

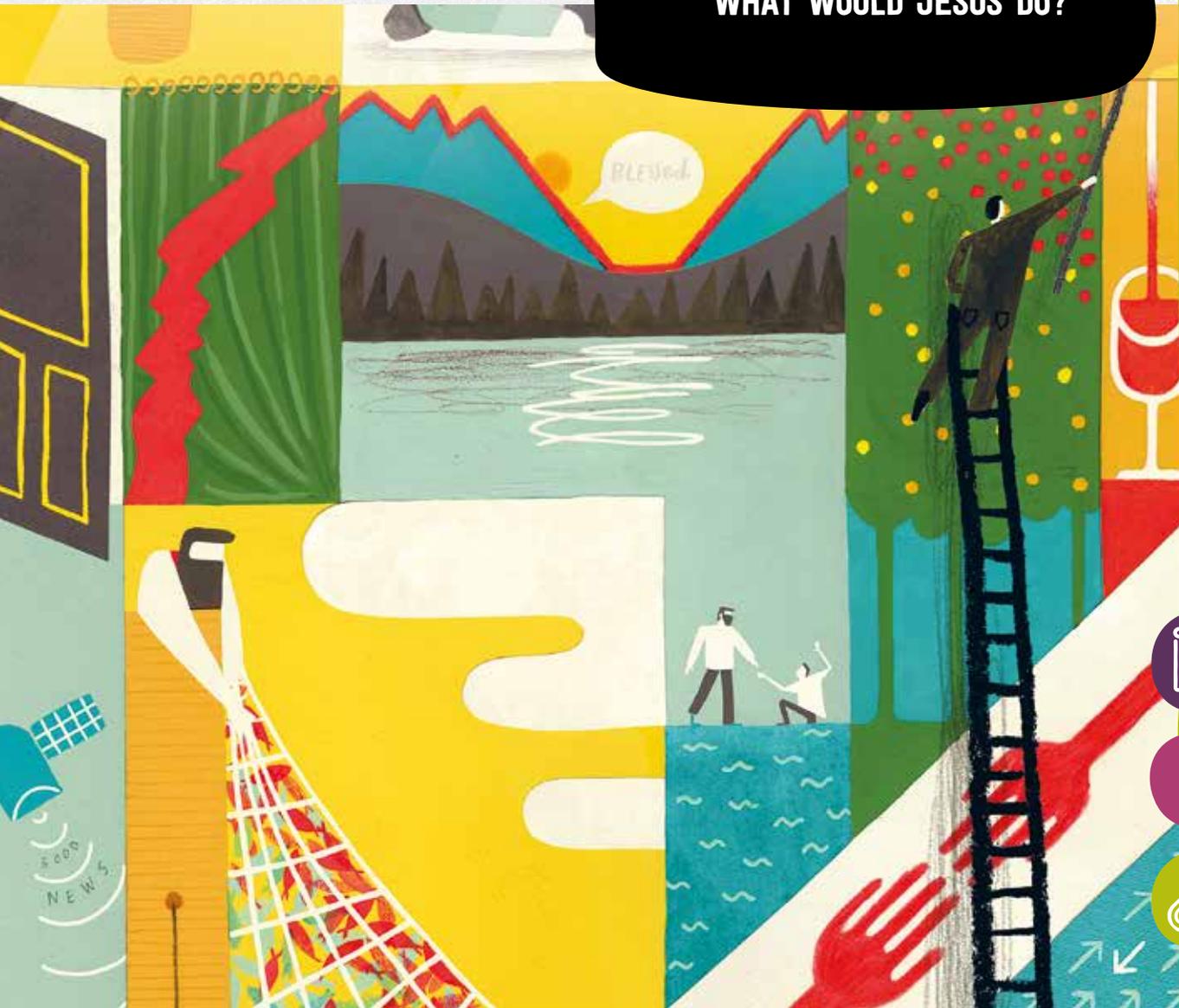
UPPER KEY STAGE 2/UNIT 2B.5

# GOSPEL

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WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

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### ★ OUTCOMES

BY THE END OF THIS UNIT, PUPILS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO:

-  Identify features of Gospel texts (for example, teachings, parable, narrative).
-  Taking account of the context, suggest meanings of Gospel texts studied, and compare their ideas with ways in which Christians interpret biblical texts, showing awareness of different interpretations.
-  Make clear connections between Gospel texts, Jesus' 'good news', and how Christians live in the Christian community and in their individual lives.
-  Relate biblical ideas, teachings or beliefs (for example, about peace, forgiveness, healing) to the issues, problems and opportunities of their own lives and the life of their own community in the world today, offering insights of their own.

### KNOWLEDGE BUILDING BLOCKS

PUPILS WILL KNOW THAT:

- The good news is not just about setting an example for good behaviour and challenging bad behaviour: it is that Jesus offers a way to heal the damage done by human sin.
- Christians see that Jesus' teachings and example cut across expectations – the Sermon on the Mount is an example of this, where Jesus' values favour serving the weak and vulnerable, not making people comfortable.
- Christians believe that they should bring this good news to life in the world in different ways, within their church family, in their personal lives, with family, with their neighbours, in the local, national and global community.

**NOTE:** Teachers should read the Essential Information pages before teaching this unit.

### YOU MIGHT LIKE TO START WITH...

Give pupils some scenarios where a choice must be made: truth or lies, kindness or mocking, generosity or greed. Ask: What would Bart Simpson do in each case? Taylor Swift? Show the class some artefacts from the 'What would Jesus do?' gift shop: online searches will give you plenty of options including wristbands, bumper stickers, mugs, badges and shirts, asking this question. Show these to pupils, and consider why they have become popular. Christians want to follow Jesus and apply his teachings to all of their lives. The pupils are going to try to work out what Jesus would do in lots of different tricky situations. It's not guesswork: it will all be based on what he actually said and did.

### MAKING SENSE OF THE TEXT

#### WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

Remind pupils that Jesus said the two greatest Commandments are to love God and to love your neighbour (Matthew 22:36–40), so explore the following in that context. You might choose two out of these three sections, noting the features of Gospel texts as you go:

#### **Foundations for Living: The Wise and Foolish Builders, Matthew 7:24–27.**

- Start with a fun design challenge: can the pupils in groups of three use 12 kebab sticks and some masking tape to create the tallest possible Bible stand? Give half the class sand trays from Reception, the other half modelling clay for the base. Which is easier? Read the parable: imagine the scene from inside the story. Ask pupils what they think the story is about and why. What did the wise and foolish builders learn? If it is not a manual for builders, why did Jesus tell this story? Jesus is clear that his words give foundations for living – and without them, people will get swept away. This unit explores the kinds of things that form these foundations for living.

#### **The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5–7.**

- Resource Sheet 1 gives 15 quotations from Jesus' teaching, to be referred to every time pupils consider 'What would Jesus do?' Get the class used to thinking about how to apply these quotes.
- You could use a guided story narrative or stilling and experiential reflection techniques to open up pupils' thinking about the meaning of these texts and to get inside the Sermon and its meaning.
- **15 sentences that changed the world:** point out that Christians and some non-Christians try to live by Jesus' teachings: over 2 billion global Christians include 59% of the UK's population too. For each of the 15 sayings from the Sermon on the Mount, ask pairs of pupils to suggest what they think it means, then summarise each saying with one topic word and a phrase of seven words or fewer. See if they can match another pair's summaries with the texts. What does Jesus think people are like if he needs to give this sermon? Is he right?!
- Collect the vivid metaphors/similes Jesus uses: how do these communicate his message? Ask pupils which three of the sentences they think are hardest to follow? Which would make most difference in the world today? Why?

#### **A healing miracle: The Centurion's Servant, Luke 7:1–10.**

- Ask groups of pupils to dramatise this story. Note that Jesus brings 'good news' – for whom, in this story? (Recall the 'big story' of the Bible – this account illustrates how the good news extends beyond the 'People of God' even to the Roman occupiers.) Talk about how Christians respond to the stories of Jesus' healing miracles (see Resource Sheet 2, for example), by imagining a conversation between two Christians about how to interpret and apply what they learn from the story. Sensitivity and care are needed, of course (see Essential Information).



## UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

### WWJD ('What Would Jesus Do?') Foundations for living

- Get pupils to reflect on the Parable of the Two House Builders and consider what makes for strong foundations in life. Use Resource Sheet 3 to consider what Christians do to build good foundations for living. What activities of the local Christian community help people to secure the foundations of their lives? Where else do people get foundations for life (for example, in Islam, from the Five Pillars)? How do these compare with Christian foundations?

### WWJD about prayer today?

- Read some prayers used by Christians (for example, [www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/topical-prayers.aspx](http://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/topical-prayers.aspx)). Remind them of the four common components of prayer (praise, confession, asking, thanksgiving – see Units 1.1 and 1.4). Can they find them in the prayers? Why do Christians think prayer is a good thing to do?

Give pupils option groups to join:

- a. Writing prayers that Christians might use for school, town, Britain or the world about topics of justice, health, kindness or peace, linking to the Sermon on the Mount.
- b. Look at examples of the work of Prayer Spaces in Schools (PSIS, see Resources). How might this help someone to understand prayer?
- c. Consider three ways in which prayer might help someone who is sad, worried, lonely, or wants to follow Jesus.

### WWJD about ill health?

- Pupils think about how Christians follow Jesus' ministry as a healer. Study one example of a Christian mission for healing, for example The Leprosy Mission: [www.leprosymission.org.uk](http://www.leprosymission.org.uk). Pupils can use the website to find out five things this mission does which connect up to Jesus' teaching and examples. See how this mixes prayer for healing with practical treatment. How does this show the 'Gospel'? For whom is the Leprosy Mission 'good news'? Get pupils to do some persuasive writing: 'Christians should support The Leprosy Mission because...'
- Has 'Jesus the Healer' had an impact on Christians today? These statistics can be used to show how significant the role of the Catholic Church is as a health provider. 'Globally, it runs 5,246 hospitals, 17,530 dispensaries, 577 leprosy clinics, 15,208 houses for the elderly and chronically ill and people with physical and learning difficulties worldwide.' (Catholic Herald, <http://bit.ly/1UgFgl1>) Pupils can write a postcard as if to a local Christian hospice or clinic, linking their work to the teaching of Jesus, and saying what inspires them about the work.

### WWJD to make a better world?

- The Christian story says humanity is a good thing (created by God), spoiled (fallen into sin), and that Jesus was God the Son, who came to Earth to turn things round. So Christians who follow Jesus always want to make the world a better place. Can pupils make lists of 'What's wrong with the world?' from this unit of study, and match each 'wrong' with something Christians can do to follow Jesus?



## MAKING CONNECTIONS

### Can enemies become friends? WWJD?

- Ask pupils to consider how to make an enemy into a friend. Tell and compare two stories of reconciliation – for example, from Archbishop Desmond Tutu's South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or of Corrie Ten Boom's post-war meeting with a concentration-camp guard, or stories from Taizé, or from the Forgiveness Project, or of friendship between Christians and Muslims. Ask pupils to identify similarities between the stories: is it possible to write a formula for forgiveness, or is each case different? What should a local church do when there is racism or conflict between groups in the local area? Set a dilemma for pupils to think through.

### Why be generous? WWJD?

- Invite pupils to consider the value and importance of being generous with time and money and giving to/working for a charity: they could learn from two examples of Christian practice; for example, projects to help homeless people, to help families with young children, to help older people or to help poor people through a food bank. How does reflecting on 'What would Jesus do?' guide Christian people and communities today? What value is there in thinking about Jesus' example? Note

that other religions and non-religious people might be generous too, for example, by running food banks. What are the similarities and differences between different groups' reasons for generosity?

- Write the unit's key topics onto six wall-chart pages: foundations, peace, forgiveness, health and healing, prayer and generosity. All pupils have sticky notes to record their ideas: 'Jesus' teaching and example is...' 'What I learned about Christians was...' 'A good follower of Jesus would...' 'My way of making a better world would be...' Ask the class to write onto sticky notes things they learned: 'What would Jesus do about...?' Give small groups one of the sheets to report back to the class. As you study each of these examples, keep asking pupils: What would Jesus do? What's your reason for saying that? Keep referring to the Bible teachings they are learning. Keep encouraging them to evaluate the Church's work from their own point of view. Ask pupils to sum up their learning by writing a short report about how Jesus' teaching and example inspire Christians, and any lessons pupils have learned about the value of the key topics explored.

### ★ OUTCOMES

BY THE END OF THIS UNIT, PUPILS ARE EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO:

- Identify features of Gospel texts (for example, teachings, parable, narrative).
- Taking account of the context, suggest meanings of Gospel texts studied, and compare their ideas with ways in which Christians interpret biblical texts, showing awareness of different interpretations.
- Make clear connections between Gospel texts, Jesus' 'good news' and how Christians live in the Christian community and in their individual lives.
- Relate Gospel ideas, teachings or beliefs (for example, about trust, forgiveness or justice) to the issues, problems and opportunities of their own lives and the life of their own community in the world today, offering insights of their own.

### 🧱 KNOWLEDGE BUILDING BLOCKS

PUPILS WILL KNOW THAT:

- Christians see that Jesus' teachings and example cut across expectations – the Sermon on the Mount is an example of this, where Jesus' values favour serving the weak and vulnerable, not making people comfortable.
- Jesus' good news transforms lives now, but also points towards a restored, transformed life in the future (See Salvation and Kingdom of God).
- Christians believe that they should bring this good news to life in the world in different ways, within their church family, in their personal lives, with family, with their neighbours, in the local, national and global community.

**NOTE:** Teachers should read the Essential Information pages before teaching this unit.

### ▶ YOU MIGHT LIKE TO START WITH...

Introduce the story of Peter's denial of Jesus and his restoration by looking at some artwork for these two parts of the Gospel (see Resources for suggestions; some pupils may have encountered this in the Digging Deeper section of Unit 2a.5), and asking pupils if they can work out what is going on in the pictures. For example, sit pairs of pupils on back-to-back seating, and have one describe a picture the other cannot see in ways that enable the second pupil to draw it. This focuses speaking and listening skills onto a narrative artwork in a memorable way.

### 🔍 MAKING SENSE OF THE TEXT

Jesus responds to people in unexpected ways. In each event in the following texts, what do pupils think Jesus would do? And compare what he actually does.

#### Betrayal and Forgiveness

- Peter denies Jesus – and is restored. Talk about the artwork from the starter activity. What do pupils think is happening and why? Give half of the class the betrayal texts in which Peter three times denied that he knew Jesus (John 13:34–38, 18:15–18, 25–27), and to the other half the restoration text in which, after the Resurrection, Jesus brought him back to lead the first Christian community (John 21:1–19). From the artworks, draw out the meanings of the two stories. How well do artists convey these meanings? How would pupils express them?
- Use Resource Sheet 4 to explore pupils' interpretations and understanding. Note the parallels between the two stories – the fire/brazier; three denials, three restorations, and so on.

#### Jesus gets Angry: The Moneylenders in the Temple, Mark 11:15–19.

- Consider with pupils what might make God angry. Explain some background, then show a clip (for example, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUJVTdNSCTA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUJVTdNSCTA)). Use Resource Sheet 5 to support discussion about the meaning of this passage. For example: Would it make God angry if people cared about money but not about prayer? If people excluded other races from worship? If the market mattered more than worship? Is this story of Jesus getting angry about the importance of prayer, or the value of holy buildings? Does it teach that Gentiles have the right to pray as well as Jewish people, or that market traders had better watch out? Make links to the 'big story' of the Bible. The people of God were always supposed to attract other nations (i.e. Gentiles, non-Jewish people) to God. Here they appear to be making it difficult. Jesus emphasises that the 'good news' is for all. He also points to the idea that he is somehow taking the place of the Temple – his sacrifice will replace the sacrifice of goats and lambs; he will be the way to God from now on.

#### A Woman in Trouble: John 8:1–11.

- Look at Essential Information as you decide whether or not to use this story. Read the story, but perhaps make the woman's sin non-specific, in order to avoid the focus on adultery. Stop at the point where Jesus writes on the ground. What do pupils think he did next? What could he say? Various artists have portrayed this event. Dinah Roe Kendall's image of 'The Woman Taken in Adultery' is excellent. Get pupils to trade places with the characters in the image. Ask them to explain what is going on, how they feel and so on. Fast-forward five minutes – what is the scene then? Ask pupils playing the woman and Jesus to explain what has happened and what it means. Jesus' refusal to condemn frees the woman for a second 'go at life'. How do pupils respond to Jesus' answer? Consider some alternative interpretations: When Jesus rescues the woman caught in the act, is the main point about being judgemental, or about forgiveness? Does Jesus uphold the law, or undermine it? Ask pupils to write a brief report of the event. They could imagine that this passage has been printed in a newspaper and the next day, letters come in from the characters (including the writer, John) to explain their perspectives. Ask pupils to write the letters.



## UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

### Art as worship

- Consider the impact of the narratives using works of art. Ask: Were these artists worshipping when they painted these images? If the images are made out of devotion to God, then the answer is 'yes'. Discuss the many ways of worshipping found in Christianity: not just singing to God or praying words of praise, but also living as Jesus exemplified. Prepare pupils for the art task below through this consideration of art as worship.
- Next, use some lessons to investigate three examples of the impact of Jesus' teaching and life. In preparation for the activity in 'Making Connections', get groups of pupils to prepare and present ideas about one of these three areas:
- Some pupils find out about the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** (used to be called 'Confession') in the Catholic Church and the Church of England: how does this ritual show what Christians do to follow Jesus with regard to forgiveness and restoration? (See Unit 2b.1 Digging Deeper section. You might use Resource Sheet 3 from that unit for this.)
- Some pupils find out about a project in which **Christian Aid** have made a big difference to some of the poorest people on Earth. A good example comes from the Christian Aid Week video resources for children from 2015: 'Meet Nigele and Bikoya' from Ethiopia, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXxejNZcpAQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXxejNZcpAQ). How does this kind of project connect to the stories of Jesus studied above?
- Some pupils find out about the work of **Prison Chaplains**: they do not condemn people who have done crimes, but try to bring 'good news' to help and support people to live better lives in future. In this work, Christians try to put forgiveness and restoration into practice.
- In the presentations the different groups make, challenge the pupils to say clearly how their discoveries relate to stories and teachings of Jesus. Use this prompt: 'This is connected to something Jesus said/ did ... because...'



## MAKING CONNECTIONS

- Pupils are going to role-play a new local Christian church's plans. The purpose of the role play is to explore how Jesus' good news can make a difference to life today and to the future. Good teaching will keep making the impact of Christianity clear as pupils tackle the role-play task, planning the building, worship and activities of a local church community. Put the pupils in groups of five. One pupil is in role as the minister, the other four are to be members of the church aged 20, 30, 40 and 50. Flesh out some roles for them. They have four tasks:
  1. To design a church building that reflects the teaching of Jesus about praying, worshipping and living for others.
  2. To create a noticeboard for the church that shows their weekly activities, each of which must connect to something Jesus said or did.
  3. To plan to spend their budget of £20,000 a year on some projects, deciding which ones to support and how much to spend on each of eight possible activities (related to their learning above).
  4. To write a page to explain how their plans will show that their new church is following Jesus, using the Bible material they have studied.
- Evaluative questions: what would Jesus do for this task? What would he design, and why? Is it better to express faith through art and architecture, or charity and generosity? Present pupils with several ethical dilemmas: What range of actions might be right actions? Which might be Jesus' response, and why? Which might be pupils' response, and why?

SELECT AND WEAVE TOGETHER ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES

UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT

MAKE SENSE OF THE TEXT

MAKE CONNECTIONS

OUTCOMES

## BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

What would Jesus do (WWJD)? This question is seen by some as a touchstone of Christian ethics and discipleship. A Christian is a disciple or follower of Jesus. 'Disciple' literally means 'learner'. For Christians, discipleship means becoming more like Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, for example by putting Jesus first, reading the Bible, loving God and other people. 'Copying' Jesus' ethics and his vision of life is not too simple a way of setting out the Christian ambition for pupils in this age group, although Christians believe they need the help of God's Spirit to enable them to do this – as well as God's forgiveness when they mess up!

Of course there is a gulf between the time and place where Jesus lived (and the New Testament was written) and the contemporary Christian context, so the question 'What would Jesus do?' may not be simple.

The Christian churches seek to be communities where discipleship is reinforced and practised collectively. It is not a solitary life to follow Jesus, but a shared experience – there were 12 disciples, and many others in Jesus' band of followers.

Just as Jesus preached, taught and lived his 'good

news' (Gospel), so Christian communities seek to be good news to those they serve, in whatever problems of life they may face. This idea of a community that is good news connects to the concept of the kingdom of God: Christians believe that where God rules, humanity can flourish.

Any story of Christian activism is likely to have some roots in the life, teaching and example of Jesus, and therefore connect the ancient Gospel with contemporary issues and hopes. Making these links is a kind of theological activity: a theology of hope is any set of ideas that use hope from God to change human life for the better. In the context of the 'big story' of the Bible, Jesus' 'good news' shows the kind of world God wants for all people: a world in which love and justice are the hallmarks of life.

Note that the Gospel texts offer accounts of Jesus' life, including teachings, parables, narrative accounts of his journeys, and dealings with his disciples, followers and opponents. They emerge from the Christian community, and so are probably best described as religious testimony. This does not mean that they are fiction, but neither are they disinterested, objective historical accounts.

## COMMENTARY ON THE TEXTS AND THEIR MEANING(S)

### **The Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5-7**

This text is the high point of Jesus' teachings about how to live in any of the Gospels, and combines spiritual ideas with ethical practice. The highest demands of the Gospels seem almost impossible, but the Gospels teach that God can strengthen and equip those who wholeheartedly trust and follow Jesus.

### **The Wise and Foolish Builders: Matthew 7:24-27**

This parable at the end of the Sermon on the Mount is surprisingly hard to interpret, but for the pupils its plain meaning should be that 'foundations' matter. The nub of the story is about the relationship between hearing and doing: for Christians, faith is about hearing the Word of God in a way that makes a difference to how you live. Those who follow what Jesus said have built firm foundations. For Christians this often means trusting God, praying humbly, giving generously, forgiving and accepting forgiveness, living in a way that shows love of God, neighbour and self.

### **Healing the Centurion's Servant: Luke 7:1-10**

This example, one from over 30 healing stories in the Gospels, is notable because Jesus heals a Roman's servant: Jesus' ministry is very inclusive. Those usually marginalised or excluded are beneficiaries of Jesus' healing generosity.

The idea of miracles is problematic for some. Some Christians would say that because Jesus was God on Earth, of course he could perform miracles. Others argue that the healing miracles are a sign that Jesus overturns the effects of the Fall – reminding people that the world is not as it should be, and that he can restore people to wholeness. Others argue that the healing is symbolic or spiritual rather than literal and physical.

This is a topic that needs to be approached with care and sensitivity, of course. Children may have parents, grandparents or siblings who are ill. Christians may often pray for healing without apparent success. They acknowledge that life is not perfect, and that death and illness are part of living in a 'fallen' world; God is still God. For Christians, the promise of forgiveness through Jesus still stands, however, and this may bring spiritual healing where there is no physical healing. People may reflect on how coming to a 'good death' can also be a way of thinking about healing. The Christian hope of heaven, where there is no more death, mourning, crying or pain (Revelation 21:4), plays its part in helping Christians to cope with illness and death.

### **Peter denies Jesus (John 13:18–21)**

For Christians, the key significance of these stories is that despite a dreadful betrayal by Peter, Jesus offered him a second chance. Salvation is not about getting everything right: the Gospel says forgiveness and Salvation depend on God's grace. Peter betrayed Jesus, but Jesus still trusted him, and he went on to become an important leader of the early Christian community.

### **Jesus gets angry (Mark 11:15–19)**

In this story, it does not actually say that Jesus is angry, but his actions reveal at least an impatience with the fact that money-loving has replaced the love of God and that Gentiles (non-Jewish people) have been excluded from the only place they could pray. Don't miss the significance of 'My temple – a house of prayer for all nations'. The market was happening in the Gentile court,

the only part of the temple where non-Jewish people were allowed. The story is an antidote to any stereotype of 'gentle Jesus, meek and mild'. It shows that Jesus was 'good news' for those who had often been excluded.

### **A woman in trouble (John 8:1–11)**

Teachers should think carefully about how to use this story. The fact that many pupils will have personal and direct experience of the pains caused by cheating on a partner is not a reason to avoid the story, but it will be a reason to tackle it very sensitively. The story is worth exploring because it emphasises several things: the sexist unfairness of Jesus' antagonists (how dare they use this woman for their little experiment? Where is the man involved?); Jesus' non-confrontational response, which allows the accusers to condemn themselves; and the skilful wisdom of Jesus' reply: he does not legitimise adultery, but his brilliant answer does give the woman a second chance. Note that the 'set-up' was a trap: if Jesus had stoned her, his enemies would have told the Romans, but if not, he would be portrayed as anti-Torah, against the Law of Moses.

In using all these narratives, it is worth remembering that Christian ideas are often emerging from stories of Jesus in fresh ways: the text is fixed, but the interpretations are more like modelling clay. This can be highlighted by retelling the story from different points of view; for example, in the case of Mark 11, a disciple, a moneylender, a temple priest, a Gentile pilgrim.

This approach is good literacy work in RE, and requires a good level of pupil understanding to be successful.

## RESOURCES

You might use the art packs published by RE Today: *Picturing Jesus*, *Picturing Easter*, *Picturing Christianity*. These are useful not just for the pictures they provide, but also for the 'art in RE' strategies they offer.

'*Vie de Jesus Mafa*' is a fantastic project from Cameroon which portrays more than 80 of the stories of Christ in art: [www.jesusmafa.com/?lang=en](http://www.jesusmafa.com/?lang=en).

[www.artbible/info](http://www.artbible/info) is another useful source of art works.

Paintings from John 21 to consider: Linda ES Roberts: 'Peter Denies Jesus (the Fourth Station)'; Frank Wesley: 'Peter's Denial'; Carl Bloch: 'Peter Denies Christ'; icon of 'The Restoration of Peter'; Magnilay Tayho: 'Jesus Waits on the Shore'; James Tissot: 'The Meal of Our Lord and the Apostles'.

The activities refer to various agencies and projects. Here are some starting points: Look at some church websites to see what happens in a typical week in terms of worship.

**Prayer Spaces in Schools** have a great website which shows how Christians today try to help children in this age group to pray. [www.prayerspacesinschools.com](http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com).

**The Salvation Army** run numerous 'faith in action' projects to help disadvantaged people all over the UK: [www.salvationarmy.org.uk/about-us](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/about-us).

**The Leprosy Mission** is a good example of a healthcare charity inspired by Jesus' healing miracles. Inspiring stories can be found on their website: [www.leprosymission.org.uk](http://www.leprosymission.org.uk)

**Christian Aid** are second to none in their commitment to the service of the poorest people on Earth in the name of Christ. Inspiring stories on their website: [www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/)

**The Prison Fellowship** unites Christians who try to help people in prison. Their website explains why and how this matters to some Christians: [www.prisonfellowship.org.uk/what-we-do/](http://www.prisonfellowship.org.uk/what-we-do/)

**Design a new church.** If your pupils design a new church building, then they might find the visuals at [www.churchbuilding.co.uk/](http://www.churchbuilding.co.uk/) interesting and inspiring; *Church Building* magazine reports modern architectural projects in churches in the UK and further afield. A very interesting source.

The vestment supplier Vanpouilles also has a great online catalogue to use for this work: [www.vanpouilles.co.uk/](http://www.vanpouilles.co.uk/)

