

KEY STAGE 1/UNIT 1.5

SALVATION

WHY DOES EASTER MATTER TO CHRISTIANS?

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★ OUTCOMES

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

- Recognise that Incarnation and Salvation are part of a 'big story' of the Bible.
- Tell stories of Holy Week and Easter from the Bible and recognise a link with the idea of Salvation (Jesus rescuing people).
- Recognise that Jesus gives instructions about how to behave.
- Give at least three examples of how Christians show their beliefs about Jesus' death and resurrection in church worship at Easter.
- Think, talk and ask questions about whether the story of Easter has anything to say to them about sadness, hope or heaven, exploring different ideas.

🧱 KNOWLEDGE BUILDING BLOCKS

PUPILS WILL KNOW THAT:

- Easter is very important in the 'big story' of the Bible.
- Christians believe Jesus rose again, giving people hope of a new life.

NOTE: You can use this unit for Year 1 or Year 2. If you teach Easter to every year group, the Core Learning section is suitable for Year 1 and Digging Deeper is suitable for Year 2.

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

➔ YOU MIGHT LIKE TO START WITH...

Taking a walk in springtime to look at signs of both Easter and new life. This is a good time of year to visit farms and see the new arrivals.

🔍 MAKING SENSE OF THE TEXT

- This unit will probably be taught in the second half of the Spring Term. If so, discuss what our senses tell us about springtime, how spring differs from the other seasons, including the idea of new life. What signs tell us that Easter is approaching?
- Ask pupils why they think Easter is important to Christians. Collect their responses at this stage.
- Explain that Easter is a festival that occurs in spring to remember a very important part of the Bible. Remind pupils that Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Christians believe that Jesus is God come to Earth. The life of Jesus and many things he said and did are found in the Gospels in the Bible. The Easter story is one of sadness, followed by great happiness.
- Set up an Easter labyrinth for pupils. Essential parts of the story to be included in the labyrinth for Year 1 are: 1) The entry into Jerusalem; 2) Jesus' betrayal and arrest at the Mount of Olives; 3) Jesus' crucifixion; 4) The empty tomb; 5) Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene and the disciples. Biblical references are in the teacher's notes, but ensure that these extracts are told in a child-friendly manner.
- At each stop on the labyrinth, pupils should hear part of the story and have a chance to discuss and reflect on it, expressing their thoughts, feelings and questions. At this age, it is useful to make the labyrinth as sensory as possible: for example, have palm leaves to feel (and wave) for the entry into Jerusalem, and vinegar to smell for the crucifixion.
- Play Easter 'pass the parcel'. Under each layer should be a picture or caption from the Easter story (have them in order, so the entry to Jerusalem is on the outermost layer). As each picture/caption is revealed, the pupil who opened it should retell that part of the story, with the other players checking for accuracy. (See Resource Sheet 1.)
- Have some small Easter eggs as the prize in the middle of the Easter pass the parcel. Ask pupils why eggs are connected to Easter. If necessary remind pupils of their walk and discussion focusing on new life, explaining (if you haven't already) why eggs are a symbol of new life. Are pupils able to spot a part of the story that is about new life?
- Place the events of Easter on the 'Big Story' of the Bible timeline, using the frieze artwork and the keywords (Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation – see Essential Information).
- Ask pupils again, why does Easter matter to Christians? How have their answers changed?

SELECT AND WEAVE TOGETHER ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES





MAKING CONNECTIONS

- Discuss what pupils find happy and sad about the story of Easter. Looking at a colour chart, discuss which colours pupils think are happy and which they think are sad. Pupils place template of crosses onto a plain piece of white paper. Smudge around outside with oil pastels so when template is lifted off there's a blank cross surrounded by colour. Each pupil should make a cross in 'happy colours' and a cross in 'sad colours'. The first should be filled with parts of the story that make pupils feel happy, and the second with parts that make them feel sad.
- Discuss some other emotions; for example, angry, excited, surprised, worried, scared. Pupils show these on their faces and bodies and talk about times when they feel each one. Show pictures of the five parts of the story included in the labyrinth. Can pupils match at least one emotion to each part of the story? 'Happy' and 'sad' can also be used as part of this emotion-matching activity.



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

- Show pupils a hot cross bun and ask them to identify how it is different from a currant bun, and how it is linked to the Easter story. Explain that many Christians eat hot cross buns at Easter to remind them of the Easter story.
- Invite in a member of the clergy or a local Christian to share some images, objects and experiences linked to ways in which Christians remember the story of Holy Week and Easter. Introduce pupils to traditions linked with Palm Sunday (palm cross, Palm Sunday processions, for example), Good Friday (for example, special church service at 3 o'clock, eating hot cross buns, visiting the 'stations of the cross') and Easter Sunday (for example, a joyful church service in the morning, giving and eating eggs, decorating a cross in church).
- Help pupils to remember how each practice links to the story by putting on one classroom wall a picture of Jesus riding into Jerusalem, three crosses on a second wall, and the empty tomb on the third. Give pupils one of the Easter practices they have learnt about – they should run to the picture it links to. Pupils should justify their choices.
- Look at pictures of decorated Easter eggs, not chocolate ones. Remind pupils why eggs are used as symbols at Easter due to their links with new life. Make a papier mâché egg and decorate it with pictures of what Christians do at Easter. Stick a small cardboard cross onto the egg.
- Create some simple actions that pupils can copy to show the events of Holy Week, from the perspective of a disciple: Palm Sunday (waving palms, excited), Good Friday (sad, show tears coming down cheeks), Easter Sunday (excited, happy, dancing, as Jesus rises to new life) – this is how the story ends! Talk about the Christian belief that Jesus rises from his tomb (resurrection) and even appears and speaks to people that he used to know. Explain that Jesus rising from his tomb shows Christians that after they die, they can also have a new life, a life with God in heaven.
- Read together the start of *Heaven* by Nicholas Allen, and discuss both Lil and Dill's ideas. Ask pupils what they think heaven might be like – can they describe it with words or draw images?
- Listen to *Waterbugs and Dragonflies* by Doris Stickney. Discuss where the dragonfly went and how this makes him feel. Ask pupils whether this is a happy or sad tale. What links can they see with the story of Jesus and his resurrection? What is different about the story of Jesus?
- Talk with pupils about the fact that beliefs in life after death vary. Christians believe that if you trust God, there is another life after this life, in heaven with God. Christians think Jesus showed that there is life after death by coming alive again after he was killed on the cross at the first Easter. Christians believe Jesus was able to come back to tell his disciples, because he was God in the flesh (incarnation). No one knows exactly what heaven is like, but Christians – at a funeral – say there will be no tears there, and people who know God will find peace and rest.



MAKING CONNECTIONS

- Ask pupils why people find it helpful to believe that there is a heaven. Make a link with the idea for Christians that Jesus brings good news.
- Give pupils time to reflect on the way the story changes from sadness to happiness, or from darkness to light. Give them a chance to paint some dark marks on a page, perhaps listening to some quiet music, then to paint some bright colours, with joyous music accompanying. Ask them to talk about what it might feel like when something good happens after something sad.

★ OUTCOMES

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

-  Recognise that God, Incarnation, Gospel and Salvation are part of the 'big story' of the Bible.
-  Tell stories of Holy Week and Easter and make a link with the idea of Salvation (Jesus rescuing people).
-  Give at least three examples of how Christians show their beliefs about Jesus as saviour in church worship.
-  Think, talk and ask questions about whether the text has something to say to them (for example, about whether forgiveness is important), exploring different ideas.

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING BLOCKS

PUPILS WILL KNOW THAT:

- Easter is very important in the 'big story' of the Bible. Jesus showed that he was willing to forgive all people, even for putting him on the cross.
- Christians believe Jesus builds a bridge between God and humans.
- Christians believe Jesus rose again, giving people hope of a new life.

NOTE: You can use this unit for Year 1 or Year 2. If you teach Easter to every year group, the Core Learning section is suitable for Year 1 and Digging Deeper is suitable for Year 2.

YOU MIGHT LIKE TO START WITH...

Enter class with an 'Easter lunchbox' containing chocolate egg, pancake and hot cross bun, and make a fuss about how excited you are to have such delicious food. Discuss with pupils whether they think this food is the most important thing about Easter for many Christians. Remind pupils of prior learning and draw out of them the symbolism of each piece of food. Ask what they think is really important at Easter for Christians. If they had to put a picture on the outside of the lunchbox showing the most important thing about Easter, what would pupils choose?

MAKING SENSE OF THE TEXT

- Ask pupils why Easter matters to Christians. How much do they know already? Recap the parts of the Easter story that pupils learned in Core Learning/last year. Get pupils to place pictures from Holy Week onto an Easter story timeline or story map.
- Tell pupils the story of Easter in child-friendly language. Include all elements from Year 1 and this year add some new parts: cleansing of the temple, the Last Supper, Jesus' trial. Focus on the new parts of the story: ensure that pupils know the story of Holy Week and Easter securely, using a range of approaches and activities. For example:
 - Use interesting storytelling techniques such as drama and godly play.
 - Add new parts of the story onto the Easter story timeline/story map and display a large version of this in the classroom.
 - Ask pupils to freeze-frame events from the whole of the Easter story and say how Jesus (and perhaps other characters too) must be feeling.
- Ask pupils to decide what they think are the most interesting, puzzling, enjoyable, upsetting, and most important moments, and why. What ideas do they have about the content of the story? Ask for their ideas about why they think it is so important that it is still remembered today.
- Get pupils to work out where the Easter story is on the 'Big Story' frieze. Introduce the words 'sin' and 'salvation' – can they find the letters of the word 'sin' on the frieze, and in the word 'salvation'? Which letters can they see from 'save' in it?
- Remind pupils of their work on Jesus building a bridge between God and humans (see EYFS units). Christians believe Jesus did more than teach people how to live: he also showed how to live. The cross is a reminder of Jesus' death, and that putting things right can be costly. Christians say Jesus died to 'save' us, to pay the price of sin in the world and reunite people with God.
- Act out having 'God' on one side of a big gap, and a person (i.e. a pupil) on the other – the gap is caused by 'sin'. Get another pupil to act as Jesus: they put their arms out wide, making a cross shape, and bridge the gap between 'God' and the person.
- Explain how Christians believe the world is spoiled by 'sin' – the bad things people do, and their failure to do good things. People keep wandering away from God. Jesus' name means 'he saves', and he came on a rescue mission to bring people back to God.
- Get pupils in groups to set up tableaux to show the events of Holy Week, take photos, and ask the pupils to add captions to show what example Jesus set Christians during Holy Week. For example, washing the disciples' feet to show that everyone is a servant of God, doing God's will by allowing himself to be crucified, showing forgiveness on the cross, standing up for what is right in God's house, stopping unnecessary violence when it looks like fight will break out at his arrest, and praying.
- Ask pupils why Easter matters to Christians. How have their answers developed?



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

- Make a visit to a local church to find out about signs of Easter and the Easter story there. These could include pictures, crucifix, empty cross, chalice and paten, colours used.
- Ask pupils to recap Easter practices that they learned last year. Look at images of foot-washing from Maundy Thursday – what part of the story do pupils think it links to?
- What example does Jesus set here? Give some instances of when Christians try to follow Jesus' example and look after other people. Find out some examples of local churches helping the homeless, running a foodbank, or helping people with disaster relief around the world. How does this link with the idea of Jesus 'saving' people? Jesus wants Christians to rescue those who are suffering too.



MAKING CONNECTIONS

- Read a story such as *Let's Be Friends Again!* by Hans Wilhelm, where one of the main characters needs to forgive another. Stop as the turtle is released, and ask what both pupils should do. At the end of the story, discuss who said sorry, how the brother felt before and after forgiving, and what might have happened if he never forgave his little sister.
- Ask if pupils have heard the phrase 'forgive and forget'. Do they think the brother will really forget what his sister did? Why is it important for him to forgive and wipe the slate clean anyway?
- Pupils to put on the angry faces that they might pull if they are very cross with someone, then relax them as they might after they have forgiven – how do their faces feel at both stages?
- Play some angry music and ask pupils to reflect on the hardest thing they have ever had to forgive. Play some softer music to allow pupils to think about forgiving the person or people who hurt you.



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

- Look at Jesus' words on the cross: 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' Discuss who Jesus is forgiving and what is being forgiven.
- Remind pupils of their own examples of things that were hard to forgive, and discuss what an enormous thing Jesus was actually forgiving – the people who are killing him! Explain that Christians ask God to forgive their sins, because of Jesus' example and action – being prepared to die to save/rescue people

and heal their friendship with God. Christians believe that God certainly has the power to forgive sins. For them, Jesus' resurrection proved many things, one of which was Jesus' power to forgive sin.

- Think, pair, share at least one reason why forgiveness is important to Christians.
- Talk about how Jesus' example inspires Christians to forgive others; ask some Christians about what it means to forgive and be forgiven.



MAKING CONNECTIONS

- Discuss how standing in someone's shoes can help us to understand another's actions. Bring in some pairs of shoes/paper footprints for pupils to practise this through drama – they could role-play being the brother from *Let's Be Friends Again!* standing in his sister's shoes, or given school and home scenarios where forgiveness is important. Look at the words from 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing' show that Jesus was able to stand in the shoes of the people he was forgiving.
- Pupils think about somebody they need or have needed to forgive. **[It is better to focus on things in school for this, rather than bringing in home life.]** Try to put themselves in the shoes of that person. Do pupils think they can now forgive that person? If so, show their forgiveness in writing (letter, prayer

or poem). If not **[and if appropriate]** discuss in a small group why something was so bad that pupils feel it could not be forgiven. In a circle, pass round a beautifully decorated forgiveness box. Pupils put their writing inside and shut the lid to show that they have finished 'holding a grudge' and the act is forgiven. The box can be kept in class for other times forgiveness is needed.

- Make the link back to the Christian idea that Jesus came to build a bridge back to God. Jesus shows what God is like, and his example of offering forgiveness reminds Christians that God will forgive them, and that they should forgive others. Recall the key question again: why does Easter matter to Christians? How deep is the pupils' understanding now?

BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

Most Christians see the Bible as telling a story about the ongoing relationship between God and Creation, with a particular focus on the bond between God and humanity. The good relationship was damaged very early on in the Bible story, with Adam and Eve eating fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and bad. This action illustrates a human tendency to go their own way – or to ‘sin’. Called ‘the Fall’ by many Christians, this act also signals a separation and division between humans and their Creator: the idyllic relationship between God and humans no longer exists. God, however, still loves his creation and seeks to bring all people back into friendship. This is the link with the concept of Salvation – of God ‘saving’ humans (and renewing the whole of creation).

For Christians, Jesus’ life, death and resurrection is the culmination of this. Jesus, as God in the flesh (incarnation), shows people what God is like, in his teachings and example. Jesus’ name means ‘he saves’. His death is seen by Christians as a sacrifice, the supreme example of God’s love for people, and the model for Christian living. One way of looking at this is that Jesus’ death and resurrection heals the damage done by sin –

so, if people ask for forgiveness, it is freely given, because Jesus has already paid the punishment.

The death and resurrection should not be seen as a complete end to sin, however: sinning still happens and should be taken seriously, but can be forgiven by God through Jesus. This unit focuses on Jesus building a bridge to God through his teachings and his example. Pupils will concentrate on the idea of his death as sacrifice more fully in KS2.

Christians use these stories in different ways. Some will prepare for Easter during Lent, reading passages from the Easter story and meditating on Jesus’ experience, perhaps particularly on his suffering. This might remind a Christian to be grateful for Jesus’ sacrifice, and to recognise that sin is still a serious business. Some Christians read the whole of the Passion narrative in John’s Gospel (Chapters 18–20) in a service; others remember it in the Stations of the Cross, saying prayers recalling different events of Holy Week. This is the most significant Christian festival, remembering and celebrating the salvation offered through Jesus.

COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT AND ITS MEANING(S)

The story of Jesus’ death and resurrection is found in all four Gospels. The story that we teach pupils in school is not written as one uninterrupted account from start to finish in any Gospel. The events in the story happen over a period of eight days. Each Gospel includes other events and teachings that happened during this time period. The Gospels generally present a chronological account, so these other events and teachings are presented at appropriate moments in the week, breaking up the traditional ‘Easter story’.

It is therefore necessary to pick out the parts of the traditional Easter story from the Gospels. In

EYFS, pupils focused on the Gospel of Matthew, so in KS1 they take their learning forward and mainly focus on Luke, with some passages taken from John. Although the story should always be told in child-friendly language, storytelling at KS1 should be based on these passages:

CORE LEARNING

John 12:12–15: Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem
 Luke 22:47–53: Jesus’ betrayal and arrest
 Luke 23:26–56: crucifixion, death and burial
 Luke 24:1–12: finding the empty tomb
 John 20:11–23: Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene and the disciples.

COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT AND ITS MEANING(S)

DIGGING DEEPER

Recap on the stories from Core Learning

Luke 19:45–46/48: the cleansing of the temple

John 13:1–11: washing the disciples' feet

Luke 22:7–23: the Last Supper

Luke 22:66–71 and 23:1–5: Jesus' trials (you might choose one trial or do both).

Christians see Easter as starting from Ash Wednesday, and pupils learn about the period of Lent in EYFS. This KS1 unit focuses on Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday – Holy Week, which culminates with Jesus' resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus is the centrepiece of mainstream Christian belief. It is the basis of the Christian concept of salvation.

Many Christian actions during Holy Week are inspired by the events recorded in the Bible. These include palm crosses and Palm Sunday processions to recall Jesus riding into Jerusalem and the crowd's reaction on Palm Sunday; church services at 3p.m. (the time Jesus was crucified) on Good Friday, and of course the use of eggs (not necessarily chocolate) to symbolise new life on Easter Sunday, the day of the resurrection.

RESOURCES

Look at the units taught in EYFS. It will be worth revisiting some of the activities, if needed, but make sure that this unit builds on, and enables pupils to make progress in, their knowledge and understanding.

The Core Learning (Year 1) unit suggests a visitor comes to the classroom, while the Digging Deeper (Year 2) unit suggests a trip to the church. Visits and visitors are important for good RE, bringing pupils' learning to life and showing them that the religion they are learning about in class is being lived all around them. While attempts should be made to host visitors and go on visits, at times these are not possible. In these cases, pupils should still have opportunities to learn the same information, but through different teaching methods.

APPROPRIATE BIBLE VERSIONS

Easter Story cube – www.familylife.com

The Big Bible Storybook – www.scriptureunion.org.uk

The Lion First Bible – www.lionhudson.com

The Beginner's Bible – www.zondervan.com

The Easter Bible Storybook – www.scriptureunion.org.uk

The Very First Easter – www.zondervan.com

The Easter Story (My Very First Bible Series) – www.lionhudson.com

The Easter Story – www.qed-publishing.co.uk

The Last Supper – www.qed-publishing.co.uk

Look at Shahne Vickery's *Experience Easter* and *Experience Easter Outside* for delightful ways into thoughtful learning about the Easter story and its meaning for Christians: www.imaginer.co.uk/jumping-fish-publications

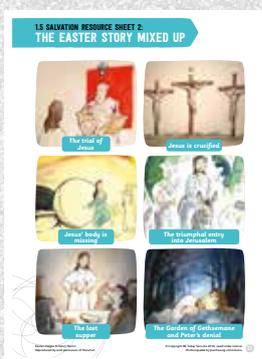
A child-friendly adaptation of *Waterbugs and Dragonflies* can be found on p.15 of *Opening Up RE: Easter*, edited by Fiona Moss, RE Today Services

Let's Be Friends Again! can be purchased. It can also be found at: www.childrensbooksforever.com/Childrenpics/LETS%20BE%20FRIENDS%20AGAIN.pdf

DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT:
WWW.UNDERSTANDINGCHRISTIANITY.ORG.UK



THE EASTER STORY



THE EASTER STORY
MIXED UP