moon' comes from a time before electric lights and tractors when farmers and the towns folk would work long into the evening harvesting their grains in the light given by the full moon.

The noun 'Harvest' refers to the time when farmers gather in wheat, barley and rye. The verb 'Harvest' is the act of gathering in the crops. Many cultures celebrate the successful collection of the harvest, demonstrating their thankfulness with singing, dancing, praying and presenting the collected food. In the UK, traditional harvest festivals involve decorating churches with baskets of bread, fruit, vegetables and tinned food. Church services remind people of the importance of the seasons, the rain and the sunshine which make it possible for the grains to be grown. People show their thankfulness by sharing food with others who may not have enough to eat. After the Harvest Festival church service, the food that has been put on display is usually given to people in need to show care and concern.

Time to reflect

- Which is the smallest of all mice?
- Should we be thankful for the sun, rain and seasons? Why?
- Why do you think people are thankful for food?
- How can you show someone care and concern?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for those involved in planting, growing and harvesting our food. Help us appreciate where our food comes from and the effort it takes to go from field to fork. May we remember those who don't have enough food so that we can do what we can to help those who are hungry. *(Amen)*

6.2 Plough, Sow and Harvest

Yesterday we heard about Hannah the Harvest Mouse. This morning we are going to think about the process farmers go through to prepare for a wheat harvest. There is a hymn that is sung in many church Harvest Festival services that start with the words:

'We plough the fields and scatter, the good seed on the land.
And it is fed and watered by Gods almighty hand'.

Ploughing is where it all starts. The way a farmer ploughs a field has changed over the last hundred years in the UK. What was once done by horses, or in some countries by oxen, is now done by a tractor. A plough is a machine that has large curved blades that dig deep into hard mud, turning over the earth. It breaks the hard earth loosening it into soft soil ready for the seeds to be planted. The farmer will often plough in straight lines, creating furrows or trenches in which the seeds will be planted.

Next the farmer plants the wheat seeds. What was once done by hand is now done by a machine called a seed drill attached to a tractor. The seed drill sows the seeds into the ground, deep enough so that they can't be eaten by birds. With the warmth of the sun, water from the rain and nourishment from the farmer the seeds grow. The wheat will grow about 60 cm tall and will turn from green into a light brown straw colour. At the top of each stalk is what is called an 'ear' which can hold up to 50 grains of wheat.

Now the wheat is ready to be harvested. Harvesting would once have been done by hand with lots of people cutting the stalks and collecting the wheat ready for making it into flour. Today farmers will use a combine harvester. The combine harvester will have rotating blades, wheels, sieves and elevators which cut the stalks a few inches from the ground. It will separate the grain and pour it into a cart pulled by a tractor. The stalks go back onto the field, ready for collecting later to be made into straw bales. The straw can be used as bedding for horses and other animals. The grains of wheat are taken to be ground into flour and enough grains are kept by the farmer to plant as seeds for the next field of wheat. Whew! It's a long process.

Time to reflect

- What will you eat that contains wheat? (breakfast cereals, bread, pasta)
- What 'processes' did the farmer go through? (Ploughing, planning and harvesting)
- Think about the amount of time and energy a farmer uses to grow wheat.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for those involved in planting, growing and harvesting our food. Help us appreciate where our food comes from and the effort it takes to go from field to fork. May we remember those who don't have enough food so that we can do what we can to help those who are hungry. *(Amen)*



6.3 Plough, Sow and Harvest (By Hand)

Preparation

You may want to show the different gardening tools on a computer screen… Gardening fork, spade (not a shovel), gardening rake.

Yesterday we heard about how a farmer ploughs, plants and harvests wheat. Today we are going to hear from a person who grows her own wheat and turns it into flour.

Jane

'Hello, I'm Jane and I have a large garden in which I enjoy growing wheat. First, I dig the earth over with a gardening fork and spade to loosen the soil. I then move a gardening rake back and forward over the soil until it is fine. I then sort of bounce the rake up and down on the earth. It makes a lot of little holes. I throw the seed over the soil. A lot of the seeds fall into the holes I made with the rake. Using the back of the rake, I gently spread some soil over the holes to cover the seeds. I then water it. I continue to water them and after a week or two the seeds grow into green shoots. After 7 or 8 months, after a lot of watering and sunshine, the shoots will have grown into long stalks with ripe ears that turn from green to a light brown straw colour. Ears are the part of the plant that contains the wheat grains. I then use a scythe to cut down the wheat stalks. A scythe is a long, curved blade on the end of a long wooden handle. I collect the wheat into bundles and tie a length of stalk around each bundle making it into a sheaf. But I haven't finished yet.

We will hear what Jane does after she collects the sheaves together tomorrow. The tools may have changed but communities all over the world have been ploughing, sowing and harvesting crops for thousands of years. Harvest festivals are common around the world and they go back thousands of years too. Rules for a Jewish harvest festival called Sukkot were written down over three thousand years ago in the Jewish holy book called the Tenakh.

Time to reflect

- If people plough, sow and reap the harvest, what should we be thankful for?
  - That people are prepared to work hard to grow our food.
  - That the weather has been kind enough to enable the food to grow.
  - That the harvest has been successful and hasn't been ruined by war, pests, floods etc…
  - That we have/or others have the health to plough, sow and harvest the crops.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for those involved in planting, growing and harvesting our food. Help us appreciate where our food comes from and the effort it takes to go from field to fork. May we remember those who don't have enough food so that we can do what we can to help those who are hungry. *(Amen)*



6.4 Threshing and Winnowing

Can anyone remember the process Jane used yesterday to grow her wheat? This morning we are going to hear about how she is able to benefit from the wheat grains.

When I have collected all the wheat sheaves, I then thresh the wheat. Threshing involves hitting the sheaves on the ground so that the grains fall off the stalks. The grains fall off the stalks but so does the case that used to cover the grain called the husk. I collect all the grains and the husks together and then separate the wheat grains from the husk, or what we often call the 'chaff'. I do this with a process that is called winnowing. When it's windy, I gently pour the wheat into a bucket. The grains of wheat are heavier than the chaff so the grains fall into the bucket while the chaff blows away in the wind. If it isn't windy I can use an electric fan. Some people throw the wheat into the air so that the wind blows the chaff away and the grains fall back to the ground.

The grains can be ground between large stones to make flour. I have a grinding machine in which I put grains in and flour comes out. One tiny seed of wheat can grow many grains, up to 50 grains on each ear. I enjoy making delicious bread, cakes and scones from the wheat I have grown.

Threshing and winnowing have taken place for thousands of years. Before modern farming machinery it used to take a lot of people to plant fields of seeds, to harvest, thresh and winnow the grain. Whole communities would join in the planting, cutting, threshing and winnowing of the wheat.

Time to reflect

- Are you involved in planting, growing or collecting a harvest?
- Do you think you would have been involved 100 years ago?
- Would someone who is involved in planting, growing or collecting the harvest appreciate the grains more than someone who isn't involved in the process?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for those involved in planting, growing and harvesting our food. Help us appreciate where our food comes from and the effort it takes to go from field to fork. May we remember those who don't have enough food so that we can do what we can to help those who are hungry. *(Amen)*



6.5 You Reap What You Sow

Whether you're a farmer with a large tractor, seed drill and combine harvester or a gardener that grows your own wheat by hand, the process of preparation, sowing, growing and reaping is the same. Both prepare the ground before the seed is sown. Both sow the seed and watch it grow before benefiting from the harvest. There are many different types of crops, can you think of any? (Wheat, corn, rye and barley to name but a few.) If a farmer sows wheat grains what crop will they grow? If a farmer sows corn what will they grow?

The word 'reap' is a similar word to the verb harvesting. Have you heard the saying, 'you reap what you sow'? What do you think it means? You get out what you put in or in other words, something that you do now will affect what happens in the future. We have been thinking about sowing and reaping grains, but can we apply what we have thought about sowing and reaping in our actions at school? If we sow kindness into our friendships it is very likely that we will have better friendships. If we sow effort into a project at schools it is very likely that we will produce a better project. If we sow practise into a sport that we play, we will become better at that sport.

Time to reflect

- What would you need to sow to do well at…
  - a school project?
  - playing an instrument?
  - writing a story?
  - playing a sport?
  - being a good friend?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are grateful for those involved in planting, growing and harvesting our food. Help us appreciate where our food comes from and the effort it takes to go from field to fork. May we remember those who don't have enough food so that we can do what we can to help those who are hungry. Help us also to remember that what we sow now we will reap in the future. *(Amen)*



7.1 Sukkot

Can anyone give me the names of some harvest festivals?

- There is the 'Hoot at Hunger' festival from Central Africa, where people hoot to remind themselves that they won't go hungry this year.
- Thanksgiving in the USA is on the fourth Thursday of November.

Some harvest festivals celebrate more than just a bountiful collection of food. Vaisakhi is an important Indian harvest festival that is celebrated by Hindus and Sikhs. It is celebrated in April after the crops have been harvested. (Different crops are harvested at different times throughout the year.) Although it is a harvest festival, Sikhs also remember events that took place over 300 years ago that led to the beginning of the Khalsa. The Khalsa is also known as the brotherhood of Sikhs. Sikhs become part of the Khalsa if they promise to live by Sikh beliefs and values.

The harvest festival that we are going to explore this week is called Sukkot. It is a Jewish festival that remembers more than a good harvest. Sukkot remembers events that are described in the Torah that possibly took place three thousand years ago. Many Jews celebrate Sukkot because there is a command to celebrate it in the Torah, the Jewish Holy Book.

Leviticus 23:39-43 (GNT) *When you have harvested your fields, celebrate this festival for seven days, beginning on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. The first day shall be a special day of rest. On that day take some of the best fruit from your trees, take palm branches and limbs from leafy trees,*



and begin a religious festival to honour the Lord your God. Celebrate it for seven days. This regulation is to be kept by your descendants for all time to come. All the people of Israel shall live in shelters for seven days, so that your descendants may know that the Lord made the people of Israel live in simple shelters when he led them out of Egypt. He is the Lord your God.

This command, or mitzvot, clearly states when this celebration should take place. The Jewish calendar is based on the phases of the moon. According to the Jewish calendar, each new year begins in spring with the hope of warmer days and when the leaves and flowers begin to grow. The command clearly states the day and the month that the festival of Sukkot should start. *'The fifteenth day of the seventh month'*. The seventh month in the Jewish calendar is called Tishrei. The Jewish month of Tishrei can fall on the months of September or October.

The command also describes how Sukkot should be celebrated. Can anyone tell me something that should be done during Sukkot? **Re-read the passage.**



– The first and last day should be a day of sabbath rest.
– Take a branch from a palm, willow and other leafy trees.
– Live in temporary shelters for seven days.

The command also explains why God commanded the festival of Sukkot to be celebrated. *"All the people of Israel shall live in shelters for seven days, so that your descendants may know that the Lord made the people of Israel live in simple shelters when he led them out of Egypt."*

Most festivals that are celebrated today have their origins in events that took place in the past. Although the command reminds Jews to rejoice, which means 'be happy', Sukkot remembers an event in the history of the Jewish people that is both a happy and a sad time. Moses, an important Jewish leader, led the Jewish people, called the Israelites, out of Egypt after God had sent ten plagues on the Egyptian people. The Jewish holy book explains that Moses led them on a forty-day journey across a desert on the way to their new home. Whilst on this journey, God gave the Israelites a special food called Manna and Moses even made water appear from a rock. Those Israelites that left Egypt didn't believe that God would help them get to their new home and complained, so God made them wander in the desert for forty years as a punishment. Eventually God did help the Israelites get to their new home.

Sukkot is a festival that remembers the Israelites living in temporary shelters when they left Egypt. Sukkot is a celebration, it is a happy time that the Jewish holy book commands Jews to rejoice. The festival reminds Jews of a difficult time in Jewish history, but it is a reminder that they came through it. We are going to learn more about what happens during the seven days of Sukkot in our thoughts for the day this week.

Time to reflect

- Why is Sukkot a happy time?
- How is Sukkot a reminder that things get better?
- Can we look back at a difficult time in our lives and rejoice?
- What difficult times have you gone through in the past?
- How did you get through it?
- What lessons can we learn from the hard times we have been through?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for celebrations and times that we can rejoice and be happy. Harvest festivals are a reminder to be thankful for what we have got. May we rejoice with our communities as we all celebrate what we consider to be important. *(Amen)*

7.2 Sukkah

Can anyone remember the name of the harvest festival that we thought about yesterday? Can anyone tell me what is remembered during the festival of Sukkot? Can anyone remember the commands about Sukkot found in the Torah? In the Torah, there is a command to live in temporary shelters for seven days. Sukkot is also known as the Feast of tabernacles or Feast of booths. Tabernacle is another name for a shelter. The following is the account of Nathan, a 10-year-old Jewish boy.

Hi, my name is Nathan. My family and I celebrate Sukkot every year, it is my favourite festival because we get to make a den. Out of our family, it is my mum and dad that have the biggest garden so my uncles and aunties come and celebrate the festival at our house. The first thing we do is prepare the Sukkah. It needs to be built with materials that are sturdy enough to not move around in the wind. Some people use a frame made of wood or metal, but my dad and uncles use plastic tubes. We put sheets of plastic around the frame using Velcro. The tall men put branches and leaves on as a roof. Sometimes my dad lifts me up so that I can put some leaves on too. We should be able to see the stars through our roof, but provide shade from the sun. We then decorate the inside of the Sukkah with drawings. In the UK we eat in the Sukkah and if the weather is good we might try and sleep in it. I have family in Israel, where it is warmer and sunnier. They can live and sleep in their Sukkah all week if they want to. When we are in the Sukkah we remember the story of our ancestors wandering in the desert and living in shelters. I often think about what it would have been like to wander in the desert living in these shelters for such a long time.

Time to reflect

- Why is Sukkot a happy time?
- What does Nathan enjoy about the festival of Sukkot?
- Why do you think the Sukkah is important?
- What do you do that helps you remember the past?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for celebrations and times that we can rejoice and be happy. Harvest festivals are a reminder to be thankful for what we have got. May we rejoice with our communities as we all celebrate what we consider to be important. *(Amen)*



7.3 Lulav and Etrog

Can anyone remember the name of the harvest festival that we have been thinking about this week? Can anyone tell me what is remembered during the festival of Sukkot? What did Nathan do at the beginning of Sukkot? There is another command in the Torah about what should happen during Sukkot. It says, *"Take some of the best fruit from your trees, take palm branches and limbs from leafy trees, and begin a religious festival to honour the Lord your God."* This morning we are going to hear the account of a nine-year-old Jewish girl called Naomi.

Hi, my name is Naomi. One of my favourite activities preparing for Sukkot is when we get to make the lulavs. We take branches, more like large twigs, from two different trees, the myrtle and the willow tree. Then we take palm leaves and tie them all together to make the lulav. During Sukkot we take the lulav and a special fruit called the etrog, which looks like a lemon, and we wave them in the air and say special words. We wave them in six directions, north, south, east, west, up and down. This reminds me that God is everywhere. We give thanks to God for all the many blessings given to us, all the lovely fruit, vegetables and trees around us.

Time to reflect

- What does Naomi enjoy about the festival of Sukkot?
- Why do you think this is her favourite part of the festival?
- Why do you think the lulav is important?
- Is there anything that you make that helps you remember the past or celebrate a festival?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for celebrations and times that we can rejoice and be happy. Harvest festivals are a reminder to be thankful for what we have got. May we rejoice with our communities as we all celebrate what we consider to be important. *(Amen)*



7.4 Celebrate Wisdom

Can anyone remember the name of the harvest festival that we have been thinking about this week? Can anyone tell me what is remembered during the festival of Sukkot? What did Naomi like to do to prepare for Sukkot?

During the seven days of the festival, meals will be eaten in the Sukkah. The story of the Israelites wandering in the desert is retold. During many Jewish festivals important stories or parts of the Jewish holy book are remembered and read. Many Jewish families read the book of Ecclesiastes during the seven days of Sukkot. The Jewish holy book called the Tanakh, which is the Bible's Old Testament, is made up of different books. The first five are called the Torah and tell the stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham and Moses. The Torah contains the account of the Israelites leaving Egypt, complaining and living in shelters. The Torah also contains the commandment to celebrate Sukkot. The Torah contains history and rules. The book of Ecclesiastes comes from a different part of the Tanakh, it comes from a section called wisdom writings (or literature).

Being wise is about using what we know and what we understand to make good decisions. Making good decisions in difficult situations is difficult. Wisdom is learning from the decisions that you have made in the past. Some decisions may not have gone the way you thought they should. Our past experiences and the experiences of others can help us to make good decisions in the future. The command to rejoice when we remember bad choices is helpful, as it is a reminder that we can use those situations to help us make better decisions in the future.

Time to reflect

- Do you have any stories that are retold every year?
- Do you have a book that you or your family like to read again and again?
- What lessons have you learned from decisions in the past that have gone wrong?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for celebrations and times that we can rejoice and be happy. Sukkot is a reminder to be thankful for what we have got and to be joyful as we learn from our decisions and the decisions of others. May we rejoice with our communities as we all celebrate what we consider to be important. *(Amen)*



7.5 Wise Sayings

This week we have been thinking about the Jewish harvest festival of Sukkot. I need some volunteers to act out some of the things that we have learned this week. **Ask pupils to act out what they have learned about Sukkot (e.g. making the sukkah, waving the lulav and etrog.** During Sukkot, like most festivals, events in the past are remembered with traditions that we do now. Sukkot remembers a difficult time with the command to rejoice. Yesterday we thought about wisdom and how we can learn from the good and bad decisions that we made in the past. Wisdom is the ability to take what we learn from our experiences and the experiences of others, and use it to be able to make good decisions.

Ecclesiastes is the book from the Tanakh (Old Testament) that is often read during the week of Sukkot. We will reflect on some quotes from this book.

Time to reflect

Ask pupils to think and discuss what a few of the quotes could mean…

Every river flows into the sea, but the sea is not yet full. The water returns to where the rivers began, and starts all over again. (1:7 GNT)

What has happened before will happen again. What has been done before will be done again. There is nothing new in the whole world. (1:9 GNT)

Wisdom is better than foolishness, just as light is better than darkness. The wise can see where they are going, and fools cannot. (2:13 GNT)

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. (3:1 NIV)

The sleep of a hardworking man is sweet. (5:2)

Better not to promise at all than to make a promise and not keep it. (5.5 GNT)

Even a king depends on the harvest. (5.9 GNT)

A living dog is better than a dead lion. (9:4 KJV)

No matter which direction a tree falls, it will lie where it fell. (11:3 GNT)

When the clouds are full, it rains. (11:3 GNT)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

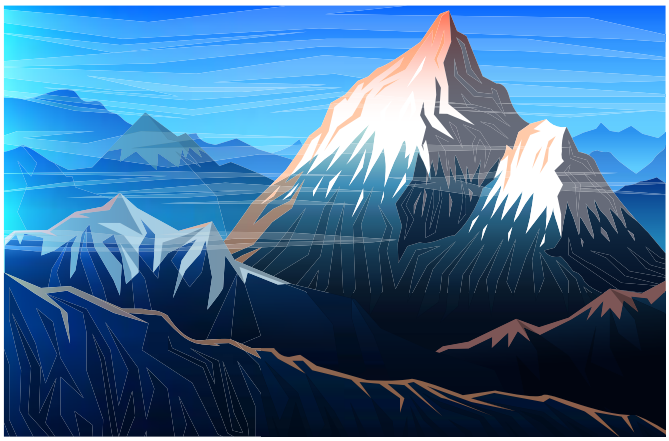
We are thankful for celebrations and times that we can rejoice and be happy. Sukkot is a reminder to be thankful for what we have got and to be joyful as we learn from our decisions and the decisions of others. May we rejoice with our communities as we all celebrate what we consider to be important. *(Amen)*



8.1 Mr Everest

Preparation

If you want to demonstrate how much bigger Everest is than the largest mountain in the UK, label one piece of plain A4 (landscape) 'Ben Nevis' and stick together 6½ sheets of plain A4 (landscape) and label it 'Mount Everest'.



Could anyone tell me what the word mountain refers to? A simple and clear definition of 'mountain' is 'a large steep hill'. There is no fixed height that a 'large steep hill' should be before it can be called a mountain. Some think that a mountain should be over 300m or 1000ft before it can be called a mountain. Others think that it should be higher. There are some large steep hills in America that are called 'mountains' that are below 300m or 1000ft.

Does anyone know the name of the highest mountains in the four countries in the UK? England's highest mountain is called Scafell Pike and is in the Lake District. Scafell Pike is 978m (3209ft). Slieve Donrand on the south-east coast of Northern Ireland is 850m (2,789ft). Ben Nevis, near Fort William in the Scottish Highlands is 1,345m (4412ft). Snowdon in North Wales is 1085m (3560ft). Scotland has the highest mountain ranges in the UK with over 100 peaks that are higher than Scafell Pike and over 50 that are higher than Snowdon. The height of a mountain is measured from sea level to the highest peak, even if the mountain is nowhere near the sea. It is not from the bottom of the mountain. Everest's height from the base of the mountain to the top is about 5,300m, Ben Nevis is just over 1,300m.

Does anyone know the name of the highest mountain in the world? Would anyone like to guess how high Mount Everest is? (Ben Nevis is 1,345m (4,412ft).) Mount Everest is 8,848m (29,029ft) including the snow and ice at the top. The snow and ice at the top of Everest is about 3 to 4 metres deep. Everest is 6½ times higher than Ben Nevis. **Use the A4 sheets prepared earlier.** Most airplanes fly at an altitude of between 30,000 – 40,000ft.

We probably take it for granted today that Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world. Have you ever thought about why it is called 'Mount Everest' or how we know that it is the highest mountain in the world? About two hundred years ago, it was generally thought that the Andes mountains were the highest in the world. They stretch about 7,000km (4,350miles) along the west of the continent of South America, **show a map.** Mount Everest is in the Himalayas, which is a mountain range that crosses a number of countries including India, Nepal, Tibet (China) and Bhutan. Mount Everest sits between Nepal in the south and Tibet (China) in the north. The Nepalese name for Mount Everest is 'Sagarmatha' which means 'Mother of the Universe'. Sagarmatha is also the name of the national park in which



Mount Everest can be found. The Tibetan name for Mount Everest is Chomolungma, which means 'Goddess mother of Mountains'.

Over 200 years ago, the British began 'The Great Trigonometrical Survey' to accurately map out (or survey) the subcontinent of India. This was a huge task and took many years. Surveying a country or region helped people to find resources like coal or map routes that could be used to transport goods. Sir George Everest was born in Crickhowel, Powis, in Wales on the 4th July 1790. He joined the army and travelled to India. George was an expert in maths, especially in working out angles and distances. These skills are very important when creating maps. At the age of 24 George was given the task of mapping Java, a country in the Indian ocean near Australia. In 1816, at the age of 26, George started to work for Colonel William Lamberton who was about to begin the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India. George led the survey when Lamberton died in 1825. George was made Surveyor General of India in 1830. The Surveyor General was in charge of all the surveys that took place over India. In 1843, George retired and travelled back to England. He received a knighthood in 1861 and Sir George Everest became Vice President of the Royal Geographical Society in 1862. He died in 1866.

George Everest retired just as the survey in the Himalayas began. Andrew Waugh became the new Surveyor General of India. During the survey it was found that one mountain was higher than all the others. The survey originally called it Peak XV and its height was calculated in 1856 at just over 29,000 feet. Andrew Waugh suggested that the highest mountain in the world was named after George Everest. George didn't feel comfortable with the decision, but it was agreed. Although George Everest led the survey, it is likely that he never visited the mountain that was named after him.

Even though there is a mountain named after George Everest, for some of us it is the first time we will have ever heard his first name. George Everest didn't want the fame that came with being involved in finding the highest mountain in the world. Like Mount Everest, our achievements are a reminder of the hard work that often goes unseen as we try to achieve our goals. There were thousands of people involved in the 'Great Trigonometrical Survey of India' mapping a vast area. The name Everest reminds us of the man who led this work, but it is also a reminder of all those that worked on the survey even though we will never know their names.

Time to reflect

- Have you visited or climbed a mountain?
- Why was the highest mountain named after George Everest?
- Could the mountain have been surveyed by one man? Why?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This morning we have heard about how the highest mountain in the world got its name. We have heard about how George Everest led a large team of people as they mapped India. The survey and Everest is a reminder of what we can achieve if we are able to work together. *(Amen)*

8.2 Radhanath Sickdhar

Can anyone remember who Mount Everest is named after? George Everest was the man in charge of the survey of India. It is likely that he never visited the mountain that is named after him.

This morning we are going the think about how you measure a mountain? Could anyone tell me how you think you would go about measuring a mountain. What skills do you think are needed to be able to work out the height of a mountain? There were thousands of people involved in 'The Great Trigonometrical Survey' most of them from India or the surrounding countries. Many had to carry heavy equipment that took accurate readings of the distances travelled and the angles of hills and peaks from various locations. The more readings that were taken, the more accurate the survey.

This information was recorded and sent back to others who would calculate heights and create detailed maps. You might be surprised to hear that the person who calculated the height of Mount Everest was a mathematician (a person who is good at maths) who also probably never visited the mountain. Radhanath Sickdhar calculated the height of Mount Everest in the year 1852. He was the survey's 'chief computer'. Before computers, the word 'computer' meant 'someone who calculates'. It may have taken Radhanath four years to calculate the accurate height of the mountain. He had to do some clever mathematics taking into account the curve of the Earth's surface and the fact that the light we see is affected by gravity. George Everest called Radhanath a rare genius. The official announcement that Everest was the highest mountain was delayed until 1856 because the calculations had to be carefully checked.

Not many people know the name of the person who is responsible for confirming that Everest was the highest mountain in the world. According to Everest, he was a hard worker and a really good mathematician. I doubt Radhanath was using his skills because he wanted to be famous. I don't know the name of the men and women who are responsible for many of the items that help me in my everyday life. The technology I use, the medicines that I may take to help me to get better, the maps I may follow will all have been created and developed by various teams of people.

Time to reflect

- Did you expect the person to calculate the height of the tallest mountain to be a mountaineer?
- Other skills were used to collect the information – what skills do you think those people had?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This morning we have thought about the man who calculated the height of Everest and the skills needed to collect that information. The survey and Everest is a reminder of what we can achieve if we are able to work together. *(Amen)*



8.3 Edmund Hillary and Tenzig Norgay

When was the height of Mount Everest calculated? Does anyone know the name of the climbers to make the first recorded journey to the top of Mount Everest?

The height of Mount Everest is 8,848m (29,029ft) above sea level and the height of the climb from the base camp to the top is about 5,300m (17,390ft). The first confirmed climb to the top was achieved by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzig Norgay on May 29th 1953. Tenzig left some sweets on the summit as a Buddhist offering and Edmund left a cross. Since it was confirmed as the world's highest mountain 100 years earlier, climbers from around the world had wanted to become the first to reach the top. Between 1924 and 1954 there were at least 10 attempts to reach the summit. Tenzig had taken part in six of them. Tenzig and a Swiss climber called Raymond Lambert came within 800 feet of the top in 1851.

Since Edmund and Tenzig's first successful recorded climb to the top, over 4000 mountaineers have reached the summit. There are many dangers on the mountain including avalanches, blizzards, rockslides, falling and extremely cold temperatures. About 240 people have died whilst attempting to climb Mount Everest. In 2010, Jordan Romero was the youngest person to climb Everest, he was only 13 years old. According to the Guinness World Records, the oldest person to reach the top was a Japanese man called Yuichiro Miura in May 2013 at the age of 80 years and 223 days.

This week we have been thinking about teamwork. Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzig are the two climbers that will be forever remembered as the first to climb to the top of Mount Everest. It is encouraging to remember that there was a team of people that helped them get to the top. A team of people carried the equipment, cooked the meals and supported them whilst climbing from one camp up to the next. All these people helped Edmund and Tenzig reach this incredible achievement.

Time to reflect

- Why do you think Tenzig left sweets and Edmund left a cross at the top of Mount Everest?
- Would you rather be the person remembered for a great achievement or in the team to help a person reach the achievement? Who is more important?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This morning we have thought about the first men to reach the top of Mount Everest. We think of the team of people that helped Edmund and Tenzig reach the top. We think of the preparation and hard work that it would have taken to complete this difficult task. May it be a reminder of what we can achieve if we are able to work together. *(Amen)*



8.4 Altitude

Who were the first people to have climbed Everest? Can you remember how many people have climbed Everest since? Everest attracts many climbers from around the world that want to challenge themselves to reach the top of the highest mountain in the world. One of the many difficulties that they face is being able to climb at a really high altitude. Altitude is how high something is above sea level. Everest's base camp, where climbers start, is about 3300m above sea level. Three times higher than Snowdon, 80 times higher than Edinburgh, 220 times higher than London, over 300 times higher than Cardiff and over 750 times higher than Belfast. The higher you go, the less oxygen is in the air around you. We all need oxygen, and we need more oxygen when our body is working hard, like climbing! There is about half the oxygen in the air at Everest's base camp compared to sea level. At the top there is only 30% of oxygen in the air.

If your body is used to using the amount of oxygen in the air at sea level, then your body will struggle to cope with less oxygen at these heights. The lack of oxygen and permanent snow means that there is almost no wildlife found above 6000m (20,000ft). At this height the permanent snow stops plant life from growing. There are a few animals hardy enough to survive. The Himalayan jumping spider has been seen as high as 6700m (22,000ft). Yellow billed choughs (part of the crow family) have followed climbers up to around 8000m (26,200ft) and bar-headed geese fly over Mount Everest.

The lack of oxygen can cause altitude sickness. Headaches, light headedness and dizziness, stomach aches, confusion, lack of energy and being sick are all symptoms of your body struggling to cope with the lack of oxygen. Altitude sickness can be very dangerous, so climbers spend time at various camps on Everest, at different heights so that they can get used to the altitude, this is called 'acclimatisation'. To climb Everest usually takes about six to eight weeks. Most of this time is climbing between the camps as the climbers are acclimatising their bodies working at such high altitudes.

Time to reflect

- Imagine working hard, training to climb Everest and then failing because you struggled to acclimatise. How would that make you feel?
- On Everest, is acclimatising as important as practising your climbing skills?
- What preparation do you need to do to help you achieve your goals?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This morning we have thought about the preparation climbers may need to go through to acclimatise themselves before they can climb Everest. May we be reminded of the preparation and the practise needed as we aim to achieve our goals. *(Amen)*



8.5 Team Work

Mountains are very rarely found on their own. Most mountains can be found amongst other hills and mountains, this is because of the way they are formed. Scarfell Pike, the highest mountain in England, is in the Cumbrian Mountains, Slieve Donrand is part of the Mourne Mountains in Northern Ireland. Snowdon is surrounded by other mountains and hills. Ben Nevis is on the West of the Grampian Mountain range. Everest is in the Himalayas which stretches about 1,500 miles with more than one hundred peaks of over 7,300m (24,000ft).

This week we have learned how the highest mountain in the world got its name. We have heard about Radhanath Sickdhar who was able to calculate the height of Mount Everest before satellites, computers and calculators. We thought about the first confirmed climbers to reach the top of Mount Everest and the challenges climbers face whilst on the mountain including altitude sickness.

For every mountain that we have heard about this week, there are many more around it. For every name that we have heard in this week's thoughts for the day there were many more people that were involved. It took thousands of people to complete the survey of India in the 1800's. Many lost their lives to the dangers including malaria and tigers. Many people who live in the high altitudes of Nepal and Tibet work to help climbers to explore and climb the mountains in the Himalayas. They support and look after the various camps and climbing routes for visiting climbers.

For every highest mountain, there are others around them, standing strong. For every person that is remembered for a great achievement, there will be a team around them, supporting them also standing strong.

Time to reflect

- Who has helped you to complete a challenge that you have faced?
- Who have you helped to overcome a challenge they were facing?
- What past great achievements would you have liked to have been involved in?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we have heard about how the highest mountain in the world got its name. We have heard about how George Everest led a large team of people as they mapped India. We have thought about Radhanath Sickdhar and the skills he had in calculating the height of Everest. We have thought about the achievements of Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzig Norgay. We have also thought about the countless unnamed people involved in these achievements. May Everest be a constant reminder of what we can achieve when we are able to work together. *(Amen)*



9.1 Off With a Bang

Warning: Today includes ingredients that go into making a firework! However there is no explanation of what the ingredients are or the quantities required.



Can anyone tell me what happens on the 5th November each year? How is it celebrated? Tradition suggests that bonfires were lit across England as people heard that Guy Fawkes had been found trying to blow up the houses of parliament on the 5th November 1605. Bonfires and fireworks are popular across the UK. This week we are going to be thinking about the invention of fireworks. Bonfire night is a celebration in the UK, but fireworks are used to celebrate many other events. Religious festivals, the coming of the new year and the birth of a new country are just a few occasions that are celebrated with the use of fireworks. Have you ever thought about who invented the first fireworks?

Bamboo is a type of grass that has a hollow thick green woody stem. The stems grow quickly trapping little pockets of air. When fresh bamboo is burnt in a fire, it pops and bangs as the air expands like many little balloons popping at the same time. Chinese people may have done this around 2,200 years ago to ward off evil spirits as part of their religious festivals, wedding rituals and other celebrations.

Legend has it that a Chinese cook was the first person to make a black powder firework. He discovered the basic ingredients that make black powder (or gun powder) by accidently mixing ingredients commonly found in a Chinese kitchen 2,000 years ago. Cooking over charcoal, used in barbecues today, the cook dropped sulphur and a special type of salt into the fire. The three ingredients caused a blue jet of flame, sparks and a crackling noise. The cook squeezed the mixture into a piece of bamboo and then burnt it creating an explosion.

Nobody really knows when the first fireworks were made, but the black powder or gunpowder was invented long before the invention of guns. Unlike the name 'gun powder' suggests, it probably wasn't invented to harm life. An account from a 9th century alchemist suggests that it may have been created as a sort of medicine. An alchemist is someone who is interested in creating magical mixtures that could make people better or even let them live forever. The account states that alchemists had heated the ingredients with the resulting flames burning their hands and faces and even burning down the house where they were working.

Paper and gunpowder were used together about 1400 years ago to create firecrackers. A monk called Li Tian covered a small amount of black powder in another Chinese invention, paper. A fuse made out of paper was used to light the small firework giving time to throw it before it went off. It would make a loud bang and like the bamboo



before it, the firecracker became important in Chinese religious festivals to scare away evil spirits. Firecrackers are used in many celebrations today. In the middle ages Chinese armies may have fired firecrackers in battle along with their arrows to scare and confuse their enemies.

As the Chinese experimented with the black powder, they found that iron powder would create white sparks thrown out from the firework. The Chinese probably created the first rocket. Packing black powder into a paper tube sealed at one end sent the rocket up into the air. These rockets were also used to confuse the enemy in battle.

Gunpowder came to the UK in the 13th century, about 700 years ago, but it's not clear when fireworks began to be used. It is thought that the Europeans combined the rockets that fired the firework into the sky with an explosion at the top that forced out iron powder creating the flower patterns we see today in many fireworks displays. Fireworks were used at the wedding of King Henry VII and Elizabeth of York on 18th January 1486. The daughter of Henry VIII and King Henry VII's granddaughter, Queen Elisabeth I enjoyed fireworks so much that she awarded the person who created the best fireworks with the title 'Fire Master of England'.

Probably the most popular use of fireworks in the UK today is bonfire night. In 1605, Robert Catesby organised a plan to blow up the Houses of Parliament. The details as to why a number of people wanted to blow up King James I and the House of Lords are slightly complicated. At the state opening of parliament, on 5th November, 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.

This morning we have heard about the development of fireworks over hundreds, if not thousands of years. Beginning with bangs created by burning bamboo over two thousand years ago through to the large colourful displays that we see today, fireworks have marked important occasions and celebrations throughout history and across many different cultures.

Time to reflect

- What events in the past do you celebrate using fireworks?
- Imagine seeing fireworks for the first time – what would you think?
- Are you or anyone you know scared of fireworks – why?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for events and celebrations that take place in our communities. This week we are thinking about an invention that is used for some of those celebrations. Help us to remember the importance of these occasions as we celebrate them with our friends and families. *(Amen)*

9.2 Firework Facts

Can anyone remember where the first black powder fireworks were first invented, or discovered? Over the course of this week we are going to hear some more interesting facts about fireworks.

Firework fact #1

- Can you guess which country makes the most fireworks today? China.

This wasn't always true, Europe including the UK created many fireworks. In the 1800's, Italian firework makers mixed various metals in with the black powder to produce different coloured sparks. 60 years ago, the UK had a number of companies making and selling fireworks all over the world. Over the past 20-30 years, China has built large factories to make fireworks and in 2016 they made 90% of the worlds fireworks.

The second fact is about the words that we use to describe a firework. What words would you use to describe a firework? ***(spend time discussing these words)***

Firework fact #2

- The Japanese word for firework is Hanabi which means 'fire-flower'.

Time to reflect

- How would you describe fireworks to someone who had never seen them before?
- How would you describe the feelings you have when you see and hear fireworks?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for events and celebrations that take place in our communities. This week we are thinking about an invention that is used for some of those celebrations. Help us to remember the importance of these occasions as we celebrate them with our friends and families. *(Amen)*



9.3 Firework World Records

World's Largest Firework*

- On the 11th October 2014, according to the Guinness World Records, the largest aerial firework ('aerial' means 'in the air') was launched at the 13th Kounosu fireworks festival in Japan. The firework shell weighed 464.8kg. It reached 907m (2,975ft) from the ground to the centre of the exploding firework. The exploding firework measured 748m across (about 7 football pitches). **

Most rockets launched in 30 seconds*

- On the 8th May 2010, an attempt was made to try and launch the most firework rockets in 30 seconds in Cebu, in the Philippines. 125,801 rockets were set off and exploded within the 30 second limit.

Largest firework display*

- To mark the beginning of the new year, 810,904 fireworks were set off in Iglesia Ni Cristo, (Church of Christ) in the Philippines. The display began at midnight on the 1st January 2016 and lastet for one and a half hours.

Longest line of firecrackers*

- An unbroken line of firecrackers stretching 11km (6.83miles) was set off in Spain on the 19th October 2002. It was part of a larger attempt that was nearly twice as long.

These records are accurate at the time of writing, If the world record has changed the Guinness World Record website will have updated details.

A video of the largest firework is available on the internet.

Time to reflect

- Are fireworks amazing? Why?
- When and where have you seen fireworks?
- Is there a specific firework that you can remember? Why?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for events and celebrations that take place in our communities. This week we are thinking about an invention that is used for some of those celebrations. Help us to remember the importance of these occasions as we celebrate them with our friends and families. *(Amen)*



9.4 A Sparkling Fact

Sparklers are a common part of many bonfire celebrations around the UK.

- No one knows exactly when the sparkler was invented, but it is thought that hand held fireworks were used in Greece about 1400 years ago.
- Sparklers can reach temperatures of between 1000 and 2000 degrees centigrade (10-20 times the boiling point of water).
- Sparklers can stay really hot for several minutes after they have stopped sparkling.
- A sparkler is a firework and it is against the law to sell them without a special licence.
- Sparklers are used in many celebrations around the world including Bonfire night in the UK, USA's 'Independence Day' on the 4th July and Diwali which is often called the festival of light.

The Royal society for the prevention of accidents (RoSPA) provide safety tips to help us stay safe when using sparklers:

- Sparklers shouldn't be given to children under the age of 5.
- You should wear gloves when handling sparklers.
- Hold sparklers at arm's length while being lit.
- Don't wave sparklers when you are close to other people.
- Never hold a baby in your arms while you are holding a sparkler.
- When the sparkler has finished put it in a bucket of cold water.
- Never attempt to pick up the sparkler once it has gone out. If you have put it down, you may accidently pick up the hot end and burn your hand.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever used a sparkler?
- How can you make sure that you use them safely?
- What should be done with a sparkler once it has gone out?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for events and celebrations that take place in our communities. This week we are thinking about an invention that is used for some of those celebrations. Help us to stay safe when we celebrate with our friends and families. *(Amen)*



9.5 The Fireworks Code

Bonfire night along with many other celebrations are an opportunity for us to enjoy time with our family and friends. Whole communities may join together around a bonfire and enjoy the spectacle of the firework display. It is important to remember that bonfires and fireworks can be dangerous. There are around 1000 accidents involving fireworks each year with around half of all firework injuries affecting children under the age of 16. *

The firework code is a list of dos and don'ts when it comes to bonfires and fireworks…

Discuss the dos and don'ts

Do

- Stand far away from the bonfire and the fireworks.
- Wear gloves when using a sparkler.
- Light only one sparkler at a time.
- Keep a sparkler at arm's length.
- Use a sparkler when supervised by an adult.
- Keep your pets inside.
- Get an adult to check bonfires for wild animals like hedgehogs before it is lit.
- Keep a bucket of water to put your finished sparklers in.
- Leave the lighting and clearing of fireworks to the adults.

Don't

- Don't go near a firework that has been lit.
- Don't go near a firework even when it has gone off.
- Don't give a sparkler to a child under the age of 5.
- Adults should not let fireworks off between 11pm and 7am.

Time to reflect

- What other enjoyable activities can be dangerous?
- How can knowing the firework code help us to stay safe?
- Who can help us to stay safe at bonfire night?
- Who can we help stay safe at bonfire night? (Younger children, animals)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for events and celebrations that take place in our communities. This week we are thinking about an invention that is used for some of those celebrations. Help us to stay safe when we celebrate with our friends and families. *(Amen)*

Gov.uk (Firework Safety)



10.1 Truce (Remembrance)

This/or last Sunday is/was a very important day in our country. Can anyone tell me what it is/was called? Remembrance Sunday is an important time when lots of people walk around the streets wearing poppies, brass bands often play and church services are held to remember soldiers who fought in different wars. Poppies are put in special places in villages, towns and cities all over the UK. Mention if your school was involved in a Remembrance Day parade.

We celebrate lots of things to help us remember. Who's had a birthday recently? How did you celebrate your birthday? Your parents and family would have remembered the day you were born; you probably can't remember that day can you? Lots of religious festivals remember important people and what they did in the past. Remembering the past is important, but why do we have a special day to remember things that are not very good, like war?

Well at 11 o'clock, on the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, World War 1 came to an end, and that is a good thing. Every year on the 11th of November and the nearest Sunday to the 11th, people commemorate the end of the war. The word commemorate means that we remember and respect something. People are often quiet for 2 minutes at 11 o'clock on these two days. They may remember a family member who is or has been in the army or other armed services. They may think about some of the horrible things that happen in war to remind them that it is not a good thing and that we should do everything we can to avoid it.

Show a map of Europe.

The reason World War 1 started is



complicated. Since the 1800's different countries around Europe had agreed to protect each other if ever one country was attacked or went to war. In 1914 the prince and next in line to be king of Austria-Hungary went to visit Serbia. He was Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Austria and Hungary used to be part of a big empire. Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his pregnant wife were murdered on the 28th June 1914. Austria Hungary blamed Serbia for his death and on the 28th July 1914 declared war on Serbia. Russia had an agreement to protect Serbia. Germany backed Austria Hungary and four days later Germany declared war on Russia, two days after that Germany declared war on France. The quickest way from Germany to France was through the small country of Belgium, German soldiers marched through Belgium. Britain, who had agreed to defend Belgium declared war on Germany.

The war began in the summer of 1914. Many at the time thought that the war would be over by Christmas but the war went on for four long years. Germany was sandwiched between France and Britain on the West and Russia in the East. German, French and British troops dug trenches on the western front stretching over four hundred miles from Belgium in the north down to

Switzerland in the south. The trenches on both sides didn't move much in the four years of fighting.

Can you imagine what it would have been like for the soldiers on the western front fighting late into December 1914 with Christmas on its way. For many soldiers, Christmas was a day of fighting just like any other day during the war. But there were reports of men singing carols and others leaving their trenches and meeting in 'No Man's Land', the bit between the German trenches and the British and French trenches. Does anyone know what a truce is? A truce is an agreement between enemies to stop fighting. During the war a truce gave both sides a chance to collect dead and wounded soldiers. There are accounts of a number of these unofficial truces taking place during 1914, but the ones that took place on Christmas day are probably the most famous. Photos taken at the time show soldiers from both sides standing, talking and even playing football. Soldiers even gave Christmas presents to soldiers from the other side.

There were only a few of these meetings that took place across the 440 miles of the western front, but reports including photos from these Christmas truces were published in national newspapers. Some French and Belgian soldiers that witnessed the meeting of the British and German soldiers were confused and some were even angry. Those leading the war were worried that the soldiers would refuse to fight as a result of their meetings with the enemy and they ordered to punish any man caught organising anymore informal truces. The small truces that took place in 1914 never took place again.

Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday are both days when we think about the horrible things that took place during World War 1 in the hope that we would do our best to avoid war in the future.

Time to reflect

- What is the difference between commemorate and celebrate?
- Should we celebrate or commemorate the Christmas truces?
- Why do you think that those leading the war wanted to stop these acts of kindness?

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 Giving Peace

This week we are thinking about Remembrance Day. Can anyone think of two different meanings for the word 'Peace'. One meaning of peace is 'quiet' or 'the lack of noise' another meaning is 'no war'. On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918 the guns fell silent after four years of fierce fighting. Soldiers had both the peace and quiet from the noise of the gunfire coming to an end and peace because war on the western front had finished.

In one of the books in the Bible, Paul finishes a letter to some of his friends by writing, *'Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way'* (2 Thessalonians 3:16 NIV). Paul writes that peace is something that can be given. Do you think that you can give other people peace? Have your parents, or even your teachers, said 'give me some peace'? In what ways can you give someone else peace?

The word 'peaceful' is an adjective that can be used to describe how we feel inside. Things that we do can help other people to feel peaceful inside. Things that we do can help us to feel peaceful inside.

Time to reflect

Discuss the following…

- Who/what gave the soldiers peace? (The end of the war)
- How do you think they would have felt?
- How can you give your parents/ guardians/teachers peace?
- What are the benefits of giving your parents peace?
- How can a person who bullies others give peace?
- Who benefits from this peace?
- What makes you feel peaceful inside?
- What could you give to make someone else feel peaceful?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

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. We also think of the peaceful feelings that we have, may our actions give peace to those around us. *(Amen)*



10.3 Peaceful Actions

Can anyone remember what word we discussed in yesterday's thought for the day? Today we are going to think about how we can create peace. One meaning of peace is quiet or no noise. If someone you were with asked you to be quiet because you were both watching TV or out birdwatching, then to be quiet you would need to stop talking. If you were listening to music but your mum needed some quiet time then you would need to turn off the music to bring about the peace. In both of these examples, it is our actions that create peace.

The word peaceful is the adjective that can be used to describe how we feel inside. Many problems between people in school or at home can come from what we do and what we say. If we say or do nasty things we can ruin other people's peaceful feelings, if we do and say good things we can encourage peace in our school or at home.

Time to reflect

Think about the following passage from the Bible

If you want to enjoy life
and wish to see good times,
you must keep from speaking evil
and stop telling lies.
You must turn away from evil and do good;
you must strive for peace with all your heart.

(1 Peter 3:10-11 GNT)

- What are the benefits of trying to bring about peace?
- How do you help to bring peace?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

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. We also think of the peaceful feelings that we have, may we strive for peace with all our hearts. *(Amen)*



10.4 Peace Belongs To All Of Us

This week we have reflected on the meaning of Remembrance Day. Being silent for two minutes on Remembrance Day, placing a wreath on a local cenotaph and buying and wearing a poppy are ways in which we commemorate the soldiers that lost their lives during war. During this time of year, we may be encouraged to commemorate the great war by thinking about how we can bring peace into our world. Over the past couple of days, we have been thinking about how our actions and the actions of others can either help to bring about peace. Like the Christmas Day truce, peace is found in our actions. Peace is the decision between two people to agree to help and support one another rather than hurting or harming another.

Time to reflect

- Think about and discuss the following quotes, what do you think they mean?
  - *"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."* Mother Teresa
  - *"You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist."* Anonymous*
  - *"If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner."* Nelson Mandela
  - Can you fight for peace?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

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. May both sides realise their responsibilities in bringing about peace. *(Amen)*

** This quote is often attributed to Indira Ghandi – a previous prime minister of India.*



10.5 Blessed are the Peacemakers

This week we started by thinking about the Christmas truce that took place between British and German soldiers on Christmas Day 1914. The unofficial agreement between men on both sides resulted in photos of men talking, playing football and sharing presents. Whilst fighting continued on most of the western front, a few men decided to celebrate Christmas with their enemy. They were blessed with a brief moment of peace amongst the fierce fighting.

There is a famous passage in the Bible called the 'Beatitudes'. The passage highlights some values that some Christians think are very important. The passage states that those who live by these values will be happy or blessed. Our values are the beliefs and ways of thinking that we think are very important. One person's values may consist of kindness and putting others first. Another person's actions may be selfishness and unkindness. Our values can be seen in our actions. One of the beatitudes is *'Happy are those who work for peace, God will call them his children.'* (Matthew 5:9 GNT). Another translation says 'Blessed are the peacemakers'. The beatitudes have been called the be-attitudes as they are good values or attitudes that some people try to be! Those that took part in the Christmas Truce could be called peacemakers and I'm sure for that brief moment, they were happy and blessed.

Time to reflect

- How can our values be found in our actions?
- What is a good attitude?
- What values help bring about peace?
- What values ruin peace?
- How can we become peacemakers?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

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. May we all value the importance of peace, in our families, friendships and across our communities. *(Amen)*



11.1 Pack Up Your Troubles

I would like everyone to think about one of their favourite songs. I want you to try and think of a reason why it may be one your favourites? **One of my favourite songs is… because…** Would anyone like to volunteer your favourite song and tell us why it is your favourite. According to the Guinness World Records, does anyone know what the bestselling song of all time is? (Teachers?) The bestselling song according to the Guinness World Records is 'White Christmas'. Written by Irvin Berlin in 1940 and sung by Bing Crosby. It appeared in a 1942 movie called Holiday Inn and again in a film called White Christmas in 1954. It is estimated that White Christmas has sold 50 million copies worldwide. The UK and US singles charts began in the 1950s, a song called 'Candle in the Wind' originally written by Elton John and Bernie Taupin in 1973 was re-written and re-recorded in 1997 as a tribute to Princess Diana, after she died as a result of a tragic accident. Called 'Candle in the Wind 1997', the song is still the best-selling single since the charts began, having sold 33 million copies.

Why do you think these two songs were so popular? The words, or lyrics, in a White Christmas describe many peoples' perfect Christmas scene. It is the type of scene that would be perfect on any Christmas card. Snow on the ground and snow on the tree tops, children listening to the sound of sleigh bells. The words continue in the hope that all your days will be merry and bright and that all your Christmas' are white. The song and the film it was in, called Holiday Inn, were released during the second world war. I wonder how it made those that heard it feel? I wonder if it made them feel worse about the situation



they were living in, or hopeful that one day the war would be over and that they could be merry and bright. Did the song bring a little bit of hope during a difficult time?

Music has the power to affect how we feel. What songs make you feel happy? What song can make you feel sad? During the Remembrance Day parades, the Last Post is often played to commemorate those that lost their lives during World Wars One and Two. During World Wars One and Two there were songs written that would make people sad, but there were also songs that made people happy. Some songs even encouraged young men as they marched off to war.

Brothers George and Felix Powell, from St Asaph in Denbighshire, North Wales, wrote a song called 'Pack Up Your Troubles' in 1915. The opening line was 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile'. A kit bag was what a solider packed their kit into as they prepared to go off to fight. What do you think the lyrics were trying to say? (The second line… *"while you've a lucifer to light your fag smile, boys, that's the style". A lucifer was the name*

of a brand of matches used to light the cigarettes which would have been popular at the time.)

The brothers didn't think the song was any good at first, but it became a huge success after it won first prize in an American song competition to find marching songs for the troops. George and Felix put the song in their own musical show in Southampton and a week later heard thousands of troops singing it as they boarded boats that would take the soldiers to the front line. In 1915 the song became popular and was sung in musical shows across the UK. Lyrics from the song were printed on postcards and calendars. From 1916, Felix travelled along the Western Front singing the song to the soldiers in musical shows, helping to entertain the soldiers and boost their morale. In 1917 the song was released in America and was featured on a Broadway musical and in 1918 it was even being sung by the German soldiers in the opposite trenches.

Does anyone know what the word morale means? It means enthusiasm and confidence. Pack up your troubles and other uplifting songs like 'It's a long way to Tipperary' had the power to boost the morale of soldiers and others that sang it. 'It's a long way to Tipperary' was another World War One song written just before World War One.

When we lose our confidence or our enthusiasm it can affect our feelings or our mood. A bad mood can make us lose the motivation to carry on doing what we were doing. We have already thought about songs that can make us happy. Songs that improve our mood, can improve our morale and in doing so can improve our ability to get on with and complete difficult and hard tasks. 'Pack up your troubles' and similar songs demonstrate that enthusiasm can be found in the most difficult of circumstances.

Time to reflect

- What songs can improve your morale?
- Can one song lift the morale of a whole country?
- What things cause you to lose your confidence or enthusiasm?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that sometimes we lose the confidence and enthusiasm to complete difficult tasks. Remembrance is a time to think about what we can do to help bring about peace in our world. May those who are working for peaceful solutions to many of the conflicts around the world find the motivation to see their work through to completion. *(Amen)*



11.2 SS Laurentic

Can anyone remember the songs that we thought about yesterday? Can anyone remember why they were important? There is one story that took place in World War One which demonstrates that 'Pack up your troubles' could boost morale in the most difficult of circumstances.

On the 23rd January 1917, a ship called the SS Laurentic set sail from Liverpool to Nova Scotia on Canada's East coast. The SS Laurentic was on a top-secret mission. The ship was carrying about forty-three tons of gold to be given to Canada and America to pay for their help in the war. The gold was packed into wooden boxes and it was so secret that not even the crew knew what it was. Early into the trip the ship's doctor reported that four men had symptoms of yellow fever and advised the captain to drop them off at the nearest port. The SS Laurentic made its way to Buncrana, a small fishing harbour on the north coast of Ireland. The ship left to continue its journey at 5pm on Thursday the 25th January. Forty-five minutes later it hit two mines and sank. Just over 350 men lost their lives that night and the gold sunk to the bottom of the North Atlantic Ocean. The rescued survivors were taken to a hall with a piano. It was reported that one of the sailors started playing 'Pack up your troubles' and soon the rest of the survivors gathered around him singing it together. It took several years for nearly all the gold to be recovered, with a few gold bars being unaccounted for!

Time to reflect

- Why do you think they started singing 'Pack up your troubles'?
- If you were a survivor would you join in? Why?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that sometimes we lose the confidence and enthusiasm to complete difficult tasks. Remembrance is a time to think about what we can do to help bring about peace in our world. May those who are working for peaceful solutions to many of the conflicts around the world find the motivation to see their work through to completion. *(Amen)*



11.3 Troubles

Can anyone recount the story of the SS Laurentic? Why do you think the survivors sang 'pack up your troubles'?

George Powell was a pacifist, which meant he didn't agree that anyone should try to solve their problems with fighting. While Felix went to entertain the soldiers on the front line, George refused to take part in the war effort. He didn't like the fact that his song was being used as a way of encouraging young men to fight. Felix on the other hand signed up and toured the trenches putting on his shows to boost the morale of the troops singing and performing his songs. Felix became upset that his tune was being used to send lots of soldiers to their deaths and at the end of the war he came back a sad man. The brothers moved to Sussex and opened a theatre.*

Time to reflect

- Why do you think the song 'pack up your troubles' boosted the morale of the troops?
- Why do you think the soldiers' morale needed boosting?
- Why do you think the brothers were upset that their song was being used to boost the morale of fighting soldiers?
- Why do you think the brothers were upset that their song was being used to boost the morale of those back home in the UK?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that sometimes we lose the confidence and enthusiasm to complete difficult tasks. Remembrance is a time to think about what we can do to help bring about peace in our world. May those who are working for peaceful solutions to many of the conflicts around the world find the motivation to see their work through to completion. *(Amen)*

**Teachers information: Sadly, Felix took his own life on the stage of his theatre in 1942.*



11.4 Lamentations

This week we have been thinking about the way in which music and songs can improve our mood, they can encourage us and make us feel happy even when times are bad. Music and song can affect our emotions in all sorts of ways. Are there any songs that make you feel sad? There is a story of a teacher asking young children to name the saddest song they had ever heard. "London Bridge" one child replies. When the teacher asked for a reason why, the child simply replied 'it's falling down'.

There is a book in the Bible called Lamentations. It was written after a time of war when the country of Israel or Judah, as it was known then, had been attacked. Many of the people who lived in Judah had been taken to another country as slaves. The book contains poems or songs that are a reminder of this sad time.

Time to reflect

Listen to the opening few verses of the book and discuss the feelings of people who listened to this who…

- lost their homes during the war listening to this.
- are the ancestors of people who lost their homes but are now living in peace.

1. How lonely lies Jerusalem, once so full of people!
   Once honoured by the world, she is now like a widow;
   The noblest of cities has fallen into slavery.
2. All night long she cries; tears run down her cheeks.
   Of all her former friends, not one is left to comfort her.
   Her allies have betrayed her and are all against her now.
3. Judah's people are helpless slaves, forced away from home.
   They live in other lands, with no place to call their own—
   Surrounded by enemies, with no way to escape.
4. No one comes to the Temple now to worship on the holy days.
   The young women who sang there suffer, and the priests can only groan.
   The city gates stand empty, and Zion is in agony.
5. Her enemies succeeded; they hold her in their power.
   The Lord has made her suffer for all her many sins;
   Her children have been captured and taken away.
6. The splendour of Jerusalem is a thing of the past.
   Her leaders are like deer that are weak from hunger,
   Whose strength is almost gone as they flee from the hunters.
7. A lonely ruin now, Jerusalem recalls her ancient splendour.
   When she fell to the enemy, there was no one to help her;
   Her conquerors laughed at her downfall.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Remembrance is a time to think about what we can do to help bring about peace in our world. May those who are working for peaceful solutions to many of the conflicts around the world find the motivation to see their work through to completion. *(Amen)*



11.5 Packing Up The Right Troubles

This week we have thought about the way one song was able to boost the morale of people who were going through a very bad situation. 'Pack Up Your Troubles' won a marching song competition and was then sang as soldiers marched off to war. The message of the song, pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile is a reminder that we can be positive in hard times. George and Felix Powell were upset that their song could be used to support young men going to fight in what became known as the 'great war'. George and Felix's response to their own song can teach us to think about our actions.

Resilience and perseverance are both very important qualities, but are they useful qualities for a young boy trying to fly by flapping his arms and jumping into the air? Or good qualities in someone who wants to hurt others physically or emotionally?

'Pack up your troubles and smile' is certainly good advice when it comes to finding the motivation to complete an important but difficult job. 'Pack up your troubles and smile' is bad advice if it means you carry on doing something that is continually wrong and refuse to change to make it right. The skill is knowing when to persevere and what requires our resilience.

Remembrance is a time to remember those that gave their lives in war, but it is also a time to think about what we can do to stop wars and to bring about peace in the world in which we live. Whether other people cause us trouble or we cause trouble for other people, we can all do something to bring about peace in our world. Our perseverance and resilience can be used to make our world a better place.

Time to reflect

Serenity means calm, peaceful and untroubled.

Discuss the message of the following prayer, called the serenity prayer:

> *Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,*
> *the courage to change the things I can,*
> *and the wisdom to know the difference.*

- What can you do to bring about peace?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

the courage to change the things I can,

and the wisdom to know the difference. *(Amen)*



12.1 The Power of a Few Letters

Preparation

Print letters (Click to download letters) for each of the following words: Listen, respect, help and trust. Keep each word's letters separate.



In the UK today there are many languages spoken. How many languages are spoken by children in this school? Many of the languages that are spoken in the UK have come from people moving here from other countries to live, work and go to school. According to the 2021 census there are over 300 languages spoken in London alone. English and a few other languages have developed in the UK. Can anyone name those languages? (Not an exhaustive list) English, Scots Gaelic (spoken in Scotland and Ireland), Welsh (spoken in Wales), Irish, Angloromani (used by British Gypsies), Cornish, Shelta (used by Irish Gypsies, but also found in parts of Great Britain), Shetland (spoken in Shetland), Orcadian (spoken in Orkney).

Can anyone tell me what an alphabet is? An alphabet is a collection of symbols that we can use to help us write down and sound out words. Thousands of years ago the Egyptians began using symbols or pictures to represent entire words. Does anyone know what these are called? Egyptian hieroglyphics. The Phoenicians were a group of people that lived around the Mediterranean Sea in north Africa and the Middle East. About 3800 years ago, the Phoenicians started using twenty to thirty Egyptian symbols to represent the different sounds in their language. To be able to read the hieroglyphics an Egyptian would need to remember thousands of different images or symbols but the Phoenicians only needed to learn the sounds of twenty to thirty symbols and they could write down and record any word they wanted. These symbols became a sort of alphabet. The Phoenician system of writing only used consonant sounds and didn't use any vowels. (Which letters are vowels?)

The Phoenicians writing was written from right to left, it spread right across routes as traders bought and sold goods around north Africa and the Middle East. A thousand years later the alphabet had travelled as far as Greece on the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The Greeks developed this alphabet, keeping some symbols and replacing others. The Greeks were the first to include vowels in their alphabet. Like Phoenician writing Greek was written from right to left, it then changed by changing direction with each new line (called boustrophedon). From the 5th century BC Greek was written from left to right. The Phoenicians borrowed symbols from the Egyptians and the Greeks borrowed letters from Phoenicians. The Romans and other cultures created their own alphabets using the Greek letters and sounds. Latin is the name of the language that was used by the



Roman empire and consists of most of the characters that are in the English, Gaelic and Welsh alphabets today.

The English alphabet is made up of 26 letters. These 26 letters can be used to write all the words that are used in the English language. There are about 40 sounds in the English language. The Welsh alphabet is made up of 29 letters and there are about 45 sounds in the Welsh language. There are 18 letters in the Scottish and Gaelic alphabets.

How many words do you know? The first Oxford Dictionary published in 1884 had 252,200 entries included in 10 volumes on 15,490 pages. In 1989 the second edition of the Oxford dictionary was published in 20 volumes with 21,730 pages and 291,500 entries. Dictionaries don't include all the words that are used in a language. Your name will not be included in a dictionary, but it is a word. Your name uses letters of the alphabet. It is difficult to work out how many words are in each language because new words and new spellings are being created all the time. The creators of new toys will create new names. When a new species of animal is discovered a new word also needs to be found. There are a million species of insects that we have discovered and probably many more that we haven't.

It is amazing to think that all the words that exist in a language, words that we read, write and recognise can all be written from a small number of letters. Millions of words can be created from just a handful of symbols written in a different order. This week we are going think about teamwork. This morning we have thought about how a whole language can be created by a small number of letters. Letters working together can create something much bigger than each letter can create on its own, what a great example of teamwork!

There are important skills that we need to develop if we want to work well as a team. To help us think about these skills I need 22 volunteers. **Separate the volunteers in to a group of 6, 7, 4 and 5. Give the group of 6 the letters for Listen, the group of 7 the letters for respect and so on. Mix up the letters and give one to each person in the group.** Each group is going to rearrange the letters to create a word using the letters I have just given them.

The words listen, respect, help and trust are all important teamwork skills that we will explore this week.

Time to reflect

- How many words do you think you know?
- Do you think you will ever stop learning new words?
- Do you think words are a good example of teamwork? Why?
- What words/skills do you think are important for good teamwork?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This morning we have thought about how a few letters can create lots of words. This week, as we think about teamwork, help us to realise how much we can achieve as we work as a team. *(Amen)*



12.2 Team Work Doesn't Just Happen

Preparation

Prepare a bag full of random letters, search online 'Random Letter Generator' or ask pupils to use their imagination.

If possible complete this activity: I have a bag with a random selection of letters, I am going to take out seven and put them together in the order I picked them out. How likely is it that it will spell out a seven-letter word? What would I need to do in order to make a word out of those seven letters?

Those letters didn't just make a word (unless they did, if they did do it again). The letters needed organising. Each letter had a different sound and the right ones were selected and put in the right order to create a word. Good team work doesn't just happen because a group of people try to complete a task. Each individual can bring skills to a team that other team members may find difficult. The task will need every one to play their part. Imagine a football team full of goal keepers, a stage show made up of lead roles, a car made completely of tyres or a word of ten letters made up of ten Zs.

Planning out how a team is going to achieve a task is an important part of team work.

Discuss the following quote: "If it takes two hours to chop down a tree spend the first hour sharpening the axe."

Breaking down the task into bits and then deciding who is the best person to complete each part will take time. Once each part has been decided and each person knows what they are doing, do you think the activity will be easier to complete?

Time to reflect

- How would you plan out a team activity?
- What skills or talents do you bring to a team?
- What skills or talents would you like to be better at?
- Do we all have to be good at everything? Why?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we be thankful for benefits of teamwork. We know that teams are made up of people with different skills and talents. May we, as we support and help each other, make the most of the talents that are in our teams. *(Amen)*



12.3 Helping a Team Work

Teams do all sorts of tasks. Can we make a list of the tasks that might be completed by a team of people?

- Building a school – (literally and figuratively)
- Competing in a team sport
- Creating and presenting a presentation
- Designing and creating a new piece of technology
- Running a school
- Running a business
- Researching a new topic
- Going on an adventure – climbing a mountain

Discuss the following quote from the Bible, what are the benefits of working as a team?

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 4:9-10 NLT

Teamwork allows people to help each other to complete a task or achieve a goal. Yesterday we thought about how teamwork often needs planning for it to work well. For some people helping others comes naturally, they may have a talent for wanting to help others. Some people may find helping difficult because they don't realise that others need help. Team work enables people to plan and practise the skill of helping.

Trust is another skill that is used within a good team. Can anyone tell me what trust is? If a team activity has been planned well, then members of the team will complete activities that are different from other members of the team. It takes trust to let another member get on with their job, trusting that it will help the team complete the overall task. If you find it difficult to trust, you may find that you want to complete all the jobs rather than leaving them to the other people in your team.

Time to reflect

- Do you find it easy to know how to help others?
- Do you find it easy to trust others to do jobs that you know you can do well?
- How can the skills of help and trust be used in larger teams like schools and communities?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we be thankful for the help that we receive as we live and work in our communities. Help us to know when others need help and help us to know when and how to trust others. Amen



12.4 Listening

What teamwork skills did we discuss *Tuesday and Wednesday*? Planning, help and trust. This morning we are going to think about the important skill of listening.

Listening is an important part of teamwork. Listening to how each person in the team would solve the problem will provide the team with a range of different options. Talking about these options and listening to each other will help the team plan the best one. Listening to each other as team members explain which bits of the task they are good at before you start will make the most of the skills in your team.

You may not always feel like you are good at what you have been asked to do. Team work may provide you with an opportunity to try something new or to practise a skill that you need to improve. Team activities provide an opportunity for you to develop individual talents and skills.

Listening to each other will help the team to get the most out of completing the task. Over the past couple of days, we have thought about how a team could plan to complete a task, how would you plan to make sure that everybody in the team is heard?

Time to reflect

- How do we listen?
- How can we plan to make sure that everybody is heard?
- How can we make sure that we stay focused on the task?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we be thankful for the people who listen to us. Help us to use the skill of listening to find the best solutions to the problems that we face, as a team and individually. *(Amen)*



12.5 Two's Company, Three's a Crowd

We started this week by thinking about letters in the alphabet and how these letters work together to create words. If you play scrabble you will know that it is very rare to be able to make a word using all your seven letters. Some letters are always left out of the words that you create. This morning we are going to think about how many people we have working in a team. Have you ever worked in a group and found that there are too many people and it is stopping you from being able to get on with your work? In football, there are normally 11 players on each team. How many people would be on a pitch during a game? (23 – including the referee) What would the game be like if there were double or treble that many on the pitch? 44 or 66 players all trying to run around, find space and pass the ball. The number of people in a team will depend on the separate tasks that need to be completed to achieve the teams overall goal. Have you heard the phrase, two's company, three's a crowd? It is used when it is likely that members of the group will feel unwanted and left out. Teams work well when everybody has got a job to do and everybody feels valued working in that team.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever felt left out whilst working in a team? Why?
- When you are working in a team, how can you make sure that everyone has a job to do? (Plan, Listen, Trust)

On *Wednesday*, we thought about the tasks that team members might complete. How big would the teams need to be if they were…

- Building a school – (literally and figuratively)
- Competing in a team sport
- Creating and presenting a presentation
- Designing and creating a new piece of technology
- Running a school
- Running a business
- Researching a new topic
- Going on an adventure – climbing a mountain

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

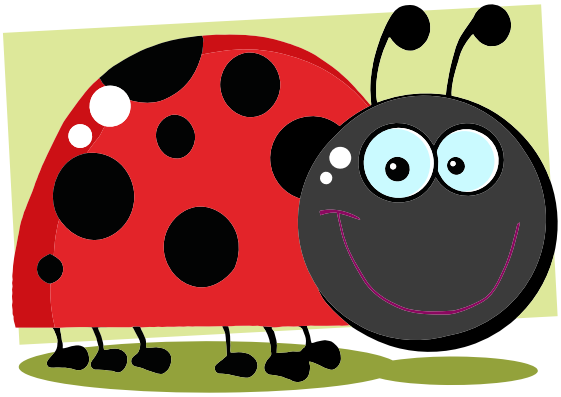
We are thankful for the teams that we have around us, in school, in our families and in our community. Help us to practise and develop our teamwork skills. Help us to plan well, to listen carefully and to trust that others will play their part as we work to complete the tasks that we have been given. *(Amen)*



13.1 The Ladybird and Our Lady

Preparation

Arrange for a pupil or teacher to read the Bible passages, they may want to see the text prior to the assembly.



This week we are going to think about advent. To help us think about advent we are going to hear about a tiny creature that may not often be seen. This beetle has a hard and often red shell with black spots, six legs and two pairs of wings. Can anyone guess what this creature may be? It's a ladybird. The ladybird is very useful in the garden and in the fields because it eats aphids. Aphids are very small bugs that live on plants and crops. The aphid sucks the sugary sap out from the leaves of plants and can even spread harmful viruses, destroying the plants and crops. Ladybirds lay hundreds of eggs in the colonies of aphids and other plant-eating pests. When they hatch, the ladybird larvae, which look like tiny black and red caterpillars with little black legs, immediately begin to feed on the aphids. After three to six weeks the ladybird caterpillars create a cocoon and turn into an adult ladybird, by this time they may have eaten a lot of aphids.

There are about 5,000 different species of ladybird around the world, they can have from 2 to 20 spots and they are not always red, some can be yellow or orange. The ladybird's bright colour warns animals not to eat them. When threatened, the ladybird creates an oily, yellow liquid that comes out of its legs and apparently it tastes horrible.

The scientific name for a ladybird is a Coccinellidae. In North America the tiny insect is called a ladybug, but how did the ladybird get its name? It doesn't look a bit like a lady or a bird and it certainly isn't a bug. Legend suggests that it got the name 'ladybird' during the Middle ages (hundreds of years ago). Farmers in Britain were plagued by pests like aphids. The farmers prayed to Jesus' mother also known as the 'Blessed Lady' or the Virgin Mary, asking her to help to save them from the pests that were eating their crops. At that time, in biblical paintings, the Virgin Mary was pictured wearing a red cloak. After the farmers had prayed, swarms of tiny red beetles with seven black spots appeared in the fields. The tiny beetles ate the aphids and pests that were destroying the farmer's crops. Flying in with a red body and seven black spots representing 7 happy events and 7 sad events in Mary's life, the people thanked God and named it 'Our Lady's bird', which eventually became ladybird.

Last Sunday (or this Sunday) marks the beginning of a time in the church calendar called Advent. Advent means 'arrival' and during Advent, Christians remember the events that led up to the arrival or birth of Jesus Christ. In the legend, the 'Lady' in Ladybird is Mary the mother of Jesus. Passages from the Bible are read out during Advent that describe the advent of Jesus.

A story from the beginning of a book in the Bible called Luke, describes how the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her that she was going to give birth to God's Son, Jesus. Just before this passage, Luke explains that Mary's cousin Elizabeth was going to give birth to a baby who would eventually grow up and became known as John the Baptist.

Luke 1:26-38 (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!"

"I am the Lord's servant," said Mary; "may it happen to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

In the legend of how the Ladybird got its name, people prayed to Mary. Many Christians still pray to Mary today. In the legend of the Ladybird, people were thankful that God (or Mary) sent the red spotted beetle, it saved their crops from being eaten by little bugs and so saved the people from starvation. In a passage of the Bible that was written hundreds of years before Jesus was born there is another passage that is read during advent. It describes the coming of Jesus.

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NLT) *For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity.*

For many Christians, Advent is a time to remember Jesus coming into the world to bring about peace, fairness and justice. In the legend of the Ladybird, the Our Lady's bird came to help. During Advent many Christians think about how they can bring peace, fairness and justice into this world today.

Time to reflect

- How did the Ladybird help the farmers?
- What do the words, peace, fairness and justice mean?
- Why does Advent remind some Christians to try and work for peace, fairness and justice?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Christmas is often thought of as a time of peace. May we be reminded that we can bring about peace, fairness and justice in our own lives and the lives of others. *(Amen)*

13.2 Ladybird's Spots Of Joy

Can you remember the name of the tiny red insect with black spots that we heard about yesterday? Can you recall how it got its name?

There are many species of Ladybird. Ladybirds come in many different colours and they have different numbers of spots depending on their species. A common species in the UK is called the Coccinella Septempunctata. It is red with seven spots, (septem in the name means seven). To help remember the life of Mary, Jesus' mother, some Christians focus on seven happy events and seven sad events in her life, these are called Mary's Seven Joys and Seven Sorrows. In the legend of how the Ladybird got its name the seven spots became a reminder of Mary's Seven Joys and Seven Sorrows. Two of Mary's Joys took place in the lead up to Jesus' birth and are remembered during the time of Advent.

The first Joy of Mary is called the Annunciation. The Annunciation is when the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus, as we heard yesterday, the Angel said *"God is pleased with you. You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and people will call him the Son of the Most High. His kingdom will never end"*.

The second Joy is called the Visitation. Mary probably travelled about 80 miles (130km) to visit her cousin Elizabeth who was also expecting a baby. The Bible describes this visit:

Soon afterward Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby moved within her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said in a loud voice, "You are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the child you will bear! Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord's mother comes to visit me? For as soon as I heard your greeting, the baby within me jumped with gladness. How happy you are to believe that the Lord's message to you will come true!" Luke 1:39-45 GNT

In a passage that follows, Mary describes how she is feeling… *'from now on people will call me happy, because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me.'* Luke 1:48 GNT

Time to reflect

- What did the Ladybird's spots represent?
- What things remind you of the good times in your life?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Christmas is often thought of as a time of peace. May we be reminded that we can bring about peace, fairness and justice in our own lives and the lives of others. *(Amen)*



13.3 What's in a Name?

This week we have heard about how the Ladybird got its name. In Germany the Ladybird is called a Marienkäfer which literally means Mary's beetle. In Russian the Ladybird is called божья коровка (bozh'ya korovka) which literally means God's little cow, probably because it has spots like a cow. In Holland the Ladybird is called Lieveheersbeestje which means 'dear Lord's little bug'.

During Advent and Christmas, Jesus is given lots of different names. They are in many of the Bible readings that are read and the Carols that are sung. Jesus will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Immanuel, God with us, the Good Shepherd, Messiah and Peace. These are just a few. When Jesus grew up he taught people about love, kindness, forgiveness and peace. Many Christians believe that the names are used to describe who Jesus is and what he is like.

What names have been used by ***others*** to describe who you are and what you are like? How would you feel if you were called nice, kind, lovely, witty, funny, pretty, handsome, cute, sporty or arty? These are all nice words. What words would ***you*** use to describe the person you think you are? Tidy, organised, happy, smiley? I would like to be called… **(You Choose)**? What do I need to do to make sure that I'm called…

Time to reflect

- What names have you been called that describe you?
- What names would you like to be called?
- What do you need to do to earn the name?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Christmas is often thought of as a time of peace. May we be reminded that we can bring about peace, fairness and justice in our own lives and the lives of others. *(Amen)*



13.4 Kind Words Bring Life

Yesterday, we thought about the good names that describe some of our good qualities. There are also names that some people use that can make us feel upset or hurt. Today we are going to think about what can happen if we are regularly called bad names.

There is an old saying… 'Sticks and stones can break my bones, but names will never hurt me.' Well, this is not true! One Bible proverb says 'Kind words bring life, but cruel words crush your spirit' (Proverbs 15:4 GNT). This proverb states that cruel words can crush us. Bad and unkind words can leave us feeling broken. Nine people can say a kind word but it might only take one person to say one unkind word and it can ruin our day.

It is often said that we are responsible for our actions, because our actions can help or hurt others. We are also responsible for our words, because our words can help or hurt others.

Time to reflect

What can we do to help us use more kind words and reduce the dangers of the cruel words?

Reduce or stop the unkind words

– We all say things that we don't mean, but we can all try to stop using cruel words. If we know that we can 'crush someone's spirit' with our unkind words and if we know how 'crushed' we can feel if someone calls us unkind names it can remind us not to call each other names in the first place.

Keep hold of the kind words

– There are many kind words that are spoken to you, remind yourself of them as often as you can.

Know how you react

– Different people react differently to the cruel names that people call them. Some names can crush us more than others. Know which words can hurt you and decide to believe that they are not true before someone calls you them again.

Kind words bring life

– If you see someone that has just been crushed by the cruel words of others, remember that 'kind words bring life'. Go over to them and use kind words.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Christmas is often thought of as a time of peace. May we be reminded that we can bring about peace, fairness and justice in our own lives and the lives of others. *(Amen)*



13.5 Prince of Peace

This week we have covered a number of different topics. We have thought about how the Ladybird got its name. We have thought about how the seven Ladybird spots represent the Seven Joys and the Seven Sorrows of Mary. Two of these events are remembered during the time of Advent. We have also thought about the power of the words we say and the names we call each other.

In the Bible passage that is read at many Carol services during December and that we heard at the beginning of this week, Jesus is described as the Prince of Peace. Peace is a word that is often used during Advent and Christmas. It will be said during Christmas Carol concerts, during Nativity plays and written in countless number of Christmas cards. I wonder if hearing the word peace will bring peace on earth.

On Wednesday we thought about the names that we would like to be called. If you would like to be called friendly, you need to be friendly. If you want to be called kind, then you would need to do kind things. Peace on earth starts with our actions and the actions of those around us. It is difficult to imagine 'peace on earth', but we can all do things that bring about peace to the people we know and the places we live.

Time to reflect

Discuss what we can do to bring peace on earth.

- Restoring friendships
- Saying kind words
- Making or giving presents to those who wouldn't normally get them or who are lonely.

You may want to discuss Justice as a form of peace on earth… e.g. buying ethically or sustainably this Christmas. Why does buying ethically help bring peace or justice to the person who made it?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Christmas is often thought of as a time of peace. May we be reminded that we can bring about peace, fairness and justice in our own lives and the lives of others. *(Amen)*



14.1 Peace on Earth and Goodwill to Men

In many Nativity plays during this time of year, you may hear the phrase, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and goodwill toward men." The phrase 'peace on earth' is often found on Christmas cards and sung in Christmas Carols like Hark the Herald Angels Sing. The carol 'Silent Night' gives the impression that Christmas is a time of peace and relaxation. But for many people Christmas time is quite the opposite. Lots of practising for Christmas productions. Adults, like parents and teachers may rush around to ensure that presents are bought and wrapped, cards are sent and food is prepared. Lots of bright lights and Christmas songs playing on a loop in every shop may not help people to enjoy a peaceful Christmas.

Peace on earth and goodwill towards everybody is a hope that many people have, and not just at Christmas time. The angels said this to the Shepherds after they were told that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. One definition of the word peace is not being disturbed, another definition is a time in which there is no war. It would be nice to live in a world where everybody could live in peace without the fear of others disturbing that peace.

2000 years ago, the Shepherds around Bethlehem would probably have had a bad reputation. Writings at the time warned people not to trust Shepherds calling them dishonest. It was advised not to buy wool, milk or lambs from Shepherds as they would most likely have been stolen. Shepherds were not allowed to be witnesses in a court of law because their words could not be trusted. The angels appeared to Shepherds. "Peace on earth and goodwill toward men." How would you feel if you were a Shepherd



and were told that the angels wanted goodwill towards people who probably didn't like you?

The Shepherds were probably Jewish, and although the Jewish people were living in the land their families had lived in for centuries, at that time, Israel was actually ruled by the Roman empire. Not only did the angels want goodwill to those that probably didn't like the Shepherds, but they also suggested goodwill towards the people that had taken over their land.

Goodwill is one word made up of two others, 'good', which I think we all know the meaning of and 'will' which in this case means a decision or determination. Goodwill literally means that you can decide to make sure that good things happen to other people. A dictionary describes goodwill as being friendly and helpful. How determined are you to be helpful to other people at this time of year? Were the angels suggesting to the Shepherds that they should be friendly and helpful to those that didn't like them or even those that they may have called their enemy.

Can anyone remember the Golden Rule? Treat other people as you would want

them to treat you or love your neighbour as yourself. Do you think the Golden Rule includes being friendly and helpful towards others? If everybody acted on this rule do you think we could live in a world where everybody could live in peace without the fear of others disturbing that peace.

Whose responsibility is it to obey the Golden Rule? This is a short story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

Once upon a time there was an important rule called the Golden Rule. Everybody was sure that Somebody would obey the Golden Rule. Anybody could have obeyed the Golden Rule, but Nobody obeyed the Golden Rule. Somebody got angry about that, because it was a rule for Everybody. Everybody thought Anybody should obey the Golden Rule, but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't obey the Golden Rule. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Who ended up obeying the Golden Rule in this story? Why? Everybody thought that Someone else could do it. I wonder if anybody ever chooses not to be kind and friendly because they think that it is a job for someone else. 'Goodwill towards men', is an important piece of advice that has the ability to bring peace into the communities and families that we live in and it is something that we can all do. Are you determined to be friendly and helpful to everyone this Christmas?

Time to reflect

- What does the term goodwill mean?
- How do you feel when people show goodwill to you?
- How can you show goodwill towards others?
- When is it difficult to show goodwill towards others?

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 and bring about peace and goodwill to all that we meet this Christmas time. *(Amen)*



14.2 Goodwill To All

Can anyone remember the phrase that we thought about yesterday? Peace on earth and goodwill to men. What did the word goodwill mean? Goodwill means being friendly and helpful.

Time to reflect

Describe a time when someone showed goodwill to you.

- How did it make you feel?

Describe a time when you showed goodwill to another person.

- How do you think it made them feel?

- Think of ways in which we can show goodwill to our friends.
- Think of ways in which we can show goodwill to our family.
- Think of ways in which we can show goodwill to our community.
- Think of ways in which we can show goodwill to people with different beliefs.
- Think of ways in which we can show goodwill to elderly people.
- Think of ways in which we can show goodwill to the environment.
- Think of ways in which we can show goodwill to people we have never met.

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 and bring about peace and goodwill to all that we meet this Christmas time. *(Amen)*



14.3 Inner Peace on Earth

This week we have been thinking about how to encourage peace and goodwill to others. Today and for the rest of this week we are going to think about the benefits of peaceful and quiet times in our own lives.

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 quiet time or '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 rest 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.

It is not just at Christmas time that we find it hard 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, poor behaviour or illness.

Time to reflect

- Do you agree with the advice about not looking at a tablet or phone thirty minutes before bed?
- Can your actions affect how happy or sad you feel?
- Can your actions make you grumpy?
- What actions can make you feel peaceful?

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)*



14.4 Peace on Earth and Peace in Here!

Yesterday we thought about peace on earth and in our own lives. Today we are going think about the benefits of having a time of silence or peace, especially at a busy time like Christmas.

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.
- Improves 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.

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

- Are you surprised with any of the benefits of a regular timeout?

Discuss the various ways in which pupils could take a timeout.

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)*



14.5 Peace Out

Today's thought for this week will allow the pupils to practise being silent by taking a time out. 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)*



15.1 Nativity Art

Preparation

From Tuesday the thoughts for the day will encourage pupils to look and discuss artwork that depicts the nativity story. There are some good articles online about how to use fine art with children and questions will be included in the 'time to reflect' opportunities. Please find a good quality version of the image to show the pupils.

Possible images: Nativity scene. Image referenced in this assembly can be found by searching: 'sarcophagus severa indeovi vas' and 'Wise men of Ravenna'.



What do you think of when you hear the word Christmas? If you were to type in 'Christmas' to google images, what images do you think you would see? Today we are going to think about the events of the first Christmas. Can anyone tell me what a nativity is? Would anyone like to describe a nativity scene for me? The term nativity, means the event of a person's birth. If you told me when and where you were born, you would be telling me about your nativity.

Images surrounding the birth of Jesus have been included in Christian art from the 4th century. The birth of Jesus can be found in two New Testament books in the Bible. The Gospel of Matthew tells the account of the Angel Gabriel meeting Joseph in a dream and telling him about Jesus' birth. Matthew also includes the visit from the wise men including the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Matthew doesn't call them kings and he doesn't say how many there were. Matthew also describes how and Joseph and Mary escaped to Egypt when king Herod wanted to get rid of Jesus. Matthew includes two parts of the nativity story, the others are found in the Gospel of Luke.

The Gospel of Luke includes a story about Mary's cousin Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah. They find out that Elizabeth is going to give birth to a son who will grow up to become known as 'John the Baptist'. Luke provides the account of how Gabriel tells Mary that she is going to become the mother of a son, and she is to call him Jesus. This event is called the Annunciation. Luke writes that Mary visits Elizabeth when she finds out that she is pregnant. Luke also includes the account of the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, ordering everybody to go back to the place where they were born to register their birth and as a result, Joseph and Mary travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Luke records that there is no room in the inn so Jesus is born and laid in a feeding trough or manger. Luke includes the angel Gabriel's visit to the shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night and their visit to see Jesus. Luke doesn't include a stable or animals in his description of the birth of Jesus, but they are often found in Christian art about the nativity and included in nativity plays.



Some of the earliest art work that include images from Jesus' nativity date back to only a couple of hundred years after Jesus' life. Wealthy Roman citizens would dig burial chambers to bury their families and friends and decorate the coffins with statues or images of Roman Gods. Christians began copying this practice and engraved scenes from the life of Jesus on the coffins of their fellow believers. One of the oldest nativity themed images comes from one of these tombs. It is a picture of the three wise men presenting their gifts to Jesus, who is sitting on Mary's knee. **Image can be found by image searching – *'sarcophagus severa indeovi vas'*.** As Christianity spread, images of Jesus' birth were used to decorate churches and were also used in peoples' homes. A 1500-year-old mosaic of the wise men can be found in a church (Basilica di Sant' Apollinare Nuovo) in Ravenna, Italy. **Image search – Wise men of Ravenna.**

A famous Saint called Francis of Assisi is possibly the first person to create a 'real' nativity scene over 750 years ago. A fellow monk explains that in 1223 St Francis asked the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Honorious III, if he could set up an animal feeding trough, also called a manger, in a cave in the Italian village of Greccio. He also used two live animals, an ox and a male donkey (also called an ass). He then invited villagers to come and look at the scene while he told them the story of Jesus being born in Bethlehem. The hay that St Francis had used in the manger (or feeding trough) was fed to local cattle that were ill and it is said that it made them better again.

Nativity scenes became popular over the next couple of hundred years and they are still a way of remembering the Christmas story today.

There are now countless numbers of images of Jesus' nativity in art. Nativity scenes are included on stain glass windows, in paintings, in statues, in plays, films and of course on Christmas cards. For many Christians pictures are an important way to retell and remind people of the events that took place in the Bible. This week we are going to continue to explore the story of Advent and Christmas in some of these pieces of art.

Time to reflect

- How can pictures help us to tell a story?
- Do you have a favourite picture or picture story book?
- Have you taken part in a nativity play?
- Who did you play?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Many traditions and things we do have their roots in events long past, many of which we are completely unaware. As we celebrate our various traditions this year, may we not forget that we are linking with and reliving history. *(Amen)*



15.2 Mary

Preparation

Suggested Image: The Annunciation (c.1450) by Fra Angelico (Prado altarpiece).

There are lots of pieces of fine art that depict the Annunciation. Please choose one that you think the children will like. Please find a good quality version of the image to show the pupils.

Time to reflect

- Which part of the story has the artist painted?
- What do you think happened just before this picture?
- What do you think will happen just after?
- Can you describe what is going on in the painting?
- What colours has the artist used?
- How do we know it is Mary?
- How do we know it is Gabriel?
- Is this how you imagined the scene?
- What's happening in the background?
- What is the best part of the painting?
- How does it make you feel?
- Sum up the painting in one, two or three words.
- If you could ask the painter one question (about the painting) what would it be?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Many traditions and things we do have their roots in events long past, many of which we are completely unaware. As we celebrate our various traditions this year, may we not forget that we are linking with and reliving history. *(Amen)*



15.3 Joseph

Preparation

Suggested Image: 'The Dream of Saint Joseph' (c.1642-3) by Philippe de Champaigne

There are lots of pieces of fine art that depict Gabriel visiting Joseph in a dream. Please choose one that you think the children will like. Please find a good quality version of the image to show the pupils.

Can anyone remember the images that we saw yesterday? Today we are going to look at a piece of art work that reminds us of another part of the nativity story.

Time to reflect

- Which part of the story has the artist painted?
- What do you think happened just before this picture?
- What do you think will happen just after?
- Can you describe what is going on in the painting?
- What colours has the artist used?
- How do we know it is Joseph?
- Do we know what Joseph did for a job? Is this included in the picture? (What is at Joseph's feet?)
- How do we know it is Gabriel?
- Is this how you imagined the scene?
- What's happening in the background?
- What is the best part of the painting?
- How does it make you feel?
- Sum up the painting in one, two or three words.
- If you could ask the painter one question (about the painting) what would it be?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Many traditions and things we do have their roots in events long past, many of which we are completely unaware. As we celebrate our various traditions this year, may we not forget that we are linking with and reliving history. *(Amen)*



15.4 Shepherds

Preparation

Suggested Image: 'The adoration of the Shepherds' (1609) by Michelangelo Merisi (Caravaggio). There are lighter and darker versions of this piece, lighter ones show more detail, the darker ones have more atmosphere. Possibly show both.

There are lots of pieces of fine art that depict the shepherds. Please choose one that you think the children will like. Please find a good quality version of the image to show the pupils.

Can anyone remember the images that we saw yesterday? Today we are going to look at a piece of art work that reminds us of another part of the nativity story.

Time to reflect

- Which part of the story has the artist painted?
- What do you think happened just before this picture?
- What do you think will happen just after?
- Can you describe what is going on in the painting?
- What colours has the artist used?
- How do we know these are the shepherds?
- Can you describe what the shepherds are thinking?
- Is this how you imagined the scene?
- What's happening in the background?
- Can you see the ox and male donkey? (Who else included an ox and a donkey in a nativity scene? Answer: St Francis of Assisi)
- What is the best part of the painting?
- How does it make you feel?
- Sum up the painting in one, two or three words.
- If you could ask the painter one question (about the painting) what would it be?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Many traditions and things we do have their roots in events long past, many of which we are completely unaware. As we celebrate our various traditions this year, may we not forget that we are linking with and reliving history. Amen



15.5 Wise Men

Preparation

Suggested Image: 'The Magi Journeying' (c.1890) by James Tissot: or 'The Journey Of The Magi' (c.1433-35) by Sassetta (Stefano di Giovanni)

There are lots of pieces of fine art that depict the Magi or wise men. Please choose one that you think the children will like. Please find a good quality version of the image to show the pupils.

Can anyone remember the images that we saw yesterday? Today we are going to look at a piece of art work that reminds us of another part of the nativity story.

Time to reflect

- Which part of the story has the artist painted?
- What do you think happened just before this picture?
- What do you think will happen just after?
- Can you describe what is going on in the painting?
- What colours has the artist used?
- How do we know these are the wise men?
- Is this how you imagined the scene?
- What's happening in the background?
- What is the best part of the painting?
- How does it make you feel?
- Sum up the painting in one, two or three words.
- If you could ask the painter one question (about the painting) what would it be?

Tissot…

- What is missing from this picture?
- Where are the gifts?

Sassetta…

- What are the people in the middle looking at?
- Where is the star?
- Where are the gifts?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Many traditions and things we do have their roots in events long past, many of which we are completely unaware. As we celebrate our various traditions this year, may we not forget that we are linking with and reliving history. Amen



16.1 Traditional New Year

Preparation

If you haven't got these to hand, you could print them.

1. 12 grapes
2. Suitcase
3. Bell
4. Goggles
5. Paper plate
6. Animal mask
7. Coloured underpants
8. Ice-cream (Print)
9. TV (Print)
10. Plastic or paper cup

10 volunteers will each need to act out the tradition using the actual or printed item above. The first tradition involves eating 12 grapes, to reduce the risk of choking don't place the pupil under a time constraint and have a drink of water to hand. Make sure the pupil isn't allergic to grapes.

Throughout this week there are references to traditions from around the world and the home countries, if pupils (or you) celebrate variations of these traditions please email them to phil@simplycollectiveworship.co.uk

Do you or your family have any traditions that you do during Christmas or New Year? Traditions are an important part of community celebrations around the world. Today we are going to be thinking about New Year's Eve and New Year's Day traditions. I need ten volunteers to act out traditions from all over the world that take place on or around New Year.

Wording in bold is what the volunteer must act out before you explain the tradition.



Eat the twelve grapes (don't give the pupil a time limit, explain the tradition after the pupil has eaten the twelve grapes). The first tradition involves eating 12 grapes in 12 seconds and is popular in Spain. The 12 grapes and 12 seconds represent the 12 months of the new year. Being able to complete it will bring good luck for all 12 months.

Walk around the hall/room with a suitcase. The second tradition requires a suitcase. In some Latin American countries, like Colombia or Mexico some people carry a suitcase 'around the block' (around where they live) at midnight in hope that they will be able to travel in the new year. Sometimes whole families walk around with suitcases at midnight.

Ring a bell. On New Year's Eve, the traditional ceremony of Joya-No-Kane is held across Japan. Buddhist Temple bells are rung 108 times, representing the suffering of the old year. The bell ringing will finish on the stroke of midnight.

Put on goggles and pretend to dive and swim. In some cold countries like Russia, people will break the ice on lakes, put on goggles, a swimming costume or trunks and go for a New Year's Day swim. On the 19th January some Orthodox Christians cut the surface ice on lakes into a cross shaped swimming pool and then swim to remember

Jesus being baptised in the Jordan river by John the Baptist.

Throw the paper plate on the floor. In Denmark, it is traditional to keep your chipped and unwanted plates, dishes and cups and then on New Year's Eve, smash them against the door of a friend.

Hold up the animal mask. In Romania, mask-dances are popular on New Year's Eve. Masks of animals like goats, bears, or horses are worn and accompanied with a special dance. Some Romanians will not eat chicken or any other bird on New Year's Day just in case their luck flies away.

Hold up the underpants or pretend to put them on. Wearing different coloured underpants represents your hopes for the new year in Brazil. If you wear yellow underpants and the New Year begins, it means you hope for wealth and money in the year ahead. Red represents love and romance and green means that you hope for good health in the next 12 months. Wearing black underpants as the clock strikes midnight may bring you bad luck.

Drop the picture of the ice-cream on the floor. In Switzerland some people drop ice cream on the floor on New Year's Eve believing it will bring them wealth and money in the coming year.

Open an imaginary window and throw the picture of the TV through it. Although it is against the law in South Africa now, some people used to throw their old televisions, furniture and rubbish out of the window on New Year's Eve as they cleaned and prepared their house for the new year.

Open an imaginary window and throw a plastic or paper cup through it. In some Latin American countries, people throw a bucket of water out of a window on New Year's Eve (probably not including the bucket). This represents throwing away the suffering and tears of the old year before the New Year starts.

Today we have heard about ten traditions that take place in various countries around the world. During the rest of the week we are going to hear about New Year traditions that take place in our home nations – England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. During New Year and at various times throughout the year, people around the world take part in individual, family or community traditions as a way of marking special occasions. Many of the New Year traditions represent hope for the coming year. The hope of a holiday in the case of the suitcase, the hope of good health by wearing green underpants and the hope of a clean and orderly life by throwing stuff out of the window.

Time to reflect

- What do you hope for this year?
- Is there anything that you can do to help that hope come true?
- From the ten traditions you heard today, which is your favourite?
- Do you think everyone in those countries follow these traditions?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for individual, family and community traditions. We are thankful for new beginnings and fresh starts. This year, may our hopes come true, may our actions and our motivation enable us to make what we hope for become a reality. *(Amen)*

16.2 England

This week we are thinking about New Year's Eve and New Year's Day traditions. Yesterday we heard about 10 traditions from around the world, which was your favourite tradition? Today we are going to hear about some traditions that take place in England.

In the Northumberland village of Allendale, there is a procession through the streets on New Year's Eve that has been going on for over 150 years. 45 men, called 'Guisers', often in fancy dress, carry flaming barrels filled with tar on their heads. They parade through the village streets until they finally throw their barrels onto a bonfire. Only family members of previous Guisers are allowed to carry the barrels.

There is a tradition in Yorkshire to say "black rabbits" three times just before midnight and then "white rabbits" three times as the bells signal the new year believing it will bring you good luck for the next twelve months.

There are many traditions that probably no longer take place. It was once popular for young ladies to drop an egg white into water believing that the first letter of the name of the man they would marry would appear. Another tradition that probably doesn't take place today involved farmers placing a cake on the horns of a cow, singing a song and performing a dance. If the cake fell forwards the farmer would have good luck for the rest of the year.

Time to reflect

- Have you heard or seen any of the traditions mentioned today?
- What traditions do you do at or around New Year?
- What do you hope for this year?
- Is there anything that you can do to help that hope come true?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for individual, family and community traditions. We are thankful for new beginnings and fresh starts. This year, may our hopes come true, may our actions and our motivation enable us to make what we hope for become a reality. *(Amen)*



16.3 Ireland

This week we are thinking about New Year's Eve and New Year's Day traditions. Yesterday we heard about four traditions from England, can you remember what they were? Today we are going to hear about traditions that take place around New Year in Ireland.

In Ireland, bad luck and evil spirits can be chased away by banging bread on the wall. The tradition encourages good luck in the hope that there will be plenty of bread in the coming year.

For some in Ireland, the first person to enter your house on New Year's Day could either bring good luck or bad luck for the coming year depending on who they are. A handsome man with dark hair will bring a year of good fortune. Some families would send a dark-haired male from the family to walk out the front door and then be the first person to walk back in.

Another New Year's Day tradition involves visitors entering your house by the front door, but they must leave by the back door. Leaving through the front door will bring bad luck.

Time to reflect

Discuss the meaning of the following Irish Blessing…

"Count your blessings instead of your crosses.

Count your gains instead of your losses.

Count your joys instead of your woes.

Count your friends instead of your foes.

Count your smiles instead of your tears.

Count your courage instead of your fears.

Count your full times instead of your lean.

Count your kind deeds instead of your mean.

Count your health instead of your wealth.

Love your neighbour as much as yourself."

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for individual, family and community traditions. We are thankful for new beginnings and fresh starts. This year, may our hopes come true, may our actions and our motivation enable us to make what we hope for become a reality. *(Amen)*



16.4 Scotland

This week we are thinking about New Year's Eve and New Year's Day traditions. Yesterday we heard about three traditions from Ireland, can you remember what they were? Today we are going to hear about some of the many traditions that take place in Scotland.

Christmas has not always been a country wide celebration and Christmas was actually banned in England and Scotland in 1644 until about 1660. The Scottish church didn't place the importance on Christmas in the same way that the English church did. Up until the 1950's Christmas was a 'normal' working day for many people in Scotland. Christmas became a public holiday in England and Wales in 1871 but it didn't become a public holiday in Scotland until 1958. Whilst the celebration of Christmas is relatively new, the celebrations and traditions around New Year go back much further.

Hogmanay is the name given to the Scottish celebration at New Year. Hogmanay is thought to have its roots in the Vikings coming to Scotland over 1100 years ago. Processions with traditional bagpipes, drums and flaming torches take place across Scotland. A flaming torch is often a wooden pole tightly bound with rags at the top that are lit. In Comrie, Perthshire, the flaming torches are made out of long, thick birch branches. In Stonehaven in Aberdeenshire giant fireballs are swung around on long metal poles whilst parading through the town. Edinburgh's Hogmanay celebrations are the biggest with hundreds of thousands of people flocking to the city to welcome in the new year.

On New Year's Day the tradition of 'first footing' involves a dark-haired man being the first person to set foot in the house carrying items that will bring good luck in the coming year. The items vary for different families and regions. Common items are coal, bread, money and salt. What do you think these items represent? Coal to represent heat and warmth. Bread representing food. Money represents wealth. Salt is called a preservative which means it makes things last longer.

Auld Lang Syne is sung across the UK at New Year. Although versions of it were sung to the same tune for over 300 years the version that is sung today was written by a famous Scottish poet called Robert Burns, who published the song in 1788.

Time to reflect

- Why do you think the New Year celebration of Hogmanay is such a big deal in Scotland?
- Have you been to a Hogmanay celebration? What was it like?
- If not, what do you think it would be like?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for individual, family and community traditions. We are thankful for new beginnings and fresh starts. This year, may our hopes come true, may our actions and our motivation enable us to make what we hope for become a reality. *(Amen)*



16.5 Wales

This week we are thinking about New Year's Eve and New Year's Day traditions. Yesterday we heard about three traditions from Scotland, can you remember what they were? Today we are going to hear about some of the traditions that take place in Wales.

Calennig is a Welsh custom in which groups of young boys used to knock on the doors of people in their community and wish them good health and prosperity for the coming year singing to the inhabitants and splashing them with water. The boys may have given the householder an apple decorated with twigs, cloves, dried fruit and holly. In return the children would receive gifts of food or money.

In Wales there were many traditions that took place on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Plygain is the custom of Welsh men meeting at the church or chapel at 3am on Christmas morning to sing Christmas carols for three or more hours.

On Christmas Eve, Noson Gyflaith or toffee evening involved boiling toffee in a pan. Bits of the toffee or taffy were then dropped in ice cold water. The taffy would curl into all sorts of shapes, some families hoped the taffy would form the first letter of the name of the person, that younger family members would end up marrying.

Mari Lwyd is a horse's skull and jaw bone that was decorated with bells and draped with a white sheet on a pole that would be paraded through the streets of Welsh towns and villages by a group that would knock on doors and hurl abuse (in Welsh) at the people inside, who in turn would say offensive things back (in Welsh). Then the group would go in to the house for a drink before moving on. Some Welsh towns are reviving a version of this tradition.

Time to reflect

This week we have heard about lots of traditions that take place around the world during New Year.

- Do you think everybody from a country celebrates with the same traditions?
- Are there traditions from the UK that you have never heard of before?
- Do you think different communities and families might practice the same traditions but in a slightly different way?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for individual, family and community traditions. We are thankful for new beginnings and fresh starts. This year, may our hopes come true, may our actions and our motivation enable us to what we hope for become a reality. *(Amen)*

Throughout this week there are references to traditions from around the world and the home countries, if pupils (or you) celebrate variations of these traditions please email them to phil@simplycollectiveworship.co.uk

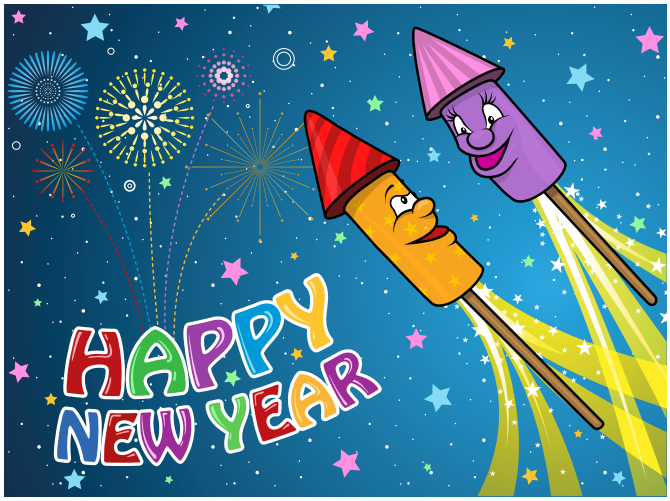


17.1 Resolution Resolve

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



Last week we explored various New Year's Day and New Year's Eve traditions from around the world. Many of the traditions that we explored are thought to bring the person good luck in the new year. Can anyone remember any of the lucky traditions? Eating 12 grapes, carrying a suitcase at midnight, different coloured underpants or throwing water out of the window are all ways that people from around the world practice their traditions. Can anyone describe what we mean by the word luck? If someone is described as lucky, then we think of good things happening to that person without them really doing anything to make them happen or a person being successful without really trying.

For some people traditions are the practices that have been repeated by their family or community for many years. Other people complete the traditions in the hope that good things will happen to them in the coming year. In the tradition of first footing, it is considered good luck for a dark-haired male to be the first person to enter your house on New Year's Day. There is one explanation as to why people practice this tradition that may explain why is it considered 'lucky'. The Vikings were a group of people originally from Scandinavian countries like Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The people of Britain first saw the Vikings as they approached British shores in long boats. The people of Britain welcomed the new visitors, but the Vikings fought them instead, burning their buildings and stealing from their churches. Vikings are often pictured as big men with blonde hair. Does having a blonde-haired person as the first person coming into your house on New Year's Day make it more likely that a Viking will attack during the year? Probably not, but you can imagine how this tradition began.

New Year traditions are not the only things people do in the hope that good things will happen in the New Year. Can anyone tell me what a New Year's resolution is? A New Year's resolution is a decision to do something or not do something over the coming year. These are popular New Year's resolutions that adults or children will make this year. For each one can you tell me what they are hoping for? Some of them are very similar.

1. Do more exercise
2. Save money
3. Play an instrument
4. Read more



5. Eat more healthy food
6. Join a gym
7. Recycle more
8. Play more sport
9. Keep a tidier house/bedroom
10. Be kinder

If a person wants to get fit, what do they need to do? What does someone need to do if he or she wants to get better at playing an instrument? What would you need to do if you wanted to get better at playing football, basketball or netball?

The word 'resolution' means a strong decision to do or not do something. It is very common for people to make New Year's resolutions and lots and lots of people make them each year. If we play more sport as an example, the decision to play more sport is only the start. To benefit from the resolution, you would need to play more sport! This will probably involve joining a sports club, playing the sport when you don't feel like it and putting up with the tired and aching limbs as you slowly get better. You may need to overcome the feelings of disappointment as you realise that you need to practise skills that you think you can't do… yet.

In a New Year's resolution survey, one in three adults gave up trying to achieve their resolution before the end of January. Many more people didn't make it to the end of the year. People give up on their New Year's resolutions not because they didn't really want to lose weight, get fit or play an instrument, but rather they found that they couldn't keep up with the actions that go with their decision.

Can you remember what the word 'resolution' means? A strong decision to do or not to do something. The word resolution sounds like a word that has a similar meaning. The word 'resolve' can also mean a strong decision. If you are a determined or stubborn person, you may be described as a person with strong resolve. Resolution also contains the word, solution. A person may be resolved to see a problem through until they find a solution. What are the various solutions to the New Year's resolutions we mentioned earlier?

Adults and some children may make New Year's resolutions, but we all set ourselves targets. Our targets may include improving our reading and writings skills, solving maths problems, becoming a better friend, getting better at a sport or playing a musical instrument. To meet our targets, we will require the resolve to see them through.

Jesus told a parable that provides good advice to anyone who wants to improve their resolve and reach their targets. He describes three attitudes that will stop people from meeting their goals. Jesus also describes the conditions that will help the seed to grow and reach its full potential. **Show the parable or read the parable of the Sower and the Seeds.** We will explore the advice in our thoughts for this week.

Time to reflect

- Have you made a New Year's resolution?
- What are your current school targets?
- What did the word resolve mean? How can you improve your resolve?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that the decision to do something better or to stop doing something is just the beginning. Help us to find the resolve to see our decision through to a solution. *(Amen)*

17.2 The Path

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

Can anyone remember the theme of yesterday's assembly? We thought about the meaning of the words 'resolution' and 'resolve'. This week we are going to think about our attitudes as we resolve to achieve our targets and reach our potential. In the parable of the Sower and the Seeds that we heard yesterday Jesus described four different attitudes towards reaching our targets. What does the word 'attitude' mean?

Show or read the parable of the Sower and the Seeds.

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 (or a target) by a teacher or another important adult at school or at home and we decide that we are not going to do it. We might think that we can't do it or that it is too hard or we might not do it because we just don't want to.

Make your bed, be nice to your little sister, learn your 8 times table, practise your speed sound, 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. In reaching our goals, it is not good to be like the path.

Time to reflect

- What sort of attitude is described by the path?
- Could you achieve a New Year's resolution with this attitude?
- Is the resolve (a strong decision) in the example of the path the opposite of the resolve needed to achieve your goals or targets? i.e. can you have the resolve not to meet your target?
- 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)*



17.3 The Rocky Soil

Can anyone remember the theme of yesterday's thought for the day? This week we thought about the meaning of the words 'resolution' and 'resolve'. We are thinking about our attitudes as we resolve to achieve our targets and reach our potential. In the parable of the Sower and the Seeds what sort of attitude does the example of the path describe?

The second type of ground that Jesus described in the parable of the Sower and the Seeds 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

- What sort of attitude is described by the rocky soil?
- Can you think of a time when you were like the rocky soil?
- Sometimes we run out of motivation because we find it too hard or we make a mistake and give up. What can help motivate someone to reach their potential?
  - Knowing that we learn from our mistakes
  - Receiving encouragement from our friends and teachers
  - Pushing on to see success
  - Knowing others that have found things difficult but reached their potential

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Thank you for the potential that we have in all of us, we ask that you would help us to find the energy, effort and motivation to make that potential a reality. Help us to make the most of the seeds that are given to us today. *(Amen)*



17.4 The Thorns

Can anyone remember the theme of yesterday's thought for the day? This week we thought about the meaning of the words 'resolution' and 'resolve'. We are thinking about our attitudes as we resolve to achieve our targets and reach our potential. In the parable of the Sower and the Seeds what sort of attitude does the example of the rocky soil describe?

The third type of ground can be found in all schools, places of work and occasionally in our own thoughts. The seed fell amongst thorns and weeds. 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 the 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.

The weeds and thorns can be like the things that we tell ourselves that stop us from reaching our potential. How often do you give up on achieving your target because you tell yourself you can't do it? Imagine if someone thinks they can't learn to ride a bike because they keep on thinking about the time that they fell off, or a baby that gives up trying to walk because they keep remembering the time they fell over. What advice would you give them?

Time to reflect

- What sort of attitude is described by the weeds and the thorns?
- What advice would you give yourself when you think you can't?
- 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. Remind us of the achievements of our past and may they provide us with hope for our future successes. *(Amen)*



17.5 The Good Soil

Can anyone remember the theme of yesterday's thought for the day? This week we have thought about the meaning of the words 'resolution' and 'resolve'. We are thinking about our attitudes as we resolve to achieve our targets and reach our potential. In the parable of the Sower and the Seeds what sort of attitude does the example of the weeds and thorns describe?

So far we have explored the three types of ground that can stop us from reaching our potential. 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.

The perfect environment for us to be able achieve our goals is if we decide that they are important, if we feed the goals 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 goals, targets and New Year's resolution that will grow are the ones we resolve or 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.

Time to reflect

- What attitude is described by the good soil?
- 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)*



18.1 Resolution Foundation

Preparation

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 courtesy of www.max7.org



Can anyone remember the theme of last week's assembly and thoughts for the day? We thought about New Year's resolutions, we also thought about the parable of the Sower and the Seeds and the advice that we can gain from it about reaching our goals and targets. Can anyone remember what the word 'resolution' means? It means a strong decision to do or not to do something. What do you need to decide to do if you want to read more books this year? Make time to read or select books that are interesting. What do you need to decide not to do if you want to read more books this year? You may need to decide not to watch as much TV or not play computer games as often. If you want to play an instrument, get better at a sport or even become a better friend, there are decisions that you can make that will help.

To help us think about how important our decisions are we are going to explore another of Jesus' parables.

(Adapted from Matthew 7:24-27) Jesus told a famous parable about two men who wanted to build themselves a house each. The first man sought out a spot that would be ideal for his house. He found a plot of land that had a very firm base. Jesus said that he built his house 'on the rock'. The second man found his spot straight away, no searching for him. He did not 'waste' his time looking for a solid or firm base. Jesus said that this man built his house on the sand. Both men completed their houses and sat down in front of the telly (not in the Bible version). One evening, not long after both men had completed their houses, it started raining. Both men had to turn the volume up on the telly as the wind outside was making it hard to hear. One house was bolted to the rock, it didn't move, and the man sat safely in his house. It wasn't so for the other house, the sand that it was on moved in the wind, the foundations began to give way, and the house came tumbling down.

Jesus spent a lot of his time teaching people about how they should treat others and how they should live their lives. Jesus told this parable at the end of one of his most famous teaching sessions' known as the 'Sermon on the Mount'. Jesus said that those who act on his words were like those who build on good foundations, those who choose to ignore them build their lives on poor foundations. The decisions that we make now will become the foundations of



how successful we will be in the future. Any professional sports person or musician will advise you that practise is the key to getting better. We may know this advice, but only by acting on it and practising will we become a better musician or sports person. They would also advise you to practise something that you probably can't do rather than repeatedly practising something that you find easy.

This is the parable of the wise and foolish piano players. Both piano players had made the New Year's resolution that they would pass their grade 2 piano by the end of the year. They had already passed their grade 1. In the final piano grade 2 exam, both piano players would need to play three pieces chosen from specific lists of music. They would need to learn to play 15 scales and arpeggios. They would also need to play a piece of music without seeing it before and then complete an aural test which involves listening to various pieces of music and completing a number of activities. Both players decided on their three pieces, the wise piano player picked ones that she felt challenging. Over the year she practised the three pieces, learnt her scales and arpeggios and played new pieces without seeing them before. She even asked her grandma to test her on the listening activities. The foolish piano player picked the three pieces of music that he thought might be the easiest. Over the year he rarely picked up the music because he found it difficult. To make himself feel better he sometimes played the grade 1 pieces he'd done last year. A few weeks before the exam, he didn't play the scales and arpeggios, instead he looked at them and hoped for the best. How well do you think he did at the piano exam?

What were the steps in building the house on firm foundations and passing the piano exam? In both stories, the wise builder and wise piano player were called wise because they worked hard to achieve what they wanted. The foolish builder and foolish piano player were both called foolish because they had the potential to be successful, but wasted that potential.

Time to reflect

- Why were the wise builder and the wise piano player successful?
- What stopped the foolish builder and foolish piano player from reaching their potential?
- What do you need to do today to help you reach your potential or move a little more towards achieving your goals?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Help us to take the good lessons that our teachers, important adults and other pupils give us in our school and at home and turn them into a good foundation that will help and support us now and in the future. Help us to be wise in our decisions and our actions. *(Amen)*



18.2 The Wise Builder

Yesterday we heard the parable of the wise and the foolish builders. Can anyone summarise the parable? Jesus said that those who acted on his words were like the man who built his house on good foundations. In school, you will receive lots of words, some about learning, some about caring, some about sharing and lots of others. Many of these will help us all to build a good and solid school community as well as prepare us for the future. The learning may help you to secure a good job. The caring and sharing will help us to help each other. A person who cares is usually someone who is also cared about by others.

The man in our story put in the effort to take the time to find the correct spot, it would be difficult to fix his house to the rock, but he knew that it would pay off in the future. By working hard now, he was helping himself in the future. It is the same with school. If a job is worth doing, it's worth doing well. A little more effort in lessons, trying to say and do the right things are all good preparation for the future.

Time to reflect

- 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)

Help us to understand that what we do today will have an effect on our future and that school is helping to prepare us for the rest of our lives. Help us to put in the effort now so that we can see the benefits later. *(Amen)*



18.3 The Foolish Builder

Can anyone recount the parable of the wise and foolish builders? What actions make good foundations? The foolish builder built his house on soft foundations, foundations that ultimately ruined his life. He lost his house and it left him in the same position he was before, needing to build a house. Is it easier to live life by listening to good advice or by learning from your own mistakes? The answer is acting on the good advice but in reality, we all probably need a bit of both, but some people live from one mistake to another. Each time they make a mistake they need to pick up the pieces and start again. Some people may learn from their mistakes, next time starting with stronger foundations. Other people don't learn from their mistakes and are always 'left picking up the pieces'. Learning to think before we act is the key to making sure that we make the correct choices. In the version of the story we heard, the sand was an easy option, the man could build straight away. The walls could have been easier to secure to the sand, like putting tent pegs into grass. Taking the easy option isn't the wisest choice, it ended up costing this man his home.

Time to reflect

- Can you think of a time when you had to learn from your mistakes?
- What advice have you acted on recently that has helped you?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Help us to take the good lessons that our teachers, important adults and other pupils give us in our school and at home and turn them into a good foundation that will help and support us now and in the future. Help us to be wise in our decisions and our actions. *(Amen)*



18.4 Parable of the Wise Piano Player

Can anyone remember a parable of Jesus that we have been thinking about this week? We also heard a similar story about the wise and foolish piano players. We are going to revisit the parable of the wise and foolish piano players today.

This is the parable of the wise and foolish piano players. Both piano players had made the New Year's resolution that they would pass their grade 2 piano by the end of the year. They had already passed their grade 1. In the final piano grade 2 exam, both piano players would need to play three pieces chosen from specific lists of music. They would need to learn to play 15 scales and arpeggios. They would also need to play a piece of music without seeing it before and then complete an aural test which involves listening to various pieces of music and completing a number of activities. Both players decided on their three pieces, the wise piano player picked ones that she felt challenging. Over the year she practised the three pieces, learnt her scales and arpeggios and played new pieces without seeing them before. She even asked her grandma to test her on the listening activities. The foolish piano player picked the three pieces of music that he thought might be the easiest. Over the year he rarely picked up the music because he found it difficult. To make himself feel better he sometimes played the grade 1 pieces he'd done last year. A few weeks before the exam, he didn't play the scales and arpeggios, instead he looked at them and hoped for the best. How well do you think he did at the piano exam?

Time to reflect

The parable of the wise and foolish piano players is obviously a re-written version of the parable of the wise and foolish builders.

- Can you think of different characters you could include in this story?
- (musician, friend, sports person, student/ learner, rock climber etc…)
- What actions would he or she need to do to be called wise?
- What actions would he or she need to do to be called foolish?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Help us to take the good lessons that our teachers, important adults and other pupils give us in our school and at home and turn them into a good foundation that will help and support us now and in the future. Help us to be wise in our decisions and our actions. *(Amen)*



18.5 Practise Makes Perfect

Can anyone tell me what a proverb is? A proverb is a wise saying. 'Practise makes perfect' is a proverb or saying that is the foundation of many successful musicians or sports people. Most people practise until they get it right, professionals practise until they can't get it wrong. Buildings stand proud and strong but their foundations can't be seen, they're hidden. Practise for many musicians isn't heard by anybody but themselves and maybe their families. We don't see athletes getting up at 5 am and running around the sports track, but we see and applaud them when they stand on the podium to receive their medals. The mark of your spelling test can be shown to family and friends, but preparation is hidden at home. A final project can be placed on the wall of your classroom, but no one knows the research that has gone into it.

Time to reflect

- What do you need to practise?
- What do you like to practise?
- Is it better to practise what you can't do or repeat what you can do?
- Can people guess what your foundations (or your goals/targets/ New Year resolutions) are by looking at what you do?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Help us to take the good lessons that our teachers, important adults and other pupils give us in our school and at home and turn them into a good foundation that will help and support us now and in the future. Help us to be wise in our decisions and our actions. *(Amen)*



19.1 Martin Luther King

Can anybody tell me the name of a famous person and the reason why they are famous? There are many reasons why people are famous. Some people are famous for being kind. Can anyone give me an example of someone who is remembered for being kind? (Mother Teresa). Some people are famous for a great sporting achievement. Does anyone know what Roger Bannister is remembered for? In 1954, Roger was the first person to run a mile in under 4 minutes. Some people are famous for their acts of science and discovery. Does anyone know what Neil Armstrong is famous for? In 1969 Neil Armstrong was the first human to step foot on the moon. Famous people are famous for all sorts of reasons. Music, art, their position in society. This morning we are going to think about the life of a man who was famous for his words.

In the United States of America, the third Monday in January marks the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. Martin Luther King was born 15th January 1929. At that time people in some places of the USA were segregated based on the colour of their skin. Segregated means separated or divided. Martin went to a school only for black children and because Martin was black, he couldn't play with white children. Martin went on to University to study Christian teachings. Whilst at University Martin met and married his wife, Corretta Scott. Whilst finishing his PhD (the highest degree you can earn) Martin became the minister of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. A year later, in December 1955, a black woman named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat for a white person on a bus in Montgomery. Black and white people were separated on buses, black people were required to sit towards the back of buses and white people sat towards the front.



Rosa Parks was arrested. Rosa belonged to a group that campaigned for the rights of black people. Martin Luther King also belonged to the group and they would often meet in the basement of Martin's church. The group organised a boycott of the buses, they suggested that all black people refused to use the buses in Montgomery on the day of Rosa Parks trial. Rosa was found guilty of breaking the segregation laws. She took her case right to the United States Supreme Court. The boycott lasted 382 days ending when the courts ruled that the segregation on Montgomery buses was not allowed to continue. Although Martin Luther King was young and had not been in Montgomery very long, he led the boycott. His house along with another black community leader's house was bombed during the boycott. The Montgomery bus boycott was successful and Martin Luther King quickly became an important voice speaking up for the rights of black people across the USA.

At that time, not all black people could vote. The USA is a big country divided up into states, some states allowed black people the vote, but some in the south did not. A hundred years earlier, during the time Abraham Lincoln was the American President, the practice of slavery came to an end. This is where one person thinks they own another person and will get them to



work for very little or no payment. Although slavery was against the law during Martin Luther King's time, not all black people were treated as equal, for example, black people were stopped from going to certain shops, schools and universities and they would never get certain types of well paid jobs.

Martin Luther King believed that if he spoke up for those that needed help and used his words to help motivate others then he could bring about change. For the next thirteen years he spoke across America campaigning for black people to have the same rights and opportunities as white people. He gave his most famous speech on 28th August 1963 in front of a crowd of two hundred and fifty thousand people including many celebrities of the time. The event was called the 'March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom' and Martin was part of the group who organised it. Speeches and presentations were given by black and white men and women, Jews and Christians, Catholics and Protestants. His speech, called "I Have a Dream" was the final speech of the day and lasted over sixteen minutes, it captured the purpose of the march:

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

After the march, Martin Luther King and the other organisers met with the president, John F. Kennedy. Two years later the law was changed to ensure that everybody had the right to vote. Martin Luther King continued to work to improve the lives of black people living in poverty. Martin Luther King was killed on 4th April 1968 at the age of 39. The night before, he had given a speech in Memphis, Tennessee to support black council workers that wanted to be paid the same as white people doing the same jobs. Whilst on his balcony, someone shot Martin Luther King. The country was shocked at his murder and a period of national mourning was announced. Eighteen years later, President Ronald Reagan created a public holiday to mark the birth of Martin Luther King. The first was held on the 15th January 1983 and continues on the third Monday of January each year.

We began by thinking about why different famous people are famous. Martin Luther King is famous for being a leader of what was called the 'civil rights movement', helping those he could. He is famous for standing up to injustice (when things are not fair). He is famous for protesting peacefully whilst those he was protesting against were not peaceful and he was famous for his words, that helped to bring hope and improve the lives of people across the United States of America.

Time to reflect

- What do you think Martin Luther King is most famous for?
- Why do you think Martin wanted to help others?
- Why do people remember him today?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the life of people who can inspire and motivate us to help and support others. Help us to use our words and our actions to help those in need and may we know that we also can make a difference. *(Amen)*

19.2 Sticks and Stones

Can anyone remember the name of the man that we heard about yesterday? What was Martin Luther King Jr famous for? Martin used words to help others, today we are going to think about the power of words.

Have you ever said something you have then regretted? Something that you said that hurt someone else and wished you could take it back? I wonder if you have heard the saying, "sticks and stones can break your bones, but names will never hurt you." It was a saying that people use(d) to suggest that name calling doesn't really matter because name calling can't hurt you physically. But the truth is that words have the power to affect someone for a very long time. A kind word at the right time can make someone feel so much better and a harsh word at the wrong time can lead to all sorts of trouble. The Bible recognises the power of words. One proverb states *'Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword, but wisely spoken words can heal'* (Proverbs 12:13 GNB). This proverb isn't even talking about the unkind words that we use, just thoughtless ones. I wonder if the writer of this proverb is writing this because he is the one who said something thoughtless or if someone had said something thoughtless to him and he felt the pain of their words. The proverb ends with a reminder that wise, or caring and kind words can make things better.

Time to reflect

- Have you said anything to someone without thinking and hurt someone?
- Has anyone said anything careless to you and hurt you?
- Can you think of kind and caring words that you can tell each other?
- Make a list of kind and caring comments e.g. "you look well today" or "I really like your ideas" or "that is a great picture".

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Today we are reminded about how powerful our words can be. We know times when we have helped others with our words and we know what it feels like to be hurt by the words of others. Help us to think about the consequences of our words, help us to use them, not to hurt, but rather to heal. *(Amen)*



19.3 The Tongue

Can anyone remember the proverb that we thought about yesterday? What type of words can hurt others? Thoughtless ones. What kind of words can heal and make things better? Wise and caring ones.

This morning we are going to continue to think about the power of our words and what we say. The Bible compares the tongue to the bit in a horse's mouth or the rudder of a huge ship, even though they are so small they have a huge impact. *"We put a bit into the mouth of a horse to make it obey us, and we are able to make it go where we want. Or think of a ship: big as it is and driven by such strong winds, it can be steered by a very small rudder, and it goes wherever the pilot wants it to go. So it is with the tongue: small as it is, it can boast about great things. Just think how large a forest can be set on fire by a tiny flame! And the tongue is like a fire." (James 3:3-6 GNT)*

The rudder on a boat is very small compared to the size of a ship but is used to steer the ship and the bit is tiny when compared to a horse, but the rider can use it to control where the horse goes. These examples remind us that although our tongue is small it can make a big difference to our own lives and the lives of others. Martin Luther King used words and was able to improve the lives of people across the United States of America. Words can also steer us towards trouble, our words can hurt others and change the way they act towards us. We often think that our words can't make a difference to others, but as we are discovering this week they can make a big difference to our own life and the lives of others.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever fallen out with someone because of the words that came out of their mouth?
- How can words make a situation worse? Can you think of any examples?
- How can words make a situation better? Can you think of any examples?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are reminded about how powerful our words can be. We know times when we have helped others with our words and we know what it feels like to be hurt by the words of others. Help us to think about the consequences of our words, help us to use them, not to hurt, but rather to heal. *(Amen)*



19.4 Stephen and Georgia

Can anyone remember what the Bible likened the tongue to yesterday? The rudder of a small ship and the bit in a horse's mouth. Why is our tongue like a rudder or a horse's bit? The passage ends by reminding us that like a small spark that can create a large fire the words that we say can sometimes spiral out of control.

It was a Saturday morning and Stephen and his Cousin Mike wanted to go swimming. Stephen was in year 6 and Mike was in high school. They were both good swimmers. Stephen's mum dropped him and Mike off at the pool and told them to have a good time but to be careful. They paid the entrance fee and got changed. After fifteen minutes in the pool, Mike decided that it would be fun to dive off the five-metre diving board. Mike was used to diving, he'd started diving as part of the pools platform diving team six months earlier and become quite good at it. Stephen had never tried it before. Mike made it look so easy. Stephen climbed the ladder on the five-metre diving platform. He shuffled his way to the edge of the board and looked over into the water below. His legs went a bit wobbly, but he went for it and jumped. Stephen wasn't sure what happened but as he hit the water he felt like he'd been punched in the stomach. Mike told Stephen later that he'd belly flopped into the water. Stephen had winded himself, he couldn't catch his breath. A lifeguard jumped into the pool and helped Stephen to the side. Stephen quickly regained his breath but decided to get out and go home to rest.

Monday morning came around and Stephen wasn't at school. Georgia had also gone to the swimming pool on Saturday morning, but her account of the story was a little different. Georgia said that Stephen wasn't in school because he'd hurt himself really badly diving off the ten-metre diving board. Georgia liked the thought that it was only her that knew what had happened to Stephen and everybody else was keen to listen. Georgia said that she'd seen Stephen hit the water and that he'd knocked himself out. Three lifeguards had to rescue him and Stephen was taken to the hospital in an Ambulance. Georgia said that Stephen was still in hospital. She asked Miss Thomas, the teacher, if the class could create get-well cards for Stephen. Miss Thomas was surprised that she hadn't been told about Stephen's accident by Mrs Evans the school secretary, but as Georgia had been there it must be true.

After break Miss Thomas collected 29 get well-cards and told the class that she would visit the hospital after school and drop them off. As Miss Thomas started to explain the next task, Stephen walked through the door. He gave a note to Miss Thomas. The note said that Stephen hadn't been at school that morning because he'd had to go to the dentist.

Time to reflect

- What does the word exaggerate mean?
- Why did Georgia 'exaggerate' the truth about Stephen's accident?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are reminded about how powerful our words can be. We know times when we have helped others with our words and we know what it feels like to be hurt by the words of others. Help us to think about the consequences of our words, help us to use them, not to hurt, but rather to heal. *(Amen)*



19.5 Gossip

This week we have been thinking about the power of words. We heard about the life of Martin Luther King who used his words and actions to improve the lives of black people across the United States of America. Yesterday we heard the story about Stephen and Georgia. No body got hurt and the only person that was left embarrassed was Georgia, but it shows how our words can quickly get out of control. Georgia liked others listening to her, it made her feel important. She thought that she was the only one at school that knew why Stephen was off.

Does anyone know what the word gossip means? Gossip is when we talk about someone else, we may exaggerate parts of a story to make it seem more exciting. We may tell a story about someone else even though it might hurt or embarrass them. We may pass on secrets that they said they didn't want anyone else to know. It is not very nice to gossip about others and it isn't very nice to be gossiped about by others. People gossip for different reasons, some of them are clearly wrong like telling lies to get someone into trouble. Like Georgia yesterday, many of us like being listened to. We may think that adding and exaggerating bits of a story may sometimes make an ordinary story seem more exciting. Passing on other people's secrets is a sure way of being listened to. Gossip, like the small spark, does get out of control. It can hurt peoples' feelings and it can break apart close friendships. Our words have the power to harm, but they also have the power to heal.

Time to reflect

Encourage one another and build each other up. (1 Thessalonians 5:11) How can you build one another up? When have others built you up?

Think of times when the following will a) help someone and b) hurt someone: (examples are given below)

1) Our words can get others into trouble.
   a) *Telling a teacher when you are being bullied.*
   b) *Saying someone had done something naughty when they haven't.*
2) Our words can make us feel better about ourselves.
   a) *Telling a friend about your achievements.*
   b) *"I'm so much better at football than… because he's rubbish!"*
3) Our words can get us what we want.
   a) *Mum said I can have an ice cream when I've finished my homework. (Truth)*
   b) Mum said I can have an ice cream when I've finished my homework. (Lie)
4) Our words can stop others from getting what they want.
   a) *Telling your mum that dad has forgot to put the circular saw away and your baby brother is trying to get it.*
   b) *Saying that someone is rubbish at netball to keep them out of the team.*

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are reminded about how powerful our words can be. We know times when we have helped others with our words and we know what it feels like to be hurt by the words of others. Help us to think about the consequences of our words, help us to use them, not to hurt, but rather to heal and build each other up. *(Amen)*



20.1 Well-being Resolution

This week is an adaption of week 38 in Cycle 1 and week 18 in Cycle 2. It continues the theme of New Year Resolutions from weeks 16 to 18 in the current cycle. If you have used week 38 from Cycle 1 and/ or week 18 in Cycle 2 you may want to discuss and use the reflection questions highlighting and reflecting on what pupils said last time.



This week we are going to be thinking about our well-being. Well-being 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? Over the past couple of weeks, we have been thinking about New Year's Resolutions. We thought about the resolve or determination that we may need to reach our targets or meet our goals. We thought about possible reasons why we may lose our resolve or motivation. We also thought about the importance good advice, hard work and practise are in being able to achieve what we want to achieve. At the beginning of January many people make the New Year's Resolution to improve their well-being. But what do they mean?

The dictionary gives the meaning of well-being as being healthy and happy. Many people make New Year's Resolutions to improve their well-being in the hope that they will do something to become happier and healthier in the new year. What do we need to do to be healthy? 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. A New Year's Resolution to improve your physical well-being will involve exercise and eating the right sorts of foods.

Well-being linked to our happiness is a little more difficult to explain. If someone's New Year's Resolution was to become happier, what would you advise? 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?

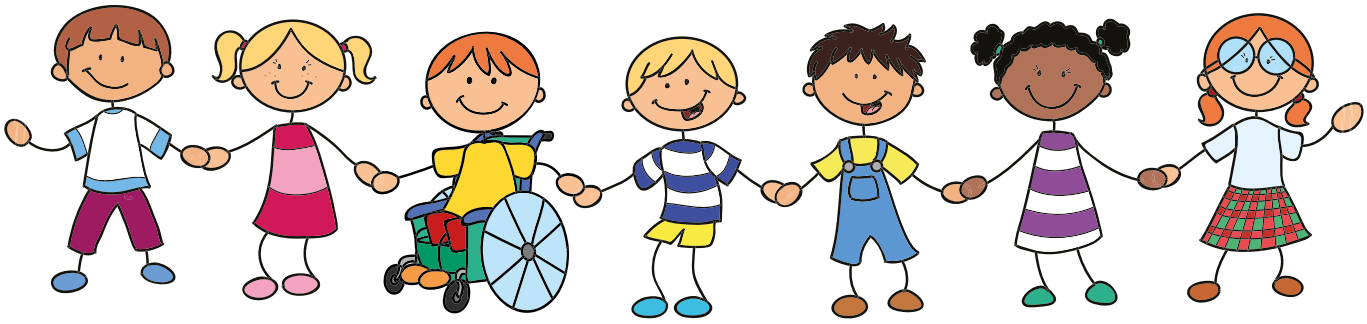
Reflection (Prayer)

(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. This year, may we as a community learn and put into practise the things we can do to improve our well-being. *(Amen)*



20.2/3 Well-being Checklist



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. They are repeated in each year of Simply Collective Worship's 4 year cycle.

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.
- Being able to cope with the stresses of daily life.
- Being able to cope with the changes that take place in our life.

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)*



20.4 In Thought, Word and Deed

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"*. 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)*



20.5 Community of Well-being

A clever man, many years ago said, *"The part can never be well unless the whole is well"* (Plato). Can anyone tell us what Plato was trying to say? The well-being of our community depends on the well-being of all of the children and adults in it. If someone in our class is in the hospital, how does it affect the rest of us? Your well-being should affect the well-being of all of us. The better everyone's well-being, then the better the well-being of the school. The question then is not how do you become a person who is just able to improve your own well-being, but how do you become a person that can improve the well-being of your friends, classmates and whole school community?

Time to reflect

Use the list from 20.2-3 to discuss ways in which we could support and improve the well-being of others.

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)*



21.1 Lenten Tradition

Will anyone be having pancakes on Shrove Tuesday? (Or did anyone have pancakes on Shrove Tuesday?) Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Day is the day before Ash Wednesday which marks the beginning of the Christian season of Lent. It is an important day for many people around the world. 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 for forty days before he was tempted by the devil.

There are many traditions that take place before and during Lent. The celebration before Lent has a few different names.





The most common name 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, like eggs and milk. Pancakes became a way of using up these ingredients. The word 'carnival' comes from the name of the celebrations that traditionally took place in the week before the beginning of Lent.

Whilst pancakes are a reminder that eggs, butter and milk are off the menu until Easter, another type of food represents the traditions that were and are still performed during Lent. Does anyone know what a pretzel is? Popular in the United States of America and across Europe, the pretzel is a simple bread dough made of flour, water and salt that is crossed over to form the specific pretzel shape. **(Show an image of a pretzel).** There is a legend that the pretzel was first made by Italian Monks to symbolise prayer. Monks are religious people that will spend a lot of time thinking, reading religious books and praying. Traditionally Monks would pray with their arms crossed.



The pretzel shape looks like crossed arms in the traditional position for prayer.

Pretzels became a popular food to eat during Lent. They don't have any eggs or milk in them so they can be eaten during Lent. The pretzel also came to represent an important Christian belief. Some Christians suggested that the three holes in them represent the Christian belief in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Catholic Church promoted the pretzel as a food that could be eaten during Lent because it reminded Christians of their beliefs and their actions, both the belief in God and ritual of prayer.

Monasteries across Europe began making the pretzel. In Germany it became known as a Bretzel (with a B), some think that this is where the name Pretzel comes from. Pretzels were used in German Easter traditions. Instead of an Easter Egg hunt, German children used to look for pretzels and on Good Friday their parents may have eaten a pretzel with two boiled eggs in the holes representing new life.

Over five hundred years ago Monks baking pretzels saved the city of Vienna in Austria from being invaded. Working through the night the Monks heard the enemy tunnelling under the walls of the city as they baked pretzels in the basement of their monastery. They were able to stop the surprise attack and protected the city from the attackers. The Austrian emperor was so pleased with the Monks that he gave them their own coat of arms of a lion and a pretzel. (A coat of arms is a specific picture painted on a shield used to symbolise important families or people.)

Today we have heard how the Pretzel became involved in Shrove Tuesday and Lent traditions. Shrove Tuesday and Lent will continue to be celebrated by millions of people across the world this year. Traditions used to celebrate this festival vary from country to country. Traditions used to celebrate the same festival may look very different in different countries, but they often symbolise the same theme. This week we are going to hear about the various traditions from around the world that help people to remember the Christian time of Lent.

Time to reflect

- Would you prefer a pretzel hunt or an Easter egg hunt?
- Have you ever seen or eaten a pretzel?
- How does the pretzel symbolise Lent?
- Do you have any traditions that are important to you or symbolise your beliefs?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we will be thinking about how different people celebrate the same or similar festivals in different ways. In our school help us to celebrate the similarities and the differences that we have with those in our school, our communities and our world. *(Amen)*



21.2 Omelette Day (Dia de la tortilla)

Preparation

Show Spain on a map of the world.

This week we are thinking about how different people celebrate the same festivals in different ways. Can anyone remember two foods that were mentioned in yesterday's assembly? (Pancakes and pretzels.) Which one can be eaten during the forty days fast of Lent and which one can't be eaten during Lent?

In Spain, the celebrations leading up to Lent start on the Thursday of the week before Ash Wednesday with carnivals taking place across Spain. The day is called 'Dia de la tortilla' or 'Omelette Day'. Why do you think omelettes are made rather than pancakes? Eggs and milk are used to make omelettes. Other types of food that are not eaten during Lent can be used in the omelette like ham and cheese.

Time to reflect

- Have you ever eaten an omelette?
- Can you imagine eating an omelette as part of a celebration?
- What do omelettes and pancakes have in common?
- How do omelettes and pancakes differ?
- Would it feel strange eating an omelette on Pancake Day? Why?
- Would it feel strange eating a pancake on Omelette Day? Why?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we are exploring how different people celebrate the same or similar festivals in different ways. In our school help us to celebrate the similarities and the differences that we have with those in our school, our communities and our world. *(Amen)*



21.3 King Cake

Preparation

Show a picture of a brightly coloured king cake.

Can anyone remember what is often eaten in Spain instead of a pancake on the week before Ash Wednesday? What similarities are there between a pancake and an omelette? They are both made with milk and eggs.

We are going to continue to think about how different people celebrate the same festivals in different ways by hearing about the tradition of the king cake. Has anyone heard of, or eaten 'king cake'? It is a round cake often with a hole in the middle and decorated in brightly coloured icing and sugar. The king cake is baked during the carnival* or Mardi Gras season between Epiphany and Lent. Epiphany is the name given to the 12th day after Christmas (6th January) that marks the visit of the three wise men giving gifts to Jesus. In the Bible account, the wise men call Jesus 'King', and this is probably where the name king cake comes from.

The tradition started in France and Spain, but it has spread to many South American countries. It is also a popular tradition in the southern states of the USA. In some countries the king cake is popular during Epiphany, in other countries the king cake is eaten nearer Lent. Some people make a king cake every week between Epiphany and Lent. In New-Orleans it is common to find a small plastic baby inside a king cake. Who do you think the baby represents? In France, you are more likely to find a bean inside and if you are lucky enough to be given the slice with the bean inside then you can become king for the day.

**Carnivals are traditional celebrations that often take place the week before Lent in countries with large numbers of Roman Catholic Christians.*

Time to reflect

- Have you heard of or eaten a king cake?
- What does the king cake represent?
- Would you like to be king for a day?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we are exploring how different people celebrate the same or similar festivals in different ways. In our school help us to celebrate the similarities and the differences that we have with those in our school, our communities and our world. *(Amen)*



21.4 Dia Del La Samaritana

Preparation

Show Mexico on a map of the world.

This week we have been thinking about the different food traditions that are practiced around the world before or during Lent. We have been thinking about how different people celebrate the same events in different ways. Each tradition has its own meaning, the pancake and omelette reminds us that people give up eggs and milk during the 40 day fast of Lent. What event does the king cake help people to remember? (Wise men visiting Jesus.)

The Bible describes Jesus meeting a woman by a water well in a country called Samaria. Most women would have collected the water in the morning when it was cooler but the Samaritan woman, avoiding the other women, collected water in the hot midday sunshine. Jesus was a Jew and at that time Jews and Samaritans were not supposed to talk to each other. In the story it says that Jews refused to use the same cups and bowls as the Samaritans. Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink. Jesus continues to tell the Samaritan woman about who he was and why he had come. Jesus demonstrated that kindness can be shown between two strangers, and strangers that society suggests shouldn't be kind to each other.

In the city of Oaxaca in Mexico on the fourth Friday during Lent, there is a celebration called Samaritan Day or Dia de la Samaritana. It began by members of the Church giving out water to passers-by. Today 'aguas' or naturally fruit flavoured drinks are given out. The climate in Oaxaca is warm similar to that of Samaria, so the free drinks have become a refreshing reason to meet in the city's main street. It is not only the church that provides the free drinks, but council workers, shops and businesses all provide passers-by with refreshing aguas.

Time to reflect

- How has the story of Jesus and Samaritan woman inspired people in the Mexican city of Oaxaca?
- How can communities benefit from people acting out stories from the Bible or other religious books? (Acts of kindness, helping other people in the community.)
- Do you think acting out events in stories help to make people kinder?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we have been exploring how different people celebrate the same or similar festivals in different ways. In our school help us to celebrate the similarities and the differences that we have with those in our school, our communities and our world. *(Amen)*



21.5 Celebration Through Action

Did anyone eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday? (Or will anyone be eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday?)

In the state of Newfoundland in Canada not only would you have pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, but you might find an item baked into your pancake that might affect your future. Items like coins, nails, thimbles and rings are baked into the pancakes. What do you think these items could represent? Coin – wealth and money. Nail – a carpenter. Thimble – a tailor or dressmaker. Ring – marriage.

This week we have been thinking about the different food traditions that are practiced around the world before or during Lent. We have been thinking about how different people celebrate the same events in different ways.

Time to reflect

- Can you describe the traditions and practices that we have thought about this week? What events do these practices help people remember?
- Are you surprised to learn that people celebrate similar events with very different practices? Why?
- How would you describe the traditions you practice to those that have never heard of them before?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we have explored how different people celebrate the same or similar festivals in different ways. In our school help us to celebrate the similarities and the differences that we have with those in our school, our communities and our world. *(Amen)*



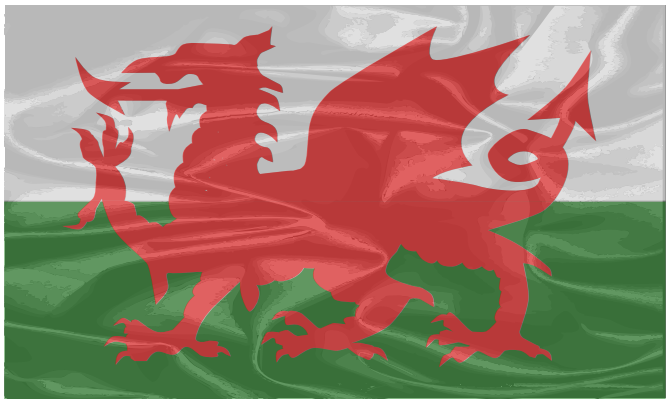
22.1 Dewi Sant (St David)

(The definitions of Britain, UK and British Isles are included in a few assemblies in the four-year cycle including Cycle 1: Week 7.1)

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. 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 or protector of a group of people. Two more notable patron saints are Saint Thomas Aquinas the patron saint of students and Saint Catherine of Alexandria the patron saint of teachers, students and librarians.

This week we will be thinking about St David, the patron saint of Wales. St David's Day is on 1st March each year and is Wales' national day. St David is the only patron saint of the 4 countries in the UK that was born in the country that he is the patron saint of. St George was born in Greece, St Andrew was a disciple of Jesus and born in Galilee in modern day Israel and St Patrick could have been born in England, Scotland or Wales.



St David was born over fifteen hundred years ago in South West Wales. Not very much is known about his life. The oldest information we have about St David was included in an account written five hundred years after St David's death. His father was the son of the King of Ceredigion. St David's mother, St Non, gave birth to him on a Pembrokeshire clifftop during a fierce storm. St David was a Christian who only ate bread and vegetables and only drank water. According to tradition he was very gentle, physically strong and very tall.

St David travelled throughout Wales and Cornwall telling people about Jesus and spreading the message of Christianity. St David became an important leader in the church. He started many churches and monasteries (a monastery is a place where monks live and work). He started one monastery in a place called Menevia (or Mynyw in Welsh) in modern day Pembrokeshire. St David's cathedral stands on the site of the original monastery. There is a black stone that tradition says St David brought back from a pilgrimage (or journey) to Jerusalem. The stone sits in an altar in St David's cathedral.

The leader of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Callactus II (or Calixtus II) made St



David a saint in 1120 and March 1st was chosen as St David's Day. He also said that St David's Cathedral was a special place of pilgrimage. This meant it became an important church that was visited by Christians from around the world. A shrine was built in the Cathedral in St David's honour. The shrine was restored in 2012 and is still visited by Christians from all over the world today.

There are many legends and stories told about St David. During a battle against the Saxon invaders, St David told the soldiers to wear a leek on their helmets so that they knew who was the enemy and who wasn't. This could be one reason that the leek is the emblem of Wales today *(this legend is also attributed to the 7th century king of Gwynedd, Cadwaladr)*. Another famous incident took place while St David was telling people about the life of Jesus. People began complaining that they couldn't hear St David, so the ground beneath his feet began to rise creating a small hill on which more people could see and hear St David talking. A white dove then landed on St David's shoulder as a sign of God's blessing.

Legend suggests that St David died on the 1st March, 589. The last words to his followers were "Be Joyful. Keep the faith. Do the little things that you have heard and seen me do." Although not much is known about St David, he has had a big impact on the lives of people not just in Wales but people from around the world. Some even travel thousands of miles to visit his shrine in St David's Cathedral. St David was described as gentle and according to his last words, he thought that the little things that we do are important.

St David's last words have become a Welsh saying… '*Gwnewch y pethau bychain*' or '*do the little things*'. Today will be filled with lots of little things, little steps towards our targets, little words said to our friends, little actions that add up to create big achievements. This week let us act on the wise words of St David and do the little things well.

Time to reflect

- Why are the little steps, actions and words so important?
- What are the little things that you can do well today?
- Does it matter if we don't care about the little things?
- How can we show that we care about the little words, actions or steps?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the stories that remind us of the good and important qualities and characteristics. Help us to remember to do the little things well. May we understand that our words and our actions are important no matter how small we think they are. *(Amen)*



22.2 "Do The Little Things"

Can anyone remember the name of the saint that we heard about yesterday? Can anyone remember what he is supposed to have said to his followers before he passed away? *Be Joyful. Keep the faith. Do the little things that you have heard and seen me do.* Do the little things or 'Gwnewch y pethau bychain' is a popular Welsh saying today based on the words of St David. We can often think that the little things aren't important. 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)

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 things are sometimes our big achievements.

Time to reflect

- Do small things 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 are thankful for the stories that remind us of the good and important qualities and characteristics. Help us to remember to do the little things well. May we understand that our words and our actions are important no matter how small we think they are. *(Amen)*



22.3 Can You Be Trusted With Very Little

This week we have been thinking about the last words of St David. Can anyone remember the popular phrase that comes from St David's last words? 'Do the little things.' Yesterday we heard a Bible verse that suggests that little things and small beginnings can grow into bigger things. Our targets in school may seem big, but we can achieve them by completing lots of little tasks and taking little steps. The Bible advises us not to despise the small beginnings because they are important. 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 practising 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 are thankful for the stories that remind us of the good and important qualities and characteristics. Help us to remember to do the little things well. May we understand that our words and our actions are important no matter how small we think they are. *(Amen)*



22.4 Can You Be Trusted With The Small Things?

There is another verse in the Bible that talks about little things. *'Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much'* (Luke 16:10). It could be slightly re-written as: 'If you can be trusted with the small things then you can also be trusted with big responsibilities'.

What does the word 'trust' mean? If I trust you it means that I believe that you will do what you say you will do or I believe that you will do what I ask you to do. Small things could be the words that we use with each other that don't seem important (but probably are). Small things could be actions like team work, completing a task to the best of our ability or tidying our room. The small things are probably the things that no one sees us doing, the things that we don't think are important. The Bible suggests that if we can be trusted with the small things, then it shows we can be trusted with much bigger responsibilities.

Time to reflect

- Can you be trusted with the small things?
- What seemingly small things do you think you do well? (Be a good friend)
- What small things do you need to do better?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the stories that remind us of the good and important qualities and characteristics. Help us to remember to do the little things well. May we understand that our words and our actions are important no matter how small we think they are. *(Amen)*



22.5 Celebration

Can anyone remember the name of the saint that we heard about on Monday? Can anyone remember any of the legends that are related to St David? St David's Day is the national day of Wales. It is a day of celebration. St David's day parades take place across Wales. People wear leeks, or daffodils and the Welsh flag, the Red Dragon or Y Ddraig Goch is proudly displayed in schools, offices and homes. Music and poetry competitions or festivals, called eisteddfods take place in schools and communities across Wales. The stories of St David will be retold, acted out and remembered. St David's Day is a celebration that reminds Welsh people to be proud of their Welsh culture, history and heritage. If you were to ask a Welsh person what St David's Day means to them, what do you think they would say? Or if you are a Welsh pererson, what does St David's Day mean to you?

Time to reflect

This week we have explored the popular Welsh phrase 'Gwnewch y pethau bychain' or 'do the small things' inspired by St David's last words. What does 'do the small things' mean to you?

- Make the most of small opportunities
- Do the small things well



- Take pride in the small things even if no one else sees you doing them
- Lots of small things add up to bigger things

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the stories that remind us of the good and important qualities and characteristics. Help us to remember to do the little things well. May we understand that our words and our actions are important no matter how small we think they are. *(Amen)*



23.1 Balaam's Anger Issues

If I was to look up the word 'anger' in a thesaurus, what other words would I find? ***Write down the words offered by the children on blank placards and/or write the following: annoyed, frustrated, grumpy, temper, irritated, fury. Write down at least six.*** I need a volunteer to act out these words. Can we order the words least angry to most angry. Different situations may affect us in different ways. Some situations may make us angrier than others. The problem with anger is that it often stops us from being able to think through situations. It can often lead us to say or do things that actually make the situation worse.

There is a story in the Bible about a man who let anger get the better of him. His name was Balaam and he was a prophet. A prophet is believed to receive messages from God and tell them to the people around them. Balaam lived during the time that Moses was the leader of the Israelites. The Israelites had left Egypt and were on their way to start a new life in what would become the land of Israel. On their journey, the Israelites met other tribes. Many of these tribes were scared because they had heard of what God had done in Egypt.

Balak, a King of Moab (one of the tribes), asked Balaam to curse the Israelites. Balak sent his officials to ask Balaam to meet with him. Balaam saddled his donkey and started on the journey to meet Balak. God didn't want Balaam to go, so he sent an angel to stand in front of the donkey. The donkey saw the angel standing in the road with a sword, the donkey left the road and began walking in a field. Balaam didn't see the angel and began beating the donkey to get it back on the road. Further on, the angel stood on the road between two vineyards.



On seeing the angel, the donkey moved near to one wall scraping Balaam's foot on the stones. Balaam didn't see the angel and beat the donkey a second time. The angel moved once more to a narrow spot on the road. The donkey laid down, unable to continue. Balaam became so angry that he began beating the donkey with a stick. God enabled the donkey to speak and the donkey asked Balaam why Balaam had beaten him three times. Balaam answered that the donkey had made Balaam look stupid. The donkey reminded Balaam that he taken Balaam on lots of journeys and had never done anything like this before. Balaam noticed the angel standing in the road with a sword in its hands and Balaam realised that the donkey had saved his life.

It wasn't normal for Balaam's donkey to stop. Balaam said he'd become angry because the donkey had made Balaam look stupid. If Balaam had thought about it and realised that the donkey was behaving strangely, he may have noticed the angel earlier. Did his

anger stop him from seeing what was really going on? (Some people say his donkey made a donkey out of Balaam, or an ass made Balaam look like an ass.)

Anger is an emotion that we all have, and we can feel angry for all sorts of reasons. Frustration is a form of anger that you may feel when something isn't going your way, maybe you've got the same maths skill wrong again and again. Annoyance is another feeling of anger that you may get when someone is trying to wind you up the wrong way or if someone is doing something that you don't want them to. Being frustrated and annoyed are often a good way of motivating us to make good choices. If you can't solve a maths problem, frustration should lead you to go and ask for help from a friend or a teacher. If someone is annoying you, it might be because they are treating you or someone else unfairly, feeling annoyed may help you to fix the situation by getting a teacher to come and sort it out. Stopping and thinking when we start to feel angry, frustrated or annoyed can help us to think about the choices we have. I wonder what would have happened if Balaam had spent time thinking about why his donkey was acting strange?

Imagine you are completing a maths problem and you keep getting it wrong, you've tried and tried, and you start to get frustrated. As the feelings of anger start to increase what are the choices? You could ask a friend or a teacher or even go onto the internet to find a solution, or you could let the anger build so that you snap your pencil, throw your work to the ground and start head-butting the wall! Or, if a friend is annoying you, you could move away from your friend and let them start doing something else and let yourself calm down, or you could go up to them nose to nose, shout in their face and push them over and then storm off. It's easy to know what we should do when we don't have angry feelings. But when we are in those situations the options aren't always so clear. Stopping and thinking when we are angry will enable us to think about the choices we have. Choosing to cool down rather than blowing your top will become easier the more we practise it.

Time to reflect

- Does anger, hurt and worry ever make a situation better?
- Have you ever felt frustrated? Why? What happened as a result?
- Have you ever felt annoyed? Why? What happened as a result?
- What decisions make these situations better and which can make them worse?
- What options do you have when getting annoyed, frustrated and angry?
- Which option should you choose?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that emotions and feelings connected with anger are part of who we are and what make us human. Annoyance and frustration can often enable us to choose and make things better, to seek help or to solve a problem for ourselves. Help us to stop and think when we are angry, so that we can make the right choices and continue to help our community stay calm, peaceful and untroubled. *(Amen)*

23.2 Calm People Aren't Easily Angered

(Read the following Proverb and discuss what it could mean, the passage is given in two different versions to help pupils think about the meaning)

Proverbs 19:11
A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense. (NIV)

Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs. (NLT)

This proverb suggests that we shouldn't get offended or annoyed at people when they try to annoy us or make us angry. A calm person chooses to overlook an offense by staying calm and not reacting badly. Getting angry often only ruins our day, not the person trying to wind us up. Patience is an important skill suggested here. Can you think of a time when you had decided not to become angry with someone and how that helped the situation, and other times when you did react badly and made the situation worse? (Discuss them)

Time to reflect

- How can a person become a more patient person?
- If one person tries and makes another person angry, who's won, why?
- Why does the writer of this proverb say you can earn respect by overlooking wrongs?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that often getting angry doesn't solve a problem, it can often make a situation worse and leave us feeling horrible inside. This proverb reminds us that patience is a way that we can overcome anger. Help us to be wise and improve our own skill of being patient, especially at those times when we feel angry. *(Amen)*



23.3 Calm People Say Nice Things

(Read the following Proverb and discuss what it could mean, the passage is given in two different versions to help pupils think about the meaning)

Proverbs 15:1
A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. (NIV)

A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare. (NLT)

How did yesterday's proverb suggest we react to other people's harsh or nasty words? Well, today's proverb shows us that harsh and angry words often lead to worse situations. Imagine you want to use something that someone else is using. If you went over and demanded "I want to use that, give it to me now!" do you think the other person will give it to you? Why not? Rather, you could say, "could I use that when you have finished with it please?" Or "could I play with that with you?"

Time to reflect

- Have you ever said something 'normal' in a nasty way, like "give me that football!" Did everybody stay calm and happy in that situation?
- Have you ever said something similar in a respectful and gentle manner? Was the outcome different?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that often harsh or angry words can lead to harsh and angry situations. This proverb reminds us that kind and gentle words can help to keep a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Help us today to practise and think of the nice way of talking and communicating with each other. *(Amen)*



23.4 Patience Brings Peace

(Read the following Proverb and discuss what it could mean, the passage is given in three different versions to help pupils think about the meaning)

Proverbs 15:18
A hot-tempered man stirs up conflict, but a patient man calms a quarrel. (NIV)

A hot-tempered person starts fights; a cool-tempered person stops them. (NLT)

Hot tempers cause arguments, but patience brings peace. (GNB)

Time to reflect

- What is a hot temper?
- Do you agree with this proverb, why?
- How can a person control a hot-temper?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We know that often getting angry doesn't solve a problem, it can often make a situation worse and leave us feeling horrible inside. This proverb reminds us that patience is a way that we can overcome anger. Help us to be wise and improve our own skill of being patient, especially at those times when we feel angry. *(Amen)*



23.5 A Wise Person Can Cool It

(Read the following Proverb and discuss what it could mean, the passage is given in three different versions to help pupils think about the meaning. The New International Version (NIV) and Good News Bible (GNB) begin with fools and stupid people and may not be appropriate if any pupils are battling anger issues. The Living Bible (TLB) may be more appropriate. The NIV and GNB have been included to emphasise the effect anger has on a person so as the writer would call them a fool or a stupid person. A wise person would not choose to live with anger.)

Proverbs 29:11
A rebel shouts in anger; a wise man holds his temper in and cools it. (TLB)

Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end. (NIV)

Stupid people express their anger openly, but sensible people are patient and hold it back. (GNB)

We often don't know we are angry until it is too late and we've said something that we regret, or it gets us into trouble. It is difficult to calm down when someone feels angry, it is something that requires practise, patience and people around us that care. If we know what makes us angry, we can try to avoid those situations or learn strategies to help us to keep calm and carry on.

Time to reflect

- Can anger lead to more anger?
- How could that anger be calmed?
- Discuss ways in which we can calm down.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we have thought about slogans and proverbs that remind us to keep calm in any situation. We know that this is often easier said than done. Help us to know what can 'heat up' our temper and to talk about and learn ways in which we can keep calm and carry on. *(Amen)*



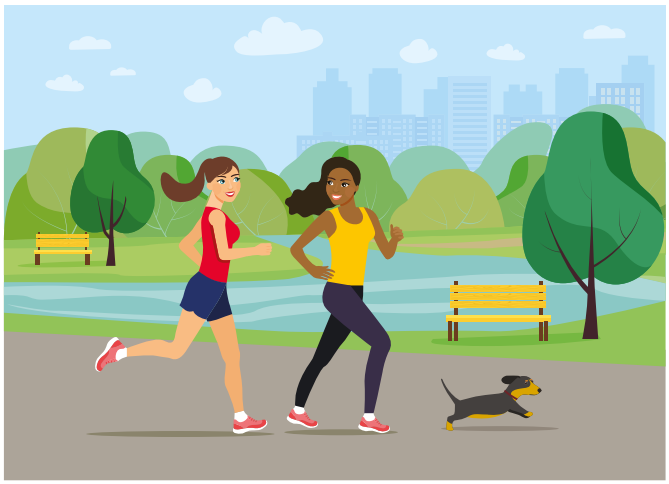
24.1 Easier Isn't Always Easy

This week we are going to think about the difference between the word easy and the word easier. Can anyone tell me what the word easy means? A dictionary describes the word 'easy' as something that you can achieve without great effort. Can anyone describe the word 'easier'? Easier means something becomes less difficult. For example, as you practise a difficult skill, the skill will become easier, but it doesn't necessarily mean that you will find it easy.

For some of you that have mastered the skill of reading you may say to others that reading is easy. Have you heard the saying 'as easy as ABC'? When you think about the process we all go through when we learn to read and write, I'm sure we wouldn't call our ABC's easy.

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.

Use the English coordinator as an example. Do you think that **(Teacher's Name)** finds reading easy? S/he is the English coordinator/subject leader. Even though **(Teachers Name)** has mastered the skill of reading there are some books that even **(Teacher's Name)** would not find easy to read. **(Teacher's Name)** will have the skills to be able to have a go, but imagine a science text book with lots of words of things that s/



he has never heard of before or a gardening book with the proper Latin name for each of the plants and flowers. **(Teacher's Name)** will have the skills to work out the words that are unfamiliar. **(Teacher's Name)** will be able to de-code new words but it doesn't mean that reading the new book will be easy. So, if **(Teacher's Name)** sometimes finds reading difficult then I think it's normal if we don't always find reading easy.

There are other examples of activities that people do that may become easier but they would probably never be called easy. The London Marathon takes place every year with thousands of people running the 26.2 mile course. Runners will have run lots and lots of miles as they prepare for the marathon. As their fitness increases they will find it easier to run further, but I doubt that they would call running long distances easy. Can you think of other activities that may never be called easy but become easier the more we do them? Sports, climbing, playing an instrument, times tables, learning lines for a school play or assembly may never be called easy.

If you do master a skill like reading and find a particular book easy to read there will always be another book that you might find

difficult. The new book may be very long or contain lots of words that you haven't read before. If you play an instrument, there will be pieces of music that you once found difficult but with practise you might say it is easy or at least easier. Practising something that is easy doesn't help us to get better. Practising something that is difficult until it gets easier does help us to get better.

Sometimes things can seem too much for us, sometimes we can think, it is easier to give up than to continue. Do you ever feel like giving up when you don't find something easy? If you get something wrong or if you feel as if you don't understand something, do you think that it is easier to give up than to continue trying to master the new skill? At school, you may hear the term 'resilience'. Resilience means the ability to recover from difficulties and try again. We are all born with resilience, whether walking, talking or a whole host of other activities, humans have the ability to overcome difficulties and have another go. It is normal to find things difficult and it is also normal for some things to become easier even if we never find them easy to do.

Many people like things to be 'easy' but easy can be a barrier that stops us getting better and mastering many different types of skills. This week we are going to think about things that can stop us from getting better and what we can do to make things that we find difficult 'easier'.

Time to reflect

- How can knowing that things become easier the more we stick at them help us to carry on trying when we feel discouraged?
- How can knowing that somethings may never become "easy" help us to carry on trying?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the skills that we have mastered so far. May we find the resilience to become better at the skills that we are currently working towards knowing that although we may never find them easy, they will certainly become easier. *(Amen)*



24.2 Others Find It Easier

This week we are thinking about the barriers that stop us getting better and mastering many different types of skills. We are going to think about things that can stop us from getting better and what we can do to make things that we find difficult 'easier'.

You will find certain skills easier to learn than other people, and other people will find it easier to master skills that you struggle with. Can you think of things that some people find easier than others?

- Kicking a ball
- Learning new words
- Doing things on the computer
- Maths problems
- Remembering facts
- Learning your lines in a school play
- Painting and drawing
- Learning musical patterns
- Working with others
- Talking to other people
- Making friends
- Learning the words of a new song
- Solving problems
- Building a tower
- Ordering other people around
- Tidying up
- Talking in front of a group of people

What does 'comparing ourselves to others' mean? To compare ourselves with other people can be a barrier that stops us practising and mastering new skills. You might think "Tommy finds it easy to learn his times tables, but I'm struggling so I'm not going to try". Just because other people find it easier to do certain skills doesn't mean that you won't be able to master them.

If you find it easy to draw and paint, it may be the only thing you want to focus on. You may think, "I'm not going to practise my reading, I'm going to draw instead because I find drawing easy". If you only do the things that you find easy, it will stop you from mastering many of the other skills that will become easier with practise.

Time to reflect

- How can knowing that somethings may never become easy help us to carry on?
- Do you spend time doing things you find easy because the other things seem hard?
- Use the list for pupils to think about skills they find 'easy' and others they find more difficult.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the skills that we have mastered so far. May we overcome the discouragement we sometimes feel when we find certain skills harder to learn than our friends. Help us to find the resilience to become better at the skills that we are currently working towards knowing that although we may never find them easy, they will certainly become easier. *(Amen)*



24.3 Practise

This week we are thinking about the barriers that stop us getting better and mastering many different types of skills. We are thinking about things that can stop us from getting better and what we can do to make things that we find difficult 'easier'.

In a normal day, there are lots of choices that make it easier to improve our ability to learn new information and get better at applying our skill. In our main assembly this week we thought 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 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. With practise, what we find difficult will become easier.

Time to reflect

- How does practising help us to learn and apply skills?
- What will happen if we don't practise? Why?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the skills that we have mastered so far. May we learn the benefits of practise and may we find the motivation to practise when other activities seem so much easier. Help us to find the resilience to become better at the skills that we are currently working towards knowing that although we may never find them easy, they will certainly become easier. *(Amen)*



24.4 Resilient Mistake

This week we are thinking about the barriers that stop us getting better and mastering many different types of skills. We are thinking about things that can stop us from getting better and what we can do to make things that we find difficult 'easier'.

Today we are going to think about the determination we need when we are learning a skill so that it becomes easier. Imagine a child learning 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 practising 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. You may want to give up because you make lots of mistakes, but the only real mistake is giving up completely.

Time to reflect

- Can learning new skills sometimes feel too difficult?
- How can you become more resilient?
- What friendship skill do you need to practise? (Listening? Kindness?)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the skills that we have mastered so far. May we learn the benefits of practise and may we find the motivation to practise when other activities seem so much easier. Help us to find the resilience to become better at the skills that we are currently working towards knowing that although we may never find them easy, they will certainly become easier. *(Amen)*



24.5 Comfort Zone

This week we are thinking about the barriers that stop us getting better and mastering many different types of skills. We are thinking about things that can stop us from getting better and what we can do to make things that we find difficult 'easier'.

My Comfort Zone
Author Unknown

I used to have a comfort zone where I knew I wouldn't fail.

The same four walls and busywork were really more like jail.

I longed so much to do the things I'd never done before,

But stayed inside my comfort zone and paced the same old floor.

I said it didn't matter that I wasn't doing much.

I said I didn't care for things like dreams and goals and such.

I claimed to be so busy with the things inside my zone,

But deep inside I longed for something special of my own.

I couldn't let my life go by just watching others win.

I held my breath; I stepped outside and let the change begin.

I took a step and with new strength I'd never felt before,

I kissed my comfort zone goodbye and closed and locked the door.

If you're in a comfort zone, afraid to venture out,

Remember that all winners were at one time filled with doubt.

A step or two and words of praise can make your dreams come true.

Reach for your future with a smile; success is there for you!

Time to reflect

- What can be our comfort zone? (Things we find easy or familiar)
- What can stop us from trying new things? (Difficult, not familiar, the fear of failure)
- What can help you step outside your comfort zone? (Teachers, friends, new experiences)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the new and exciting opportunities that lay ahead for all of us. Help us to make the most of these opportunities that we are given. May we find the resilience to become better at the skills that we are currently working towards knowing that although we may never find them easy, they will certainly become easier. *(Amen)*



25.1 St Patrick - Bouncing Back

Preparation

Get three different objects, one that bounces well (like a bouncy ball) one that bounce okay (like a tennis ball) and one that doesn't bounce (like an egg (joke!), or a bean bag)

Does anyone like trampolining? Does anyone have a trampoline in their garden? According to circus folklore, the trampoline was first developed by an artiste named du Trampolin. Circus acrobats perform acrobatics from a swing called a trapeze that are located very high, near the top of the circus tent. There is usually a net below them, so that if an acrobat falls when performing on the trapeze, they land safely on the net. It is also a convenient and safe way of getting down from the trapeze. It is thought that du Trampolin saw the possibility of using the trapeze safety net as a form of trampoline. He experimented with different sized nets to perform acrobatics. The trampoline, similar to the ones we know today was designed by an American gymnast George Nissen in the 1930's. George Nissen's first trampolines were used to practise gymnastic routines but they were also used in the training of fighter pilots and astronauts. Trampolining, originally called 'rebound tumbling', eventually became a sport of its own and in 1964 Great Britain staged the first World Championships. It became an Olympic sport in Sydney in 2000.

Have you ever heard someone say 'bounce back'? It means to carry on after you have had a setback or something bad has happened. A trampoline is a great examples of bouncing back, but like many things that happen to us, we might not bounce back staight away.



Show the three objects (bouncy ball, tennis ball and bean bag) and ask the children which of the three items will bounce back the best. Throw/drop each one in turn to see if the children are right. Bouncing back after a setback isn't easy. Many times we might feel like the bean bag. We might not want to get back up and carry on. We might just want to lay their feeling sad and annoyed. But for many setbacks, it is important that we get up and try again. **Bounce the bouncy ball so that it goes out of control (not too out of control).** Bouncing back too quickly can sometimes cause us problems. If we think about our setback or our mistakes, we might learn some important lessons. What can I do to learn the letter sound? What did I say to make my friend annoyed? How could I have built the tower to make it big and strong? If we don't we might end up with exactly the same setback. **Bounce the tennis ball in a controlled manner.** Bouncing back and thinking about what caused the set back in the first place means that we learn from our setback whilst getting up and carrying on.

The 17th March is a day that remembers the life of another person who bounced back. St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. On St Patrick's Day each year in Ireland, there is a public holiday when people celebrate the



feast of St Patrick. Over the centuries people from Ireland emigrated to Australia, Canada, the USA and Great Britain. Irish communities around the world celebrate St Patrick's Day. Many people wear an item of green clothing. Parties featuring Irish food and drinks are part of this celebration. The flag of the Republic of Ireland is often seen in St Patrick's Day parades around the world.

Like many patron Saints, St Patrick wasn't born in the country that he is the patron saint of. He was born over 1600 years ago in fourth century Roman Britain. When St Patrick was a teenager, raiders kidnapped him. He and many others were sold into slavery in Ireland. St Patrick was forced to become a shepherd. St Patrick writes that although he had been kidnapped his faith in God only became stronger. After a few years, whilst herding sheep he heard the voice of God in a dream urging him to leave Ireland. In his dream he also heard someone say to him that a ship was ready. St Patrick escaped and walked nearly two hundred miles before catching a boat that returned him to Britain. St Patrick moved to a monastery and eventually after years of study, he became a Priest and then a Bishop.

After the bad things that had happened to him, being kidnapped, taken away from his family and sent to Ireland and sold into slavery, you'd have thought that Patrick would never have wanted to go back to Ireland ever again. But, years later, Patrick returned to Ireland. Patrick travelled around Ireland, teaching people about the stories and miracles of Jesus. Some think that St Patrick designed the popular Celtic Cross that can be seen across Ireland and the British Isles. The Celtic Cross combines a circle with a traditional Christian cross. Some think that St Patrick took the important Irish symbol of the sun and combined it with the important Christian symbol of the cross.

Many thousands of people turned to Christianity due to St. Patrick's life and teaching. The date 17th March is thought to be the anniversary of his death and some people think that he is buried at the graveyard at Down Cathedral in Downpatrick, 20 miles south of Belfast in Northern Ireland.

Today we have heard about Izzy Weall and St Patrick. Izzy and St Patrick overcame setbacks in their past. They both didn't let the events stop them from doing what they wanted to do. There are many stories and sayings that remind us of how important resilience is. Resilience is the ability to try again after you have experienced a setback. You may have heard the saying 'It's not how many times you get knocked down that count, it's how many times you get back up'. Nelson Mandella said 'the greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.' We all face setbacks and we all make mistakes. It is important to remind ourselves that we all have resilience and we can all bounce back.

Time to reflect

- What does 'bouncing back' mean?
- How are Izzy and St Patrick good examples of resilience?
- What setbacks have you bounced back from?
- How can you become more resilient?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We have heard today about two people who did not give up when bad things that happened to them. Please help us to find the resilience to bounce back from difficult situations or the setbacks that we find ourselves in. *(Amen)*

25.2 The King and the Fire Festival

Can anyone remember the names of the two people we heard about yesterday? St Patrick and Izzy Weall. Can anyone tell me why they are both good examples of resilient people?

There are many stories and legends about St Patrick. One such legend took place after St Patrick had become a Priest and returned to Ireland. The Irish people were celebrating a Celtic springtime fire festival called Beltane. The festival would start with the lighting of the High King of Ireland's fire. Only after the High King of Ireland's fire had been lit could other bonfires be set alight. According to the legend, St Patrick lit an Easter fire on top of a hill. People saw the fire and thinking it was the king's started lighting their own fires. The High King of Ireland was furious, he ordered that St Patrick's fire was put out, but no amount of water could put out St Patrick's fire. The High King of Ireland realised that God was helping St Patrick and allowed St Patrick to spread the message of Christianity across Ireland.

Time to reflect

- Would you have gone back to Ireland if you had escaped from slavery?
- How is St Patrick good examples of resilience?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories and examples of resilience, may we be reminded that we can overcome setbacks in our own lives and help others overcome setbacks in theirs. *(Amen)*



25.3 St Patrick Drives the Snakes from Ireland

Can anyone remember the legend that we heard yesterday about St Patrick?

There is another legend involving St Patrick that includes snakes, lots and lots and lots of snakes. A plague of snakes had attacked Ireland. The people of Ireland were scared and angry. The snakes were everywhere. There were snakes in their cupboards, snakes on their chairs and snakes in their boots. The people complained to the High King of Ireland, but what could he do! St Patrick knew what to do. He prayed, made a large drum and started to bang it. The drumming was so loud that the snakes, trying to get away from the noise, fled from every house, field, rock and cave. Snakes don't have hands so they couldn't cover their ears. St Patrick, banging his drum, chased the snakes through Dublin town and into the sea.

It is very unlikely that St Patrick really chased snakes out of Ireland. It is true that there are no wild snakes in Ireland today, but it is likely that there have never been any snakes in Ireland. The snake probably represents something else. At the beginning of the Bible, a snake visits Eve in the Garden of Eden and tempts her to eat some fruit that God had told Adam and Eve not to eat. Many Christians think that the account of Adam and Eve explain why bad and evil things happen. St Patrick taught about God's love, goodness, fairness and kindness, all things that can reduce bad and evil things from happening. It probably wasn't snakes that St Patrick chased out the land but the evil and bad things that people did to each other.



Time to reflect

- Can good actions and values replace bad actions?
- What would happen if everyone tried harder to be good, fair and kind?
- How can we help a friend bounce back from an illness?
- How can we help a friend bounce back from being sad?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories and examples of resilience, may we be reminded that we can overcome setbacks in our own lives and help others overcome setbacks in theirs. *(Amen)*



25.4 The Shamrock

Preparation

Display an image of a shamrock

Can anyone remember the legend that we heard yesterday about St Patrick?

If you search for images about St Patrick's day on the internet, it is very likely that you will find pictures of a shamrock. Does anyone know what a shamrock is? It is a small three leaved green plant that grows all over Ireland. St Patrick used the shamrock to teach Irish people about the Christian belief in the Trinity. The Trinity is the belief that there is one God, but three persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Each person of the Trinity is like one of the leaves, there are three leaves, but only one shamrock.

Jesus included the things around him when he taught using parables. St Patrick also used what was all around him to teach people about Christianity. It is often easier to learn a new concept or idea if we can touch and experience it in some way. We often need more than our memory when learning a new idea or concept. Using our senses can help us to make sense of difficult information. St Patrick taught using the sense of sight and touch as well as with his words.

Time to reflect

- What things have you learned by experiencing them through your senses?
- What senses did St Patrick use by teaching about the Trinity using a shamrock?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories and examples of resilience, may we be reminded that we can overcome setbacks in our own lives and help others overcome setbacks in theirs. *(Amen)*



25.5 Practise Setbacks

Practise is the best way of becoming better at many things, sports, playing instruments, reading, maths, being a friend, writing. Can you think of anymore skills that improve with practise? So how do you become better at being resilient? It is an interesting thought, but you can only bounce back if you have something to bounce back from. Like Izzy Weall and St Patrick, the most resilient people are the people who have bounced back from the biggest setbacks.

You are resilient! If you can walk you will have used your resilience because you will have fallen over. If you can ride a bike you will have used your resilience because I'm sure you will have fallen off, got back on and tried again. Making a friend, writing your name, being able to complete a stage on a computer game after failing 20 times all demonstrate resilience. One passage in the Bible states that we could *'Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds, because… [it] produces perseverance.'* James 1:1-2 NIV. Perseverance is another word that we could use to describe resilience. What encouragement or advice would you give to someone who faced a setback? Would you tell them to be happy and joyful? It seems strange to tell others to consider it pure joy when they face trials and setbacks, but we know that many of the struggles are helping us to become better at many things including becoming better at being resilient.

Time to reflect

- What setbacks have you bounced back from?
- What do you currently need more resilience for?
- How resilient do you think you are on a scale of 1–10? (1 having no resilience and 10 being very resilient.)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories and examples of resilience, may we be reminded that we can overcome setbacks in our own lives and help others overcome setbacks in theirs. *(Amen)*



26.1 Water Day

Preparation

Glass of water. Globe or map of the world.

The 22nd March each year is United Nations World Water Day. It is a day that we are reminded of the importance of water. **Hold up the glass of water.** Water is very, very important to the health and survival of every human being and animal on planet Earth. Humans can survive for three or more weeks without food, but we can't last more than 3 or 4 days without water.

Can anyone tell me what we use water for?

- Drinking
- Cooking
- Washing ourselves – in a bath or shower
- Cleaning our teeth
- Flushing the toilet
- Washing our clothes
- Cleaning our pots, pans, plates and cups etc…
- Cleaning our windows
- Watering our gardens
- Washing our cars
- Swimming
- Water fights
- Making potions (If you're like my children)
- Farmers water their crops – the rain waters their crops



What did you use water for today? Have you washed your hands and face, had a shower or cleaned your teeth? How did you get the water that you used this morning? Did you get your water from a water well? Did you get your water from a river or a lake? Did you get your water from a tap?

In the UK today, we probably take water for granted. Not only do we have safe drinking water delivered directly to our homes, schools and places of work, but there are ponds, lakes, streams and rivers in towns, cities and throughout the countryside. Taking something for granted is a phrase that we use if we never think about something because we think or assume that it will always be available or we think that it will stay exactly the same. We can often take water for granted because we can get water easily, but that isn't the case for everyone in the world. Over 70% of the surface of the earth is covered in water **(this can be demonstrated by a globe or world map)** but most of this water is salty and undrinkable. Only 1% of all the water on the Earth is used for all those things we mentioned earlier.

If you lived in a town or city in the UK during the early 1800's it would be very likely that you would have had to collect your water from a river or a well. During the



industrial revolution people moved from the countryside to find work in towns and cities. The number of people living in these towns and cities increased. Many of the rivers and wells that supplied water to the people in these towns and cities became polluted with industrial waste and sewage. People became sick from drinking the dirty water.

Between 1720 and 1830 Nottingham's population had grown from 10,000 to 50,000 people. The River Leen, the River Trent and water wells provided Nottingham with water. The rivers and wells became polluted with industrial waste and sewage and as a result, diseases called typhoid and cholera spread amongst the city. In 1831, a water engineer from Nottingham called Thomas Hawksley, working for the Trent Waterworks Company, designed the country's first water system delivering safe water to taps around the city.

The system was very successful at providing safe and clean water across the city. An outbreak of cholera between 1848-49 killed thousands of people in towns across Britain, but it didn't badly affect the people of Nottingham because of their safe and clean water supply. Thomas Hawksley was asked to oversee water projects around Britain, he supervised the improvements of the water supply systems to Cambridge, Darlington, Derby, Leeds, Liverpool, Leicester, Northampton, Oxford, Sheffield, Sunderland, and Wakefield.

Thomas Hawksley helped to improve the quality of the water for many people in the UK and around the world. He was asked to advise on projects in Sweden, Denmark and Brazil as well as many others. Thomas not only helped solve the problem of providing a clean supply of water to towns and cities but he was also responsible for improving sewage systems, safely removing and treating waste water including the waste water from toilets.

Today you may have been reminded or you have learned for the first time that most people in the UK have only been able to get reliable, safe drinking water from taps for less than 200 years. Many people only think about or appreciate water when they can't get it easily. For example, when there is a hose pipe ban or when the water companies tell us to boil the water because it is unsafe to drink from the tap. The United Nations World Water Day on the 22nd March is an opportunity for us to be reminded not to take water for granted.

Time to reflect

- Can we take water for granted? Why? (We seem to have a lot of it)
- How do we take water for granted? (Waste it)
- Is water more important than gold? (Or Xbox gold for some children) Why?
- Which would you rather have?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we be reminded today of the importance of water. May we take time today to think about all the useful things water helps us to do. May we remain thankful for all those that are involved in providing us with refreshing, clean, life-giving water. *(Amen)*

26.2 Walking For Water

Can anyone remember the name of the man that was responsible for providing the people of Nottingham with safe drinking water in the 1830's? Thomas Hawksley.

This week we are focusing on water as part of the United Nations World Water Day on the 22nd March. Yesterday we learned or were reminded that tap water hasn't always been available in the UK. 200 years ago, it would be very likely that you would have collected water from local rivers or wells. It makes me thankful that I am able to go to the tap and get a glass of water rather than walking and carrying back the water that I need for drinking, cleaning and cooking from a well or a river. How far do you think you would need to walk if you wanted to fill up a bottle with water right now? When you get up of a morning how far do you need to walk to get from your bedroom to the bathroom?

Yesterday we suggested that it is easy to take water for granted because we get it easily. Today, millions of children in countries around the world still fetch their water from rivers and other places because they don't have taps in their homes or even a water well in their villages. Many of these children will walk for over half an hour and some may walk over two hours to fetch enough water for their families.

Time to reflect

- Can you imagine getting up early before school to fetch the water that your family will need for the day?
- How would not having access to clean, fresh water affect your day? How would it affect the people who look after you?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we be reminded today of the importance of water. May we take time today to think about all the useful things water helps us to do. May we remain thankful for all those that are involved in providing us with refreshing, safe, life-giving water. *(Amen)*



26.3 Drinking Dirty Water

Thomas Hawksley was concerned about the diseases in water that made people sick. He designed systems that delivered safe water to people all around the UK. Can anyone remember where the people of Nottingham collected their water from before Thomas Hawksley introduced his new water system? The River Leen, Trent and from wells.

Most of the water that is piped into our homes and schools still comes from rivers and manmade lakes called reservoirs, but the water is cleaned before it gets to our taps. The water goes through a number of different steps to clean it and make sure that it is safe for us to drink. Dirt is removed by pouring or 'filtering' the water through layers of sand and gravel. Bits of dirt get stuck in the sand and gravel and the cleaner water is collected. The water is poured through another type of filter to remove very small bits of dirt. Chlorine is then added, this kills the diseases like cholera and typhoid making the water safe to drink.

Today, there are still lots of people around the world that still collect and use water that is dirty and hasn't been cleaned or made safe to drink. The dirty water can make those that drink it very sick. There are a number of charities that work to provide safe and clean drinking water to communities around the world.

Time to reflect

- Are you surprised that there are people that still drink unsafe water today?
- Can you think of charities that help to provide safe drinking water? (Water aid, UNICEF.)
- How do you think charities provide safe drinking water?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we be reminded today of the importance of water. May we take time today to think about all the useful things water helps us to do. May we remain thankful for all those that are involved in providing us with refreshing, safe, life-giving of water. Help those that work to provide safe drinking water to communities around the world to continue their important work. *(Amen)*



26.4 Kofi

Yesterday we thought about charities that help to bring safe water to communities around the world. Today we are going hear from a boy whose life has been transformed by the work of one of these charities.

Hello. My name is Kofi. I live in a small village in Ethiopia. I used to get up early to collect water with my mum and my sisters before school. We would collect our water from a tap about one and a half miles away from where I live. ***(Could you give an example of how far that is… "to the middle of town" etc…)*** *The journey to the tap and then back home used to take just over an hour. If there was a queue it would take much longer. My sisters and I used to walk with nothing on our feet before one charity sent us shoes and flipflops. Last year another charity installed what they called a borehole pump. We found out that although we had to walk a long way to collect our water, there is water right under the village deep underground. The charity brought in a special machine that could dig a hole and then they installed pipes, filters and a pump so that we can get safe and clean water in our village when ever we want. The charity has also installed water taps at my school (I call them faucets).*

Time to reflect

- What time would you need to wake up if you had to spend more than an hour collecting water before school?
- How would you feel if you didn't have easy access to safe and clean water like Kofi?
- What would you miss most about having an unlimited amount of water? What does unlimited mean?
- How do you think Kofi felt when the water pump was installed in his village?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we be reminded today of the importance of water. May we take time today to think about all the useful things water helps us to do. May we remain thankful for all those that are involved in providing us with refreshing, safe, life-giving water. Help those that work to provide safe drinking water to communities around the world to continue their important work. *(Amen)*



26.5 Safe Water

This week we have been thinking about how important water is and reflecting on just how fortunate we are in the UK to be able to get access to safe and clean water whenever we want. We learned that around 200 years ago most of the people living in the UK would have got their water directly from rivers, lakes and wells. If the water became polluted it could spread deadly diseases like cholera and typhoid.

The World Health Organisation works to try and stop the spread of diseases around the world. They work with governments and others to ensure that everybody can have the highest levels of health possible. Having access to safe and clean water is an important way of reducing the spread of disease. In a report in 2017, the World Health Organisation reports that billions more people have gained access to basic drinking water and sanitation services since the year 2000. Sanitation is the word that we use for things like toilets and sewers that take used water away from our homes and schools. They report that although lots more people have access to water the water isn't always safe to drink.

Time to reflect

- Why can we in the UK take water for granted?
- Is there anything we can do to help people who do not have access to safe water?
- How can we show that we are thankful for the water we have? (Don't waste it.)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

May we be reminded today of the importance of water. May we take time today to think about all the useful things water helps us to do. May we remain thankful for all those that are involved in providing us with refreshing, safe, life-giving water. Help those that work to provide safe drinking water to communities around the world to continue their important work. *(Amen)*



27.1 Easter Art

Preparation

From Tuesday the thoughts for the day will encourage pupils to look and discuss artwork that depicts the Easter story. There are some good articles online about how to use fine art with children and questions will be included in the 'time to reflect' opportunities. Please find a good quality version of the image to show the pupils.



What do you think of when you hear the word Easter? If you were to type in 'Easter' to google images, what images do you think you would see? When searching 'Easter' in google and comparing it to a search about 'Christmas', Christmas gets 5 times more search results than Easter. Google presents 1,230 million websites about Easter compared to over 3,010 million results for Christmas! **(Correct at the time of writing, google 'Christmas' and 'Easter' to find the most recent figures).**

Easter is the most important Christian festival in the year. Christmas remembers Jesus' birth, but Easter 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. 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 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 death, resurrection and new life is remembered in many of the traditions associated with Easter.

Who will be eating hot cross buns during the Easter holiday? You can buy hot cross buns in most bakeries and supermarkets nearly all year round. It wasn't long ago that the sweetly spiced bun with a cross on the top could only be bought during Easter time. At the end of the 16th century, just over 400 years ago, Queen Elizabeth I declared that hot cross buns could only be made and eaten on Good Friday, Christmas Day and for peoples' funerals. If anyone was caught making or selling hot cross buns at any other time, they would be required to give all the buns to the poor. For many Christians the hot cross bun symbolises Jesus' death on a cross and is eaten two days before Easter on Good Friday.

Who will be eating Easter eggs on Easter Sunday? The hot cross bun symbolises Jesus' death on the cross but Easter eggs symbolise the belief that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. Eggs are a common symbol of spring and new life that date back thousands



of years. Pancake Day came about because Christians wanted to use up any ingredients before the fast during Lent. But chickens would continue to lay eggs, so just imagine how many eggs would be collected after forty days. With the surplus of eggs, Christians began decorating them as part of their Easter celebrations. In 1307, Edward 1st ordered 459 boiled eggs to be painted or covered in gold and given to his royal household. Faberge eggs are probably the most famous and expensive decorated Easter eggs (although they're not made from chocolate).

Many christians remember a few special events that are described in the Bible in the week before Easter Sunday.

– Palm Sunday is celebrated one week before Easter Sunday. Many Christians receive a palm cross to remind them of Jesus riding a donkey into the city of Jerusalem, this is often called the triumphal entry. The Bible describes lots of people welcoming Jesus into the city, waving palm leaves. The palm crosses that Christians receive today are often burnt the following year and ashes placed on the forehead to mark Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent.

– Can anyone tell me what happened on Maundy Thursday? On the Thursday. Jesus ate a 'last supper' with his disciples. During the meal Jesus told his disciples to eat bread and drink wine to help them understand what was about to happen on Good Friday. During Thursday evening, Jesus washed his disciple's feet as a reminder that they should all help and serve one another. After the meal, Jesus went to pray in a garden called gethsemane with his disciples. Judas, one of his followers, betrayed Jesus and Jesus was arrested and taken away to be sentenced to death.

– Good Friday is the day that Christians remember Jesus dying on a cross and is the reason that the cross is an important symbol in Christianity and the reason for the cross on the top of hot cross buns.

– On the Saturday morning, Jesus' body was placed in a tomb and a large stone rolled over the entrance.

– Easter Sunday is the day that Christians celebrate Jesus being raised from the dead. One of Jesus' followers, called Mary Magdalene, found that the stone at the entrance to the tomb had been rolled away and that the tomb was empty. Mary found who she thought to be the gardener and asked who had taken Jesus' body, but it was the risen Jesus she was talking too. Jesus also visited his disciples. One disciple, Thomas, is remembered for not believing that Jesus had risen from the dead.

This week we are going to explore the story of Easter by looking at some paintings that retell this important and world changing event.

Time to reflect

- Can anyone tell me why there is a cross on the top of the hot cross bun?
- Why did eggs become an important part of the Easter celebrations?
- The hot cross bun and the Easter egg represent opposites, one represents death and the other represents life.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Many traditions and things we do have their roots in events long past, many of which we are completely unaware. As we celebrate our various traditions this year, may we not forget that we are linking with and reliving history. *(Amen)*

27.2 Triumphal Entry

Preparation

Suggested Image(s):

Entry into Jerusalem (1842) by Hippolyte Flandrin.

Jesus enters Jerusalem, and the crowds welcomes him (1320) by Pietro Lorenzetti.

Entry into Jerusalem, (c1300) by Giotto.

Search "Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, miniature from Armenian gospel, folio 7 verso. Armenian museum, Isfahan, Iran."

There are lots of pieces of fine art that depict the triumphal entry. Please choose one that you think the children will like and ensure it is a good quality version of the image to show the pupils.

Today we are going to look at a piece of art work that reminds us of a part of the Easter story. The triumphal entry describes Jesus entering into Jerusalem. Five hundred years before the triumphal entry, in a book of the Old Testament called Zechariah, it was written: 'Rejoice... See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.' Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, whilst the people of Jerusalem welcomed him by waving palm leaves.

Time to reflect

- Which part of the story has the artist painted?
- What do you think happened *just* before this picture?
- What do you think will happen *just* after?
- Can you describe what is going on in the painting?
- What colours has the artist used?
- How do we know it is Jesus?
- Does the picture present the words of the Old Testament written five hundred years before the triumphal entry?
- Is this how you imagined the scene? *(Regarding Hippolyte painting – do the people look happy, should they look happy?)*
- What's happening in the background?
- What is the best part of the painting?
- How does it make you feel?
- Sum up the painting in one, two or three words.
- If you could ask the painter one question (about the painting) what would it be?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Many traditions and things we do have their roots in events long past, many of which we are completely unaware. As we celebrate our various traditions this year, may we not forget that we are linking with and reliving history. *(Amen)*



27.3 The Last Supper

Preparation

Suggested Image(s):

The Last Supper (c.1498)
Leonardo Da Vinci

Some interesting facts about the Leonardo Da Vinci's 'The Last Supper':

It is 8.8m x 4.6m and was painted directly onto a dining room wall of the convent, Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan.

It was painted over five hundred years ago. Due to a poor choice of materials, the paint started to flake off within Leonardo's own life time.

In the mid 1600's a doorway was added to the wall right where Jesus' feet used to be.

A restoration project started in 1980, taking 19 years to complete.

Only a small number of visitors can see the painting at any one time due to the size of the old dining room.

The painting retells the moment Jesus tells his disciples that someone is going to betray him.

Jesus' hands are reaching out to the bread and wine, symbols of the Eucharist.

Can anyone remember the images that we saw yesterday? Today we are going to look at a piece of art work that reminds us of another part of the Easter story.

Time to reflect

- Which part of the story has the artist painted?
- What do you think happened *just* before this picture?
- What do you think will happen *just* after?
- Can you describe what is going on in the painting?
- What colours has the artist used?
- Who is in the painting?
- Is this how you imagined the scene?
- What's happening in the background?
- What is the best part of the painting?
- What emotions can you see in the paintings/people in the painting?
- How does it make you feel?
- Sum up the painting in one, two or three words.
- If you could ask the painter one question (about the painting) what would it be?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Many traditions and things we do have their roots in events long past, many of which we are completely unaware. As we celebrate our various traditions this year, may we not forget that we are linking with and reliving history. *(Amen)*



27.4 Jesus is Arrested/ Crucifixion

Preparation

Suggested Image(s):

Kiss of Judas (1304–06), Fresco by Giotto.

Behold the man (1871), Antonio Ciseri – The image depicts Pilate, the Roman governor in Jerusalem, asking the crowd what he should do with Jesus. The crowd replied 'crucify him', or put him on the cross.

https://www.max7.org/en/resource/crucifixion a 5 min free download animation courtesy of www.max7.org This video is a snapshot of the crucifixion – preview the video before showing it to your pupils to check that it is suitable.

(Suggested images of the crucifixion have not been included in this resource. Whilst the crucifixion is a central and important theme in the Christianity and an essential part of the Easter account, it should be dealt with sensitively. For younger children it could be presented… "Some people wanted to get rid of Jesus and put him on a cross where he died." For older children the simple image of a cross, the symbol of Christianity, or a crucifix could be used to explain the crucifixion.)

Can anyone remember the image we saw yesterday? Today we are going to look at a piece of art work that reminds us of another part of the Easter story.

Time to reflect

(the questions can be adapted for the video)

- Which part of the story has the artist painted?
- What do you think happened *just* before this picture?
- What do you think will happen *just* after?
- Can you describe what is going on in the painting?
- What colours has the artist used?
- Who is in the painting?
- Is this how you imagined the scene?
- What's happening in the background?
- What is the best part of the painting?
- How does it make you feel?
- Sum up the painting in one, two or three words.
- If you could ask the painter one question (about the painting) what would it be?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

Many traditions and things we do have their roots in events long past, many of which we are completely unaware. As we celebrate our various traditions this year, may we not forget that we are linking with and reliving history. *(Amen)*



27.5 Resurrection

Preparation

Suggested Image(s):

Apparizione agli apostoli, by Duccio 1311. (Jesus appears to the Disciples at supper)

Le tre marie al sepolcro by Peter Von Cornelius (c1800). (The three Marys by the Tomb)

https://www.max7.org/en/resource/HeIsRisen a 3m 23s free download animation courtesy of www.max7.org depicts the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Preview the video before showing it to your pupils to check that it is suitable. Resurrection takes place 52s – 2mins.

(Suggested images of the crucifixion have not been included in this resource. *It is the opening scene in the animation mentioned above.* Whilst the crucifixion is a central and important theme in Christianity and an essential part of the Easter account, it should be dealt with sensitively. For younger children it could be presented… "Some people wanted to get rid of Jesus and put him on a cross where he died." For older children the simple image of a cross, the symbol of Christianity, or a crucifix could be used to explain the crucifixion.)

Can anyone remember the image we saw yesterday? Today we are going to look at a piece of art work that reminds us of another part of the Easter story.

Time to reflect

- Which part of the story has the artist painted?
- What do you think happened *just* before this picture?
- What do you think will happen *just* after?
- Can you describe what is going on in the painting?
- What colours has the artist used?
- Who is in the painting?
- Is this how you imagined the scene?
- What's happening in the background?
- What is the best part of the painting?
- How does it make you feel?
- Sum up the painting in one, two or three words.
- If you could ask the painter one question (about the painting) what would it be?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

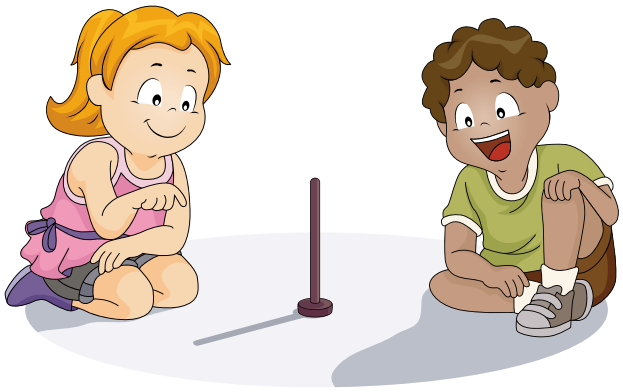
Many traditions and things we do have their roots in events long past, many of which we are completely unaware. As we celebrate our various traditions this year, may we not forget that we are linking with and reliving history. *(Amen)*



28.1 Horology

Preparation

Show the possible images: Watch, Clock – Salisbury Cathedral Clock, Sundial, Water clock



How do you know what time of the day it is? (Clock, school bell, someone tells you) Is it important to know the time? Why? Humans have probably always used the sun to help them work out what time of the day it was. Early man may have used the setting sun to find somewhere safe to sleep. Before the invention of electric light, farmers used the sun to work out how long they had before it went dark so they knew how long they had to carry on working in the fields.

A clock is a device that helps us measure, keep or tell us the time. Horology is the name given to the measurement of time and the art of making clocks and watches. A person who is interested in horology is called a horologist. Horology goes back thousands of years. The oldest clocks were invented between five and six thousand years ago. Early clocks include sundials and sand glasses (or hourglasses). Markers on candles and oil lamps with particular amounts of oil enabled the passing of particular amounts of time to be measured.

The Egyptians created tall, thin pillars called obelisks, the sun would cast a shadow that moved throughout the day. The Egyptians could track the shadow to measure time. By marking where midday or noon was, the Egyptians could divide their day into two parts, before and after noon. Later markers were added around the base of the obelisks to break down time in smaller measurable amounts, like hours. Some historians suggest that the Egyptians separated the time between sunrise and sunset into twelve hourly sections around three thousand, five hundred years ago.

The Egyptians were some of the first humans to create sundials, but the Greeks continued to use them to study time. Sundials can only be used during the day when the sun is able to cast shadows. The water clock was a more reliable way of measuring time that didn't need the sun to shine. Water clocks were used by the Greeks over two thousand, three hundred years ago. By measuring how much water had leaked from one container into another the Greeks could work out the passing of time in any weather, day or night.

Nowadays, the hours of daylight we have in a day depends on the time of year. In winter we have less hours of daylight and in summer we have more hours of daylight. There are only two days each year when the sun is visible for exactly 12 hours. Does anyone know what these days are called? The summer and winter solstice. How many minutes are there in an hour? How many seconds in a minute? In Roman times the amount of time in an hour changed depending on the time of year. The Romans split every day into twelve hours of daylight

no matter how long the daylight lasted. An hour in summer was much longer than an hour in winter.

Water clocks continued to be developed over the next thousand years with clever systems of gears and dials. They could not only tell the time but horologists and astronomers designed them to map the movement of the planets and their moons. The first mechanical clocks, clocks that weren't powered by water, were developed about eight hundred years ago. The oldest example of a mechanical clock that is still working is in Salisbury Cathedral, Wiltshire and dates from 1386.

Does anyone know what a pendulum is? A pendulum is a weight that swings from side to side. Pendulums were first used in clocks in 1656 by the mathematician and horologist, Christiaan Huygens from Holland. Galileo, a famous inventor, had the idea for a pendulum clock twenty years earlier but he didn't live long enough to make one. Before the invention of pendulum clocks, a mechanical clock could lose as much as 15 minutes a day, which means if you had a mechanical clock at home, you'd be made to go to bed 15 minutes later than your actual bed time without your parents knowing about it. Pendulum clocks were far better at keeping the time, they only lost 15 seconds a day.

Watches were developed over one hundred years before the pendulum clock. Early watches were not worn on the wrist, they were often held in the hand, kept in a pocket or worn on a chain. Although wrist watches have been around for over four hundred years, they didn't become popular until the first world war. As an army officer, it was difficult to read a pocket watch whilst organising your men for battle in the first world war trenches. Wrist watches worn by soldiers created a fashion that spread throughout Britain which has continued to this day.

The first clocks were used by ancient civilisations for religious and farming purposes. Clocks didn't just happen; one person didn't just have an idea for time and make a watch. Horologists developed clocks over thousands of years, borrowing on the understanding and inventions of horologists that came before them. The organising of time and the humble watch is something that we take for granted but is something that changed the world.

Time to reflect

What normal activities in the 21st century would be impossible to do without knowing the time?

- Catching a bus or train
- Everyone arriving at school together
- Bed time
- Boiling an egg with a runny yoke
- Parents watching TV
- Timing the running of a marathon
- Meeting a friend at 3:30pm
- Watching a live football match

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for all the little steps and inventions that people have made to provide us with what we so often take for granted today. Help us to make the most of the time that we have got. Help us to play our part knowing that with others, we too could change the world. *(Amen)*

28.2 The Church Bell

Can anyone remember the name given to the study of clocks? What would you do if you wanted everybody in your community to know what time it was but you knew that no one had a clock? The bell has been an important way for people across Europe to know what time it was for hundreds of years. Bells have signalled time to wake up, time to pray, time to start and stop working, to mark times of celebration and to call communities to come together (for example: church services on a Sunday). The school bell historically signalled the beginning of the school day, break time, lunch time and home time.

The church bell has been a common sound across the UK for over twelve hundred years. The first church bells were used in Italy in 400AD (one thousand, six hundred years ago) to guide Christians in their daily rituals. As more churches were built, bell towers and the bells got bigger. They became an important way of telling the time for all of the reasons mentioned above.

Church bells were originally chimed by deacons pulling on a rope to turn the bell. Campanology is the name given to study of bells and bell ringing. Over time people began experimenting with new ways of hanging the bell to improve the control of how and when the bell would chime. Different sized bells were used that chimed at different tones, some high and some low. Churches began including a number of different size bells and bell ringers were able to change the order in which the bells rang.

Mechanical clocks started appearing on churches not long after their invention in the 1300's. The bells and the clocks were used to help communities organise their time. The time in one community may not have been the same as the time in another community. The church clock and bell many have been set by sundials, but they weren't always accurate. It wasn't until the railways that communities needed to know exactly what time it was in the next town or city. Time wasn't standardised across Britain until the 1840s.

Time to reflect

- Do bells help you to know the time? Alarm, school bells etc…?
- What does knowing the time help communities to do that they couldn't do before?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for all the little steps and inventions that people have made to provide us with what we so often take for granted today. Help us to make the most of the time that we have got. Help us to play our part knowing that with others, we too could change the world. *(Amen)*



28.3 The Minaret and the Muezzin

Can anyone remember some of the reasons why many traditional churches have a bell? This morning we are going to think about how Muslims know when it is time to pray.

Salat or prayer is one of five important actions that most Muslims complete. The five actions are called the 'Five Pillars of Islam.' Pillars are used in building, 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.

'Salat' is the second of these Five Pillars of Islam. Salat are five daily prayers that are performed at set times during the day or night. Times for Salat are:

1. Just before sunrise,
2. midday,
3. the late part of the afternoon,
4. just after sunset
5. and between sunset and midnight.

Islam was started by the prophet Muhammad in modern day Saudi Arabia at the beginning of the 7th Century (c.610CE). Within a couple of decades mosques had been built in Makkah, the city where Muhammad was born and in another important Muslim city close by called Madinah. During the time of these early mosques a person would call Muslims to pray five times a day from the top of the highest roof top. This person was called a muezzin. Within a hundred years, mosques were built with high towers from which the muezzin would call Muslims to prayer. These towers are called minarets and a common feature on Mosques all around the world where muezzin continue to call Muslim worshippers to prayer.

Time to reflect

- What are the similarities between a church bell and a muezzin and minaret?
- Why were church bells and muezzins important in helping communities organise their time?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for all the little steps and inventions that people have made to provide us with what we so often take for granted today. Help us to make the most of the time that we have got. Help us to play our part knowing that with others, we too could change the world. *(Amen)*



28.4 Time Around the World

So far this week we have explored the history of the measurement of time. We have learned about lots of inventions that took over six thousand years of improvement to get where we are today. The invention of clocks and the ability to measure time accurately has changed our world. We have already thought about the things we wouldn't be able to do if we didn't have the ability to accurately measure time.

Each invention was improved, sundials became smaller and more accurate at dividing the day into even sections or hours. Water clocks began by simply measuring water emptying from one container into another but they developed into detailed clocks with moving gears that could track the movement of the planets in our solar system. Improvements to the mechanical clock meant that they became smaller *and* bigger. Small enough to wear on your wrist and big enough to be seen across London on Big Ben's clock tower. The improvements made the mechanical clock more accurate. The ability to accurately tell the time allowed other things to be developed like Britain's railway system.

We have only mentioned a few of the many improvements and inventions that continued to develop horology throughout history. Did the stop watch, the grandfather clock, the cuckoo clock, the electric powered clock, the quartz crystal clock and the atomic clock all have their beginnings in the simple sundial?

All of the things that we have today come from an idea, possibly a simple idea. A car from a wheel, a plane from a piece of paper (paper plane), a computer from pen and paper. I wonder if the person who had the idea of tracking the sun across the sky using a stick in the ground ever thought that one day people would have a clock on their wrists.

Time to reflect

- What do you like? Games consoles, bikes, toys. They all started with an idea.
- Have you experienced the development of an idea? (Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox 1s)
- What ideas of others have you developed?
- What ideas have you had that others have developed?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for all the little steps and inventions that people have made to provide us with what we so often take for granted today. Help us to make the most of the time that we have got. Help us to play our part knowing that with others, we too could change the world. *(Amen)*



28.5 Thinking Time

This week we have been thinking about time, how it has been measured and displayed over the centuries. Yesterday we thought about some of the improvements that have been made to develop the sundial that has led to the creation of the watches and clocks that we often take for granted today. I wonder how many people have been involved in developing ways of improving the way time is measured and displayed. I wonder how many people over the centuries have contributed to allow me to be woken up my alarm clock or ensure that I arrived at school on time this morning.

For every clock that worked I wonder how many didn't. I wonder how many experiments went wrong, inspiring someone to change and improve their ideas. It is reassuring to think that people developing something that changed the world probably only worked on a little bit of it. It is inspiring to think that they probably had set backs and worked through them, but ultimately, they worked with others to create something that would benefit all of us.

School is a place where we work together, face challenges and improve together. Children all around the world are learning, improving their ideas and helping each other.

Time to reflect

- What setbacks have you overcome in your learning?
- What would you like to do to improve things for others?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for all the little steps and inventions that people have made to provide us with what we so often take for granted today. Help us to make the most of the time that we have got. Help us to play our part knowing that with others, we too could change the world. *(Amen)*



29.1 John Harrison

Preparation

Search and display John Harrison or John Harrison's chronometer H1, 2, 3 or 4.

Can anyone remember the theme of last week's assemblies? What is the name given to a person who makes clocks and is interested in the study of time? What words or phrases do you think of when you hear the word hero? A hero may a person with super human qualities, or a person known for their courage or their achievements. Someone who saves lives is often called a hero. This week we are going to hear about a hero horologist that saved the lives of thousands of sailors.

John Harrison was born in March 1693 in the West Yorkshire village of Foulby. As a child, John caught smallpox. Whist recovering in bed, he became fascinated with the workings of a pocket watch he had been given as a gift. John and his family moved to Barrow on Humber in Lincolnshire in 1700. John followed in his father's footsteps as a carpenter and he also enjoyed singing, becoming the choir master of his local parish church. John combined his skills as a carpenter and his fascination with clocks by building his first Grandfather clock at the age of twenty. He created the cabinet and the workings of the pendulum clock. This and two other grandfather clocks made by John still exist today.

Like many horologists, John wanted to improve the accuracy of his clocks. Pendulum clocks still lost a few seconds every day and mechanical pocket watches would be out by minutes. Pendulums are often made of metal and the metal expands and gets bigger as



the temperature around it warms up. Metal shrinks and gets smaller as the temperature around it cools down. These changes in the pendulum affects how well it keeps time. John understood how temperature can change the accuracy of a pendulum and experimented with using two metals (brass and iron) to reduce how a change in temperature would affect the accuracy of his clocks. Harrison created and improved the accuracy of pocket watches.

But why is John a hero? If you are a sailor, knowing where you are when at sea is very important. Knowing where the nearest port is and how long it will take to get there will make sure that you will have enough supplies of food and drink. It will help you to stay away from dangerous cliffs and submerged rocks hidden just below the surface of the water. Today, satellite tracking systems help sailors to know exactly where they are when at sea. During John's time sailors had maps and compasses and used the sun, moon, stars and their experience to navigate their ships at sea.

To know exactly where you are at sea you need to accurately workout how far and in which direction you have travelled. The sun, moon and stars can be used to find out how far north or south you are but working out knowing how far west of the UK shores you are is much more difficult. Before and during

John's lifetime many sailors died as a result of being lost at sea. The Royal Navy had lost many ships because they were unable to navigate dangerous seas and ended up as shipwrecks. The British government set up the Board of Longitude in 1714 offering a prize of £20,000 to the person who could help solve this problem.

John Harrison understood the problem. If a sailor had an accurate way of knowing the time of the place they started from, they could work out how far east or west they had travelled. The most accurate clocks of his day were pendulum clocks, but they were useless on a ship that moved around on the sea. A chronometer is the name given to a clock that can work accurately in different conditions. A good chronometer will not let temperature, humidity, air pressure or the constant movement of a ship stop it from keeping accurate time. John set himself the task of creating a marine chronometer that could withstand the conditions at sea.

John started his 'sea clock' known as H1 in 1728. It took him seven years to complete. John and his brother tested the H1 on the river Humber and in 1736, satisfied that it was ready, he brought the clock to London to show the scientific community and hopefully claim his prize. A sea trial was organised to see how well the H1 would keep time whilst on a working Royal Navy ship. It was taken on board HMS Centurion as it prepared to set sail to the port of Lisbon in Portugal. The clock didn't do very well on the 1,200-mile trip to Portugal. The H1 was transferred to HMS Oxford for a return journey. This time the clock performed well and Harrison saved the crew from sailing too close to dangerous rocks off the coast of Cornwall.

The Board of Longitude was impressed by the H1 and agreed a payment of £500 to help Harrison build an improved clock. John moved to London and the new chronometer, called H2, was completed two years later. John realised that the design of the H2 would still lose time because of the way ships moved when they turned in the water so he began working on H3 in 1740. He worked on H3 for a total of nineteen years. Each clock performed better than the previous one, but John still wasn't satisfied that his clocks would keep accurate time in all conditions, so in 1750 he began designing H4.

We will find out if John wins the prize later this week. It took years of his life to make one clock. When that clock didn't work as he wanted, he didn't give up. He used the knowledge that he gained and included it in the design of the next one. He included the things that worked and redesigned the bits that didn't. John Harrison can inspire us when we find our work difficult, or when we get things wrong.

Time to reflect

- How can John Harrison inspire you when you find things difficult or get things wrong?
- When learning to ride a bike, don't say 'I'm rubbish because I fell off', instead say 'I did well to ride 10 metres'.
- What can you learn from getting things wrong?
- Would John have invented his clocks if he hadn't have caught small pox as a child?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for people who can help to inspire us as we face our own challenges and problems. Help us today to carry on applying the things we learn from our first, second or tenth attempt at achieving our goals. *(Amen)*

29.2 Time For A Change

Can you remember what John Harrison is remembered for? How many clocks did he make trying to win the Board of Longitude prize? John's first clock took him seven years to complete. The second took him two years. His third attempt, H3 was running and being tested after five years, but he continued to make changes to it for the next fourteen years. Ten years into his work on H3, John had an idea to completely redesign the heart of his clocks. John tried a completely different solution to the same problem. H4 was very different to the three clocks he had already designed. (The national Maritime Museum website has images of all four of John Harrisons clocks, H1-3 are similar in size with a lot of workings, compare them to H4. You will need to filter images 'Collection items' in search results)

Over the years, John improved parts of H2 and H3 that he felt were making the previous design lose time. His first three clocks were all a great leap in horology, he had developed new ways of solving age old problems. H4 wasn't like his other clocks. John started on a completely new design, he decided to improve the reliability and accuracy of the pocket watch.

Sometimes the old methods just simply won't work. John had spent twenty-two years improving his first three clocks. He began to realise that at sea, his first three designs may never work in all weather conditions. He decided to try a new solution to his problem. It would be so much easier to have continued working the same way he had done for the past twenty years, but John was very brave to start working on a completely different design. His choice to start on a completely new design payed off and after working and testing H4 for fifteen years, it proved a success.

Time to reflect

Discuss and think about the following:

1. *God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;*
   Courage to change the things I can;
   and the wisdom to know the difference.
   Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971)
2. *"If you only do what you have always done then you will only get what you have always gotten."*

- Should you ever give up on reaching your goals?
- How do you know your goal is the right one? Was John's goal impossible?
- What is the difference between giving up and trying a different solution?
- What problems have you solved by changing the way you tried to solve it?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for people who can help to inspire us as we face our own challenges and problems. Help us when we seem to get stuck and struggle to master a skill or reach our goals, help us to know when to carry on and when to try another solution. *(Amen)*



29.3 Horology Hero

Can you remember what John Harrison is remembered for? John started his fourth clock in 1751. The H4 looks like a large pocket watch which did not impress the Board of Longitude, but in 1761, they gave permission for William Harrison, John's son, to test the H4 on a voyage to Jamaica. The H4 performed so well that the captain of the ship offered to buy their next one. The H4 called the 'marine chronometer' had kept reliable time. The H4 and the timekeepers that came after it helped to keep sailors safe from the dangers of getting lost at sea.

We began this week by saying that we were going to be exploring the life of a hero horologist that saved the lives of thousands of sailors. John was a self-taught clock maker that was interested in making and developing new systems in the workings of a clock. His 'marine chronometer' made sure that sailors were safer at sea than they had ever been before. His invention protected the lives of countless numbers of sailors. John had dedicated his working life to solve this problem and it took over three decades and four designs. His dedication, skill, perseverance and his resilience all make him a horology hero.

Time to reflect

- Do you think John Harrison is a hero? Why?
- Is John Harrison an unusual hero? Why?
- How can John Harrison inspire other heroes?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for people who can help to inspire us as we face our own challenges and problems. Like John, help us to continue doing what we enjoy and may it help and benefit others. *(Amen)*



29.4 An Unsolvable Problem

This week we learned that John Harrison worked on his first three clocks for twenty-two years before deciding to go for a completely different design. It is hard to understand just how difficult solving the problem of keeping accurate time at sea was. When the Board of Longitude was set up in 1714, Sir Isaac Newton (a very very famous scientist) wrote to the board saying that he doubted it could be done with the use of a clock.

"One [method] is by a watch to keep time exactly. But, by reason of the motion of the ship, the variation of heat and cold, wet and dry, and the difference of gravity in different latitudes, such a watch hath not yet been made."

In 1721, Sir Isaac Newton wrote to the Royal Navy:

"A good watch may serve to keep a reckoning at sea for some days and to know the time of a celestial observation; and for this end a good Jewel may suffice till a better sort of watch can be found out. But when longitude at sea is lost, it cannot be found again by any watch."

Even though great scientists of the day thought it could not be done, it didn't put John off. John must have believed that he could make a clock that would keep accurate time at sea. His knowledge, expert craftmanship and determination convinced him that he was the man who could solve this problem. John had all the qualities that enabled him to achieve his goal.

Time to reflect

- What qualities did John Harrison have to be able to achieve his goal?
- Should he have given up if those around him said it couldn't be done including great scientists?
- How can John Harrison's determination and skill inspire us?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for people who can help to inspire us as we face our own challenges and problems. Help us to accept the things we cannot change. Courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know the difference. *(Amen)*



29.5 Be Inspired!

There are so many things we can learn from the story of John Harrison and his ambition to create an accurate chronometer that worked well at sea.

Time to reflect

Think about what we can learn from the life of John Harrison using the points below:

- He learned from his experience. John adapted and improved his clocks based on what he had learned.
- If H1, 2 and 3 didn't keep time well enough, would they be considered as failures? Each clock kept good time whilst on land.
- He didn't just try to solve the problem, he also took pride in the detail of each clock. Each clock is a masterpiece of engineering. John took pride in his clocks. The engraving on all of his clocks are of the highest quality. **(The national Maritime Museum website has images of all four of John Harrisons clocks. You will need to filter images 'Collection items' in search results)**
- He wasn't afraid of starting again. John completely changed his approach after H3 opting to improve an oversize pocket watch.
- John was resilient and persistent. He worked on the problem for over thirty years.
- Would John have invented his clocks if he hadn't have caught small pox as a child?
- What else can we learn from the life of John Harrison?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for people who can help to inspire us as we face our own challenges and problems. Help us when we seem to get stuck and struggle to master a skill or reach our goals, help us to know when to carry on and when to try another solution. *(Amen)*



30.1 The Golden Rule

Preparation

Arrange for a pupil or teacher to read the first part of The Good Samaritan.

Have you heard the phrases 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself' or 'Treat others as you want to be treated'? Does anyone know what these rules are often called? This week we are going to think about what is known as 'The Golden Rule'. Has anyone heard of 'The Golden Rule'? What do you think 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself' or 'Treat others as you want to be treated' could mean? We'll think about some questions first. Do you like it when people are mean to you? Do you ever feel bad if you're left out of a game? No one likes it when their feelings get hurt. Have you ever wondered if your own actions hurt other people's feelings? The Golden Rule is a reminder that we should treat others in the same way that **you** would like to be treated. The Golden Rule has been written about for thousands of years. The theme of the Golden Rule was included in a nice sounding Egyptian book called the Book of the Dead three and a half thousand years ago. The book explained how a person's actions could affect them in the afterlife. The Golden Rule can be found in most religions.

The Hadith is a collection of sayings from the founder of Islam. Muhammad tells his followers that "None of you has faith until he loves his brother or his neighbour what he loves for himself." Sahih Muslim Book 1, Number 72. Some Muslims believe that Muhammad told his followers to "Assist any person oppressed, whether Muslim or non-Muslim". The Quran also states that Muslims should return evil with kindness.



In the Torah, an important Jewish book, it says "Love your neighbour as yourself." (Leviticus 19:17) Rabbi Hillel was an important teacher who lived around 2000 years ago. He said, "Don't do to others what you would not want done to you". The Torah is the first five books of the Jewish holy book called The Tanakh. In the Tanakh it says that "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat, if he is thirsty give him water to drink." (Proverbs 25:21)

The Golden Rule can be found in the teachings of many of the major cultures and religions including Hindu Dharma (Sanatan Dharma), Sikhi, Buddhist Dharma and Baha'i. The Golden Rule can be used by all people in all situations, regardless of nation, culture, race or beliefs. Humanists teach that the Golden Rule requires kindness and care and discourages lying, bullying and theft. *

When Jesus was asked, which is the greatest commandment? He replied "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, this is the first and greatest commandment and the second is like it love your neighbour as you love yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments."

For Jesus and for many people, the Golden Rule is very important. Jesus explains that



loving others means helping those that you don't like or even helping people that don't like you. A person once asked Jesus, who is my neighbour? The parable of the Good Samarian was his reply.

Hi there, my name is Josh and I come from Jerusalem, in Judea. One day I was walking from Jerusalem to Jericho to visit some friends. I was carrying a bag over my shoulder with my money and some things for my friends in it. It was a hot day and the path was dusty. There were some trees and big rocks on both sides of that road. I was happily walking along, thinking about my friends when suddenly some men came from behind one of the boulders and started pulling at my clothes and bag, they beat me up quite badly and then ran off. I laid on the ground bleeding and hurting so much that I couldn't move. I could hear some birds whistling in the trees. Then, as I lay there I heard footsteps. I could see a man in posh robes. It was a Priest, one of my Jewish religious leaders. "Great" I thought, "he will help me", but he just looked at me, crossed over the road, and carried on walking.
I heard more footsteps and saw a man walking on the other side of the road. I could see he was one of the Levites that helps the priests in the synagogue. I thought he would help me, but although he seemed to glance over at me he just carried on walking.

Then, I heard the clippety-clop of hooves. The man stopped, got off his donkey and bent down to me. He said that his name was Dan and that he was from Samaria. At this point I was very scared. The Samaritans hate us Jews and there's no way I could get up and run away. I was unable to move. What was he going to do? Surprisingly, he started cleaning my wounds, he bandaged them and gave me a drink. He put me on his donkey. I was still a bit scared. Was he kidnapping me? Surely not after he had been so kind. He walked along the road with me on his donkey until we came to an inn. He bought me food and changed my bandages. He made sure I was okay. The next morning he gave the innkeeper some money, asking him to look after me and said that if it cost the innkeeper more money to look after me, he would pay the rest next time he came to the inn. I had to wonder at what had happened. I had been taught never to talk to a Samaritan because they are our enemy and yet a Samaritan had shown compassion and cared for me.

During this week, we will hear from the Priest and the Samaritan, to hear their part of the story and think about why we should treat others as we would want to be treated. The opposite of love is hate and we will consider when children in Manchester were killed due to someone's hate, but it caused people to be more loving, kind and compassionate.

Time to reflect

- What is The Golden Rule?
- Who is your neighbour?
- Why did Jesus reply to the question who is my neighbour, with the parable of the good Samaritan?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

The Golden Rule is an important piece of advice that has been used for thousands of years to help us know how we should treat other people. Please help us to think about what we say and do and to treat others as we would want to be treated. *(Amen)*

**The humanist association website has more information on humanist ethics.*

30.2 The Priest

Preparation

Preparation: Arrange for a pupil or teacher to read the part of the Jewish Priest. To recap the story, download and watch the free video from www.max7.org/en/resource/goodsamaritan. Videos can be downloaded on memory sticks and kept as a permanent resource in the school courtesy of www.max7.org.

This week we are thinking of the 'Golden Rule'. Can anyone tell me what the Golden rule is? 'Do to others as you would want them to do to you' or 'love your neighbour as you love yourself'. Yesterday we heard Jesus' reply to the question 'who is my neighbour?' Jesus expressed that everyone in need is a neighbour and told a parable about a Jew that was helped or 'loved' by his enemy. Today, we are going to hear what the Priest has to say for himself. The Priest is the religious person who taught Jews the ten commandments from the Torah. He taught the people to 'Love the Lord your God and Love your neighbour as yourself', and 'Forget about the wrong things people do to you. You must not try to get even. Love your neighbour as you love yourself.' Leviticus 19:18

The Jewish Priest

I was walking along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho when I saw a man that I recognised was a Jew lying on the floor. He looked as though he had been beaten and robbed, there was a lot of blood and bruises, he may even have been dead. As a priest I knew that I should check to see if he was alive and help him, but what if he was dead? I'm a priest and I'm not allowed to touch a dead person. I wouldn't be allowed to perform my duties for a week. I daren't even let my clothes touch the body, so I crossed over the road to protect myself. And, besides, what if the robbers were still hiding and came and beat and robbed me.

Have you heard the phrase 'practise what you preach'? The Priest would have taught the Jews to 'Love your neighbour as yourself' and that it would particularly apply to fellow Jews. Is that what the Priest would have wanted someone to do, if he had been robbed, beaten and left to die? Would the Priest have wanted someone to pass by on the other side? The Priest said I, me and my a lot. It sounded as if he was only thinking about himself.

Time to reflect

- Do you think the Priest thought about how the person on the ground was feeling?
- Was the Priest practising what he preached?
- How do you think the person on the ground felt when he saw the Priest cross the road?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

The Golden Rule is an important piece of advice that has been used for thousands of years to help us know how we should treat other people. Please help us to think about what we say and do and to treat others as we would want to be treated. *(Amen)*



30.3 The Good Samaritan

Preparation

Arrange for someone to read the part of the Samaritan

Can anyone remind us of the Golden Rule? What parable did Jesus tell to explain who is our neighbour? Today we will hear from the Samaritan in the parable.

Dan the Samaritan

Hi, my name is Dan and I am a Samaritan from Samaria. I was riding my donkey along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho one day, when I saw a Jewish man lying on the path. He wasn't moving at all and was covered in blood and bruises. Jews and Samaritans have been enemies for hundreds of years, we don't even talk to each other! As I got closer and closer I started to feel sorry for the person lying on the floor. I could have passed by but I started thinking, 'What if that was me lying on the floor nearly dead and a Jew came by. Would I want him to help me?' I couldn't help myself. I just had to do something or this man may die. I asked him his name, he told me he was called Josh. From a piece of clothing I made some bandages. With a piece of the cloth and some of my water I cleaned off the blood, then washed and bandaged his wounds. I put him on my donkey and rode to the nearest inn. There I paid for a room and fed Josh with some soup, I gave him sips of water and changed the bandages. In the morning, I had to get on my way, but I left the innkeeper some money to look after Josh for at least a couple of weeks. I said that if it cost any more money to care for Josh, I would pay the rest when I next came by. I didn't know what my friends would say if they heard what I had done, but, really I should care more about Josh than what my friends might say. I just felt so sorry for him lying there, seeing that he had been beaten up and left to die, I had to do something. I know I would want someone to stop and help if it had been me.

Time to reflect

- Could the Samaritan man have left the Jewish man lying on the floor? (Why?)
- Why did he help the Jewish man?
- What help would you like to receive today? How can you help someone else today?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

The Golden Rule is an important piece of advice that has been used for thousands of years to help us know how we should treat other people. Please help us to think about what we say and do and to treat others as we would want to be treated. *(Amen)*



30.4 Love Thy Neighbour - Tolerance

This week we have been thinking about 'The Golden Rule'. There are two versions of the Golden Rule, can anyone remember what they are? 'Do to others as you would want them to do to you' and 'love your neighbour as yourself'. 'Do to others as you would want them to do you' is clear, it can be turned around, don't do to others as you would not want done to you. If you don't want to be bullied, don't bully. If you don't want things stolen from you then don't steal. If you don't want others talking about you behind your back, then don't gossip about others. If you want others to accept who you are and respect what you believe, then accept others and what they believe. Tolerance is the ability to accept and respect those who don't believe what you believe. Tolerance is the ability to accept and respect those who do different things and perform different rituals or celebrate different festivals. Tolerance is the ability to accept and respect those who look different, both their skin colour and the clothes they wear. If you want people to tolerate what you look like, your beliefs and your actions then you must tolerate what others look like, their beliefs and their actions. 'Do to others' is a good way of working out if something shouldn't be done. Bullying is wrong because I don't want to be bullied.

The word love in 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself' can sound a bit funny. We can often think that love is the feelings that you keep within a family. The word 'love' means something much more than that. In May of 2017, there was an intolerant act at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester.

The reaction to the bomb was not one of hate, but love. All over Manchester and other parts of the UK, there were stories of people opening up their homes and offering support to those who needed it. Ariana arranged a concert called 'One Love Manchester' held in Manchester Arena. It was an opportunity to share the hurt and grief of the people affected by the bombing and it raised a lot of money to help those who were injured and the relatives of those who died in the attack. Many singers and bands emphasised the importance love can have in overcoming intolerance. The concert showed that love is stronger than fear and hate.

Time to reflect

- What would it be like if everyone loved their neighbour as they did themselves?
- How can love overcome intolerance?
- How can love help us to become more tolerant?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

The Golden Rule is important piece of advice that has been used for thousands of years to help us know how we should treat other people. Please help us to think about what we say and do and to treat others as we would want to be treated. *(Amen)*



30.5 How Can We Love Our Neighbour?

Can anyone tell me what the Golden Rule is? 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself' and 'do to others as you would want them to do to you'. The parable of the Good Samaritan is a reminder that we can help anyone, no matter where they come from or what they believe. 'When I Needed a Neighbour' is a song that is written from the point of view of a person needing help. **Read the reflection questions then read the lyrics to the song:**

Time to reflect

As we read the lyrics to the song I want to you to think…

- The man mugged in the story of the Good Samaritan was hungry, thirsty, stripped of his clothes, needing a shelter and needing someone to make him better?
- Who was there for him?

The word 'creed' in this song means your beliefs. 'Colour' is used to refer to the colour of our skin.

Did the Good Samaritan stop helping someone because of different beliefs or skin colour?

1) When I needed a neighbour,
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a neighbour, were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter,
Were you there?

2) I was hungry and thirsty,
Were you there, were you there?
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter,
Were you there?

3) I was cold, I was naked,
Were you there, were you there?
I was cold, I was naked, were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter,
Were you there?

4) When I needed a shelter
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a shelter were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter,
Were you there?

5) When I needed a healer,
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a healer, were you there?
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter,
Were you there?

6) Wherever you travel,
I'll be there, I'll be there.
Wherever you travel, I'll be there.
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter,
I'll be there.

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Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

The Golden Rule is an important piece of advice that has been used for thousands of years to help us know how we should treat other people. Please help us to think about what we say and do and to treat others as we would want to be treated. *(Amen)*



31.1 Buddha Day

Each year, in May or early June, millions of people around the world celebrate the festival of Wesak. Wesak is also known as 'Buddha Day' because it celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of a man called Siddhartha Gautama who came to be known as the Buddha.

Siddhartha was born to King Suddhodana and Queen Maya in a place called Lumbini in modern day Nepal over 2500 years ago. Before the prince was born, Queen Maya had a dream that a white elephant entered her side. Hindu holy men also told the king and queen that they would have a son and that he would either become a great ruler or a great religious leader. The king wanted his son to become a great ruler so he made sure that Siddhartha had everything he wanted. The king made sure that Siddhartha never left the palace. The king protected his son by not allowing sick people, old people or religious monks into the palace. He employed many young servants to distract Siddhartha. When Siddhartha was 16, his father arranged Siddhartha's marriage to the beautiful young princess Yasodhara. Siddhartha and Yasodhara had a son called Rahula and they lived and raised their son within the palace walls. Siddhartha wasn't satisfied with his life of luxury, throughout his life he wondered what the world was like outside the palace.

Before his 30th birthday, Siddhartha asked the palace servant, Channa, to show him life outside the palace. Channa prepared a chariot and Siddhartha left the palace for the first time. Not far from the palace, Siddhartha saw on old man. Siddhartha had never seen an old person before. The lack of hair, the wrinkles and the walking stick all surprised Siddhartha. He asked Channa



about what he had seen, Channa told Siddhartha that he had just witnessed old age. "We must all grow old" said Channa. At this Siddhartha ordered the chariot to return to the palace.

It wasn't long before Siddhartha wanted to see life outside the palace again. Channa prepared the chariot and Siddhartha left the palace for the second time. They hadn't been travelling long when Siddhartha saw a man lying and groaning on the road. Siddhartha asked Channa about what he had just seen. Channa told Siddhartha that he had just witnessed sickness. "We can all become ill" said Channa. Siddhartha didn't know that people could suffer in this way. He ordered the chariot to return to the palace.

Siddhartha didn't like old age and sickness, but he wanted to see outside the palace again. Channa prepared the chariot and Siddhartha left the palace for the third time. On this visit, Siddhartha saw some people carrying a dead body in a funeral procession. He asked Channa about what he had just seen. "We must all die" said

Channa. Struggling to understand what he had just seen, Siddhartha ordered the chariot to return to the palace.

Siddhartha thought a lot about what he had seen and about why there was so much suffering in the world. He had to see outside the palace once more. Channa prepared the chariot and Siddhartha left the palace for the fourth time. Siddhartha saw a religious monk. The monk's head was shaved, the monk didn't have many clothes and he carried a bowl. The monk seemed to be very poor, yet he looked very happy. Siddhartha couldn't understand how someone could be so happy with so much suffering around. He asked Channa about what he had just seen. Channa told Siddhartha that the monk was a holy man. "What he carries is all that he owns," said Channa.

Siddhartha struggled to understand the four things he had seen. He decided to become a holy man and search for the answers. Siddhartha and Channa came to a river by the edge of his father's kingdom. The prince took off his beautiful robes and his jewellery and gave them to Channa. Siddhartha cut off his hair and began the next stage of his life. As a prince, Siddhartha had everything he ever wanted. To find the answers to the problem of suffering he decided to try and live with as little as possible. He ate so little food that he nearly starved to death.

Siddhartha spent a lot of time focusing his thoughts in meditation. Sometimes he would meditate trying to find answers to the problem of suffering, other times he would meditate and not think of anything at all. One morning, Siddhartha awoke from his meditation. He had answers to all of the questions that he had been thinking about, everything made sense. He had become the Buddha, the Enlightened one. He understood that suffering was a part of life, both luxury and poverty cause suffering. Siddhartha was about 35 when he reached what is called 'enlightenment'. The Buddha spent the next 45 years teaching others and spreading the message of Buddhist Dharma. Wesak commemorates Siddhartha's birth, enlightenment and death.

Time to reflect

- Why was Siddhartha so affected by the four sights he had seen outside of his palace?
- How did Siddhartha try and find the answers to the problem of suffering after leaving the palace?
- Are there any events in your life that have a big impact on you?

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)*



31.2 Heaven and Hell

Can anyone recount the story of Siddhartha Gautama that we heard yesterday? What is Siddhartha also known as? He lived the first 29 years of his life without seeing or experiencing any suffering. The visions he saw with his charioteer Channa changed his life and he started to meditate on some of the most difficult questions humans try to answer. Can anyone remember the four things that he saw that changed his life? There are many Buddhist stories and sayings that help to explain why people suffer and what people can do to reduce or stop suffering.

Once upon a time there was a nun. She wanted to understand the difference between the place of extreme bliss (sometimes called heaven) and the place of extreme suffering (sometimes called hell). "Before I die" she said "I want to visit both". Her wish was granted and she arrived at a great dining hall at lunch time. The dining hall was packed with people and the tables were piled high with delicious food and drink. As the nun looked carefully she noticed that all the people were thin and starving. Each person was holding a pair of chopsticks the length of a tall man. Although they were hungry they greedily tried to pick up the food but couldn't get the food from the plates to their mouths. 'I understand where I am' she told one of the diners, 'I want to see heaven'. Immediately she was transported to another dining hall with the same tables piled high with the same delicious food and drink. Happy people who looked well fed had the same giant chopsticks, but they were using them to feed each other so no one went hungry.

This is an old Buddhist parable that helps to explain how human selfishness can lead to suffering. In the first dining hall, the people only thought about feeding themselves. Everybody in the hall suffered because they didn't want to help each other. In the second dining hall the people were well fed. The situation was exactly the same but they worked together to help make sure that everybody was able to eat.

Time to reflect

- What was the difference between heaven and hell in the story?
- What made hell a place of suffering?
- What made heaven a place of bliss?
- What do we do at school to make things:
  - a) better for ourselves and others?
  - b) bad for ourselves and others?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for stories and parables that remind us of the values that we should live by. This Buddhist parable reminds us that some of the suffering in the world is created by our own actions. The parable also teaches us that the opposite is true, our actions, including helping others, can create a bit of heaven on earth. *(Amen)*



31.3 Buddhist Proverbs - Words

Wisdom is the ability to use the experiences we have had and the experiences others have told us about to make the right choices. We also need the wisdom to remember that we all make mistakes so that we can be fair to everyone around us. There are many wise Buddhist sayings and proverbs that can inspire people to make choices that will help them and the communities in which they live. We are going to think about the advice that we can gain from just a few of these sayings about the words we say.

Time to reflect

For each of these sayings, discuss what you think they mean. What advice are they trying to give? Can you make up similar sayings of your own?

"Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle and the life of the candle will not be shortened."

A kind word costs us nothing but it can brighten someone else's day and inspire them to say a kind word to someone else.

"Better than a thousand useless words is one useful word, hearing which one attains peace."

We might want to spend time telling someone how to do something using hundreds of words, whilst "let me show you" might be more useful.

"A dog is not considered a good dog because he is a good barker. A man is not considered a good man because he is a good talker."

Good actions demonstrate if a person is good or not, not their words. A person may use kind words but hurt people with their actions.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for people in our lives who want the best for us. We know that others may know things that we don't because of their wisdom, their experience and their understanding. Help us today to make the right judgements based on the advice of others. *(Amen)*



31.4 Buddhist Proverbs - Happiness and Anger

Wisdom is the ability to use the experiences we have had and the experiences others have told us about to make the right choices. We also need the wisdom to remember that we all make mistakes so that we can be fair to everyone around us. There are many wise Buddhist sayings and proverbs that can inspire people to make choices that will help them and the communities in which they live. We are going to think about the advice that we can gain from just a few of these sayings about happiness and anger.

Time to reflect

For each of these sayings, discuss what you think they mean. What advice are they trying to give? Can you make up similar sayings of your own?

"Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned."

Anger and unforgiveness hurts the person who is angry far more than it does the person who they are angry with.

"Whoever doesn't flare up at someone who's angry wins a battle hard to win."

It is hard not to become angry with some one who is angry at you, but it will only make the situation worse. It is better to try and stay calm however hard it may be.

"Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions."

We probably all want to be happy, but how many of us want things that are out of our control to make us happy? "I'll be happy if the sun comes out today". Happiness is something that we get from our own actions.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for people in our lives who want the best for us. We know that others may know things that we don't because of their wisdom, their experience and their understanding. Help us today to make the right judgements based on the advice of others. *(Amen)*



31.5 Buddhist Proverbs - Learning

Wisdom is the ability to use the experiences we have had and the experiences others have told us about to make the right choices. We also need the wisdom to remember that we all make mistakes so that we can be fair to everyone around us. There are many wise Buddhist sayings and proverbs that can inspire people to make choices that will help them and the communities in which they live. We are going to think about the advice that we can gain from just a few of these sayings about our attitude to learning.

Time to reflect

For each of these sayings, discuss what you think they mean. What advice are they trying to give? Can you make up similar sayings of your own?

"He is able who thinks he is able."

If you think that you can do it, you will overcome the mistakes and the disappointments. If you think you can't you'll use the mistakes and disappointments as reasons to give up.

"No matter how hard the past, you can always begin again."

Mistakes are inevitable – it's the reason they put little rubbers on the end of pencils.

"It is better to travel well than to arrive."

Try and enjoy the process of learning, researching and practising rather than wanting to complete the learning, researching and practising.

"If you have a problem that can be fixed, then there is no use in worrying. If you have a problem that cannot be fixed, then there is no use in worrying."

Don't worry!

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

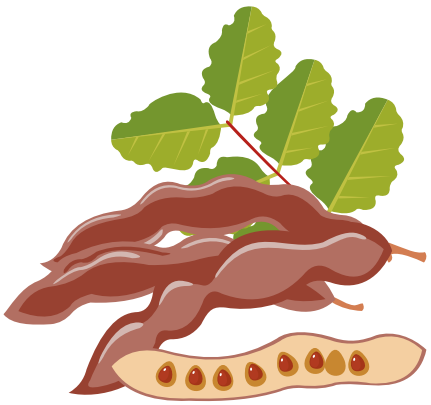
We are thankful for people in our lives that want the best for us. We know that others may know things that we don't because of their wisdom, their experience and their understanding. Help us today to make the right judgements based on the advice of others. *(Amen)*



32.1 Cost The Earth (World Environment Day)

Preparation

Prepare: a wooden spoon, plastic bag, plastic cutlery, pair of trainers.



CAROB

This week we are going to be thinking about sustainable development. Sustainable development is an important term that is used when talking and thinking about the issues concerning our attitude towards the environment. Sustainable development means that as we continue to live on this planet, we don't damage it in the process. As we live and develop our society sustainably we can also think about how our choices effect people in other countries.

The word 'sustainable' means 'to be able to keep going'. One definition of development includes the term 'to grow'. Sustainable development involves us thinking about the stuff that we need to help us now and thinking about the effect it will have on our future or the future of other people. Have you ever heard the phrase 'it cost the Earth'? It usually refers to something that was really expensive but we can use the phrase to think sustainably. When thinking about our actions we can ask the question, 'what is the cost to the earth?' To think sustainably we can think about what has happened in the past, think about what is happening now in the present and think about what will happen in the future. We can ask a few questions about most of the items that we use at home or in school.

The Past

Where did this item come from? Who made it? Why did they make it? Was it made from sustainable materials? Did the person who made it get paid a fair price for their work? We may not know the answer to many of these questions, but the information is becoming increasingly available on the internet. Do you think that we should make choices about what we buy now based on the answers to these questions? Why?

The Future

What will happen to this item in one week? One month? One year? One decade? One hundred years? Is it sustainable? Can I or someone else reuse it? Can I recycle it? Can I compost it?

The Present

Do I want this item? Do I need this item? What changes to this item could make it more sustainable? Can the packaging for this item be reduced? By thinking about the past and future of an item, it may help us to think about our need for it now. If I need it but it can't be recycled or if the person that made it was not paid very much then I can research another similar item that is sustainable.



Use the items suggested and ask questions about their past, future and present.

There is an old Jewish tale that can help us to think about the benefits of thinking sustainably. One hot sunny day, a Rabbi was enjoying a walk. He came across an old man planting a carob tree. It looked like back breaking work on such a hot day and the Rabbi was impressed if not a little surprised. "How many years will it take for the tree to bear fruit?" asked the Rabbi.

"It will take many years," the old man replied as he began watering the newly planted seed.

The Rabbi thought and continued, "Are you so healthy that you expect to live many more years and eat its fruit?"

The man replied, "I found a fruitful world because my ancestors planted it for me. I am planting for my grandchildren."

What is the meaning of this story? The old man in the story thought about the past, the present and the future. What was the old man doing (in the present)? What had happened in the past that made the old man plant the tree? What is going to happen in the future?

Carob trees have been grown for over 4000 years. The carob tree produces brown pods that contain beans similar to coco beans. Throughout its history, the carob pods and beans have been used to make a range of useful things like a healthier form of chocolate and medicine that is good for sore throats. Carob seeds were even used to weigh gold, it's where the term 'carat' gold comes from. In the story, the old man was not only ensuring that his grandchildren had something to eat, but it was something that they would enjoy as well. When it comes to sustainable development, if we all think about where things that we buy come from, what we are going to do with them and ultimately what will happen to them in the future, then we can all make choices that will help everybody enjoy their time on planet earth.

Time to reflect

- How would you explain sustainable development to some who didn't know what it means?
- Can you think about what will happen to the items that you use today?
- If we don't think sustainably what could happen? Will it cost the Earth?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that the earth has enough resources to feed, water and shelter everybody. Help us to make choices that will help everyone to benefit from what the world has to offer in a way that doesn't cost the Earth. *(Amen)*

32.2 Give A Man A Fish

Can anyone remember the theme of yesterday's assembly? Can anyone recount the story of the carob tree? What lessons can we learn from the story of the carob tree?

The old man in the story was thinking of his grandchildren and did something that would help them for years to come. The carob tree grows slowly. It takes about six to seven years before it will start producing its fruit but it will then produce fruit for the next seventy to eighty years. Sustainable means 'to be able to keep going'. The old man realised that his ancestors had planted a sustainable source of food for him years before. He planted the carob tree to make sure that his grandchildren had a sustainable source of food.

What would you prefer, your grandad giving you one carob-based treat or growing you a carob tree so that you can pick and make your own as often as you want? What are the benefits to getting the carob-based treat? What are the benefits of having the tree? There is a saying, 'Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day, teach him how to fish and you feed him for a life time.' What do you think is the meaning of the saying?

There are many types of charities that all work to support and help people from countries around the world in different ways. During a famine, some charities help people by transporting food and water to those who need it. Once the famine is over, people may need help to begin growing their food again. Other charities may provide seeds and animals like goats so that the people can begin to grow and create their own food.

Time to reflect

- What would happen if charities didn't help people to produce their own food after a famine?
- How can charities help people to help themselves?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that the earth has enough resources to feed, water and shelter everybody. Help us to make choices that will help everyone to benefit from what the world has to offer in a way that doesn't cost the Earth. *(Amen)*



32.3 Sustainable Liberty

Does anyone know what 'liberty' means. Liberty means being free to believe and act in the way that you think is best. Article 12 of the UN Convention on the rights of the child states that *'you have the right to give your opinion, and adults to listen and take it seriously'. The UN convention on the rights of the child also state that 'you have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met'* (Article 27). What happens if actions damage the environment or stop other people from earning enough money to be able to buy things that meet their basic needs like food, clothes or shelter?

What jobs are involved in the creation of a cotton t-shirt? (Stages of production)

- Cotton grows on a cotton plant and is collected. People are involved in growing and harvesting the cotton.
- The cotton is turned into thread.
- The thread will be woven into sheets of material.
- The material will be dyed.
- The dyed material can be cut and sewn together to make a t-shirt.
- The t-shirt may need a logo or image printed onto it.
- What about the information tags sewn into the t-shirt?

There are lots of children around the world that work to earn money to support their families. Many are involved in making clothes that are sold in shops all around the world. The little money the children earn will help their families buy the things they need like food. Often the children will not be able to go to school and learn skills that will help them to get a good job. When they grow up they might send their children to work making clothes to earn enough money to buy food for the family.

What does the word fair mean? Companies can make sure that a fair wage is paid to all the adults that make the clothes at every stage of production. The fair wage will allow adults to meet their basic needs so that they won't need to send their children out to earn more money. Many clothing companies are making sure that no children are involved in the creation of their clothes and that the people who are involved are paid fairly. In Monday's assembly, we were encouraged to think about the past, the present and the future of the items that we use regularly. By thinking about who makes our clothes, we can make choices to help more families meet their basic needs (search 'Fairwear foundation' on the internet).

Time to reflect

- What choices can we make to help other people, even if they live in other countries?
- What choices can we make that won't cost the earth?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that the earth has enough resources to feed, water and shelter everybody. Help us to make choices that will help everyone to benefit from what the world has to offer in a way that doesn't cost the Earth. *(Amen)*



32.4 Sustainable Rules

Can anyone remember what we discussed yesterday? We thought about the people that are involved in making clothes. The choices that we make can help people around the world to earn enough money to meet their basic needs (the opposite is also true). Today we are going to think about what governments can do to help protect us and the environment.

How did you get to school today? Who walked? Who caught a bus? Did anyone cycle? Who came by car? Does anyone know what unleaded petrol is for? Unleaded petrol is used to fuel many of our cars. Does anyone know why it is called unleaded? Before the year 2000, many cars ran on petrol that contained lead (Tetraethyl lead). For many years (about 80) lead was added to petrol to help cars run better, but the lead is bad for people's health. The UK government banned the sale of nearly all leaded petrol in 2000. Petrol stations stopped selling leaded petrol and car makers made all their petrol engines run on unleaded. A few petrol stations still have a licence to allow them to sell leaded petrol that can be used in old classic cars today.

Yesterday we thought about the choices that we can make that affect the lives of people living in other countries. Today we have thought about an example of when a government (and parliament) has made a choice that helps to protect everybody.

Time to reflect

- Discuss laws that the government has made or could make to help protect the environment, our health or to ensure that peoples basic needs are met?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that the earth has enough resources to feed, water and shelter everybody. Help us to make choices that will help everyone to benefit from what the world has to offer in a way that doesn't cost the Earth. *(Amen)*



32.5 Assisi Declarations

Can anyone remember yesterday's thought for the day? What laws protect our health and environment? Can anyone think of actions that humans are doing that may cost the Earth or stop other people from being able to meet their basic needs? (Here are a few.)

- Making children and adults work to make clothes and grow our food and not paying them fairly.
- Littering – especially plastic.
- Cutting down large amounts of forest and moving the people who lived in them.
- Pollution – from leaded cars etc....
- Dumping dangerous chemicals into the sea.
- Hunting endangered animals like elephants.
- Building towns and cities that destroy the homes of animals and plants.
- Over fishing – reducing the numbers of fish in the sea.
- Using chemicals that kill off coral in the sea.
- Raising the temperature of the atmosphere.

Mankind has been on the Earth for a long time. For most of that time, the actions of humans haven't caused problems that cost the Earth. It is only in the past two to three hundred years that humanity has started to create problems that affect plants, animals and people all over the world.

Religious and holy books have a lot to say about how a person should live, they contain rules and guidance on a whole range of issues. The technologies and inventions that have had a significant negative impact on nature such as leaded fuels were not around when the religious books were being written so there are no specific rules when it comes to the environment. There are passages throughout the religious writings that can help to shape a religious person's attitude towards the environment.

In 1986, to mark the 25th anniversary of World Wide Fund for Nature International (WWF), its then president, HRH Prince Philip invited leaders from five of the major world religions to discuss how their faiths could help to save the natural world. The meeting took place in Assisi, Italy. Each of the five religions created a 'declaration on nature' highlighting some of their beliefs regarding the environment and outlining attitudes and actions that encourage the people of that faith to live by to ensure a positive future for all that live on the Earth. The final document was called 'The Assisi Declarations'.

Time to reflect

- Discuss your own 'Assisi declaration'. How can you help to save the natural world?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful that the earth has enough resources to feed, water and shelter everybody. Help us to make choices that will help everyone to benefit from what the world has to offer in a way that doesn't cost the Earth. *(Amen)*



33.1 Shavuot

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 many 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. This week we are going to explore the Jewish festival of Shavuot. The festival of Shavuot celebrates God giving Moses the Torah over three thousand, three hundred years ago and takes place seven weeks after another Jewish festival called Passover. **(An assembly and thoughts for the day about the Passover are included in Cycle 2: 26.1-5.)** The account of Moses receiving the Torah is described in the Torah's second book, called Exodus. The book of Exodus explains how the Torah was given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai after the events of the Passover.

Can anyone tell me what the festival of the Passover remembers? During the festival of Passover, Jews retell the story of how God rescued their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. God sent Moses to Pharaoh, the Egyptian leader, to tell him to release the Hebrew slaves. Pharaoh refused and Egypt received nine plagues. After each plague Pharaoh still refused to let the Israelites go.

Exodus explains that God gave instructions to Moses about a meal the Hebrews 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, saving the lives of the Hebrew first-born sons.

Pharaoh finally released the Hebrews (also known as Israelites). The book of Exodus explains that 600,000 Israelite men left Egypt as well as women and children. Moses led the Israelites on a journey that lasted three months, to a mountain, called Sinai. During the journey, they were chased by Pharaoh's army after Pharaoh changed his mind again. Exodus describes how Moses stretched his hand over the sea and God sent a strong wind splitting the sea into two and allowing the Israelites to cross on dry land. The soldiers followed them, Exodus says that God jammed the wheels of their chariots. As the last of the Israelites managed to climb safely onto the far shore, the wind stopped and the waters returned destroying Pharaoh's army.

Whilst on their three-month journey, the book of Exodus explains that the Israelites complained about the lack of food and water. God provided water from a rock and bread from heaven. They arrived at Mount Sinai and set up camp there. Whilst on the mountain, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments as well as many other rules that are included in the Torah.



Although the Torah includes all the commandments and rules that Moses received on Mount Sinai the Torah itself covers so much more. The Torah starts with the story of creation. It describes how the world was created in six days with God resting on the seventh. It describes how God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and how a mistake brought death and suffering into the world. The Torah explains how Cain, a son of Adam and Eve, killed his brother Abel. It describes God asking Noah to build an ark because of the great flood. It also explains why there are so many languages with the account of the Tower of Babel.

The Torah explains that God made a special promise with a man called Abraham. God promised that he would make Abraham into a great nation by giving him lots of descendants. The Torah describes how God gave Abraham a son called Isaac. It tells the account of Abraham's descendants to Jacob and his twelve sons. It explains how the Israelites came to be slaves in Egypt. It describes how Moses was born into slavery in Egypt but he was saved as a baby and grew up in the palace of the Pharaoh. The Torah explains how Moses killed an Egyptian guard and fled into the desert. Moses met God in a bush that was on fire but not actually burning. The Torah explains the Passover and how the Israelites fled Egypt. It also describes the events of the next forty years as the Israelites wandered around the desert as a punishment for not believing that God would help them find their own land to settle in. The Torah describes how God was to be worshiped. The Torah contains the laws that many Jews still live by today. The festival of Shavuot is an opportunity for many Jews to accept the Torah for the next twelve months. Many Jews stay up all night during Shavuot to read the Torah.

Has anyone seen a television programme called 'Who do you think you are?'? The programme looks into the family history of celebrities. The celebrities often find out information about the families that they never knew before. Some celebrities find that they are connected to royalty or that they are connected to a sad event in the past. Finding out the history of their ancestors can help people to find out more about themselves.

Time to reflect

- Do you think the Torah provides information that helps Jewish people to answer the question 'Who Do You Think You Are?'
- Have you or any members of your family researched your family history?
- What do you think your ancestors were doing 5000 years ago?

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)*

33.2 Lighting Of The Candles

Like many festivals, Shavuot has its own traditions. Some Jewish families and communities will observe and practice all of the traditions carefully and other Jewish families only practice a few of the traditions. Some Jewish families may choose not to practice any at all.

Many Jewish festivals begin and end at sunset. Shavuot takes place between sunset on the fifth of the Jewish month of Sivan and ends two days later at sunset on the seventh. The Jewish calendar and the Gregorian calendar (January, February, March etc…) are different and the Gregorian calendar date of Shavuot changes each year taking place in May or June.

Shavuot, like many Jewish festivals, begins and ends with the lighting of candles. It is traditional that the women of the family light the candles and a blessing is said while the candles are being lit. Before the Shavuot starts, Jewish women will light a candle and say the following blessing (in Hebrew): *Bo-ruch a-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ho-olom a-sher ki-de-sha-nu be-mitz-vo-sov ve-tzi-vo-nu le-had-lik ner shel Yom Tov. Which means. Blessed are you, L-rd our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified (or purified) us with His commandments and has commanded us to kindle (or begin) the light of the Festival Day.* At the end of Shavuot, candles are lit and the following blessing is said (in Hebrew): *Bo-ruch a-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ho-olom she-he-che-ya-nu vi-kee-yi-ma-nu vi-hi-gee-an-u liz-man ha-zeh. Which means: Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and let us reach this time.*

Time to reflect

- Why are Candles and candlelight important to many Jewish people?
- Do the blessings that are said at the beginning and at the end of Shavuot give you a clue as to why the candles and candlelight are important during festivals?
- The following are some of the reasons candles and candle light are important to Jewish people:
  - Candlelight can represent God's presence.
  - The candle's light helps people to see clearly, it can represent understanding. If you have struggled with a particular maths skill and then suddenly you understand how to do it you might say *'it's like someone turned on a light!'*
  - Candlelight often represents joy in Judaism.
  - The flame of a candle often represents life.
  - Fire also represents purity and cleansing.

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)*



33.3 Reading The Torah

Can anyone remember the name of the Jewish festival that we are thinking about this week? Shavuot. Why is Shavuot important and what does it celebrate? Shavuot remembers Moses being given the Torah. The Torah tells the history of the beginning of the world and the beginning of the Jewish religion. The Torah also contains lots of Jewish rules including the 10 commandments. Traditionally there are 613 Mitzvot or commandments in the Torah. 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.

For many Jews, Shavuot is a time to re-read the Torah. Some Jews will stay up during the first night of Shavuot just to read it. The Torah in many traditional synagogues is written on a scroll. During Shavuot, the community will meet in the Synagogue to read passages of the Torah. Some Jewish communities read the book of Ruth. It tells the story about a compassionate woman called Ruth. The book of Ruth is not included in the 5 books of the Torah but can be found in the bigger Jewish book called the Tanakh. Ruth is the great grandma of the famous Israelite King, King David. In the first chapter of the book of Ruth, Ruth who was not an Israelite, moved to Israel, accepting the teachings of the Torah around the time of Shavuot. There is also a legend that Kind David died on Shavuot. Both are possible reasons why the book of Ruth is read during Shavuot.

Time to reflect

- What books are important to you?
- What would you do to celebrate the writing of an important book?
- (Read it? Following the instructions in it?)

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)*



33.4 The Ten Commandments

Can anyone remember the name of the Jewish festival that we are thinking about this week? Shavuot. Why is Shavuot important and what does it celebrate? Shavuot remembers Moses being given the Torah. Obeying the instructions in the Torah is a way of demonstrating that a person thinks it is important. 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 of the importance of our relationship 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?

Why do we have rules in school? How do we benefit from the rules? They help to keep us safe physically. The rules help to protect our well-being. Rules also help us to get the most out of the learning opportunities we have at school, preparing us for our future. 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'.** Just as some Jews show respect for the Torah by following its rules, so we can show respect for our school community by following the rules in school.

Time to reflect

- Why do we have rules?
- Which rules keep us safe?
- Which rules protect our well-being? (no bullying)
- Which ones help us to make the most of our learning opportunities?

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)*



33.5 Respect Tradition

This week we have been looking at the Jewish festival of Shavuot. Can anyone tell me why Shavuot is important? The traditions that we have explored this week are:

- Women of the house lighting the candles
- Reading the Torah throughout the night
- Going to the synagogue
- Public reading of the book of Ruth

Other traditions include cleaning the house in preparation for the festival and eating sweet dairy foods like cheesecake or blintzes (sweet pancakes) during Shavuot. As well as practising these traditions, Jews also demonstrate respect for the Torah by obeying the laws and rules that are included in it.

I need some volunteers to act out how a Jewish person may celebrate Shavuot or demonstrate how a Jew may respect the Torah. The rest of us will try to guess what you are acting out.

Time to reflect

- Do our actions demonstrate what we respect? Can you think of an example?
- Do our actions demonstrate what we don't respect? Can you think of an example?

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)*



34.1 Ruth

Preparation

Possible image: Painting 'Ruth and Naomi' by Pieter Lastman (1624)



Last week we explored the Jewish festival of Shavuot. Can anyone tell me why Shavuot is important? The festival of Shavuot is a celebration of God revealing the Torah to Moses over three thousand, three hundred years ago. Can anyone remind us why the Torah is important to Jews and Christians? The Torah contains a history of how the world began, the history of the beginning of the Jewish religion and 613 Mitzvot or rules including the Ten Commandments.

Last week we learnt about how some Jewish people celebrated Shavuot. I need some volunteers to act out how a Jewish person may celebrate Shavuot. The rest of us will try to guess what you are acting out. **(Prompts are included below if needed)**

- Cleaning the house in preparation for the festival
- Women of the house lighting candles to begin and end the festival
- Reading the Torah throughout the night
- Going to the synagogue
- Public reading of the book of Ruth
- Eating sweet dairy foods like cheesecake

During the festival some Jewish communities will read the book of Ruth. It tells the story about a compassionate woman called Ruth. The book of Ruth is not included in the 5 books of the Torah but can be found in the bigger Jewish book called the Tanakh. Ruth is the great grandma of the famous Israelite King, King David. In the first chapter of the book of Ruth, Ruth who was not an Israelite, moved to Israel, accepting the teachings of the Torah around the time of Shavuot. There is also a legend that Kind David died during Shavuot. Both are possible reasons why the book of Ruth is read during the festival.

This week we are going to hear and think about this story.

"Hello, my name is Naomi. I was born and grew up in a town called Bethlehem in Judah (in modern day Israel). I married a man named Elimelek and we had two sons. We called the eldest Mahlon and the youngest we named Kilion. There was a famine where we lived. It didn't rain for weeks and our crops failed. The Philistines would attack our towns and cities looking for food so the little grain we did collect was often taken, leaving us with nothing. Elimelek suggested that we moved east of the river Jordan to a country called Moab. Moab was only 60km from Bethlehem (about 37 miles) and the journey took us about 6 days but it felt a million miles from home. Although I could understand the Moabite language I had to get used to using it every



day. I had grown up in Bethlehem and we liked to celebrate our history, we often read the Torah and told stories about our ancestors. I continued to tell those stories to Mahlon and Kilion whilst living in Moab. Getting used to living in a different culture was difficult. We hadn't lived in Moab long when Elimelek passed away. I mourned his passing but at least I had my sons to look after me. We stayed in Moab because Bethlehem was still in the grip of the famine. They both married Moabite women. Kilion married a woman named Orpah and Mahlon married Ruth. We were a close family living in Moab, they all helped me. After ten years another tragedy happened, both Mahlon and Kilion died. Well you can imagine how upset I was. I had already lost my husband and now I lost both my sons. I had heard that the famine had ended in Bethlehem. I thought it was best that I returned back to my homeland and let Orpah and Ruth get on with their own lives. They were still young and would be able to find new husbands. I wasn't sure what I was going to do, but the Torah outlined rules to make sure that widows like me would be looked after."

"As I prepared to go home, Orpah and Ruth began packing their things as well. They followed me onto the road that would take me back to Bethlehem. I urged them both to go back to the homes of their parents and prayed a blessing over them because of the great kindness they showed my sons and me. They insisted that they would come back to Bethlehem with me. I pleaded with them to stay. I said that I was too old to have any more sons for them to marry and even if I could, they couldn't wait long enough to be able to marry them. Orpah cried and I cried and we hugged and Orpah went home but Ruth clung to me and wouldn't let me go. I told her that Orpah was returning home and that she should do likewise. But Ruth just clung to me, she said that she would go where I go, that she would stay where I stay. Ruth said that my people would be her people and that my God would be her God."

"The trip back to Bethlehem was hard. As Ruth and I made the return journey we remembered the good and the bad times we had in Moab. We laughed and cried as we remembered and talked about Elimelek, Mahlon and Kilion. We were grateful for the time we spent with them. We talked about Ruth's family and I told her how grateful I was that both her and Orpah wanted to come back with me. I hoped that she would be able to find a husband in Bethlehem. When we arrived in Bethlehem, people were bringing in the Spring Harvest and celebrating Moses receiving the Torah on Mt Sinai."

We will continue to hear from Naomi throughout the rest of this week.

Time to reflect

- What references to Shavuot were included in Naomi's account?
- What sad events took place in this account?
- What are the happy times that Naomi talked about?
- This week we will be thinking about kindness. What kindness was demonstrated in the book of Ruth?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those festivals and important occasions that help us to remember the past. May we learn the lessons from the past that will help to improve our own communities today. May we show kindness as we learn about the kindness of others. *(Amen)*

34.2 Gleaning

What would you do if you broke an arm? You would probably go to the hospital and the doctor or nurse would put your arm in a plaster cast until it heals. Does anyone know what the NHS is? The National Health Service is there to provide health care for anyone who needs it whether they have lots of money or none. The UK provides free education for everyone (although some parents may pay for their children to receive a private education). The UK supports people who may be out of work due to unemployment or a disability and the UK provides benefits to families with children and to older people. Does anyone know what you will receive when you are older and have given up work? (A Pension). These benefits have not always been available in the UK. The government's aim to improve everybody's access to health, education and employment only began in the 1940's with the development of the 'welfare state'. Not all of these benefits are available to people around the world today.

There was no 'welfare state' during the time of Naomi and Ruth. Most families owned a bit of land and they would grow their own food and look after their own animals. The elderly and those that couldn't work would be looked after by other members of their family. Naomi's husband and sons had passed away whilst Naomi was in Moab. The Torah provided laws that made sure that the poorest people in society never went hungry. The poor were allowed to 'glean' crops left by the land owners.

Leviticus 23:22 (NIV): When you harvest your fields, do not cut the grain at the edges of the fields, and do not go back to cut the heads of grain that were left; leave them for poor people and foreigners.

Leviticus 19:10 (NIV) Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner.

Deuteronomy 24:19-22 (NIV) When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.

Time to reflect

- How do you think Naomi was going to find food when she returned to Bethlehem?
- Did the Torah make sure that poor people still had enough food to eat?
- By obeying the Torah does it make a person 'kind'?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those festivals and important occasions that help us to remember the past. May we learn the lessons from the past that will help to improve our own communities today. May we show kindness as we learn about the kindness of others. *(Amen)*



34.3 Kind Boaz

Can anyone remember the laws in the Torah that protected the poor and made sure that they had enough to eat? Today we are going to continue to hear from Naomi. Can anyone remember what had happened to Naomi from her account on Monday?

Naomi: *"Both Ruth and I returned to Bethlehem as people were bringing in the Spring Harvest and celebrating Moses receiving the Torah on Mt Sinai. The whole town seemed so excited to see me. I told them about Elimelek, Mahlon and Kilion. I said that I left Bethlehem full, but the Lord has brought me back empty."*

"We moved back into my family home, but we had no food. It was the Spring Harvest and Ruth said that she would glean the fields to collect the leftover grain for us. The Torah instructed those that were harvesting their fields, not to cut the grain at the edges of the fields and to leave the heads of grain that were dropped for the poor and for foreigners. As it turned out Ruth began to glean in a field that belonged to a man named Boaz. Boaz was a relative of my husband Elimelek. Boaz was kind to Ruth, he told her to continue to take grain from his fields, he also told her to take a drink from the water jars if and when she was thirsty. When Ruth asked Boaz why he was being so kind, Boaz said that he had heard of Ruth's kindness to me after the awful things that had happened in Moab. She was even invited to sit down and eat with Boaz and his workers. I heard after, that Boaz then asked his workers to leave some of the stalks they had collected for Ruth to pick up."

Kindness is often met with kindness. How did Ruth show kindness to Naomi? Kindness is doing something good for another person that we didn't need to do. Ruth could have stayed in Moab but she showed kindness to Naomi by staying with her and gleaning grain to make sure the both of them didn't go hungry. We can show kindness to others by doing something nice that they weren't expecting. Kind words and actions will brighten someone else's day. The Bible describes kind words as being like honey, they are *'sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.' Proverbs 16:24 (NLT)*

Time to reflect

- Why was Boaz being so kind to Ruth?
- Is kindness often met with kindness?
- When have you been kind to others, did it make things better?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those festivals and important occasions that help us to remember the past. May we learn the lessons from the past that will help to improve our own communities today. May we show kindness as we learn about the kindness of others. *(Amen)*



34.4 Family

Family was very important in the time of Naomi and Ruth. The Israelites had settled in groups and land was organised and owned by different families. The families would use the land to grow crops and rear animals that they would use for food. If any Israelites became poor, the Torah commanded their relatives to 'redeem' them. The word redeem means to save or rescue. If an Israelite became poor and needed to sell their land to buy food, it was the responsibility of a relative to buy the land to keep the land in the family. If the person selling the land was a woman, the male relative would often marry them to keep the land within the family. Today we are going to continue to hear about what happened to Naomi and Ruth.

Naomi: *"I was so pleased that Ruth had come back to Bethlehem with me, but I was concerned that she would be gleaning and collecting grain for herself and me for the rest of our lives. In Bethlehem it is traditional that land is passed on from father to son. Elimelek and I owned a small piece of land. When Elimelek died the land passed to my sons but my sons died with no children to pass it on to. Ruth and I decided to sell the land."*

"I knew that Boaz was one of our relatives, I hoped that he would buy our land and marry Ruth. I told Ruth to wash, put on some perfume and put on her best clothes. The harvest was over and I knew that Boaz had spent the day winnowing barley. I told Ruth to go to where he was working. I said that she was not to let Boaz see her until he had finished eating. She was to watch where he was going to spend the night and when he was asleep, she was to lift the cover and lie down at his feet. By doing this, she was asking him for protection and marriage. Boaz woke up and found Ruth at his feet. Boaz knew exactly what this meant. He told Ruth that she had shown another great act of kindness. Marrying Boaz would ensure a safe future for Ruth and me and keep the land in our family. Boaz was an honest man and said that there was a closer relative that may want to buy the field and marry Ruth. He said he would settle the matter later that day."

Kindness can come in all shapes and sizes, in kind words and actions. Ruth demonstrated her kindness to Naomi by agreeing to marry Boaz. Boaz had already proved he was a kind man. Tomorrow we will find out how the story ends.

Time to reflect

- What kind act or word could you do or give today?
- What could your kind act inspire others to do to be kind?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those festivals and important occasions that help us to remember the past. May we learn the lessons from the past that will help to improve our own communities today. May we show kindness as we learn about the kindness of others. *(Amen)*



34.5 A Done Deal, A Wedding and a King

Can anyone remember the account that Naomi gave yesterday? Is Boaz going to be able to buy Naomi's land and marry Ruth? What might stop that from happening?

Naomi: *"During the time that I lived in Bethlehem, any important business took place by the town gates. Boaz asked the elders of the town as well as my closest relative to meet him by the gate. He told them that Ruth and I were selling the field that belonged to our family. Boaz reminded them of the Torah's law to buy land to keep it in the family. Boaz said that my closest relative had the right to buy my land and that he, Boaz, was next in line. Unfortunately, my relative agreed to buy the land."*

"Boaz kindly reminded him that if he bought the land he would also need to marry Ruth as she was the widow of my son, who owned the land (a widow is the name given to the wife of a husband who has died). At this point my closest relative said that he didn't want to buy the field or marry Ruth and suggested that Boaz redeemed the land instead."

"At the town gate, before lots of witnesses and the elders of the town, Boaz bought all the land that I, my husband and sons owned. Boaz married Ruth and they had a son who was the grandad of David, the king of Israel. But that is another story."

We started this week's thoughts for the day by thinking about the Jewish festival of Shavuot. The story of Ruth is often read during the two-day festival. This week we have heard the story retold by Naomi. Ruth who was not an Israelite, moved to Israel, accepting the teachings of the Torah around the time of Shavuot.

We have also reflected on the acts of kindness in the story of Ruth. Ruth was kind to Naomi and promised to stay with Naomi after the death of Ruth's husband and Naomi's son, Mahlon. Ruth was kind by gleaning the fields, collecting food for Naomi and herself. Boaz was kind to Ruth because of the kindness Ruth had shown Naomi. Boaz was kind to Naomi and bought her land and married Ruth.

Time to reflect

- Kindness is often followed by more acts of kindness. Do you agree?
- How does kindness benefit the person being kind?
- Do you agree with this proverb from the Bible?
  - *'If you want to be happy, be kind to the poor.'* Proverbs 14:21 (GNV) or
  - *'Blessed is the one who is kind to the needy.'* Proverbs 14:21 (NIV)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for those festivals and important occasions that help us to remember the past. May we learn the lessons from the past that will help to improve our own communities today. May we show kindness as we learn about the kindness of others. *(Amen)*



35.1 Time To Flee - Refugee

If you have refugee children in your school, please read through and consider the appropriateness of this assembly. For many, it may bring welcome attention, helping other children understand their situation. For others, it may bring back unwanted memories. Please use your discretion.

Good morning, this week we are going to think about refugees. We will hear what it is like to be a refugee, how people become refugees and the sort of places refugees may come from. Does anyone know what a refugee is? A refugee is a person that has to leave their home, their town or their country for safety. They may need to flee their homes because of war and persecution or because the region they live in has been affected by severe weather or a natural disaster like floods, droughts or an earthquake. The word refugee comes from two older French words. '*Refugier*' which means to put in a place of safety, and '*refugere*' which means "to run away from, flee or escape". Many refugees will travel to another country hoping that they will be allowed to live there safely until they can go back home to live peacefully after war or rebuild their homes after severe weather or natural disasters.

In the UK we experience relative peace. Most of us have a safe home, we have food to eat, fresh water to drink, toys to play with, books to read, schools in which to learn and people that care for us. In 2025 the United Nations refugee agency reported that 123 million men, women and children were forced from their homes by war, persecution, severe weather or natural disasters. That's roughly just under twice the population of the UK.



Everyday people make the difficult decision to leave their homes and country because they have no other choice. They fear for their own lives and the lives of their families. They leave their home and seek the protection of another country because they have been forced to leave their own.

This morning we are going to hear from a girl who had to flee her home and become a refugee because of war. In 2025, about a third of all refugees came from four countries. South Sudan, Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine. We are going to hear an account from a girl from Gaze that had to leave her country because of war.

LIDA

My name is Lina, and I am 12 years old. I was born in Gaza City, in Palestine. For as long as I can remember, life has been difficult, but in October 2023, everything changed. Fighting broke out again between Hamas and Israel, and the violence quickly became worse than anything people had seen before. Many families, including mine, were caught in the middle.

At first, we stayed in our apartment. We thought the fighting might stop after a few days like it sometimes had in the past. But instead, the airstrikes became more frequent. Whole neighbourhoods were

destroyed. The electricity stopped. Clean water became hard to find. My parents tried to stay calm, but I could see the fear in their eyes.

One night, in early November, we heard a huge explosion. The windows shattered. Dust filled the air. My little brother screamed. My dad shouted for us to run. We grabbed what we could and left the building. When we looked back, part of our home had collapsed. That was the moment we knew we couldn't stay.

We walked south with thousands of other families. Some people carried bags; others carried only their children. We slept in schools, tents, or anywhere we could find space. Aid organisations tried to help, but there were so many of us. Food was limited. Water was rationed. Every day we heard news of more people being injured or killed. I kept thinking about my friends from school and wondering if they were safe.

In 2024, after months of living in temporary shelters, my family was allowed to leave Gaza through a humanitarian evacuation programme supported by international organisations. We travelled to Egypt, and from there, we were offered resettlement in the United Kingdom. I had never been on a plane before. I was scared, but also hopeful.

Now, I live in a small town in the UK. I go to school every day. I have a warm bed, clean water, and a safe place to sleep — things I never used to think about. People have been kind, helping me learn English and understand this new life. But I still miss Gaza. I miss my cousins, my neighbours, and the sea. I miss the smell of my grandmother's cooking and the sound of children playing in the streets.

Even though I am safe now, part of me is still there. I hope one day I can return to a peaceful home.

Lina's story gives us just a little insight into how someone may become a refugee, but sadly, it is not an uncommon story.

Time to reflect

- How do you think Lina felt when she heard the bombs? How would you have felt?
- Why did Lina leave Gaza?
- If you are a refugee in a UK school, how have people made you feel?
- How should you treat a refugee in your school?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the relative peace we experience in this country. We are thankful for our school, our friends and teachers that all help to create a community where we can learn and grow. Please help us to consider those who have had to leave their homes due to war. May we be kind to refugees. *(Amen)*

35.2 Time To Flee From War and Persecution

Preparation

Consider showing Save the Children's video 'Most Shocking Second a Day' which is 1 minute 34 seconds. It was created to help children and adults understand the trauma of the refugee crisis, illustrating what life is like for a child refugee. Please preview the video (more relevant for Key Stage 2) to ensure that it is suitable for your pupils or refugees in your class. A 2nd video 'Still The Most Shocking Second a Day' (2 minutes) is even more shocking.

Can anyone recall where Lina was from? How did Lina became a refugee? Lina's story gave us just a little insight into how people become refugees. Lina's story is very sad.

Many countries are reaching out with compassion to thousands of refugees affected by war by giving them shelter, food and medical care.

Does anyone know what the word 'compassion' means? Compassion is when we feel and show care and concern for the suffering and misfortune of others.

Time to reflect

Whether you show the video 'Most shocking second a day' or not, ask the pupils to discuss what it would be like to:

a) Leave your home because of war.

b) Travel through your country during a time of war
c) Being housed in a refugee camp.
d) Being sent to live in another country with or without your parents.

Why would you want to be shown compassion if you were a refugee fleeing a war?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the relative peace we experience in this country. We are thankful for our school, our friends and teachers that all help to create a community where we can learn and grow. Please help us to consider those who have had to leave their homes due to war. May we be kind and show compassion to refugees. *(Amen)*

World vision's website has a section called 'pray with world vision'.



35.3 Climate Refugees

Can you give me an example of different types of weather? Can anyone tell me what a climate is? The climate is the weather conditions, like rain fall or temperature, over a long period of time. We might say the climate in the UK is quite wet or the climate in West Africa is very hot. Large parts of the Earth are currently covered in ice. The climate of the world is getting warmer and some of the ice is melting adding more water to the sea making the sea level higher.

Can anyone recall why Lina became a refugee? War is only one reason why someone may become a refugee. A climate refugee is a term that is being used to people forced from their homes due to changes in our climate. The first reported climate refugees left a country called Tuvalu which is a group 9 islands in the Pacific Ocean. In 2012 there were about 11,000 people living on the islands which are no higher than 4.5m above sea level. Rising sea levels cause regular flooding in parts of Tuvalu. Some islanders have complained that the salt water is ruining the soil making it difficult to grow crops. In 2007 a family moved 3,700 kilometres (2,300 miles) to set up a new life in New Zealand arguing that climate change had forced them from their home on Tuvalu. In 2013, they were accepted as refugees after a court ruled that climate change was an important factor in the family's move to New Zealand.

Time to reflect

- What kinds of things make people leave their homes?
- What is the cause of rising sea levels?
- What would you miss if you had to leave your town? (What landmarks would you miss? – tomorrow will focus on what you would miss from your home)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the relative peace we experience in this country. We are thankful for our school, our friends and teachers that all help to create a community where we can learn and grow. Please help us to consider those who have had to leave their homes due to climate change. Help us to be kind and show compassion to refugees. *(Amen)*



35.4 Environmental Refugees

This week we are thinking about why people become refugees. Can anyone tell me why a person may be forced to leave their home? We heard about why a girl called Udia had to leave her home. We have also heard about the term 'climate refugee'. What does that mean? This morning we are going to think about environmental refugees.

Can anyone remember why a family left the islands of Tuvalu to live in New Zealand? Climate refugees are those people who have had to move because of events linked directly to climate change. Environmental refugees are those people who have had to move because of natural disasters. Can anyone give me an example of a natural disaster? Volcanos, floods and earth quakes are all natural disasters.

In May 2026, Mount Dukono on the Indonesian island of Halmehera began to violently erupt. Thousands of people had to leave their homes. We have experienced floods in the UK that have resulted in houses being evacuated and schools, churches and other community buildings turned into temporary shelters.

People may leave their homes during, or just after, a volcano, flood or earthquake. Once the disaster is over many will go back to their communities and get on with the job of rebuilding their homes and livelihoods.

Between 2015 and 2026 around 250 million people were forced to leave their homes due to natural disasters.* (The population of the UK in 2025 was estimated to be 69 million.)

Time to reflect

- Have you experienced a natural disaster?
- How would you feel if a natural disaster destroyed your home?
- What would you miss most if you had to leave your home?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the relative peace we experience in this country. We are thankful for our school, our friends and teachers that all help to create a community where we can learn and grow. Please help us to consider those who have had to leave their homes due to natural disasters. Help us to be kind and show compassion to those that need it. *(Amen)*

**UNHCR - The Way Forward (Nov 2025)*



35.5 Time To Flee Through History

Throughout history people have fled due to war, persecution or natural disasters. The Bible gives an account of a man called Jacob and eleven of his sons leaving the country of Canaan, in modern day Israel, because of a famine and becoming refugees in Egypt over 3500 years ago. 2000 years ago, the Bible, describes the account of Jesus' father, Joseph, taking Mary and young Jesus to Egypt to seek safety because the king of Israel, Herod, wanted to kill Jesus. In 622 CE Muhammad had to flee Makkah, the city where he was born. People persecuted him due to his beliefs. He went to live in the city of Medina. This event is an important event in the history of Islam and is given the name 'Hijra'.

Persecution is a word that is used when someone or a group of people are treated badly because of their beliefs, the colour of their skin or because of the country they were born in. The holocaust is the word that is used to describe the persecution of Jewish people before and during the Second World War. Before and during the war Jews were leaving their homes looking for safety in other countries.

After the Second World War, when people found out the horrible things that had happened to millions of Jews, many countries felt they should have done more to help Jewish refugees. Events in history, like the holocaust, are a reminder of the horrors that people face if they stay in their own homes, towns or countries during times of persecution. We don't always learn the lessons from the past.

This week we have thought about people who need to leave their homes because of war and persecution. We have thought about those who have fled their homes due to natural disasters and climate change.

Time to reflect

The Golden Rule states 'do to others as you would have them do to you'.

- What would you want to happen if you became a refugee? Spend time thinking and talking about this question and the impact the Golden Rule would have on the way we treat refugees.

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We thank you for our school, our friends and teachers that all help to create a good community where we can learn and grow. Please help us to consider those who have had to leave their homes due to war and persecution. May others look after us if we ever became refugees. *(Amen)*



36.1 Positive Change - Father Abraham

This week, we are going to be thinking about how we can stay positive through change. Can anyone give me some examples of the changes we may experience. Starting school, changing year group, growing, changing school, moving house. All of these are big changes that we will or may go through in our lives. Change is an important part of our lives. Knowing how and why change happens, helps us to cope with that change better. Knowing that we get older, taller and that we will get better at using the skills we learn at school will help us to understand why we go from year 1 to year 2 and year 2 to year 3 and so on.

This week we are going to hear about the story of a man called Abraham, his nephew Lot and his wife Sarah. Abraham and his family went through many changes and we are going to think about how he and his family coped with them and what we can do to help us face the many changes in our lives.

Abraham is thought to have lived over 4000 years ago and is an extremely important person for Jews, Muslims and Christians. In the Jewish holy book, Abraham obeys God and is told that his descendants, (his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and so on) will turn into a great nation. Muslims call him Ibrahim and his son Isma'il is thought to be the father of the Arab people. For Christians, Abraham is important because he is the father of the Jewish nation and Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was born into a Jewish family.



Abraham: *Hi there, my name is Abraham. I haven't always been called Abraham. I was born in a place called Ur of the Chaldeans and my dad, Terah, called me Abram. I had two brothers called Nahor and Haran. My brother Haran passed away whilst we lived in Ur. In the time that you are living, Ur of the Chaldeans is in the south of a country called Iraq. My wife, Sarah couldn't have children but we looked after Haran's son, he was called Lot. My wife wasn't always called Sarah, when I married her, she was called Sarai. My dad decided that he wanted to move to a place called Harran, which is in modern day Turkey. Sarai, Lot and I travelled over 600 miles (about 950 km) with my dad. We travelled with all our possessions on camels. We all settled in well to life in Harran.*

When I was seventy-five years old and before my name was changed, God met with me and told me to go from Harran, to leave my father and travel to a land that God was going to show me. God also said that he was going to bless me and that he was going to make me into a great nation, that my name would be great and I would be a blessing to all the people on the earth. Well you know the saying, "You're never too old," so I said my goodbyes to my dad and the rest of my family. Sarai, Lot and I with all our possessions set off for the country of Canaan. Harran to Canaan is over 400 miles (about 640km, London to Edinburgh is about 400 miles). We eventually arrived in

the country of Canaan, stopping at a place called Shechem, God said that this land would be given to my offspring. We carried on south and travelled to a place called Bethel, but we didn't stop there long, we just carried on travelling eventually stopping in the desert about 420 miles (about 675 km,) from where we started.

We thought we had settled, but there was a famine in the land so I decided that it would be best if we went down to live in Egypt, about 220 miles away (about 354 km). There was lots of food in Egypt and we would be able to come back after the famine. I told my wife, Sarai, to tell the Egyptians that she was my sister and not my wife so that they would be kind to us. I think the Pharaoh fancied her but when he found out she was my wife we were sent away from Egypt. The famine was now over, so we travelled back up to a place called Bethel.

We will be hearing a bit more from Abraham in our thoughts for the day this week. In the account Abraham did a lot of travelling, first to Harran, then to Canaan and then onto Egypt and back. I wonder what he thought when his dad said that he was going to move and I wonder what he thought when God asked him to move again. Abraham could have stayed in Ur of the Chaldeans when his dad moved to Harran, or he could have stayed in Harran when God asked him to go to Canaan.

Before we heard from Abraham, we thought about some of the changes that we face. Starting school, changing classes and moving house are just some of the changes that you will go through. Change isn't always an easy process to go through. The nerves you feel when starting a new school or starting a new class are a natural feeling. Understanding why we need to change will help us to better cope with those feelings. Abraham first moved with his dad, then moved because he felt God had asked him and finally moved because there was a famine in Canaan so he moved to Egypt. At each point Abraham knew why he needed to move. Why do you move classes in school? Well firstly, if you didn't move classes, by the time you are eleven years old, you'd be the oldest and tallest reception pupil in the school. You will master skills and then need to move onto a new class where new harder skills are taught. Knowing this reminds us that it is okay to change classes even if we are nervous. It reminds us that we can stay positive through change.

Time to reflect

- When did you through a big change?
- Can you think of reasons for the change?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we are thinking about change. As we reflect on the changes that we have already gone through may we learn how to cope with the changes we face in the future. Help us to understand the need for change. *(Amen)*



36.2 Lot

Can anyone recount Abraham's story that we heard yesterday? This morning we are going to hear from Abraham's nephew, Lot.

Lot: *Hi, my name is Lot. I am Abram's nephew. You have heard how my grandfather, my uncle Abram and auntie Sarai left our home in Ur of the Chaldeans for Harran. Uncle Abram and Sarai then took me to Bethel after staying in Egypt during a famine. Abram had become very wealthy whilst we were in Egypt, he had lots of silver, gold and sheep. I had a large flock of sheep of my own. When we returned to the land near Bethel we realised that the land couldn't cope with all our animals. The men looking after our sheep started to argue over the best land for grazing our animals. Abram suggested that we separate and go our own way to make sure that our animals had enough food to eat. He asked me to choose which path to take and he would take the other. He said that if I go to the left, he would go to the right and if I went to the right, he would go to the left. I looked at the two options, one way was full of streams that watered the land making it perfect land for my sheep. The other didn't look as good. As Abram had asked me to choose, I went for the better path and we went our separate ways.*

Abram knew that the land hadn't got enough grass to feed his flocks and the flocks of his nephew Lot. Change was needed, Abram decided that the best option was that he and Lot separate, Lot taking one road and Abram taking the other. Abram could see the consequences of what would happen if he didn't do something about the situation. Yesterday we thought about how understanding can help us to deal with change. Sometimes it is the understanding that can help us to decide to make a small or big change.

Time to reflect

- What situations can make someone decide to make a change. Think about possible changes for…
  - not practising your spellings and regularly getting them wrong
  - constantly being bullied
  - regularly falling out with a good friend
  - never getting any better at playing your instrument
  - never getting any better at playing sport

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we are thinking about change. As we reflect on the things that we would like to be better in our lives, help us think about the positive changes that we could make. *(Amen)*



36.3 Father Abraham

Why did Lot and Abram decide to separate? How do you think they would have felt? This morning we are going to hear about two events that changed Abram's life forever. In the time that Abram lived it was very important to have children.

Abraham: *During my life, my wealth had grown, I had lots of gold and silver. My flocks were large and I had workers to look after them. Sarai and I couldn't have children, I thought all my wealth would disappear after I had died. When I was seventy-five, God told me that I was going to have a son. He told me to look up at the night sky and asked me to count the stars. There were so many stars, it was impossible to count. God said that I was going to have so many descendants that it would be impossible to count them all. Twenty-four years later, when I was 99 years old, Sarai and I still hadn't any children. God visited me again, he said that I was going to be called Abraham which means father of many nations and that Sarai should change her name to Sarah. God reminded me of the promise of a child with my wife Sarah and I was to call him Isaac.*

Today many Jews and Muslims believe that they are descendants of Abraham. Many Christians believe that without Abraham, Jesus wouldn't have been born. If you were able to count the people who were Christian, Muslim or Jewish going back through history, that would be a lot of people, certainly impossible to count.

Before this promise, Abram thought that he and Sarai were not going to have children. All that he had worked for was going to go to a distant relative. I wonder how Abraham would have felt after God told him that he was going to have a child?

Many people when they are learning and practising a new skill, imagine that mastering the new skill is impossible. Yet they master the skill anyway. Riding a bike, playing a new piece of music on an instrument or learning a maths skill can sometimes seem impossible.

Time to reflect

- Think of something that you thought was impossible but you can do now. (Riding a bike, playing a piece of music, learning a new skill, times-tables.)
  - How does it make you feel to think you did the impossible?
  - Imagine after mastering a skill that you thought was impossible you could go back in time to meet the you before you mastered the skill. What advice would you give them?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we are thinking about change. As we reflect on the changes that we have already gone through may we learn how to cope with the changes we face in the future. *(Amen)*



36.4 Three Visitors

Can anyone recount the story that we heard yesterday? Which three religions think Abraham is important? This morning we are going to hear from Sarah, the wife of Abraham.

Sarah: *I'm sure that Abraham has told you about the promise he received from God to become a father in his old age and that I was going to give birth to a son and call him Isaac. Well he used to tell me about it, but I never really believed it. I had given up the hope of a child many years before. Well one day, when I was 89 years old, Abraham ran into our tent. (It was normal to live in tents, so that we could move around to feed our flocks.) Abraham asked me to prepare some food for three men that had stopped to visit us. When it was ready, Abraham took the food out to feed them. I was in the tent peeping out to get a good look at them. They told Abraham that they would return around the same time next year and that I would have a son. Well I laughed, I thought Abraham and I were too old to have a child. The Lord heard my thoughts and asked Abraham why I had laughed. Well you can imagine, I was scared. Sure enough, a year later Abraham and I had a son, we called him Isaac, which means laughter.*

Sarah and Abraham named their son Isaac. The name means laughter, Isaac was a constant reminder that what Sarah thought would never happen could actually come true. Yesterday we discussed the things that we thought were impossible but that we can do now. It is good to remind ourselves of the things that we can do now that we once thought were impossible. They are a reminder that the problems we face now can be overcome.

Time to reflect

- Think of something that you thought was impossible but you can do now. (Riding a bike, playing a piece of music, learning a new skill, times-tables.)
  - How does it make you feel to think you did the impossible?
  - How can you remind yourself of past achievements when you are struggling with current problems?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we are thinking about change. As we reflect on the changes that we have already gone through may it inspire us to face our current challenges. *(Amen)*



36.5 Abraham and Isaac

Can anyone remember what the name Isaac means? We have been thinking about how changes in the past can be a reminder that we can overcome the changes we are going through or the problems that we face today.

Abraham: *I loved my son and with him being Sarah's only son we certainly spoilt him. He had the best camel, the best tent, the best… well the best of everything. When he was a little older God reminded me of how important he was and how grateful I was that we had had him. The story is a bit strange, but this is how it goes… We were camped in a place called Moriah, when God said that I should take Isaac to a nearby mountain and sacrifice him. Well sacrifice means that you give something up as a way of saying that it belongs to God and not me. God was asking me to kill and burn Isaac to give him back to God. Well you can imagine what I felt. We travelled three days by donkey. Isaac carried the wood. Isaac knew that we were going to offer a sacrifice to God and asked where the animal that would be sacrificed was. I told him that God himself would provide the lamb for the sacrifice. After preparing the wood I was just about to offer Isaac as a sacrifice as God had asked when I heard a voice from heaven say Abraham, Abraham! The voice said do not do anything to him. At that moment we heard a ram, a male sheep, caught in brambles close to where we were. I took the ram and sacrificed it instead. It turned out that God didn't want me to sacrifice Isaac, it was a test to see if I would obey God by giving up the most precious thing in my life. God reminded me of his promise to make my descendants, that is my children, grandchildren, great grandchildren as numerous as the stars in the sky.*

Many Jews and Christians believe that this story demonstrated that Abraham was prepared to obey God no matter what and it is one reason why Abraham is considered the father of Judaism. The Qur'an tells a similar story, but Muslims believe the child wasn't Isaac, but Abraham's son, Ishmael, considered to be the father of the Arab people.

We started this week's theme by thinking about change. Abraham accepted that change happens. Abraham wasn't selfish throughout times of big change, demonstrated by allowing Lot the use of the best land. He remained hopeful even when things seemed as if they were not going his way.

Time to reflect

Think about some of the advice we have learnt this week…

- Accept that change will happen. (Moving classes, schools, clubs, home.)
- Try to remain kind. (It could be easy to be selfish during change, "I want the best seat, table, friends.")
- Remain hopeful. (Looking back to remind yourself that you overcame or benefited from the changes in the past.)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

As we have been thinking about change this week, help us to accept the changes as we face them. May we remain kind and true to ourselves and may we be reminded of the benefits and strength we have gained from past changes. *(Amen)*



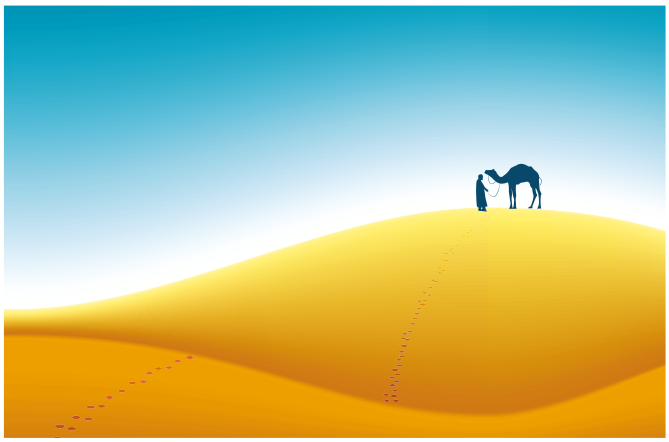
37.1 Watering The Camels - Abraham 2

Preparation

Have an empty two litre bottle ready.

Can anyone remember the characters we heard from last week in our assembly and thoughts for the day? Abraham, Sarah and Lot. Can anyone recount the theme of last week? Today we are going to hear from one of Abraham's servants. But before we do that, I need a volunteer, someone who thinks they are a very kind person. **Ask someone to come to the front and give them the empty two litre bottle.** I need you, while I tell the story, to fetch me some water. Is that okay? Before you agree, you need to know how much I need. Can you fetch me 1340 litres of water? Does anyone know how many times **Name** will need to fill up this bottle with water? 670 times. Is that okay? I wouldn't really ask you to fill up the bottle that many times, firstly I haven't got a need for that much water right now and secondly, where would you put it. This morning we are going to hear from someone who did need that amount of water.

Hi there, my name is Eliezer. Last week you heard from my boss, Abraham, from his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot. Isaac, their son, grew up with the best of everything, the best camels, the best tents, the best food. But Abraham became very old, and Sarah sadly passed away. Abraham and Isaac started talking about the woman that Isaac should marry. Well you could probably have guessed, Abraham wanted the best for Isaac. Abraham loved Sarah and he wanted a wife for Isaac that Isaac would love too. Abraham sent one of his servants, me, back to where his family still lived, to find



a wife for Isaac there. I asked Abraham, if no woman agrees to come back with me should I take Isaac back to the land of your father. Abraham told me that Isaac was to stay in Canaan no matter what, because he said that where they were living was now their home.

I set out for the country where Isaac's grandad had settled. I had ten camels loaded with all kinds of good things. I travelled for days remembering the journey we took when Abraham left Haran. I arrived at a town called Nahor and had the camels kneel down near a well outside of the town. It was nearly evening and the women of the town came to draw water from the well. I prayed, "Lord, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. I am standing next to this well, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a young woman, 'Please may I have a drink,' she will reply, 'Yes and I'll water your camels too' – let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."

Before I had finished praying, a young woman named Rebekah came out with an



urn for collecting water on her shoulder. She was the granddaughter of Abraham's brother Nahor. She went to the well and filled her urn with water. I asked Rebekah if she would let me have some water. Rebekah lowered the urn and gave me a drink, then said that she would draw water for the camels too. I told Rebekah and her family all about Isaac and about Abraham's request. I told them about the prayer I had prayed beside the well. Rebekah agreed to leave her family and come and be Isaac's wife.

What an interesting story. Eliezer travelled a long way to find a wife for Isaac. In his prayer at the well, Eliezer asked God to show him a young woman that would let him have a drink and then offer to give water to his camels. Has anyone seen a camel in real life? Has anyone given a camel a drink before? Does anyone know how much a thirsty camel can drink? One camel can drink as much as 30 gallons of water. That's about sixty-seven, two litre bottles of water. Eliezer had 10 camels, how many two litre bottles would I need to provide all the camels with enough water? 670! A full urn of water would have weighed about 20 kilogrammes, the weight of an average 7-year-old. Rebekah would have needed to fill the urn about forty-five times to provide enough water for the 10 camels. Rebekah was a very kind person. Eliezer asked her for a drink, but he didn't ask her to provide water for his camels. Rebekah's actions demonstrated that she was a very kind person, an ideal partner for Isaac.

You may have heard the phrase, 'going the extra mile'. It is used to describe acts of great kindness that are above what is expected. I would have expected Rebekah to have given Eliezer a drink, but I was surprised when she offered to provide his camels with water too. Kindness is a good quality to have. For some of us, like Rebekah, it comes naturally, for others of us it might be more of a challenge. Last week we explored trying to stay positive through the changes that we face in our lives. Rebekah was obviously a kind person. It can sometimes be a challenge to be kind and nice to others when we face big changes. At these times, we appreciate the kindness from others so much more.

Time to reflect

- Are we able to be kind to others when they are facing big changes?
- What acts of kindness have you received that are above what you expected?
- Have you ever been kinder than you were expected to be?
- Why is it good to know a kind person?
- Why is it good to be a kind person?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

As we think about the kind actions of others, may we be reminded of how we can be kind. May our school be a place of kindness, where we go the extra mile for others in our community. Help us to remain kind when we face our own challenges and may we show kindness to others when they face challenges of their own. *(Amen)*

37.2 How Camel Got His Hump

Can anyone remember how much water a camel can drink in one go? 30 gallons, or about 134 litres. Has anyone heard of Rudyard Kipling? He wrote the 'Jungle Book'. He tells a story about how the Camel got his hump... (adapted from How the Camel Got His Hump', 'Just So Stories' 1912).

In the beginning, when the world was new and there were lots to do and the animals were just beginning to work for man, there was a Camel. The Camel lived in the middle of a desert and although there were lots to do, Camel didn't want to do lots. He ate thistles and thorns and when anyone spoke to him, 'Humph' was his reply.

Early Monday morning, Horse came to visit Camel. Saddled and with a bit in his mouth, Horse said, "Camel, come and trot like the rest of us."

"Humph!" was Camel's reply.

On Tuesday morning, Dog visited Camel, and with a stick in his mouth Dog said, "Camel, come and fetch and carry like the rest of us."

"Humph!" was Camel's reply.

Ox visited on Wednesday morning with a yoke about his neck. Ox said, "Camel, come and plough like the rest of us."

"Humph!" was Camel's reply.

Horse, Dog and Ox told the Man all that had happened. The Man was sorry, but the world was new and there were lots to do. Man told Horse, Dog and Ox that if Camel refused to work, then Horse, Dog and Ox would need to work harder.

Horse, Dog and Ox were furious. Camel walked up to them, laughed, said "Humph!" and then walked away. This only made Horse, Dog and Ox worse and they couldn't do anything but complain about Camel.

Yesterday we heard a story about kind Rebekah providing water for Eliezer's camel and today we have heard about a Camel that refuses to work and help his friends. We will hear the rest of the story over the next few days.

Time to reflect

- How do you think Horse, Dog and Ox felt when Camel refused to help?
- How do you think they felt when the man said that they needed to work harder?
- What is the opposite of kindness?
- How does selfishness and laziness affect others?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

As we think about the selfish and lazy actions of the camel, we are reminded of how our actions can affect others. May our school be a place of kindness, may we go the extra mile for others in our community. Help us to remain kind when we face our own challenges and may we show kindness to others when they face challenges of their own. *(Amen)*



37.3 The Djinn Of The Desert

Can anyone recount the story that we heard yesterday? Where did we leave the story? How did Camel's friends feel when Camel refused to help?

The Story Continues…

There was a Djinn (a little less than an angel) who was in charge of all the deserts, he rolled in on a cloud of sand and stopped when he heard their disdain.

"Djinn of all Deserts," began the horse, "The world is new and there is lots to do. Dog, Ox and I have worked hard, but Camel, who lives in your desert, with a long neck and long legs, hasn't done anything since Monday morning. Is that fair?"

"It is certainly not." said the Djinn.

"Camel won't trot." said Horse. "He just says 'Humph!'"

"Camel won't fetch and carry." said Dog. "He just says 'Humph!'"

"Camel won't plough." Said Ox. "He just says 'Humph!'"

"I have heard all you have said," mused the Djinn.

The Djinn rolled across the desert and found Camel admiring himself in the watery reflection of an oasis. "The world is new and there is lots to do." the Djinn began.

"Humph!" came Camel's response.

"Horse, Dog and Ox are working hard." the Djinn continued.

Camel replied with a "Humph!"

"I hear that you are not pulling your weight! The world is new and there is lots to do." said the Djinn.

"Humph!" said Camel.

Camel's friends have asked Camel to help and now Djinn has asked him to help, but Camel still refuses.

Time to reflect

- Think about a time when you refused to do something that you were asked to do?
- Who was involved and how did your actions affect others around you?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

As we think about the selfish and lazy actions of the camel, we are reminded of how our actions can affect others. May our school be a place of kindness, may we go the extra mile for others in our community. Help us to remain kind when we face our own challenges and may we show kindness to others when they face challenges of their own. *(Amen)*



37.4 Camel's Humph

Can anyone recount the story that we heard yesterday? Where did we leave the story? How did Camel's friends feel when Camel refused to help?

The Story Continues…

Camel continued to admire his own reflection. 'What's to be done?' the Djinn reflected. "The world is new and there is lots to do. In three days, since the work began you have done nothing." After a pause Djinn continued, "I want you to work!"

"Humph!" said Camel

"If you wish" said the Djinn.

In the reflection of the water, Camel saw his very own humph, growing and growing on his back. "That's your very own humph!" said the Djinn. "The world is new and there is lots to do and you haven't worked since Monday when the work began. You will now work!".

This time the Camel did not reply with his usual 'Humph!' "If I could work before I certainly cannot now. How can I work with this heavy humph on my back?"

"You missed three days of work." said the Djinn. "The humph will allow you to work for three days more without a break for food. Am I not kind? The world is new and there is lots to do. Go and help Horse, Dog and Ox."

Camel and his humph joined the Horse, Dog and Ox. Today we call Camel's humph, hump, not to hurt Camel's feelings.

Time to reflect

- What is the camel's hump a reminder of?
- What are the consequences of selfishness and laziness?
- Is kindness the opposite of selfishness?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

As we think about the selfish and lazy actions of the camel, we are reminded of how our actions can affect others. May our school be a place of kindness, where we go the extra mile for others in our community. Help us to remain kind when we face our own challenges and may we show kindness to others when they face challenges of their own. *(Amen)*



37.5 Hardworking And Kind Camel

We have already found out that camels can drink a lot of water, but camels can also go a long time without eating. The hump on their back is where they can store fat that they can use as energy when they need it. Like horses and donkeys, camels have been used to carry people and products long distances. A camel can run at speeds of up to 40 miles an hour. A camel is an all-round hard-working animal. I wonder if it is making up for the time when it got the humph!

Rudyard Kipling wrote the original story about how Camel got his hump. At the end of the story, he included a poem.

How The Camel Got His Hump

The Camel's hump is an ugly lump
Which well you may see at the Zoo;
But uglier yet is the hump we get
From having too little to do.

Kiddies and grown-ups too-oo-oo,
If we haven't enough to do-oo-oo,
We get the hump—
Cameelious hump—
The hump that is black and blue!

We climb out of bed with a frouzly head
And a snarly-yarly voice.
We shiver and scowl and we grunt
and we growl
At our bath and our boots and our toys;

And there ought to be a corner for me
(And I know there is one for you)
When we get the hump—
Cameelious hump—
The hump that is black and blue!

The cure for this ill is not to sit still,
Or frowst with a book by the fire;
But to take a large hoe and a shovel also,
And dig till you gently perspire;

And then you will find that the sun
and the wind,
And the Djinn of the Garden too,
Have lifted the hump—
The horrible hump—
The hump that is black and blue!

I get it as well as you-oo-oo—
If I haven't enough to do-oo-oo—
We all get the hump—
Cameelious hump—
Kiddies and grown-ups too!

(Click for copyright information)

Time to reflect

- What is the hump that is described in the poem?
- How do we get this hump?
- What ways can we get rid of the hump?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

This week we have thought about the kind actions of Rebekah and the lazy selfish actions of Camel. We think how our actions affect others and how the actions of others affect us. May our school be a place of kindness, where we go the extra mile for others in our community. *(Amen)*

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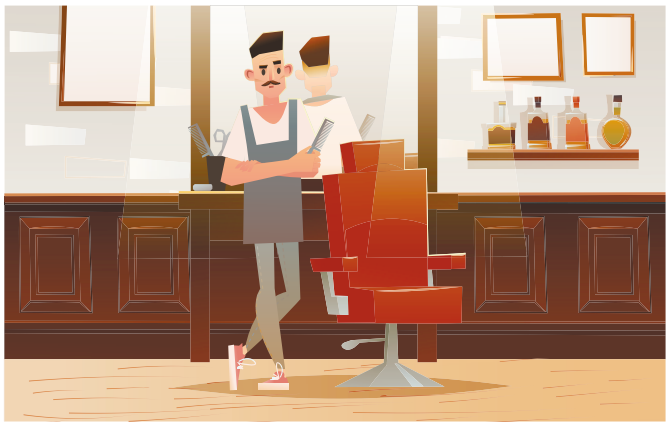


38.1 Myths And Legends

Can anyone tell me 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. This week we are going to hear some of the myths, legends and folktales from around the British Isles.

Myths, legends and folktales are stories from the past that are or were popular in the life of a community. A myth is a traditional story about the early history of a group of people often explaining real events or things in supernatural or magical ways, myths often include mythical creatures. A legend is another traditional story, often taken to be true but without any real evidence. Legends may include people who really lived or include real places and the stories of what happened to them may or may not be true. Folktales are popular stories that are important to a group of people including fairy tales and fables. Whist there are differences between the three types of stories, they often overlap. One thing they all have in common is that they feed a community's need to hear a 'good story'.

The first legend that we are going to hear comes from Wales and tells the tale of King March mab Meirchion. King March mab Meirchion was a rich and powerful ruler and kept his court at Castellmarch in North West Wales. March owned lots of boats and he was one of the greatest sea traders in Britain, it made him very rich. March was a



kind and generous king and his people were happy. Although his people were happy, King March was not. He had wealth and power, but he also had a secret. King March had been born with the ears of a horse. As a boy, March hid his secret by letting his hair grow long. As a man, March kept a crown placed firmly on his head. Nobody knew about the king's secret apart from the king's barber.

Eventually the king's barber retired and a new one was sought. Bifan was appointed as the new barber to the king. Bifan was made to swear an oath of secrecy, if Bifan told the king's secret to anyone, the king would cut off Bifan's head. The secret was safe and many years passed, but Bifan grew tired of his burden. Keeping the king's secret to himself had started to take its toll.

Bifan became so ill, he stopped eating and spent his days lying in bed. His wife was so worried that she called the doctor. The doctor examined Bifan and asked Bifan lots of questions. The doctor explained that in his opinion Bifan was keeping hold of a secret and the secret was making him ill. The only cure was for Bifan to share the secret. The doctor's diagnosis only made Bifan feel worse. He couldn't tell anyone his secret,

but the secret would only make him worse. Bifan told the doctor of the dilemma, he didn't tell the doctor the secret, only that he was sworn to secrecy and that either way the secret would kill him. The doctor suggested that Bifan share the secret with no one other than the earth itself.

The doctor's advice seemed like a good idea. Bifan dragged himself out of bed, he walked for a while until he found the perfect spot by a river. He couldn't see anyone, but to make sure that no one heard the king's secret Bifan found a secluded spot amongst the reeds. All alone and hidden from view, Bifan whispered his secret to the earth. He felt the burden lift from his shoulders and within a few days his health had completely recovered.

It came to pass that king March called a great feast. The great hall was decorated, the finest food prepared and the best piper in all of Wales was sent for. On his way to Castellmarch Hall, the piper collected reeds to make a new pipe. The piper stopped at the river where Bifan, the barber, had told the king's secret to the earth. The day of the feast arrived and so did the finest guests in their finest clothes. Food was served and many of the guests commented that they hadn't been to a finer banquet. The king commanded the piper to begin the entertainment. The piper began to blow, but it wasn't the sound of music that the guests heard, instead the guests could hear the following words coming from the piper's pipe, *"King March has the ears of a horse, the ears of a horse has King March!"* The guests were alarmed.

Ashamed and embarrassed the king drew his sword ready to kill the piper. The piper quickly told the king that he had collected reeds to create his pipe from a nearby river. The king picked up the pipe and began to play. Again, no notes could be heard just a voice saying *"King March has the ears of a horse, the ears of a horse has King March!"* On hearing the voice for the second time, Bifan stepped forward and told the king about the illness and the doctor and the reeds. The king raised his sword, he had promised to kill Bifan if ever Bifan told anyone the king's secret. But the king felt relieved, the king laughed and dropped his sword. Now everyone knew the kings secret, the king didn't need to hide it anymore. King March took off his crown revealing his ears to all of his guests. No one laughed, instead they clapped and cheered their king.

Legends about kings born with horse or donkey's ears can be found all over the world. Legends along with many other stories can contain lessons that we can all learn from. What do you think we can learn from the legend of King March mab Meirchion?

Time to reflect

- Why do you think the king felt relieved when everyone found out his secret?
- Why did the secret make Bifan the barber feel unwell?
- What sort of secrets can make us feel bad? (Not telling a teacher about bullying)

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the power of stories. Stories help us when we are learning to read and they can inspire us to learn important lessons about friendship, community and family. May stories inspire us to develop and discover our own values and history and the values and history of others. *(Amen)*

38.2 The Ballad Of Thomas Rhymer

Can anyone remember the difference between a myth, legend and folktale? Can anyone recount the legend of March mab Merichion? Today and tomorrow we are going to hear a story from Scotland. The story is called 'The Ballad of Thomas Rhymer'. A ballad is a story that is often set to music. Ballads were and are often used by poets to tell a story. In the late 1800's a man called Francis James Child gathered together and published 305 traditional ballads from England and Scotland. They are known as the 'Child ballads' and contain ballads about Robin Hood, King Arthur and various English kings and queens. (All 305 ballads are available online)

The Ballad of Thomas Rhymer is about a Scottish Laird (or Lord and landowner) called Thomas de Ercildoun, who lived over six hundred years ago. Thomas was a poet and he could also predict the future. We don't know how he received this gift, some say that he was given these powers by the Queen of the Elfland. The tale goes like this…

On a warm spring day, Thomas left his cold castle in Ercildoun in southern Scotland to walk his land. He enjoyed watching life return to his lands after the long and harsh winter. He walked towards the woods and sat down by the banks of a stream. In the distance he heard the sound of tinkling bells coming from the direction of the woods. As he looked he saw the fairest lady he'd ever seen, dressed in green and riding a white horse. She was accompanied by hunting dogs and she carried a bow and blew a silver horn that echoed around the hills.

He leapt up and ran to meet her. They met under the Eildon tree on the Eildon hills. (The Eildon tree is no longer there but the Rhymer's Stone marks the spot where it once grew.) Thomas greeted her as if she was Mary, Queen of Heaven. The lady got down from her horse and said that she was not from heaven, but from Elfland where she was indeed its queen and she was hunting with her hounds. Thomas asked her to stay with him under the Eildon tree. The Elfland Queen told him that she could not stay with him or her beauty would fade like a leaf in autumn. Thomas didn't believe her and without a thought he kissed the Elfland Queen. Immediately, the queen's skin began to grow old, her black hair turned grey and her clothes were replaced with a long dull cloak. The queen instructed Thomas that they must both return to her kingdom and as punishment he must serve her for seven years… (To be continued tomorrow.)

Time to reflect

- Do you know of any other ballads?
- How do you think the Ballad of Thomas Rhymer will end?
- How do you think he felt being told that he would serve her for seven years?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the power of stories. Stories help us when we are learning to read and they can inspire us to learn important lessons about friendship, community and family. May stories inspire us to develop and discover our own values and history and the values and history of others. *(Amen)*



38.3 The Ballad Of Thomas Rhymer

Yesterday we started to hear the story of Thomas Rhymer. Can anyone recount the story so far?

They rode through wind, darkness and water. Eventually they arrived at a garden in the bright sunshine. There were flowers of every colour and all kinds of fruit. Thomas was hungry and went to pick a large, red, delicious looking apple. But just before he was about to pick it the Elfland Queen told him not to eat from the garden. The Elfland Queen showed Thomas three roads. The road on the right was called the path of goodness, it was thick with thorns and to walk it looked difficult and painful. This road went to the kingdom of heaven. The road on the left was wide and smooth lined with flowers, this road was called the path of evil and led to hell. The queen informed Thomas that the middle road would take them to the Elfland kingdom. They began to travel the middle road and to his surprise, the queen changed from the old woman back to the lady he had first seen.

They both arrived at the Elfland castle to a great procession that welcomed the Elfland Queen. Thomas settled into his new life and he enjoyed his time in Elfland so much that the seven years passed too quickly. The queen told Thomas that she would take him back to his own land. Before they left, the Elfland Queen gave Thomas three gifts, the ability to know the future, a harp and the talent to play it. She also told him that from this point on he would be unable to tell a lie.

They returned to Thomas' home land. As the Elfland Queen was about to leave, Thomas asked if he would see her again. Yes, she replied, in seven years after he had received a visit from two deer, a white stag and a white doe.

As the years passed, Thomas played his harp and sang. He became known as True Thomas because all that he said turned out to be true. One day Thomas had laid on a banquet for Scottish soldiers returning from war, villagers sent word that two white deer had been seen coming from the woodland. The white stag and doe made their way through the village and onto Thomas' castle. Thomas collected his harp and began to follow the deer back to the wood. Thomas Rhymer disappeared and was never seen again.

Time to reflect

- Thomas de Ercildoun was a real person known for poetry and predicting the future.
- According to the ballad, who gave him these gifts?
- Did he enjoy serving the queen for seven years? Did you think he would?
- Did the story end as you had predicted yesterday?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the power of stories. Stories help us when we are learning to read and they can inspire us to learn important lessons about friendship, community and family. May stories inspire us to develop and discover our own values and history and the values and history of others. *(Amen)*



38.4 Cormoran The Giant

This week we have heard the legend of March mab Meirchion and the ballad of Thomas Ryder. Both stories involve historical people. The story that we are going to think about today involves the history of a place in Cornwall. St Michael's Mount is a small Island that is a few hundred meters off the coast near Marazion, only a few miles from Penzance. Marazion is one of Cornwall's oldest towns. St Michael's Mount is accessible by a path that only appears during low tide.

But how was the Island formed? Legend suggests that the Island was built by a giant called Cormoran. Cormoran carried blocks of white granite rock across the sea from the mainland helped by his wife Cormelian. The island used to be called 'The White Rock in the Wood.' Cormoran was insistent that only white granite rock should be used to build their new home. Cormelian carried granite blocks in her apron. One day, weary from building the Island, Cormoran fell asleep. Whilst Cormoran slept, Cormelian continued to build the island. She had to travel quite far to collect the white granite rock, so she decided to collect green stones as they were closer. Cormoran awoke and saw that Cormelian was bringing different coloured rock to the island. While she was only half way between the mainland and the island, Cormoran kicked her and a rock fell from her apron into the sea. Called Chapel Rock, the large rock between St Michael's Mount and the town of Marazion is still there today.

Time to reflect

- What does the story of Cormoran the giant try to explain?
- Do you know any similar stories? - Giants Causeway (Northern Ireland)
  - a) Stories about how certain places were formed?
  - b) Stories about giants?
- Are there legends about where you live?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the power of stories. Stories help us when we are learning to read and they can inspire us to learn important lessons about friendship, community and family. May stories inspire us to develop and discover our own values and the history and the values and history of others. *(Amen)*



38.5 Jack The Giant Killer

There are many stories that involve Cormoran the giant. One involved how he died. Can anyone guess the name of the boy who defeated Cormoran? Jack.

In this tale, Cormoran is five and half meters tall and very round in the middle. He had six toes on each foot and five fingers and a thumb on each hand. Cormoran lived in a cave on St Michael's Mount (or Morvah in some versions) and would walk across to the main land during the low tide to steal sheep and cattle (and sometimes children) taking them back to his cave to eat. Cormoran wouldn't just steal food, he would take any treasures he found along the way storing them on the island.

The people of Penzance called a meeting to find a way of dealing with Cormoran. It was decided that anyone who could rid Cornwall of the giant would receive Cormoran's treasure as a reward. A local farmer's boy called Jack stepped forward confident he could get rid of the giant. Jack was a good swimmer and one evening he collected together a shovel and a horn and swam across to the island. On a path to Cormoran's cave, Jack began to dig. He continued digging throughout the night and by dawn he had created a hole deep enough to trap the giant.

As the sun began to rise, Jack blew his horn. Cormoran appeared from his cave and saw Jack. Jack began calling Cormoran all sorts of names. Cormoran was very angry (and hungry) and began to chase Jack down the path. Jack jumped over his freshly dug pit. With the morning sun in his eyes, Cormoran didn't see it and fell in. With the giant stuck in the pit, Jack returned to kill the giant.

Jack collected the treasure and was welcomed back to Penzance as a hero. According to legend, Cormoran was the first giant Jack killed, do you know of any more?

Time to reflect

- Do you know of any other stories involving Jack and a giant?
- How do myths, legends and folktales continue to live on?
- Why do you think we like a good story?

Reflection (Prayer)

(Dear God)

We are thankful for the power of stories. Stories help us when we are learning to read and they can inspire us to learn important lessons about friendship, community and family. May stories inspire us to develop and discover our own values and history and the values and history of others. *(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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