

Welcome to the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham's

Church History & Open Churches Project



welcoming groups of children and young people into our churches

Often children's organisations and groups ask if they can visit a church and as the church welcoming these youngsters into the building it can be hard to know what to do when the children arrive. This pack offers ideas of activities for churches to organise for such groups. It is based on the Primary Pack from the Church History project, and offers activities which will help the children enjoy their visit to the church and give church members confidence in offering a suitable session. Feel free to adapt the activities to suit your church, volunteers and the children visiting. They are aimed at children aged 6-12, but could be adapted for older or younger groups. *An Introduction to the church for young children* would be suitable for groups younger than this. All materials may be freely photocopied.

This pack contains:

- A brief overview of the Church History & Open Churches Project
- Activities on the following areas
 - The Church (A look at the building and what it's used for)
 - An Introduction to the church for young children
 - 1. Fonts and Baptism
 - 2. At the Altar (The Eucharist or Holy Communion)
 - 3. The Bible in Church Art (Stained glass/lectern/banners)
 - 4. Clues to the Past in a Graveyard
 - 5. Worship Traditions (Church Music)
 - 6. The Church in the Community (Easter, Harvest and Christmas)
 - 7a. Reading the Symbols in a Church
 - 7b. Vestments and Colour in Church
 - 8. Church Architecture (A look at a church's distinctive features)
 - 9. The Name of the Church
 - 10. The Church and its People

If you need further information, have any comments, or would like to share your ideas with us, then please contact the project co-ordinator Heather.Sirrel@southwell.anglican.org

For more information on the project visit the website www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk



The Church History & Open Churches Project

is c/o The Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham, Jubilee House, Westgate, Southwell, Nottinghamshire, NG25 0JH

www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk

A brief overview of the

Church History & Open Churches Project



The Church History Project (CHP) was set up as a partnership between the Diocesan Advisory Committee and the University of Nottingham in 1998. The intention is to provide an accurate, detailed history of each of the 314 active parish churches in the Diocese, as well as redundant, ruined or demolished churches. All the material is available free to view on the internet.

The project has since been awarded a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) so that the work can continue, and at the same time be combined with related projects on church tourism and education under the 'Open Churches' heading.

The project has three strands: Research, Tourism and Education. Briefly put, the Research strand aims to record a detailed historical and archaeological account of every church in the diocese; the Tourism strand encourages and facilitates churches to be open, both through organised open weekends and the production of various high quality leaflets; the Education strand is developing material for churches to use with a wide variety of ages and groups, particularly schools and other education establishments.

Do explore the full range of resources on our website

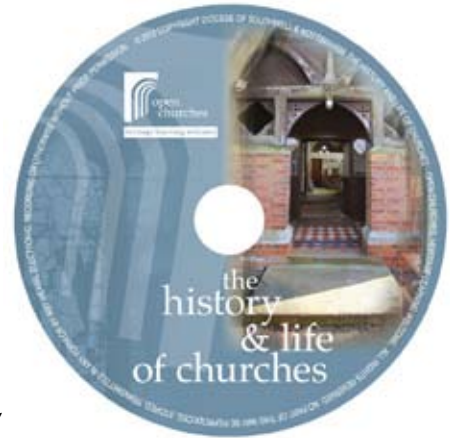
www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk



Also available are many linked resources, including our
DVD 'The History & Life of Churches'

DVD MAIN CHAPTERS

1. Introduction
2. Churches in your community
3. A place to learn about God
4. Baptism
5. The Bible
6. The Cross
7. Holy Communion
8. The Offering
9. Prayer and Worship
10. Story of 'the history and life of Churches'



INTERVIEWS

- What is 'Church' to you?
- Church through the week
- Why is Holy Communion important to you?
- Tell us what 'Prayer' is to you?

Each of these topics is covered with pictures, interviews and video of real people from Nottinghamshire Churches, and the accompanying booklet gives suggestions for lessons/group sessions and assemblies.

Also on the website www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk:

- Materials for use with groups in Specific Churches with particular features
- A page of resources created by local people and churches, kindly shared to inspire you
- A developing resource section of materials for Primary and Secondary schools

Plus detailed **Research** on Nottinghamshire churches

Plus **Tourism** opportunities and ideas

We hope you find these resources useful. Feel free to adapt them to your own situation.
We'd love to hear your feedback, your experiences, and your ideas for developing resources.
Contact us on email CHPopenchurchesEd@southwell.anglican.org

Our thanks go to the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham, The University of Nottingham and those who have written and contributed to this pack, in particular Sally Smith and Maureen Collins.

The Church

(A look at the building and what it's used for)



Information for leader

The church is not just the building but the people – the body of Christ.

However, we want children to understand the main features of a church building – the shape of it (cross/cruciform), the altar, pulpit, lectern, font, pews, and what they are used for.

These activities give an introduction to churches in general. You will need to add activities to highlight interesting features unique to your church.

If there are areas you do not want children to go (e.g. around the altar), rope them off clearly – so avoid any need to reprimand them.



Introduction

- Welcome the children to your church, and ask them to look around – from where they are sitting.
- Ask them what they can see – things that are similar to what they have seen in other buildings, and things that are different?
- Praise them for spotting things and comment briefly on them – saying what they are used for and any special meaning.
- If your church is cruciform in shape, draw attention to this. If not, explain that many churches are. Ask why the children think this might be.
- Ask them what they think a CHURCH is.
- Talk about their answers, bringing out the truth in them.
- Tell them (if they haven't said it) that the church is actually the 'people'. So it could meet in someone's home or even a park. But the usual place is a building a bit like this – called a church because Christian People meet here to worship God.



- Give the children three minutes to walk round having a good look and to find one thing they think is particularly interesting or unusual. In a large group they can share their ideas in pairs and feed back a few ideas, in a small group you will be able to hear what each child has found.
- Prepare ten small copies of each of several photos (enough for one per group or pair of children). Hide these around the church. Each group or pair of children is given one of their photos and sent to find the rest. As they are looking for their photos they will have the chance to look round the church.

Activities

- Some worksheets are provided below for the children to use in looking round the church.
 - For *Introduction to Church* you would need to produce labels – possibly laminated – for the key places in your church. You could replace the pictures in the worksheet with digital ones from your own church if you wished.
 - *Inside a Church* gives information about parts of the church. This could be useful to your helpers, or used by older children.
 - *Have a go* could be useful for older children.
 - *Visit to a church* could be used by younger children. They might need adult help with finding the places and to write for them. You could replace the photos with ones of your church.
- Choose six key places in your church. Have a member of the congregation at each key place who will give a brief explanation, visually and interactively, lasting about three minutes. Children can go round the places in small groups with an adult.
- Create a Treasure Trail round church using some of the significant places in your church and their importance or purpose. This can be done in several ways:
 - Give the children purpose or significance and they find the place, where there is the clue of another purpose, leading to the next place, etc.
 - Give them a list of purpose and significances and they find the places.
 - Younger children might find it easier to be given a list of places to find, and have a discussion afterwards about what they might mean.
 - You could produce a page of photographs of places for the children to find – include some hidden ones or take some photos from an unusual angle to make it harder.
- Play Simon says . . . Call out Simon says go to the altar, go to the place where the Bible is, touch a hymn book. . .
- Give each group a digital camera and set them off to take photos as if they were church mice. How would they see the building differently? What would they see that we wouldn't?
 - Children could then write a story on the Adventures of the Church Mouse, or act the adventures out, or create a presentation of their photos.
- Give each group a digital camera and ask them to take five photos from unusual angles that others might not recognise. When they have taken them, swap cameras and see if they can find the subject of the photos.
- Ask the children to imagine they are tourist guides. They plan a tour of the church (you will need to provide them with the basic information). You could split the group into pairs or small groups and each group cover one or two areas of the church, then at the end they can go round as a large group with each pair leading their part.
- Make a matching game, with photos of parts of the church, their names and uses.
- Involve the children in acting out how different parts of the church are used.
- Create a time capsule that will show people in the future what the church is like now.
- The children can create an advertising leaflet showing local people what the church is like and why they should visit it.



- The children could create a leaflet showing people who have never been in church before what there is and what it is used for.
- In small groups the children could make plays about someone coming in to church for the first time.

Drawing it together

- Gather the children together and ask them what they enjoyed or what they found out.
- Go through worksheets and check answers together.
- Talk about what else happens in your church, especially any activities for children. If you have a church member there they could tell you what it means for them to be part of the church. You may want to tell the children they are welcome to come and see what a church service is like (maybe recommend the week you have all age service?)
- Gather the children together and sit quietly. Light a candle, creating a reflective atmosphere. Ask the children to reflect on what they have learnt about the building and what it means to other people.
- Have a fun quiz to re-cap some of the things the children have learnt.
- Play hangman with key words you have been using.



Introduction to Church

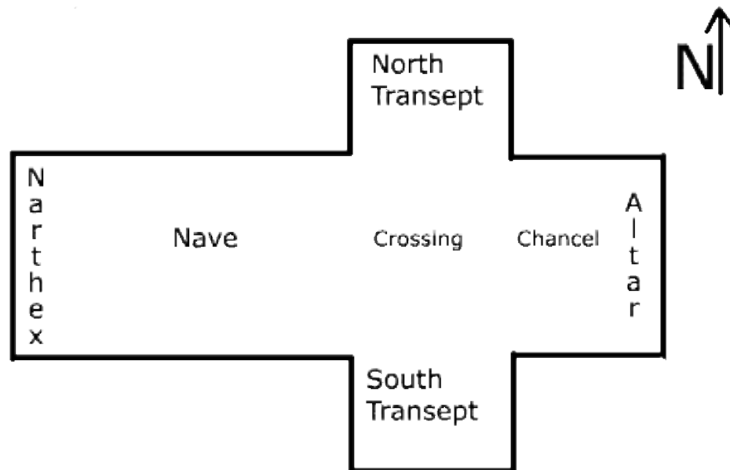


heritage learning welcome

A church is...

What do you think? Is it a building or is it the people?

page 9 : Introduction to Church worksheet



The basic shape of the building is a _ _ _ _ _

This is sometimes called a 'cruciform' shape.

Why do you think a church might be built in this shape?

Can you find these things in the church building? (Draw a sketch of each one)

<p>Altar</p>

<p>Font</p>
--

<p>Lectern</p>

<p>Pulpit</p>
--

See if you can work out what they are used for?

Have a go!

Match the sentences!

Match up the sentences so that they make sense.

- a) A Church is a sort of table used for Holy Communion.
- b) The Font is a place where Christians meet together to worship God.
- c) The Altar is the place where people are christened.
- d) The most holy part of a Church is the Vestry.
- e) The Choir Stalls are a symbol of Jesus, who is called 'The Light of the World'.
- f) The choir put on their robes in the Lectern.
- g) The Nave is the place where the minister preaches a sermon.
- h) The Pulpit is the main part of the Church, where all the people sit.
- i) The Bible is read from the Sanctuary.
- j) Candles are usually in the chancel.

Inside a Church



A Church is a building where Christians meet together to worship God. Some churches are very old, stone buildings. Some Churches are very modern. Older Churches often have a tower, or a spire, and have a floor plan which is cross-shaped or rectangular. Some modern Churches have a round floor plan. A Church doesn't have to be built specially: in some places ordinary houses are used for Churches.



The Font is the place where babies and older people are baptised (christened). When someone is baptised they become a member of the Church. For this reason the font is often found at the back of the Church, near the door.

The Sanctuary is the most holy (special) part of a Church. It is the area around the altar. Often there is a rail around the sanctuary and visitors are not allowed to enter it.

The Nave is the main part of the Church, where all the people sit. The people (congregation) may sit on chairs, or special benches, which are called pews.

The Altar is a wooden or stone table. A Church may have more than one altar, but the main one is always at a central point in the Church. The altar is used for the service called the Eucharist or Holy Communion.



The Choir Stalls are the seats where the choir sits. They are usually in the chancel. In some churches the members of the choir wear special robes.

The Vestry is the place where the choir and the minister put on their special robes. Often there are two vestries in a church, one for the choir and one for the minister.

Most Churches have an **organ**, and sometimes other musical instruments. You will often find that the organ console (where the keyboard is) is a long way from the organ pipes (which make all the noise).

The Chancel is the part of the Church between the Sanctuary and the Nave. Often the choir stalls and the organ console are found here.

The Pulpit is the place where the minister preaches a sermon. Often it is a sort of box, raised up by a few steps. In some churches there is no pulpit, and the minister preaches from the lectern.



The Lectern is the place where the Bible is read out from during a service. Sometimes it is very simple. In some Churches it is made from brass and the book stand is in the shape of an eagle.

Some Churches have aisles at the side which are called **transepts**. This means that the floor plan of a church like this is in the shape of a cross.

Most churches have **candles**, which Christians believe are a symbol of Jesus, who is called 'The Light of the World'. You will usually see candles on the altar. Often there are also candles or oil lamps in the sanctuary. You sometimes see candles which people can light to say a prayer.

A Church is not just a building: it is a place where people do things and things happen. What sort of things do you think happen in a Church?



Visit to a Church worksheet



heritage learning welcome

We saw the place where babies are baptised the



The is the place where the is read.



The is where the vicar talks about what it means.

The Sometimes the seats are made of wood, with a shelf for books.



The This is where Christians eat bread and wine to remember Jesus dying on the cross.

An introduction to the church for young children (involves making story bags)



Information for leader

The contents of your bags very much depend on your building. Choose six or seven interesting items in your church, e.g. carvings, pictures, stained glass windows, altar frontals. For every item you are going to look at place a bag near that item, which contains something relevant to it, so, for example, a stained glass window with a sheep image could have a small toy sheep or picture of a sheep in the bag; a carving of a flower on a pew could be represented by a silk flower in the bag; an image of a rainbow, picture of a rainbow in the bag, and so on. You might also like to choose a nursery rhyme or simple song relating to each item.

Remember that small children might not have been in the church before and could be overwhelmed – make them as welcome as possible before you begin the tour. They love mystery so build up an air of the unknown as you prepare to look in the bags for clues.

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Welcome the children as a whole group to the nave of the building, asking if any of them have been here before. Do they know what the building is called? What do people do here?
- Explain that we are going to find out a little more about the building by exploring. We are going to look for some bags which have clues in to help us find things around the church. Ask the children if they are good explorers.
- Ask the leader to divide the children into small groups of no more than 10. If you have more than one group going around at one time, make sure you have planned a starting point for everyone and move around the stations in a clockwise direction. You will have about six minutes at each station.

Activity (40 minutes)

Begin the tour and work your way around in a clockwise direction as agreed with the other group leaders doing the tour.

At each activity, find the bag and choose a child to get the object (e.g. sheep) out of the bag. Have a short discussion about what it is and ask if anyone can see that object (sheep) around them. If you have chosen some songs then finish by asking the children if anyone knows a song about the object (sheep) and sing it together. During the activities, ensure that all the children are included in the discussions and have an opportunity to participate if they wish to.

Drawing it together (15 minutes)

Give the children a drink and biscuit (check with leaders about any allergies) and read a short picture book Bible story (one that links with one of the objects would be particularly suitable).

1. Fonts and Baptism



Information for leader

You will need to adjust this activity according to the age of the children. With younger children, focus on belonging during the short discussion at the beginning, with older age groups discuss the symbolism of belonging and celebrating together and how the church becomes the centre for this important event.

The best way to explore baptism is by acting out a baptism service with a doll. Include as many children in this as you can. The baptism here gives a simplified version of the words used and promises made at a ceremony, but gives the children the general idea of what happens and explores some of the symbolism of a baptism service.

Introduction

- Greet the group, position them around you in a semi-circle, and tell them your name. Ask them theirs (if they are a large group they can all reply together!) Explain that names are important – it helps to give us our identity within our family and friends, and may tell us something about our family's past (e.g., who is named after a family member?) We probably share our last name with mum or dad, or brothers and sisters, but our parents have chosen our first names to give us our own unique identity.
- Tell them that you are going to show them a welcoming ceremony used in the church which is called Baptism (or Christening). This is a ceremony to show the child belongs to the church, and the Christian religion. The parents state the child's name during the ceremony.
- If the group are wearing uniforms, make a point of saying that you can see they all belong to the same organisation because their uniform identifies them. Ask the children to tell you where else they belong – don't take detail, just ask as many as you can, (likely answers: Brownies, family, cubs, school).
- Ask if anyone had a ceremony to welcome them to their organisation, e.g., did anyone introduce them to the group or formally have a ceremony? (Brownies and cubs have enrolment ceremonies.) Let some children tell you about it.
- Churches have always been centres of local communities, and at one time everyone would bring their babies here to be baptised by the priest and welcomed by the local community. People still do this now.



Acting out a baptism

For the baptism you will need:

- Font, water
- Basket or box containing a candle, a cross, some water and a picture of a dove

- A baby doll wrapped in white blanket
- Box of dressing up clothes and/or presents
- A white stole
- Ask if anyone knows what happens at a ceremony of baptism. Make sure they know it is sometimes called a Christening. Listen to the answers.
- Discuss the uniforms children wear with symbols on them to show they belong to school or other groups. Christians use symbols of Christianity too at the baptism ceremony. Ask for volunteers to come and choose a symbol – these should be hidden in a box.
- Line the children up with their symbols and make sure everyone sees what they are: Water, a dove, a candle and a cross. (Are there any of these symbols on or near the font, perhaps in a window, a candle or a sculpture. If so, this should be pointed out). Place the symbols down by the font.
- Tell children that anyone can be baptised, but often it is a baby, so we need a mum and dad. Ask for volunteers, and send them off with the baby to choose a name for it secretly.
- Meanwhile, identify four 'Godparents' who will have to promise to help look after the baby. Explain that this is usually friends, family or neighbours.
- You will be the priest, so put on a white celebration stole if there is one available.
- The rest of the children will be guests from the local area, so all need either a dressing up item or a present for the baby. Two children can be chosen to be the church doors by making an arch to walk through. Prime everyone that this is a special day so they will be wearing their best clothes. Tell them to mime getting dressed in their best clothes and arriving across the other side of the nave.
- Ask the 'doors' to make a big arch to let everyone in. The priest goes in first, followed by mum, dad and baby, who stand at the font. Everyone else should sit in the 'church'.
- In role as the priest welcome your guests to your church, saying what a pleasure it is to have them all with you, especially baby...? (Ask the parents what name they have chosen) and invite Godparents to join you by the font.
- Now you need to check that they really do want their baby to be a member of the church and Christian community. Tell them to reply 'I do'. Ask them:
 - o Do you turn to Jesus?
 - o Do you plan to bring up baby ... as a Christian?
 - o (Godparents and friends) 'Do you promise to help mum and dad to care for baby ...?'
- Now come the signs:
 - o Make a cross on the baby's head with water with your finger or thumb. (It may be done with oil of chrisam in an actual baptism.) This is a sign of Jesus – Christians sometimes wear the cross like a badge, so that others know they belong to his family.
 - o Wash the baby's head with water – we clean the baby, washing away its old life and representing the new life it has with Jesus. At this point pretend the baby is crying as it didn't like cold water, so pass it back to mum or dad.
 - o Give the lit candle to one of the Godparents to hold and ask if anyone can remember why candles are significant. (Light of Christ, getting rid of darkness and evil.)



- o Give the dove picture to another child to remind us that as Jesus was baptised God sent a dove from heaven. This image isn't used in the service, but is often present in the form of decoration on or around a font.
- Now ask the family and friends to give the baby a clap and leave the church, replacing everything in the correct box.

Activities

- Look at the font. (NB this will be different in every church, so the following notes are suggestions as to how you might introduce your font. Children should not have to listen to a lecture about it, but should be encouraged to join in with the discussion through careful questioning).
 - o Ask if anyone knows what this piece of furniture is and draw out the word font. Let's find out a bit more about it. Has anyone seen it being used? (If yes, then we know it holds water.)
 - o Ask if it has a date or any carvings on it. What is it made from? Can we guess its age by looking at it? What evidence is there that it is new/old? Is it near the door (old fonts are often near the door, so it is the first thing the baby gets to on its first visit into the church and as a symbol of baptism as the start of the Christian journey.)
- If some of the children might have been baptised in the church, look up their entries in the baptism register.
- Read or tell the story of Jesus' baptism. Children could then make stained glass windows of Jesus being baptised. The following churches on the Church History website, have windows representing Jesus' baptism:
 - o <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/radcliffe-on-trent/hglass.php>
 - o <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/beeston/hglass.php>
 - o <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/hyson-green-st-stephen/hglass.php>
 - o <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/bleasby/hglass.php>
 - o <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/arnold/hglass.php>
- Take in a book of names and let the children explore the meaning of their names. Do any of them know why they were given their names?
- Show the DVD *The history and life of churches* section on Baptism.
- Look round church to find the symbols used in baptism – water, dove, candle, cross.
- Baptism is about being washed clean from the bad things we have done. Children can do this symbolically by writing or drawing things on an acetate sheet (or a laminated piece of plain paper) using a washable pen, and then dipping them in a bucket of water and seeing their writing being washed away.
- Children could use magazines to make a collage of the different uses of water.
- After watching the baptism children could:
 - o Prepare a leaflet telling parents and Godparents what to expect at a baptism service.
 - o Make a baptism card, including some of the symbols you have talked about.
 - o Have a baptism party.



Drawing it together

- Bring the children back to where you started and go over the symbols again and the name of the font. With younger children see if they remember what they are, whilst the older ones may remember what they meant.
- Use the Church History Project website (<http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk>) to find photos of fonts from around the Diocese and discuss why they are different. Three contrasting ones would be:
 - o **St Mary's, Lowdham:** stone, intricately carved by stone Masons working on the Minster Chapter House: 1290
 - o **St Peter's, East Bridgford:** stone, Tudor roses carvings: 1663
 - o **St Mary's, Plumtree:** stone font, wooden lid: 1875
- Find out about adult baptism. Use the PowerPoint of baptism by full immersion available via website.
<http://www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk/education-resourcesbychurches.php>



2. At the Altar

(The Eucharist or Holy Communion)



Information for leader

Christians interpret the Eucharist in different ways – as a simple reminder of Jesus’ sacrifice, as a mystery in which Jesus is ‘really present’ in the bread and wine, or as transubstantiation where the bread and wine actually become the body and blood (Roman Catholic). You do not need to go into depth with children, but concentrate on it being a very special way of remembering Jesus, thanking him (Eucharist means Thanksgiving) and being linked (in Communion) with him and others.

Check for any allergies before asking children to taste anything.

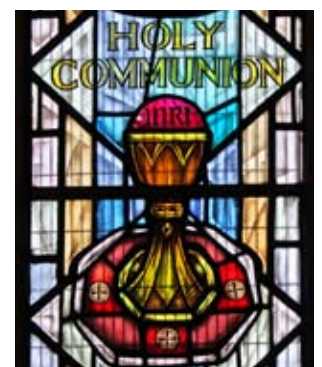


Introduction

- Begin with the children sitting around, or in front of, the altar. Ask children if they know the name of where they are sitting.
- Remind them that this is one of the most important parts of the building. Explain why.
- Ask if they know any of the special events that might happen here. Briefly tell them about marriage, a funeral when a coffin might be placed close by, Eucharist.
- Talk about the history of the altar cloths for this church – did someone make them? Were they a gift? Why are they special to this church?
- Show the chalice and paten from the church. Again talk about the history of these artefacts in this church. Is there any history associated with the altar rail? Are there any special carvings in this area? Are there any banners or stained glass that link to Eucharist?
- If there are special features of the altar in your church show them to the children and briefly talk about them. If you have altar cloths available show them and talk about how they are changed at different times in the year.

Activities

- Read from a Children’s Bible, or retell the story of the Last Supper bringing out the following points:
 - Jesus knew that he was soon going to die; he was very sad.
 - He wanted his friends to have a way in which they could remember him.
 - He helped them to prepare a meal and at that meal they had bread and wine.
 - Jesus took the bread and said that this bread was like his body and that when they ate it in this way they should remember him.





o Then he took a cup of wine and said the wine was like his blood and that when they drank the wine in this way they should remember him.

o He told them that he was going to die soon and that this would be their last meal all together.

When you come to Jesus' actions with bread and wine, re-enact those actions. Break open a loaf of bread. When Christians today have the Eucharist they remember the last meal Jesus had with his friends but it also

reminds them of something else. Point to the cross and ask children why that is there. Tell the children that the cross reminds Christians that Jesus died because he loved people so much and so, when Christians share the Eucharist they remember this as well. All Christians will drink the wine from the same chalice; this helps them to remember that they are united, joined together in God's love.

- Show a bottle of wine. Ask how wine is made. Show some grapes. Taste them. Children could use a rolling pin to crush some grapes to show the juice that could be used to make wine. You could use this later.
- Show a few different types of bread. Where does bread come from? Which would children like to eat? Taste the different breads. Show children the wafers that some churches use for Holy Communion. Explain what happens in this church.
- Make bread with the children. Naan bread doesn't require proving and is grilled, so can be made quite quickly. Or make ordinary bread, but let the children take it home for the second proving and to bake. Or you could have a bread maker already baking in church, so it is ready to share at the appropriate time.
- Show children the chalice and paten. Ask why the church might use these special things at this celebration. Talk about how sometimes at home their parents get out the best crockery for a special dinner, or if they have special guests for dinner. Remind children what the chalice and paten are used for.
- Make chalices and patens from clay.
- Before taking the bread and the wine, Christians say sorry for the bad things they have done and ask God and each other for forgiveness. Children could undertake an act of forgiveness – this could be writing the things they have done wrong with a washable pen on a sheet of acetate, and then watching as the sheet is dipped in water and the bad things are washed away, or looking at a dirty stone while thinking about the bad things, and then washing the stone clean. The clean stones could be collected together, or the children could take them home as a reminder that they can say sorry and be forgiven.
- Children could make banners showing the important symbols of Holy Communion. They could use paper, or fabric which could be glued onto a background. These could be hung in church for the next Eucharist service.
- Communion is an act of coming together and belonging. Discuss with the children what they belong to, and how they show that they belong (uniforms, attending, doing the right things, respect . . .).
- Holy Communion is also an act of remembering what Jesus did at the Last Supper and on the cross. Discuss with the children how they remember things, what is there around their house that helps them to remember people and events in their family life? What can they find in church that helps people remember (memorials, etc.)? To remember their visit to church the children could make a photo frame and take a photo to put inside it, or a bookmark with wheat and grapes or a chalice and paten on.
- Show the DVD *The history and life of churches* section on Holy Communion.



Drawing it together

Share some bread and grape juice together. Encourage the children to think about the story of the Last Supper as they eat and drink, and what this means for Christians. You may need to reassure the children that the bread and wine have not been blessed and so are ordinary bread and juice, so they are not taking communion, just remembering the story.



3. The Bible in Church Art (Stained glass/lectern/art work/ banners)

Information for leader

We are looking at the Bible and how it is seen in windows, lecterns, art work and banners.

The Bible is very important for Christians, being called the Word of God, because God speaks through it. It is also known as the Good News (gospel).

Many items in church show the importance of the Bible, some very old, showing it has been important for a long time. Your church Bible itself may have an interesting history. Christians often use creative ways to explain the 'good news' of the Bible. (You will have to adapt the ideas below to use items in your own church building.)

Introduction

Ask if they can see a big book (if you have a large Bible on the lectern). Otherwise hold up a normal Bible. Do they know what it is called? Why it is special?

Talk about the Bible being important to Christians. It is called the Word of God because it contains messages from God to people. Many things around the church remind people of the Bible and the stories in it. In the past not so many people could read, so pictures on windows, carvings and banners were important too.

- If you have an eagle lectern, talk about the Word of God being carried all round the world so that everyone knows about Jesus. Explain that the Bible is translated into many different languages, so everyone can understand. (You could visit www.biblegateway.com and print out a well-known passage in several languages.) Missionaries have gone to different countries to take the 'gospel' which means 'good news'. Christians believe that Jesus' love for us is so great that they want everyone to know that he loves them too.
- Ask if the children can see any pictures that might tell a Bible story. This could include stained glass windows, banners or other art work, including kneelers, wood carvings, etc. Acknowledge them all, then pick one which has a very clear picture story and take group to look at it. Discuss the picture; what it's made of, how old it is and briefly tell the story in it.



- If there are banners or art work of a more modern nature, discuss them and their artists. (If it is a local person, you could invite them in to tell the children why they made this).
- In most churches there will be old and new things. Explain that Christianity has existed for over 2000 years, and some of our churches are very old (how old is yours?). In each generation, Christians try to let the people around them know about the good news that Jesus loves them!



Activities – on the features

- Look at the lectern activity sheet – compare modern and ancient lecterns. Talk about which the children like and why.
- Explain the history of your church's lectern – even if it is modern, it will have a history. You could refer to photos of lecterns available on the Church History Project website (<http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk>). Let them answer the questions on the sheet, and sketch your lectern.
- If stained glass windows are a main feature of your church, you might like to get children to make a stained glass window. Have a choice of templates available, coloured tissue paper and glue or sticky tape and plenty of helpers.
- Use a Bible verse design (see examples on <http://www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk/education-ppresources.php>) or your own design to print out for children to colour.
- Find out more about stained glass windows by looking at a range of churches on the Church History website and discovering different Bible stories told in windows.
- Ask whether the church banner-makers may be willing to talk to a group of children about the banners they make, how they design them, and so on.
- Look at a range of Bibles of different translations, and allow the children to decide which ones they prefer and find most accessible.
- Children could make bookmarks with the books of the Bible listed on them to help find their way round the Bible.
- Collect different portrayals of the same Bible story. Look at them carefully and find the similarities and differences between them. Which are true to the Bible story?

Activities – on a Bible story

Read one of your favourite Bible stories from a Children's Bible and base activities on that story. Depending on the story and the age of the children, you could choose from the following:

- Design a banner or stained glass window. Offer a prize for the best ones, which could then be displayed in church.
- Act out the story – this could be done all together, or in small groups.
- Small groups create a human tableau of a scene from the story using clothes and props. Take photographs of each group. What is each character saying or thinking at this point?
- In groups, create a picture book of the story; each member of the group preparing one page.



- Create a TV news report of the 'incident'.
- Create text messages from one of the characters to their best friend at different points in the story.
- Make puppets and use them to act out the story.
- Create a 'This is your life' style drama for one of the characters in the story. Introduce the other characters and use them to tell the story. Parents could come early to pick up their children and watch the show and see if they can guess who the character is.
- Make a board game based on the story. Include the characters and main events in some way. What is the 'prize' at the end of the game?
- Make a banner of the story. What message do you want the banner to give to people who see it?

Drawing it together

Listen to the story again (maybe from a different Bible) and look at the work produced, or think about what they have been doing.

Recap on why the Bible is important to Christians, and how they want to both show its importance and explain its message (good news) to others.



Lecterns worksheet



A lectern may be the shape of an _____ made of wood or _____.

It stands on a _____ which represents the world.

The Bible is placed on the eagle's outstretched wings, showing that God's Word is going out over the whole world.



A lectern may also be a simple stand for the _____, at the front of the church.

It will usually have a Christian symbol, such as this _____.

Name of Church:

Do you like the simple or ornate lectern better?
Try to explain why.

Draw a sketch of the lectern in this Church

How might God's Word (in the Bible) fly out over the whole world?

What can you find out about this lectern?

How old is it?

Who made it?

When and why was it given to this church?

4. Clues to the Past in a Graveyard



heritage learning welcome

Information for leader

- Most churches will have a churchyard and/or a variety of memorial plaques. However, the focus of a particular visit will reflect the particular building and need local contextual information.
- Attention should be paid to risk assessments and safety briefing of helpers and children for any outdoor activity.
- Useful resource: www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk This is an organisation that encourages conservation projects in churchyards and graveyards. God's acre is a name sometimes given to churchyards.



Introduction

- Welcome the children, 'Lovely to see you.' Sit the children on the grass somewhere central in the churchyard and introduce your team (name badges for helpers is a good idea). Begin with some initial warm up questions, What's this place called? Has anyone been here before? How does it make you feel? etc.
- Do you know – you are in the 'dead centre of . . .' Scary! But not really – yes the church and churchyard have been at the centre of . . . for centuries, but you couldn't be safer sat here, because this is God's acre. Explain that churchyards are sometimes called God's Acre, meaning the field or land around the church, God's house.
- People chose to be buried close to the church because they believed it brought them closer to God. Look at all the graves from where you're sitting – notice anything in common? Talk round a few responses concluding with: They all point in the same direction. Lead into: The church faces the same way! Why? Explain that the Holy Land, where Jesus was born and lived is in the east. Jesus is central to the Christian faith. Christians believe that because Jesus died and rose again, there is hope for life continuing after death in heaven.
- Most people wanted to be buried on the east or south – only criminals and strangers were buried on the dark, shadowy north! In the middle ages people believed that evil lurked in shadowy places and so they didn't want to be buried there.
- Older churchyards may have mounds where poor people were buried on top of each other.
- Lots of older graves have ledgers – rectangular stones on top of them – to deter body snatchers.
- Many table/altar/chest tombs are in disrepair – but don't panic – they never contained bodies; the bodies were buried beneath. These tombs were a way of showing how wealthy you were, so wealthy you could afford more than just a headstone.
- If you were rich, what would you do so the world would remember you after you had died? Talk about big monuments, what would yours look like? What would it be made of? Would it be big or beautiful or unique in some way? Or is it the words that are important on tombs? Would yours say something about your family? How would you sum up something special about you in a few words?

Activities

Choose from the following activities as appropriate for the group:

- Conduct a survey – male/female Christian names or age at death or size of families, or style of gravestones or occupations. Split the graveyard into sections and work in groups. Older children could devise sub-sets 1700-1750-1800-1850 etc.
- Use paper and wax crayons (or special metallic crayons look really good) to make rubbings of gravestones or different decorative designs.
- Collect interesting epitaphs. What do they tell you about the person buried there, or their family?
- Look for popular surnames. What are the local names? Is there enough information to devise a family tree? Can the children find their family name? Do they know if they are related?
- Look for the wildlife in the churchyard. You could make this part of the RSPB Birdwatch event (www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch) Make bird feeders or bird boxes for the church yard or to take home. Take a book of birds to help identify what you see.
- Look at the flowers and trees growing in the churchyard. Sketch some and find out their names (take some books to help identification).
- Look at the lichen on the gravestones. How many different types can you find?
- If you have a sun dial or mass dial on the wall and the sun is shining, see how it works.
- Compare weathering on igneous slate and sedimentary limestone gravestones.
- Make up stories about some of the people buried here.



Drawing it together

- Collect the group together. What have you found out? What have you found interesting?
- *Before we go, let's remember that we are in God's acre, the land around God's house, the church. Let's be quiet and still to think for a minute of the thousands of people from our town/village who have come here over the years, for funerals and to remember those they have loved.
Then let's think of all the people who have made it a special place, a peaceful place to please God, today; the people who look after it and keep it tidy, making it a pleasant place to come to, to think, to remember or just to be with God and experience his love.*
- *It's been lovely to welcome you here today. We hope you've had a good time and we look forward to seeing you again soon.*



5. Worship Traditions (Church Music)



Information for leader

The best way to explore music in worship is to do it. To do this it might be helpful to involve someone from your church choir or music group. If no-one is available, and you do not feel capable yourself, you can use recorded music.

If the group is not a church-based group you will need to be careful not to ask children to worship God if they do not believe, but they can still take part in the activities.

Introduction

As the group comes in to church have some music playing and encourage them to come in quietly and to listen to the music as they sit down. Give them the opportunity to listen to the music and to look around them before turning the music down.

Ask what difference the music made to the building. What was the music adding to the stone building? How would it have been different if the music hadn't been playing?

Are there any signs of music and worship in your church? Some churches have carvings of instruments being played. Let the children look round church and see what clues they can find to how God is, and has been, worshipped here.

You could invite one or two people from the congregation to talk about what music in church means to them and how it enhances their worship.

The Organ

- Gather the children around the organ, ideally so that they can see the pipes, keys, stops and pedals. Give a demonstration of how sounds are made and blended, how volume is controlled, where the sound comes from, etc.
- Play a familiar tune such as 'Baa baa black sheep' using different sounds, or just the pedals. Allow one or two children to pull out a stop or play a tune (for those who have piano lessons).
- Get children to try singing along, to high and especially the low notes! Play loud and soft – have fun.
- Children should understand that people sing along with the organ during services on Sundays and at other times during the week. It is a traditional church instrument. (Talk about the history of your church organ if it is known.) This can be adapted for churches without organs by demonstrating the instruments that are used.

The Choir Stalls

If your choir wears robes during services, you may consider letting children dress in these. There may be a member of the choir who is willing to help with this section.



- With the children in the choir stalls, ask them what they think these seats are for. Explain briefly that the choir leads the congregation in singing. Explain that over the centuries, choirs have played a large part in church history and music in many churches is a very integral part of the worship that goes on there.
- If your choir pews have any interesting features (carvings etc.) show them to the children or allow them to explore and find them for themselves. They can try resting on the misericords if you have them.
- Practice processing into the choir stalls, standing and sitting together as you direct them.
- Take the children through a series of singing exercises, and use your hands to indicate volume, pitch, length, as a conductor would do – (use la, ah, oo, ee sounds).
- Ask the children to sing you a familiar song while you conduct – if you can arrange it, ask the organist or a musician to play along.
- Dress the children in choir robes and gather them together at the back of church, in pairs in a straight line. Choose children to carry the cross and the candles to go at the head of the procession.
- Either using your musician, or using a CD of organ music, the children can process to the choir stalls and stand in their places until you indicate that they are to sit down.



Respond to church music

This will ideally take place in an enclosed space, so that children can focus on the music. It might be appropriate to dim the lights to help the children concentrate on the music.

You will need to collect samples of different styles of church music beforehand. You don't need complete tracks as these may be too long to hold children's concentration. These can be from your CD collection, or ask others in church if they have something suitable to borrow, or samples are available on the internet you could use (search for Gregorian chant, Bach, John Rutter, Taizé, organ music, choral, Graham Kendrick, Matt Redman, Iona, etc. and you will find short samples available. Try to include something modern and lively!) Check that they are loud enough to be heard in the space you are using and the quality is good and clear. You could record some music from one of your services and use that as one of the samples.

Play one track. Then invite the children in pairs, or if you have a small group together, to say what they thought of the music.

- How did it make them feel?
- What were they thinking as they were listening?
- How might it influence someone in a church service?
- What is this music expressing? (praise, joy, stillness, community...)

Repeat this with a few very different tracks.

With some groups and some music it might be appropriate to allow the children to move to the music.

Discuss the tracks you have heard.

- Which of the tracks would you include in church, and why?
- Which wouldn't you include?
- Has anything surprised you? What and why?



Making music

You could ask the leaders of the group in advance if anyone in the group plays a musical instrument, and ask them to bring it and something they would like to play to the group. Listen to them play and then ask them how the sound and experience is different in church to at home.

Collect together musical instruments that are easy to make a sound with – these will be predominantly percussion, but try to include guitar, piano or keyboard, recorders . . .

- Give each small group a few verses from a psalm and ask them to produce some music to go with the words, it could be in the form of a song, or could just reflect the meaning of the words. Allow some time to practice, then listen to each other's work and let the performers describe what they were trying to convey. How successful have they been? You could use the following:
 - o Psalm 148 (each group could be given two verses)
 - o Psalm 29:3-4
 - o Psalm 31:1-2
 - o Psalm 61:1-3
 - o Psalm 66:1-4
 - o Psalm 104
- Choose a popular tune and work on new 'worship' words for the song that could be used in church worship.
- Play a worship song and invite the children to play percussion along to it.
- Children could re-write a psalm in their own words, write it out and decorate it.
- Teach them a children's worship song.
- If you have a hand bell group they could teach the children a tune.
- Arrange for the bell ringers to take small groups into the belfry.



Drawing it together

Bring the children together. If they have dressed in choir robes they could process together to the choir stalls.

If appropriate this could be for a short act of worship, incorporating some of the activities they have been doing.

If you are not holding an act of worship, you could listen to some of the music they have created.

You could show part of the DVD *The history and life of churches* section on Prayer and Worship.



Listen again to one of the pieces of music you have used, asking the children to think about what they have done in this session and what has surprised them. You could then ask each to say one sentence on what has stood out for them.

You could finish by singing a song or hymn they all know together.

6a. The Church in the Community (Easter)



Information for leader

The central aim of this activity is to link the secular aspects of festivals to their Christian origins and to see the church as a place to meet and celebrate festivals.

It is likely that this activity will take place in the spring term and during Lent so you will need to take into account your church traditions during this season (i.e., the crosses may be covered).

There may be events which are specific to your community that you wish to mention.

There are many suggestions for Easter activities on the internet and in books, use a selection of those, or the activities below with the children. Try to make sure you have covered different aspects of the Easter story in the activities and that those with cultural origins are explained (Easter eggs, bunnies, chicks . . .).

Introduction

- Welcome the children to the church and introduce yourself, telling them that you belong to this church. Ask who has been here before.
- The church is a place to remember the stories of God and to **celebrate as a community**. Sometimes the church will remember sad or difficult times as well as happy ones. There are different times in the church year and churches often use colours to help people think about the different times.
- You might like to start by telling or reading the Easter story, to set the context for the activities that follow, or show part of a video telling the story.

Activities

Lent

- What colour can you see on the altar table at the moment? (purple) (You might also like to have a selection of purple vestments with different images on to draw attention to the purple.) Think about purple for a moment. What sort of colour is it? What does it make you think of? Collect some ideas from the children then explain that it can be a sad colour but also a royal colour. In the church it represents a time of waiting and of getting ready. Use lots of questions and answers to look at and talk about some of the images on the vestments if appropriate, explaining that people have used their skills and talents to create these lovely fabrics and images and they need to be looked after carefully so they can be used over and over again.
- Make pancakes. Have a pancake race. Explain that Pancake Day was for using up all the 'rich' ingredients before fasting in Lent. Ask



the children if they have ever given anything up. You might like to share your experiences of giving things up, and why you did it.

Palm Sunday

- Make Palm Sunday crosses.
- Play Pin the tail on the donkey, after explaining the part the donkey played in the story
- Write 'A donkey's tale', telling the story from the donkey's point of view.

Maundy Thursday

- Have bread and grape juice (or grape smoothies) for a snack.
- Children could wash each other's feet. How does this feel – both the being washed and the washing?



Good Friday

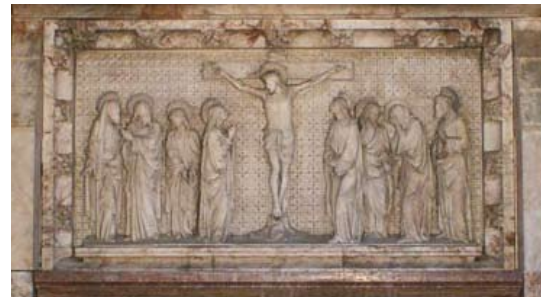
- The cross is the most powerful symbol of Christianity as it reminds Christians of how much God loves us. Talk about any special crosses you might have. Challenge the children to see how many crosses they can find in church. (Allow things in the shape of a cross as well as specific crosses.)
- Make lambs to show the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (search on the internet for ways of making lambs).
- Use tissue to make stained glass windows, and then put a black cross over the top as a silhouette. You could do this for Easter with the colours representing the joy of Easter.
- Make hot cross buns. Or buy them and eat them for a snack. Explain that the cross on the bun is a reminder of Jesus on the cross on Good Friday.
- Play a dice game to remember the soldiers casting lots for Jesus' clothes.

Easter

- Ask the children what season we are in now and what happens in spring time, collecting suggestions (flowers begin to grow, lambs are born, weather gets warmer, etc.). Do they know what festival the church celebrates in the spring time? Easter is a time when we think about new life, because Jesus came back to life after he was killed. You might like to look at the Easter vestments and altar cloth, if possible, explaining that white is a colour of celebration in the church.
- Make an Easter card using Christian images of new life: eggs, flowers, chicks and bunnies. The internet is a good source for Easter craft ideas, try: www.dltk-holidays.com/easter/crafts.
- Decorate a tree with cut out paper eggs that the children have decorated (search the internet for patterned templates to colour in).
- Make an Easter garden as a reminder of the garden in which Jesus was buried and then the empty tomb found. Include the crosses and a tomb with a stone to roll away.



- Create a Treasure Trail round church using different symbols associated with the Easter Story and their meanings. This can be done in several ways:



- o Give the children a meaning and they find the symbol, where there is the clue of another meaning, leading to the next symbol, etc.
 - o Give them a list of meanings and they find the symbols, either parts of the building, or pictures.
 - o Younger children might find it easier to be given a list of symbols to find, and have a discussion afterwards about what they might mean.
 - o You could produce a page of photographs of symbols for the children to find – include some hidden ones or take some photos from an unusual angle to make it harder.
- Taking a template of a Sunday to Sunday weekly diary, children could fill in what happened each day in Holy Week. With older children, they could start writing a diary of 'Holy Week' from the point of view of one of the disciples.



Drawing it together

- Have a range of Easter symbols and images you have talked about on a table. Use the vestments too.
- Through question and answers with the children recap the significance of the meanings of these symbols.
- Finish with the cross as our most powerful symbol – a sign of love and friendship with Jesus.
- Look at what some of the children have made. Why do they think you included those activities?

My Holy Week Diary

Palm Sunday	Maundy Thursday
Monday	Good Friday
Tuesday	Easter Saturday
Wednesday	Easter Sunday

6b. The Church in the Community (Harvest)



Information for leader

The central aim of this activity is to link the secular aspects of festivals to their Christian origins and to see the church as a place to meet and celebrate festivals.

There may be events which are specific to your community that you wish to mention, especially if you live in a rural community.

Introduction

- Welcome the children to the church and introduce yourself, telling them that you belong to this church. Ask who has been here before.
- Ask whether anyone has been to a baptism or wedding here. These are occasions to celebrate as a community. Ask 'Do you enjoy celebrations? I do and I have some things here to help us think about celebrating'. (Have a bag with some 'party' items in: balloons, streamers, cake box, candles, plastic wine glass, CDs, etc. Choose some children to pick an item out of the bag and say what they are.) What things do we celebrate? With the person next to you, see if you can think of three things you celebrate in your family or school. (Birthdays, weddings, Christmas, etc.)
- If your church is decorated for harvest at this time, point out the different types of decoration: flowers, fruit, corn, bread, etc. explaining that at this time of year we celebrate and thank God for the harvesting of crops. (Otherwise bring some fruit and vegetables in to church.) Tell the children where the food will go if it will be given away.
- Explain that in the past, children would have helped with the harvest in the summer so the summer holiday would have been a busy time for them. Why don't we use children now to help with the harvest? (It's dangerous and we are more careful about safety, and a lot of the harvest is done by machinery – combine harvesters etc.)
- Sing Thank you Lord for all our food... right where we are. (Children can suggest alternative words, e.g., Thank you Lord for bread and jam, Thank you Lord for beans on toast – you might have to juggle the words to make them fit!)



Activities

- Use bright collage pieces (paper, tissue, etc.) to create food, especially fruit pictures.
- For older/more able children ask them to draw a plate of their favourite meal and then to consider where each item of food comes from, e.g. meat, vegetables, pasta, eggs, rice, fish, etc. (Worksheet available on website www.nottsoopenchurches.org.uk/education-ppresources.php)
- Make Harvest Soup from vegetables – the children can help cut up the vegetables.
- Plant some cress seeds. Use plastic cups with wet cotton wool. Prepare stickers printed with Genesis 8:22, or the chorus of 'All good gifts around us', and space to write their name.
- Make potato faces with potatoes, vegetables, dried fruits, marshmallows, pipecleaners, toothpicks, etc.
- In the graveyard, collect leaves and seeds from plants and trees. Take a reference book so the children can look up what they have found. Make rubbings of the leaves. Warn the children not to eat anything and to wash their hands when they go back inside.
- Have some seeds and leaves. Can the children match the seeds to what they become?
- See which winged seeds (such as sycamore) will fly the furthest. Make paper helicopters and fly them.
- The children can cut up different fruit for a snack. Look at the seeds as they prepare the fruit.
- Make bread and mould it into different shapes – older children could try a harvest wheat sheaf or plait (or have some dough already made for the children to make into shapes).
- Prepare some salt dough for the children to use to make harvest shapes.
- Think of different ways of saying 'thank you' to God for the harvest.
- Find out the significance of Harvest in the nearest rural community. Ask a farmer to visit and talk about this.
- Design and make 'Harvest Cards' to give to friends at Harvest time.
- If appropriate, look around the church for how harvest is portrayed in carvings, windows, etc.
- If your church supports a charity for poor or homeless families abroad or here, you could ask children to reflect on being thankful that we have so much compared to others. Imagine not knowing if you would have any tea today, or tomorrow, or the next day. Christians pray for people who are hungry, as well as giving food and money to help them.



Drawing it together

- Make a collection of all the children have made and have a quiet moment to look at the display and think about all the food we have every day.
- Sing a harvest song.
- Say a harvest prayer.

6c. The Church in the Community (Christmas)



Information for leader

The central aim of these activities is to link the secular aspects of Christian festivals to their Christian origins and to see the church as a place to meet and celebrate festivals. There may be Christmas services or traditions which are specific to your community that you wish to mention.

Introduction

- Welcome the children to the church and introduce yourself, telling them that you belong to this church. Ask who has been here before.
- Ask the children how old they are. Work out how many Christmas mornings they have been alive for. Then wonder how many Christmas mornings have been celebrated in this church.
- Explain that very soon, most people will be celebrating the festival of Christmas and that this is a very special time for the church. What does the church celebrate at Christmas? (birth of Jesus) Sometimes we think of Christmas as Jesus' birthday.
- Ask the children to talk to a partner about what they do at Christmas in their family. Take some feedback from the group (presents, visiting family, special meals and parties, going to church, Christmas trees and lights, Christmas carols and cards). In the church we remember Jesus' birth by hearing the Christmas story, singing carols which tell the story and lighting the church with candles. (Add any specific events that your church has here, especially if they are child/family friendly, but avoid listing all your Christmas services!)
- Tell the Christmas story. You could use a children's version, simple props (cloaks, baby, sheep, crowns, etc.) and choose children to be the characters, creating a series of scenes with them or use figures from a nativity set, placing them on a table as they appear in the story to create the scene.
- Point out any specific Christmas artefacts in your church: windows, carvings or paintings with nativity scenes.
- Check with the leader in advance if there is a Christmas song the children know well. They could sing it here, or at the end of the session.



Activities

Choose from the following activities:

- Make a Christian themed Christmas card to give to a member of their family. Have an A4 or A5 card for each child. Use either old Christmas cards or Christmas wrapping paper and simple templates of stars, angels, gifts, etc. for the children to create a Christmas card. (Some are available on the Church History website www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk/education_files/resources/templates%20for%20Christmas%20cards.pdf)
- Design a stained glass window showing a scene from the nativity. Look at examples in your church or on the Church History website www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk You could begin by looking at:
 - o Bestwood Emmanuel <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/bestwood-emmanuel/hglass.php>
 - o Epperstone Holy Cross <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/epperstone/hglass.php>
 - o Halam St Michael <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/halam/hglass.php>
- Make decorations for the Christmas tree – this could be for the children to take home for their trees, or for the church tree. Stick to symbols related to the Christmas story – stars, angels, etc.
- Go outside and look at the stars, as the wise men would have looked at them. If you have someone in your congregation who has a telescope, invite them to come and show the children what they can see.
- Make angel and star paintings – draw pictures with a candle or white wax crayon on white paper, then paint over with a fairly watery black paint. Stick shepherds onto the background.
- Make sheets of wrapping paper by printing large sheets of paper with stars or angels.
- Hide old Christmas cards around church and invite groups to find three cards that say different things about Christmas. When the children are back together see what they have found and what they think is the meaning of Christmas.



Drawing it together

Have a table ready displaying, on a bright cloth, a present, a candle and a star.

Draw the children together again and sum up using the display.

- At Christmas Christians celebrate Jesus – God's gift to the world.
- Jesus brought light into Mary's life and brings light into the world (light the candle).
- The star reminds us to keep following Jesus just as the wise men did long ago.

Discuss how the activities the children have done fit in with these three themes.

You might like to send them home with a leaflet inviting them to your church Christmas events.



7a. Reading the Symbols in a Church



Information for leader

It might be useful to have available the separate sheet on history and meaning of symbols, Cross, Chi-Rho, fish, grapes and loaves, etc.

Choose activities that relate to the symbols seen around your church, so check on the symbols in the church first, and make sure that they are easily visible for children.

Introduction

- Introduce the idea of symbols, reminding children that they will have seen many symbols on road signs, etc. Talk a little about symbols that we see on roads and other symbols that children may recognize.
- Display pictures of symbols that are found in your church, such as crosses, fish, doves, grapes, lamb, etc. As well as being attractive shapes or patterns these all have meanings. Ask if anyone knows what each of them means. Discuss and explain the meaning of each one, allowing the children to guess and contribute ideas as you go along.
- Hide small cards with symbols on them around the church. Allow the children to walk round and look for them. Bring them back together and see what they have found. Explain the meanings of the symbols. They could then go and find the symbols on carvings etc. in church.

Activities

- Allow the children to explore the church in small groups, with adults keeping an eye on them. Their task is to find as many symbols in the church as possible. They should then draw the symbol on a sheet of paper (clipboards are useful if you have them), and if possible (for older children) write briefly about where the symbol is to be found, and what Christian belief it reminds us about.
- Invite the children to draw some of the symbols they have found onto bookmark blanks or create their own symbols to go on them. The finished bookmarks can be laminated if you have time and personnel available!
- Children could create a symbols guide for your church, explaining what symbols can be found, where, and what they mean.
- Give each pair of children a few definitions of the meanings of symbols (how many will depend on the age of the children) and send them to find see if they can find a symbol they think fits with the definition. Look at their ideas all together at the end.
- Give small groups a Christian truth and a range of creative materials to use to make a symbol to go with that truth. You could use God, Jesus, baptism, communion, the Good News, God is love . . .



- Create a banner with your favourite symbol. Explain what the symbol is, what it means and why you like it.
- Take a dictionary of names and ask the children to make a symbol for their name. Include in the symbol something about the meaning of the name.
- Children can make a monogram of their initials. They can try using different fonts and arrangements of the letters until they find something they like. These could be drawn onto badges or stickers.
- Explore gestures used in worship. What is the symbolic meaning of the gestures? Do they help worship?



- Have digital cameras available for the children to take photos of symbols they can find. Have some books for them to look up the meaning of what they find.
- Invent actions to go with the symbols that include something of the meaning of the symbol in them.
- Divide the children into teams. Have a list of symbols available ready. One child from each team comes up and is told the meaning of a symbol. They have to go and draw the symbol (no talking or actions) while the others guess what they are drawing. The first to guess correctly goes to be told the next symbol. The team that guesses them all first wins.
- Children could look for symbols suitable for rubbings with paper and wax crayons.
- Challenge children to see how many of one particular symbol they can find in church (choose symbols that are common in your church).
- Create a symbols trail. This can be done in a number of ways:
 - o Give the children a meaning and they find the symbol, where there is the clue of another meaning, leading to the next symbol, etc.
 - o Give them a list of meanings and they find the symbols, either in the building, or use pictures.
 - o Younger children might find it easier to be given a list of symbols to find, and have a discussion afterwards about what they might mean.
 - o You could produce a page of photographs of symbols for the children to find – include some hidden ones or take some photos from an unusual angle to make it harder.

Drawing it together



- Start by discussing where the children found the symbols, and remind them of the meanings as you go.
- Play Kim's Game with photos or copies of symbols in church. Put the symbols where all the children can see them. Let them look for 1 minute, then close their eyes. Then either take away one symbol and see who can work out which is missing, or see who can remember most.
- Look at some of the things the children have been doing and producing.
- Ask some of the children what their favourite symbol of all those they have seen is, and why.
- Have a quiz about some of the symbols you have been looking for.

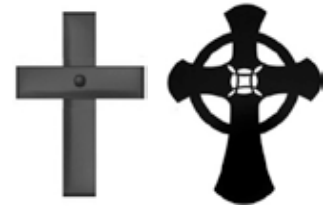
7a. Reading the Symbols in a Church (Background information)



Symbols are to be found in many places in Churches, both inside and outside the building, on carvings, stonework, statues, stained glass windows, banners, tombstones and in many other places. There are many other symbols to be found in and around Churches; this list highlights some of the most common ones.

The Cross

This is of course the best known of the Christian symbols and refers to Christs' sacrificial death. The Latin cross is the most common form. Another often seen is the Celtic cross.



The Chi Rho

This is formed from the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ.

$$\chi = CH \quad \rho = R$$

The Fish

$\text{ἰχθύς} = \text{Ichthus}$

This is an ancient Christian symbol from very early days. It was a secret sign of persecuted Christians and was used because in Greek, the initial letters of the phrase, 'Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour' spell out the word fish.



The Dove

The dove signifies the Holy Spirit, and is important in the story of Jesus being baptised by John the Baptist

The Olive Branch

Olive trees provide shelter and a place to rest, and olive oil is used in soothing ointment, so this is a symbol of peace. It is mentioned in the story of Noah and the flood, as a sign of dry land and rest.



The Lamb standing with the Banner

This stands for the success of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Jesus is often described in the Bible as a 'lamb', linking with the Jewish tradition of sacrifice.

Three intertwined circles or arcs

The Holy Trinity, father God, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



The Bunch of Grapes

This stands for the sacrament of Holy Communion, where people take wine as a reminder of Jesus' blood from his wounds while on the cross.

The Evangelists

Matthew is shown as a man (in the Bible, Revelation 4:7). This is said to be because his genealogy, at the beginning of his Gospel, emphasises Christ's humanity.

Mark is symbolised by a lion. This is because his Gospel begins with "The voice of one crying in the wilderness," and this suggests the roar of a lion.

Luke is symbolised by an ox, the animal of sacrifice, since his Gospel stresses Christ's sacrifice.

John is shown as an Eagle because of the soaring nature of his writing about the mind of Christ.

A Pot of Lilies

This often represents the Virgin Mary and stands for Virginité and purity.



The Saints

There are symbols for many Saints, e.g.

- St Catherine – a wheel, as she was martyred by being broken on a wheel, (thus the Catherine wheel)
- St Cecilia – a harp, she is the patron saint of music
- St Anne – a book, she is traditionally the mother of Mary, and a symbol of her careful instruction of the Blessed Virgin
- St George and St Andrew – crosses, both have specific designs
- All Saints – hand of God, which signifies God's divine care

7b. Vestments and Colours in Church

Information for leader

Information is given for the leaders on vestments and liturgical colours. It is helpful to the children to see the range of colours of vestments, robes, altar cloths, etc.

Introduction

- Ask children about people who wear special clothes: nurses, police, firemen, etc. Be open to suggestions. Remind them about school uniforms and uniformed organisations.
- If possible use costumes to help the children understand the theme. They could dress up, pretend to be the person they are dressed as, do some informal role play, etc.
- Remind children that clergy also wear special clothes. Some wear them for all services, and most wear their 'dog collar' much of the time to identify them and their role.

Activities

- Look at the vestments and robes available. Look at the colours of the robes. Often the colour of the robes and vestments will match the altar frontal. Have an altar frontal available if possible. Talk about the robes, describing what each item is called (you may refer to the information sheet) and how it is worn. You may allow a child (or adult!) to be dressed up in the robes. Laminated large print labels for the items would be helpful. Talk about the special seasons when different colours are used (from the sheet).
- After looking at the vestments and stoles the children could design their own for a season of their choice. Invite your priest in to look at them and make positive encouraging comments.
- Use a large prepared outline (or the worksheets included in the pack) to design a stole for a special service or season. Invite the children to be as creative as possible, and possibly use some of the symbols looked at previously (if the symbols activity has been done).
- Have a year planner and some stickers ready. Using appropriate coloured and shaped stickers, mark the children's birthdays and other happy occasions. Put on some sad occasions (you may need to supply these). Link the happy and sad occasions into



Jesus' life, and happy and sad occasions in the church seasons and put these on the planner.

- Give each group of children a liturgical season and ask them to prepare a poster for that season. They can use appropriate colours, pictures, quotes, symbols . . . You might need to provide information and Bible stories on each season.
- Choose favourite songs for each season and sing some of them. You could invite a musician from the congregation along to help.
- Make (paint, draw, collage, etc.) pictures in just one colour. You could use the colour of the present season and look at things in church which reflect this, or give each group or pair of children a different colour. Look at the pictures. What do they remind you of? How do they make you feel? What does it make you think of? How well does it reflect the season?

Drawing it together

- Look at some of the work the children have been doing. As you look, reinforce the use of colours and their meanings.
- Have a quiz on the different colours, their meanings and when they are used.

7b. Vestments

Background Information for Leaders



(This is background information, and does not need to be communicated in detail to children, but will help teachers and helpers to be able to answer questions more fully.)

ALB

The Alb is a long white garment. (Albus is Latin for white) It has its origins in long tunics worn by the Greeks and Romans and has been worn since early Christian times.

STOLE

This is a long strip of material like a scarf. It was possibly first used as a scarf or a handkerchief. It is first mentioned as being used in church in the 4th century AD (in the Eastern Church). It is often embroidered and decorated and can be in any of the liturgical colours. It is worn round the neck by the priest when taking services. A deacon wears it like a sash over the left shoulder, fastened together at the right side.

CHASUBLE

This is worn by a priest when celebrating the Eucharist (Holy Communion). It can be plain or decorated and is in the appropriate liturgical colours. In its shape it is rather like a large tabard. It is worn over an Alb, with a stole, and has its origins in the 'paenula' or 'planeta', which was an outdoor cloak worn by both men and women in the later Graeco-Roman world.

COPE

This is shaped like a semi-circular cloak. It is often very decorative. Its origins are similar to the chasuble, but it is open at the front. It is often worn on special festivals and on occasions such as weddings. Copes made for the coronation and funeral of Charles II are still in use at Westminster Abbey. The Ridding Cope, still in use at Southwell Minster was first used by the first Bishop of Southwell in the early 20th century, at the Coronation of Edward VII.

MITRE

This is a special hat worn by a bishop. It is shield shaped and has two heavy ribbons at the back. The shape of it is thought to represent a flame, reminding people of the flames of fire that settled on people's heads when the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost. Its use dates from the 11th century.

CASSOCK

Not a vestment, but a long black coat-like garment worn by the clergy. The 'vestis talaris' was a long garment worn by clergy and laity alike until the 6th century, when shorter garments (tunics) became more usual among the laity.

SURPLICE

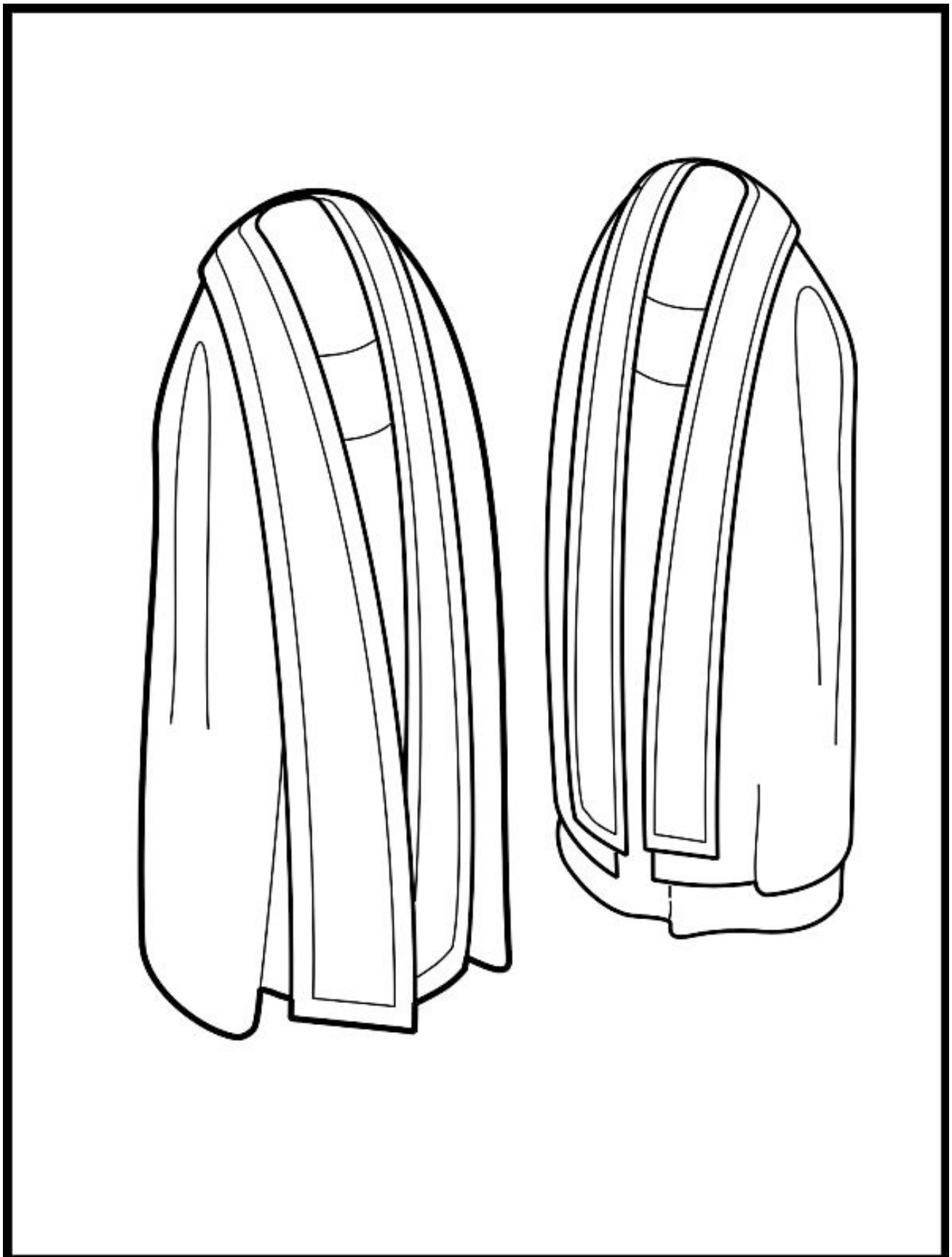
A white, wide sleeved garment, usually worn over a cassock by clergy, altar servers, choir members, etc. Its name comes from the Latin 'superpelliceum' which means 'over a fur garment' It originally came into use in churches in northern countries (where fur robes were often worn), because its wide sleeves (as opposed to the narrow sleeves of an alb) fitted more easily over the bulky robes. Used since at least 12th century.

'DOG COLLAR'

The white collar worn by clergy with their clerical shirt was made popular among Anglicans in 19th century by the Oxford movement. It easily identifies clergy, and may also remind them that as a collar controls a dog, they should be controlled by God!

7b. Vestments worksheet

For children to label or colour, or design their own stole.



7b. Liturgical Colours (Background information)



The cloth hanging at the front of the altar, and other cloths such as on the lectern, are of a certain colour. Priestly vestments may be made to match all of these.

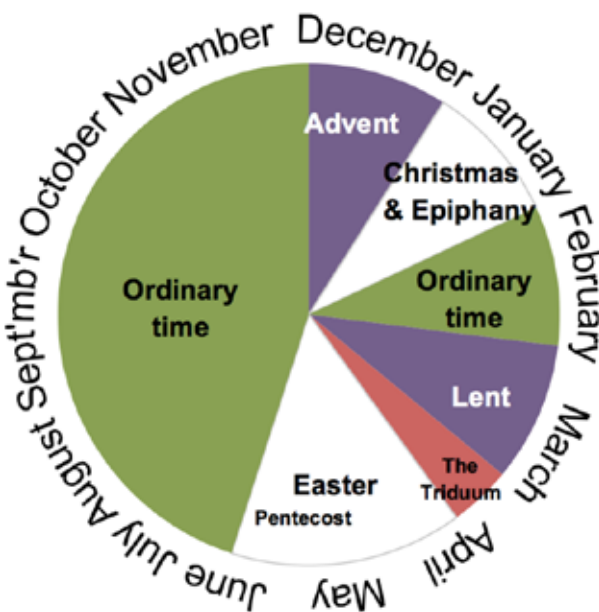
In the days before congregations could read or even understand the words of the service (they may have been in Latin), the changing colours were a means of reminding them what was taking place. Just as the pictures in the stained glass windows, wooden carvings, etc. reminded them of Bible stories.

They remain as a focus of brightness, variety, and, it is hoped, beauty in the church.

Liturgical colours have been used since the beginning of the 12th century. Practice has varied over the years, and still does in different churches.

In large churches and Cathedrals, e.g. Southwell Minster there are often several changes a week. Church lectionaries and diaries give the colours on a daily basis.

The liturgical seasons, and their colours, are:



Advent (Advent is the beginning of the Church year, getting ready for Christ's coming – as a baby, and a second time in glory.)

Purple is used in Advent, meaning 'royal'

Christmas and Epiphany (Christmas Eve until the Presentation of Christ in the temple – Candlemas, Feb 2nd)
White or Gold

Lent (Forty days from Ash Wednesday until the eve of Palm Sunday) **Purple**

Holy week – **Red**, Maundy Thursday – **White**. Good Friday and Holy Saturday – **no colours**

Easter (50 days until Pentecost) **White or Gold**

Pentecost Red

Trinity Sunday White or Gold

Ordinary Time (also known as Feria which used to mean a feast day, but now means the opposite!). This is the Sundays before Lent and Sundays after Trinity. (There may be about two weeks between Christmas and Lent, and about six months after Easter and before Advent) **Green**

They may also be changed for **Saints' days:**

Saints who are not martyrs - **White**

Saints who are martyrs (meaning killed for their faith) - **Red**

The Symbolism of the Colours

- Purple signifies the solemn seasons of Advent and Lent and is also a royal or kingly colour.
- Gold is the colour of majesty, glory and festivity.
- Red stands for blood (Christ's blood shed for us, martyrs, or remembrance) and for fire (Pentecost).
- Green is the colour of 'Ordinary Time', when there is no special commemoration in the church year, but the world God made is represented by green.

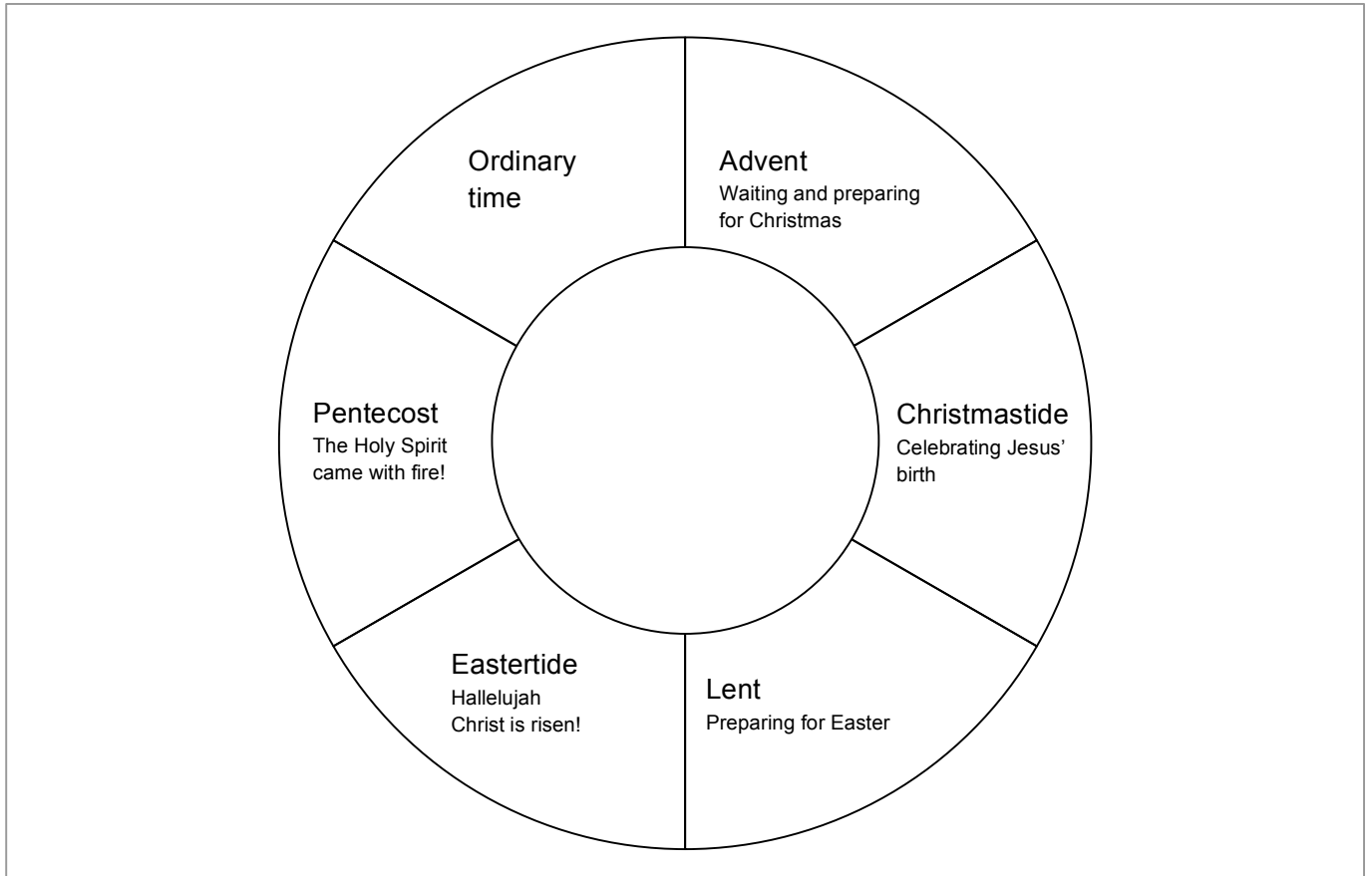
For more information see 'Common Worship' pp532 – 533

Church House publishing (2000)

7b. The Christian Year worksheet



heritage learning welcome



- Colour each segment the right colour.
- Try to find out the dates for this year and put them in.
- Can you draw a picture of this church (or take a photograph) to put in the middle?
- Which time of the year do you like best?

- Which time of the year do you think is most important for Christians remembering about Jesus?

Maybe you could add a symbol for each season.

8. Church Architecture

(A look at a church's distinctive features)



Information for leader

- Most of the key features mentioned will be evident in most churches. The focus of a particular visit will reflect the particular building.
- Most churches have some stained glass windows. Modelling and sketching are offered as an alternative if this is not the case.

Introduction

- Ask a series of questions to encourage the children to look at the church building and begin to look for clues about its age. You could include:
 - o How old do you think this church is?
 - o What did you notice as you arrived?
 - o How old do you think I am by looking at the clues? Point out the sort of clues (style of clothes, wrinkly skin, white hair . . . Accept a few guesses in good humour!).
 - o Suggest they look around again and look for clues! Accept a few 'guesstimates' for the age of the building and explanations.
 - o If I asked how old your house was, how might you be able find out?
 - o Who has had a conservatory or extension built onto their house? or a patio area or pond? (take a few responses) It has changed over the years.
 - o How might this church have changed over the years? Explain that Christians sometimes call their church the house of God. For hundreds of years Christians in this area have been worshipping God here; just like lots of your houses, over the years it has been modernised, extended and made more beautiful.



- If friendly aliens from the planet Og landed here tomorrow and visited your school, they'd see whiteboards, books, teachers and say, 'Ah, I know what happens here!' If they popped into a hospital and saw medicine, bandages and doctors, they'd soon guess what happens there. But what if they walked in here? How would they know what happens here? What would catch their eye? What seems important? It may be appropriate to walk around the building to look more closely at some of the main features. The extent to which the discussion develops will depend on the age of the children. The key points to try and establish are: The cross as the Christian badge; Christians follow Jesus by teaching, hence the pulpit, reading the Bible, the lectern; the house of God is very special so Christians want it to be beautiful (carvings, banners, stonework and windows).

Activities

- Each group could look at a different window then create their own individual, pair or group window with black paper frames and tissue paper or felt pen and oiled greaseproof paper.
- If banners are more a feature of your church, they could design (and possibly make) a new banner.
- Look at a particular 'beautiful feature' in detail and sketch or model it.
- See www.nottsoopenchurches.org.uk/education-resources-architecture_activity.php for activities focused on the shape of the building and the doors, windows, etc.
- Design and build a model of 'the perfect church' from a child's perspective. What things would be important to have in a church? What would it look like? What could make it comfortable?
- Make box models of churches.
- Choose five features that make this a church. How would you change this building?
- Design a stained glass window for this church. What would you put on it?
- Design your own church. You might need to think about:
 - o The purpose of the building
 - o What the building is saying about God
 - o What the central features of the building need to be
 - o What materials would be used
 - o What symbols might be incorporated into the design of the building
- With younger children you could help them to build a church inside your church. In a large space provide large boxes, a clothes horse, sheets, candles, cross, cushions, bowls, card, scissors, coloured paper . . . You could end the session by holding a simple 'service' in their church (a prayer, a song, a Bible story).
- Encourage the children to use different parts of the building appropriately (kneel at the altar, read from the lectern . . .).
- The children could make a brochure advertising the church building along the lines of an estate agent's brochure.
- Invite someone who knows the history of the church to give a three minute version of the story of the church.
- Groups can look at the stained glass windows and create a short drama based on the story shown in one of the windows. These could then be shown to the other groups at the end for them to guess which window they had chosen.
- Using a digital camera, groups of children could take photos of unusual views of parts of the church and then swap with another group to see if they can find where the photos were taken. Or you could take some beforehand and print them out on a sheet for the children to find.



Drawing it together

- Bring the group together and share some of the things they have been doing.
- If time allows you might elaborate on the original purpose of stained glass windows, but emphasise that this ancient tradition still continues and new windows are still being created, similar points can be made about other church features.
- It would be good to point out an example of something new in your church: a new banner, the data projector for more effective communication, or the coffee bar for encouraging friendship.
- Pause to think about the thousands of people from the local area who have come to the church over the years for Christenings, weddings, funerals and to worship God. Think of all the people who have made it a special place, a beautiful place, a place to please God – today.



“How old do you think I am?”



9. The Name of the Church



Information for leader

Most churches are named after saints, and many celebrate their patronal festival when their saint's day occurs each year.

Some common names may apply to different people. For instance a 'St John's' may be St John the Evangelist or St John the Apostle. Many of the activities are based on the life of your patron saint. It would therefore be useful to begin the session with a telling of the story of your saint. Story books are available giving the lives of some of the more common saints. Activities will depend on who your saint is, and the significant events in their lives, so only general ideas are given here.

The website www.catholic-saints.info may be useful for finding out more about the lives of saints.

Introduction

- Welcome the group and introduce yourself. Tell them your name, and a little about what it means. Explain that parents often choose the names of their children really carefully, and some will know what their names mean and stand for.
- Using some baby names books find out the meanings of some of the children's names, and the background of people (often Biblical saints) who had that name.
- Read or tell the story of the saint your church is named after. Explain what a patronal festival is, and how the church celebrates it.

Activities

- Before the session write the story in six short sentences on six pieces of paper. Hide these around the church. The children can search for these and then put them together to make the story. With a larger group you could do this with several smaller groups by using different coloured paper for each group.
- Children can split their name into syllables and make jigsaws of their names (one syllable on each piece) and decorate them appropriately to their name. Take a baby name book so they can look up the meaning of their name.
- Small groups can devise a board game based on the life of the saint your church is named after. Good events in their life could be rewarded with advancement (St Paul sets out on his first missionary journey – go forward 2) and not so good events with going backwards (St Paul is put in prison – go back 3 spaces). Groups can swap and play each others' games.



- Make puppets and use them to tell the story.
- Create a commentary (like a sports commentary) on the life of the saint.
- Create a picture or piece of drama of a moment from their life, finding out more through photocopied information or books.
- Design a shield or logo that illustrates something about the life of the saint.
- Make cards to give out on the patronal festival. Include a quote or an event in their life that might be an inspiration to others. Add symbols of their attributes and good deeds.
- Make up a song based on the life of the saint, or an inspirational event in their life.
- Give groups a moment from the life of the saint and ask them to make a tableau of that scene. These could be shared together in order at the end, giving the others time to reflect on the life of the saint.
- Children could be invited to attend the church for a special (child appropriate) patronal festival service to share what they have learned.

Drawing it together

- Look at the work done by the children in the session.
- If any prayers are known that were used by the saint, and if appropriate for the group, you could use these together.



10. The Church and its People

Information for leader

This will require some work and research into the local church as it is impossible to produce a specific outline for every church. The suggestions here are generic.

Activities

Missionaries

Explain what a missionary is – somebody sent out by a church to another country to share the Christian faith, often working for the people of the country as well in schools, hospitals, agriculture, development, etc.

- Find out if the church has any members who have been sent out as missionaries.
- Where have they gone to?
- Are their pictures in the church?
- What work are they doing as missionaries?
- Does the church or diocese have a link with that place? What is it?
- How does the church continue to support the missionaries?
- Show a map of the country where the missionaries are working.
- What do children know about that country?
- Talk about how the church sent the people out. How do they keep in touch with them?
- As far as possible have lots of visuals for children to look at – maps, photographs, video clips, etc.

The group might want to raise money for the missionary. Discuss with them how they might do this, and what the money would be used for. They could discuss what they might like to send the missionary – letters, photos, etc, or gifts to help with their work. It would be helpful to find out in advance how the group would be able to help.

They could make a display to stay in church from what they have heard.



Famous people

The link with a famous person will need to be researched. It may be that a famous person came from the community where the church is and therefore lots might be known about them. Look around the church for memorials, records, etc. linked to the person.





- What are they famous for?
- What link did they have with the church?
- How are they remembered now? Maybe memorial stones or they may have given something to the church.
- Children could reflect on how they would like to be remembered in a few hundred years time. What would they want to leave so that people would remember them?

Ordinary people

If possible have available the records from your church for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. Show them to the children and explain the legal and historical importance of them. Ask the children if they know anyone (perhaps a family member, or someone well known in the local community) who has been married or baptized in this church, or maybe

some of the children have been baptised in the church – find their records. (Be sensitive to pastoral issues such as bereavement and remarriage.) See if you can find some of the records for people the children know. It would be useful to maybe ask the leader about this in advance.

The church is not just about famous or especially religious people, but about ordinary people who come here every week, or at least to mark special times in their lives. Stress that the church is here for its community. 'It is YOUR Parish church' – you are welcome here.

- Concertina a piece of paper and cut out shapes of people so they are linked together.
- Draw and cut out different people in the local community known to the children. Stick them together to make a community.
- Find out what jobs in church different people do. Draw the activity and stick them onto a church shape. The church is the community of people.
- Make a time capsule to show who is part of the local community and the church community now. Challenge the children to find things to represent those people and their contribution.
- Design a badge that members of the church could wear that would show that they belonged to the church. Discuss who should wear the badges.
- Make gingerbread people, or decorate bought ones with icing, sweets, etc.
- Devise a board game based on the life of a famous person from the church, or on the life of the missionary and the situation they are living in.
- Create a 'This is your life' style show based on the life of someone connected with the church (famous, ordinary, missionary).

Drawing it together

Sit in a circle. Take a ball of wool, hold onto the end and throw the ball to a child, saying your name as you do so. They hold the wool, throw the ball and say their name, keeping hold of the wool.

When everyone has hold of the wool and has said their name discuss how you are all part of the same community, linked by the wool. Repeat saying the names of other people in the local community. Pause and remember each one.

