

Good Learning in RE

Films for teachers from NATRE: sponsored by Culham St Gabriel's Trust and the Diocese of Saint Albans

Film 1: Enquiring into Worship / 7-9 year olds

The teacher uses a 'picture from memory' task to energise learning and develop children's observation, teamwork and thinking skills. This lesson aims to help pupils understand Christian worship and community life through processes of enquiry, in which children do their own observation, work in teams, think for themselves about connections between Biblical ideas and Christian practice.

The 7-9 year olds in this class enjoy the varied learning activities, and the teacher clarifies and builds their understanding while also challenging them to think about the meaning of some well chosen examples of 'Biblical Wisdom'. This is part of a longer sequence of lessons in which children find out about worship, devotion and community life in different faiths, learning from similarities and differences.

Key RE Concepts:

Beliefs and teachings: what the Bible teaches Christian people about God, worship and how to live.
Identity and belonging: exploring how community life is strengthened. Questions of meaning and values: considering what matters in the life of the Christian community.

Key vocabulary and ideas:

- Vocabulary and concepts pupils use include worship, service, love in action, fair trade, belief and the impact of belief.
- The central idea in the lesson is that the activities of a Christian community / church can be explored in the light of teaching from the Bible. The intention is that pupils will learn from this exploration, reflecting on their own ideas and behaviour thoughtfully.



Pedagogy and Learning Method:

This film shows a teacher using the thinking skills structure 'picture from memory' to enable pupils to familiarise themselves with a range of Christian practices. The picture used has four different church windows, and the activities seen in each are linked to the details on the central Church notice board. This well planned work exemplifies some ways visual learning theory also encourages pupils to interpret what they see in dialogue with each other. The learning methods then move on to use a selection of well chosen Bible quotations. Pupils are asked to think out how they teaching of the sacred text links to community practice. This open ended task does not have one 'right answer': again in dialogue, the teams propose and refine suggested links. They need to interpret what they are seeing, using previous knowledge about Christianity to support them in their observations and interpretations.



Links to key RE strands:

This work is about Christian practice, worship and sources of authority. The central theme of community life links to the children's sense of belonging, which is another key concept. The lesson enables the pupils to handle links between sacred text, values and belonging.

Lesson outline:

Three phases of learning about the Christian community and its scriptures are seen in this short film, of a lesson that takes about 75 minutes in all. Visual learning and thinking skills structures enable careful teamwork to remember, reconstruct and make sense out of a 'big picture' of Christian worship. Next, pupils are asked to raise and answer questions about the things they have been looking at. Again, a team work structure means some pupils ask their own questions, then discuss and consider answers from another team. In the third phase of this learning sequence, pupils take some stimulating and meaningful Bible quotes and apply them to the activities of the Christian community, seeking to give reasons for what they see going on.

Learning intentions:

In this lesson, we wanted pupils across a range of abilities to learn:

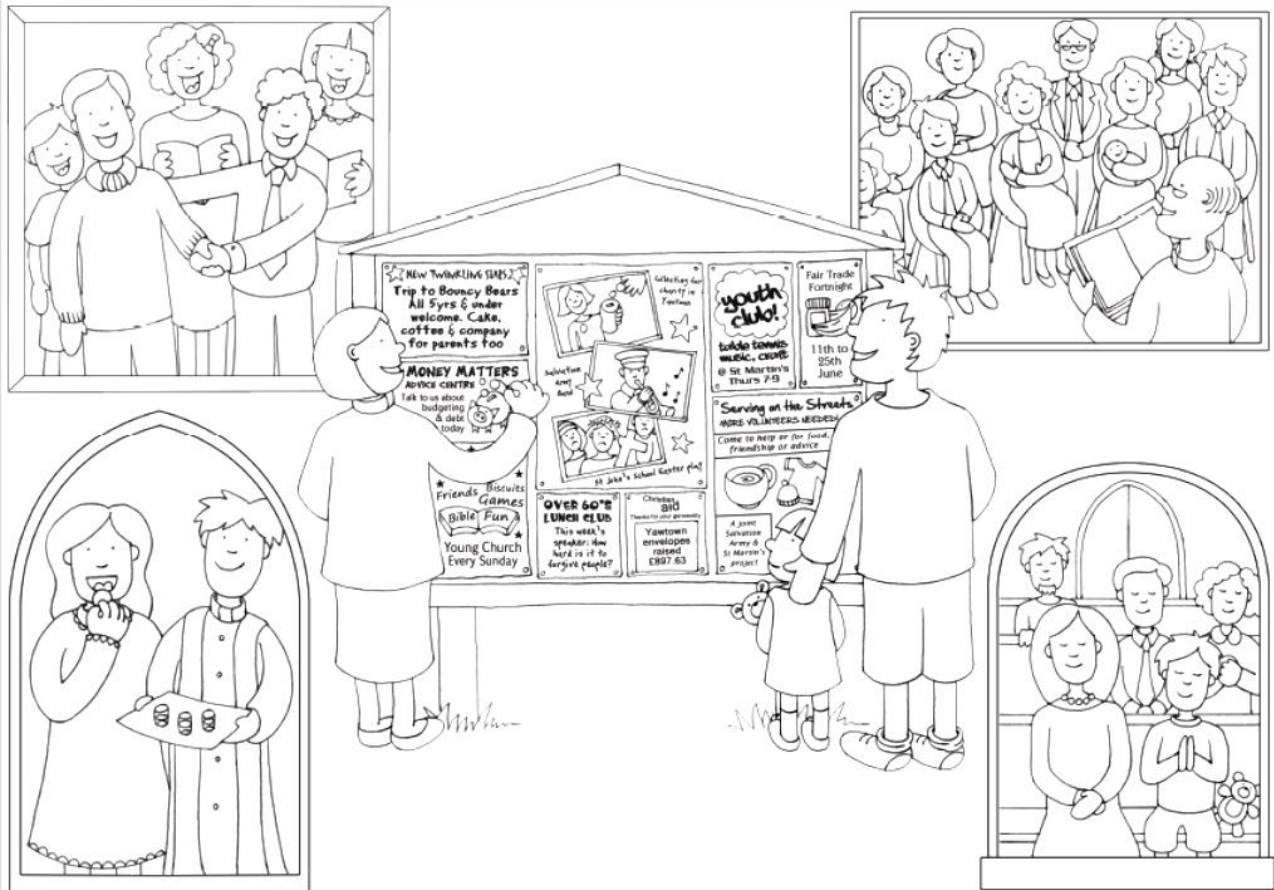
- To describe some things Christians do in their communities (L3)
- To make links between what the bible says and community activities (L3)
- To understand different ways in which the Bible guides the life of the community (L4)
- To apply ideas such as helping others, being fair, caring, working together or living for God to examples of community activity for themselves (L4)
- To explain reasons why Christians organise different activities in Church communities (L5)
- To explain their own views about what makes a good community life, and why it is good to work together for fairness and other community objectives (L5).
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What makes for good learning in this example?

There are many features of good RE learning in this short film. The teacher has planned work which enables pupils to use their general learning skills – enquiring, visual memory, raising questions, suggesting answers – to further their own RE learning. Collaborative and team based activity is strong in this lesson, which is open to all pupils of different ability levels in the class, enabling progress for all.

The pupils are interested, and they are motivated by the soft competitiveness of the team task, and then by trying to answer questions posed by another group. Thinking skills devices make some complex material accessible to pupils across a wide ability range, and progress is seen where children use new words and offer their own reasons for their ideas. The link to pupils' own reflective thinking becomes clearer as the responses to Christians sacred text are articulated.

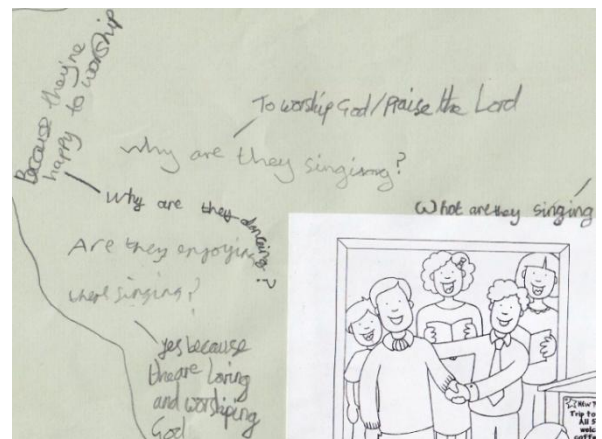
Running a lesson like this: what do you need to do?



The picture used here is published by RE Today – see details on page 5. Other pictures – church activity, noticeboard and so on, could be used similarly. Other faith community pictures would work well too.

Pupils in small groups of 4 use felt pens and a big piece of flip chart paper to take turns: Number One comes to look at the picture for 10 seconds, returns to their group and draws as much as they can of the picture from memory. Numbers 2-4 return to the picture and look again, for ten seconds, and add to the picture. Keep it speedy and open ended. This softly competitive activity uses teamwork to make the visual memorable. Over 15 minutes and 6 to 8 visits to the picture, different groups of pupils create a picture similar to the one they are all looking at. Teachers can praise the efforts of all groups in this impossible-to – be perfect task – which is very good at making the picture memorable.

Enquiring into Christian Practice: The four windows in the picture show detail of Christian practice. Ask pupils to raise questions about what they have been looking at, and point out to them that when it comes to questions in RE, the bigger, the better. They write their questions about each aspect of Christian practice around the edge of their picture. Can they get 10? 15 good questions? Then the picture / question sheets are moved on by the teacher. At this point, the pupils may need to read for information, because they are going to try and answer the questions on the sheet they receive – but some of the questions will require deep thinking, but no particular facts. They might tackle these first. The enquiry method of enabling pupils to set agendas is badly needed in RE: learning where teachers give facts and pupils forget facts is no way to improve the subject. The illustration shows where 9 year olds may go with this activity.



Share the finished pieces with the whole class. What has been learnt about Christian practice?

Belief and behaviour- so what? This activity helps pupils to make links between Christian teaching, belief and practice and the behaviour of Christians. Christianity is about both belief and behaviour. Arrange pupils to work in pairs. Each pair needs an A4 colour or black and white copy of the picture and a set of the Bible quotes below, with scissors and paste, or equivalent. Ask pupils to take each of the Bible quotes and try and identify somewhere in the picture where this teaching is being followed. They might choose 5 of the bible quotes to work with and for each quote respond to these three sentence starters: Christians are taught... / This means they should try... / An example of this in the picture is...

A Bible Dozen: texts that make sense of Christian worship and practice

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love.	Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.
I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Psalm 104:33	“Give thanks to the LORD Almighty, for the LORD is good; his love endures forever.” Jeremiah 33.
And don’t forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.” Hebrews 13:16	The love of money is the root of all evil 1 Timothy 6:10
For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Matthew 25:	And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting but encouraging one another. Hebrews 10:24-26
Jesus said ‘whenever you eat bread and drink wine, remember me’ Luke 22	Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:32
May God our Father give you grace and peace Ephesians 1;2	“Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path” Psalm 119:105

A final task might ask pupils which of the activities the community is engaged with they would be keen to support themselves – this enables exploration of their own attitudes and commitments.

Creative Curriculum Connections

The work here links RE to some other curriculum areas including literacy and local studies. Visual learning and thinking skills connect to the tasks.

Resources:

From RE Today (www.retoday.org.uk): The picture the pupils used is shown here is available in ‘Opening Up Christianity, edited by Fiona Moss, RE Today 2012

Also see: www.reonline.org.uk



Notes written by Lat Blaylock, with thanks to all the teachers and pupils involved