

Seeing Jesus' death in the context of his life



Y3&4 Easter Pause Day: Journeys

Overall aim:

- Provide an opportunity for children to investigate Jesus' life in greater depth.
- Enable the children to become familiar with stories of Jesus' life and death looking for clues to His identity.

Outline of the day:

- Use mind-mapping, drama and modelling to look at some familiar stories from Jesus' life all the while looking for clues about who He is and why He lived on earth.
- Create the journey of Jesus' life as a way of evaluating 'Who is Jesus?'

Please be aware that you may find that there is far too much material, so be selective about what you need and do not worry about items that cannot be fitted in.

Preparations required before the day:

- Mind map materials
- Copies of chosen stories from Contemporary English Version of the Bible available at www.biblegateway.com
- Prepared Clues
- 'Songs for Every Easter' or 'Sunday's Cool Volume 2'
(This latter book and CD were generously donated as a gift to all Guildford Church Schools by Mark and Helen Johnson in 2010)
- Resources: shoe boxes, plasticine, camera
- Set up prayer space (optional) Make the place comfortable (e.g. cushions for resting), peaceful (e.g. bubble tube), reflective (e.g. have some Christian music playing) a place for recording prayers (e.g. post-its that can be stuck to the bubble tube) or for writing confidential prayers and thoughts (e.g. writing in sand or on a white board that can then be 'erased')

Overview of the Day:

Session Aim	Activity
1	<p>To investigate how Jesus' life was extraordinary right from the start</p> <p>Use a mind map/concept map to record the Christmas story. Use the concept of 'Miracle' and research what, where, how etc different miracles happened at the first Christmas. In mixed ability groups of 3 or 4 invite the pupils to think back to everything they know about the first Christmas. Of each event ask each other 'What was amazing, strange, extraordinary, or miraculous about that?'</p> <p>If the pupils are not sure of the Christmas story the teacher may need to give a very brief outline and at regular intervals stop and ask pupils to Spot the miracle.</p> <p>Here are some prompts for teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">*An angel appearing to an ordinary young girl with an extraordinary message. Miracle Mary believed and graciously accepted the impossible (she was a virgin) even though her pregnancy could have led to her being ostracised or even stoned to death. The fact that she was not is another miracle.*Joseph's dream that gave him courage to defy his culture and stick by Mary even though it could have been dangerous for him to do so. Miracle Joseph believed the dream, he changed from being terrified of what was happening to accepting Mary's situation and protecting her and therefore He protected the baby to be born.*Angels appearing to lots of local shepherds. Miracle This event happened. Not many people have seen anything like this before or since but there were many 'eye witnesses' to this extraordinary event. The shepherds acted on what they had witnessed even though it meant abandoning their work for the time being and probably never being the same people again.*Wise men travelling thousands of miles because they were convinced that a new King had been born. Miracle the appearance of a single star changed these highly intelligent men and led them to spend a huge amount of time, effort, money and risk their reputations because they were so convinced about the reality of what was going to happen before it had happened.*Wise men having dreams to warn them about Herod's evil intentions towards Jesus. Miracle the dream proved correct and these highly intelligent people were convinced to change their plans.*Simeon (Luke 2:25-33) recognising that an ordinary baby was God's salvation. Miracle Simeon knew what is impossible to know about a tiny baby's future.

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2	<p>To learn about and act out stories from Jesus' life and to investigate how these events suggest that He was no ordinary person</p> <p>To ensure that pupils realise that the stories are historical accounts rather than myth</p>	<p>Begin by reminding the pupils that these stories are historical accounts of real events. (There is much scholarly evidence including a 1st century Romano- Jewish historian called Josephus)</p> <p>Activity: Give the groups their prepared story (see suggestions and references below) to read and discuss together. Give the groups this one question to ask of the story: 'What was interesting, amazing, strange, extraordinary, or miraculous about that?' Put the pile of prepared Clues upside down on the table.</p> <p>Group members read their story to each other perhaps taking different speaking parts or reading one verse each. Ask each other the one question. Can everyone say one thing? There are some clues to help you.</p> <p>Extension: More able pupils could repeat activity with another story or support another group.</p>
3	<p>To use freeze frame drama techniques to demonstrate the most significant parts of the story.</p> <p>To photograph for records and display.</p> <p>To think about the impact of Jesus' life on ordinary people.</p>	<p>Ask the pupils to choose a scene from their story before the 'amazing, miraculous' bit then freeze frame it.</p> <p>Photograph.</p> <p>Look at each others' 'frames'. Now choose a second scene during or after the amazing/miraculous' bit. This is the 'wow' scene.</p> <p>Photograph.</p> <p>Think about the 2 freeze frames and spot the differences. Ask each group: 'What difference do think Jesus made to the people's lives?'</p>

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Ask each other the **one** question.

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4	To construct a journey line through some of the events of Jesus' life leading up to and including Easter week using modelling and shoe boxes.	<p>In groups pupils choose one of the scenes that they used for 'freeze' framing.</p> <p>Pupils use an open shoe box as the frame and recreate the 'wow' scene from their story using a modelling medium such as plasticine.</p> <p>Make a journey line display of the completed shoe boxes in sequence. The boxes could either be pinned to the wall or laid out on a long surface.</p> <p>Make a label for the shoe box with the name of the story.</p> <p>The photographs of the freeze frames could be displayed beside the appropriate box.</p> <p>Extension: More able pupils could repeat activity with their other story or support another group.</p> <p>Consider inviting parents in at the end of the day to see shoe box display and hear about the day from their child.</p>
5	To learn song: 'Hosanna'	<p>'Hosanna' is found in Sunday's Cool Volume 2 and 'Songs for Every Easter' by Mark and Helen Johnson.</p> <p>The song includes reference to some of Jesus' 'miraculous signs'</p> <p>The CD is a 'Words on Screen' version which makes learning easy.</p>
Unstructured session	To provide a space for personal reflection, contemplation and response.	<p>Set up a comfortable interactive prayer space where the children choose to go (not compulsory) if they want space by themselves to respond to the thinking of the day.</p> <p>Create opportunity for the pupils to respond to the question 'What do you think about Jesus?'</p> <p>Practical ideas for prayer spaces can be found at: http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/creating_a_prayer_space</p>

Here are some **suggested stories** to use with Clues provided.

(Note inbuilt differentiation of shorter or longer readings)

1. Jesus as a 12 year old boy

Reference: Luke 2:41-52

Clues:

- Jesus talks about God as His father not Joseph
- The experts listening to Jesus were amazed by His insight and knowledge.

- Jesus' mother realised that something special was going on and 'treasured' all these events in her heart.
- As Jesus grew up He was recognised as being extraordinarily wise and respected by other people.

2. Jesus baptised as an adult

Reference: Luke 3:21-22

Clues:

- Baptism is a public event and many people will have seen the dove come and sit on Jesus as He was praying.
- There will have been many 'eye witnesses' who heard a voice say clearly 'You are my own dear Son. I am pleased with you'.

3. Jesus' first miracle turning water into wine

Reference: John 2:1-11

Clues:

- Mary knew that Jesus was special and that he could solve the problem. She told other people to do what He said even though it must have seemed stupid.
- The servants were aware that the wine had run out. The servants saw the people enjoy the good wine even though it had previously been water.
- The taste of the wine was so special that it was a talking point.
- Jesus did not show off about the amazing thing that He had done.

4. Jesus calms a big storm on the sea

Reference: Matthew 8:24-27

Clues:

- The disciples would have been used to big storms because they were fishermen. This storm was so violent that they thought it would capsize the boat and they would drown.
- Jesus was not a fisherman but neither was he worried by the storm. He was so relaxed that He was sound asleep.
- Jesus told the disciples that they should be able to trust Him.
- Jesus spoke and the winds immediately calmed down.
- The disciples were amazed.

5. Jesus heals a paralysed man

Reference: Mark 2:1-12

Clues:

- Crowds of people were desperate to learn from Jesus the teacher.
- Friends believed that Jesus could heal the paralyzed man and risked ridicule and anger to demonstrate their faith.
- Jesus makes a very big statement 'Your sins are forgiven!'

- Everyone listening knew that only God can forgive other people's sins so in other words Jesus was stating that he was God.
- Jesus healed the paralyzed man.

6. The Centurion's servant

Reference: Matthew 8:5-10 and 13

Clues:

- The Roman centurion was a powerful man. He recognised that Jesus had 'power' as well but it was different power.
- The centurion was a different race (Roman) from Jesus (Jew) but he did not feel worthy of having Jesus visit him at home.
- The centurion was a humble and faithful man and Jesus was impressed.
- Jesus just spoke quietly and the servant back at home was made better instantly.

7. Jesus goes to Jerusalem

Reference: Matthew 21:1-11

Clues:

- The man who owned the donkeys knew that the 'Lord' Jesus needed them for something special.
- Hundreds of years before this event someone had said that it would happen.
- Jesus did not look like a King but hundreds of people greeted Him as if He was the King and a hero.
- All the people in the city were interested and talking about Jesus, wondering who He was.
- The people could only think that He was a special prophet.

8. Jesus is arrested

Reference: Luke 22:47-54

Clues:

- Just a few days before, the crowds had been welcoming Jesus as a hero. Why were there such enormous extremes in people's reactions?
- When the disciples tried to protect Jesus He stopped them from using violence.
- In front of all the angry crowd and the frightened disciples Jesus healed a man's ear when everyone had seen that it had been cut off.
- Jesus did not resist arrest because He trusted that God had a bigger plan.

9. Jesus is questioned by Pilate

Reference: Luke 23:1-5 and 13-15

Clues:

- The Council members became very angry and made up lies to accuse Jesus.
- Pilate was the judge and he said Jesus was innocent.
- Jesus kept quiet even when He was falsely accused.

- Pilate was a strong and important man and he realised that Jesus had done nothing wrong but he was frightened of the other people and in the end gave up even though it meant that Jesus as an innocent man would be killed.

10. Jesus' death

The accounts of Jesus' death and resurrection are full and detailed and therefore may not be appropriate for the children to read in the original text although that would be a useful thing for the teachers to do. For the pupils you may wish to choose a story teller bible version.

However, there are still clues to discover.

Clues:

- Even though Jesus was innocent He asked God to forgive the people who were killing Him.
- While Jesus was in great pain on the cross He still had time to care for His mother.
- Jesus talked about life after death to the other 2 people being killed at the same time as Him. He promised the one thief that He would join Jesus in heaven.
- When Jesus died (and the soldiers checked that he was definitely dead) on the cross there was an eclipse of the sun and everything went dark. There were lots of eye witnesses to this event.
- Another extraordinary event happened when a huge curtain in the temple split down the middle from top to bottom. There were eye witnesses to this event.
- After Jesus died a member of the Council risked his own life by saying that he would give Jesus a burial place.
- When Jesus was buried, Roman soldiers made sure that nobody would be able to open the tomb and then they guarded the place.

11. Jesus' resurrection

Clues:

- The huge stone and the guards could not stop Jesus coming back to life and walking out of the tomb.
- Women were the first to meet Jesus again after He came back to life. Women's testimonies at that time were not thought significant. The fact that their eye witness accounts were believed and recorded is extraordinary.
- The disciples met with Jesus and saw the cuts and wounds in his body.
- Many hundreds of people met, heard and saw Jesus again for 40 days after He had come back to life.
- Jesus was obviously a real person because He ate food but He also had a different body because He could suddenly appear to people and chat with them but He was not frightening.