

Good for evil

SERIES THEME: FAMILY FESTIVALS

The festivals in these outlines will be familiar to most pupils, the themes help the pupils understand more about the Christian beliefs around those festivals and their relevance for all of us today.

SESSION TOPIC

Easter

AIM

To help pupils consider their willingness to offer good in exchange for evil, as Jesus did.

SUITABLE FOR

Years 3 to 6

BIBLE BASE

Mark 14:55,56,65; 15:17–19; Luke 23:22–25,34;
1 Peter 2:23,24

YOU WILL NEED

A selection of items of varying value (eg small toys, a bag of sweets, a bunch of grapes, a comic), an item of no value (eg a bag of dirty stones), an item of great value or popularity (eg a mobile phone)

BEFORE YOU START

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

INTRODUCTION

Explain the system of bartering used in some countries, where goods are offered in exchange for other goods.

Lay out some of the items of varying value you've brought with you as goods available for barter. Include the item of no value. Ask for a volunteer to be the stall holder.

Have the rest of the items in a bag, including the item of great value or popularity. Take various items out of your bag and offer them in exchange for the goods on the stall. Ask the stall holder whether they are willing to make the exchange. After each of your proposed exchanges, ask the other pupils whether they think it would be a fair exchange.

Finally, offer the item of great value in exchange for the item of no value. Talk about the exchange. Are there any reasons why someone might offer to make that exchange? (For example, if the person making the offer really cared about the stall holder and wanted them to have the best.) Thank the stall holder and ask them to sit down.

BIBLE STORY

Now talk to the pupils about Easter. Easter is a festival when Christians remember what happened to Jesus at the end of his life. Christians believe that Jesus was a man who was always full of love— a good man who was always obedient to God. At Easter time, Christians remember that Jesus experienced terrible

suffering. He was arrested and accused of things that weren't true.

His friends abandoned him. People punched him and spat on him. He was whipped and made fun of and finally, he was executed, even though the Roman governor found him not guilty.

What did Jesus do in return? The Bible says that he didn't fight back, he didn't stand up for his rights. Instead, he asked God to forgive the people who were hurting him.

Christians believe that Jesus took all the lies and anger, the hatred and pain of the world and – in exchange – he offers people love, forgiveness, peace and hope.

APPLICATION

A Christian viewpoint

Christians believe that Jesus has set an example for them to follow, that they should be willing to offer good things in exchange for any wrong that people do to them.

For everyone

Ask the pupils for ideas of any ways in which they might be able to offer something good in exchange for something bad (eg share their crisps with someone who never shares theirs).

RESPONSE

Use the pupils' ideas for a time of reflection. If appropriate, make them into a prayer. You could follow the style of the prayer of St Francis of Assisi. For example:

'Lord God,
help us to offer good things in exchange for bad:
where there is hate help us to offer love;
when we are hurt help us to offer forgiveness;
when there is fighting help us to make friends;
when anyone tells lies help us to tell the truth.'



What are you like?

SERIES THEME: FAMILY FESTIVALS

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SESSION TOPIC

Easter

AIM

To teach pupils that Easter is a time when Christians think about the wrong things they've done and remember that God forgives sin.

SUITABLE FOR

Years 3 to 6

BIBLE BASE

Luke 18:9–14

YOU WILL NEED

Paper, pencils, the Body Quiz (see box), two large body outlines drawn on paper and cut up, Blu Tack, some suitable music and the means to play it (optional)

BEFORE YOU START

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

INTRODUCTION

Ask for a couple of volunteers who can draw. Give them pencils and paper and tell them they have about three minutes to draw a self-portrait. Whilst they are doing that divide the rest of the pupils into two teams and do the Body Quiz using the questions provided. When a team gets a question right they get a body bit to stick up. The first team to make a body wins. Select questions appropriate for the school you're in and the age level of the pupils (the questions in the quiz get progressively harder).

After the quiz, look at the self-portraits and see how accurate they are. Congratulate the artists on their efforts. Point out how hard it is to draw a self-portrait, especially without a mirror, as we

often forget what we look like. In fact there are lots of things we don't know about ourselves.

BIBLE STORY

Tell the pupils that in the Bible there is a story Jesus told about two people. One thought he knew everything about himself. Ask the pupils to listen carefully as you read the story and see if they can spot which man knew most about himself. Tell the parable of the pharisee and tax collector (Luke 18:9–14). Ask a couple of pupils to come out and act out the parts as you tell the story.

When you have finished, ask the pupils which of the men knew most about himself. Why? Explain that it was the tax collector, because he knew he was sinful (briefly explain 'sinful' if necessary).

But the pharisee couldn't see his own faults. Jesus went on to say that it was the tax collector who would be forgiven because he wasn't proud, but was honest about what he was like.

APPLICATION

A Christian viewpoint

The Easter festival is a special time for Christians to think about the wrong things they've done and to ask God to forgive them. Easter is when Christians remember that Jesus died as a punishment for the wrong things people have done. It's a time for Christians to be honest about what they're really like and to ask God for forgiveness. The Bible says it's important for Christians to be honest and admit to God the wrong things they've done, and not pretend that they're perfect.

For everyone

Everyone does things wrong, but often we don't want to admit it. We know other people do

things wrong, but don't want to see faults in ourselves. Sometimes we don't seem to know ourselves very well.

RESPONSE

In a short time of quiet ask the pupils to think about things they've done which they know are wrong. You could play some quiet music at this point. Encourage the pupils to think if there's anyone they need to be honest with or say sorry to: themselves, other people, or perhaps, God. Finish with this prayer, offering them the chance to opt out by not saying 'Amen' but sitting quietly and thinking about the issue.

'Dear Lord, we know that often we do things wrong. Please help us to know when we've done wrong, and to be brave enough to say sorry. We want to say sorry now for times when we've done things which have upset other people and you. Please forgive us and help us not to do those things again. Amen.'

THE BODY QUIZ

1 How many hearts have you got?
(Answer:1)

2 Name the five main senses. (Answer:
hearing, sight, smell, taste, touch)

3 Which teeth are used to grind up food?
(Answer: molars)

4 What does the heart do? (Answer: pumps
blood round the body)

5 Why do we need bones? (Answer: to
provide a rigid structure for our bodies and
to enable us to move)

6 Which is the longest bone in the human
body? (Answer: the thigh bone)

7 What does the blood travel round the
body in? (Answer: blood vessels – arteries,
capillaries and veins)

8 What are the lungs used for? (Answer: to
supply the body with oxygen and to expel
carbon dioxide from the body)

9 Where would you find the cochlea?
(Answer: in the ear)

10 What makes someone short-sighted?
(Answer: the lens focuses the light coming
into the eye in front of the retina)

Giving your all

SERIES THEME: FAMILY FESTIVALS

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SESSION TOPIC

Easter

AIM

To help pupils understand the Bible teaching that God gave everything, so that people could be his friends.

SUITABLE FOR

Years 3 to 6

BIBLE BASE

John 3:16

YOU WILL NEED

An Easter egg for a prize, a recording of a hymn and the means to play it

BEFORE YOU START

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

INTRODUCTION

Ask for five volunteers to take part in a competition. Choose a simple contest that needs great determination and concentration (eg not laughing whilst standing on one leg, whistling a tune without smiling etc). Make sure it doesn't just rely on physical strength as this will always be biased towards older pupils). Award the winner the prize and make the point that she/he had to try really hard to win – they had to give it everything.

Ask all the pupils what one thing they would like to be or have above all else. After you've heard from several of them, explain that to achieve their dreams they might need to give it everything. To be a great footballer or actress or

to own a private jet will take years of commitment and trying.

BIBLE STORY

Tell the Easter story in this way:

I wonder what God would say if we asked him the same question? What would God want above everything else? The Bible gives an answer to that question. It says that what God wants more than anything else, is for people to know that he loves them and to be friends with him. Christians believe that God has given everything to make that happen.

First, the Bible says, he sent his Son Jesus to earth to show people what God is like. God was prepared to send his only Son from heaven to earth. That's what Christians celebrate at

Christmas. But that wasn't all. Jesus also wanted everyone to know how much God loves them and to be friends with him, so he was prepared to give up everything. That is what Christians believe happened at Easter.

In the Bible it says that Jesus was arrested and killed, not because he had done anything wrong, or just because people hated him. He gave up his life because his death was a punishment for all the wrong things others had done. He died that so that people could be friends with God. To make this possible, Jesus had to give up everything. His friends all left him, he was arrested and beaten by the soldiers, and then he was put on the cross to die. But the Bible says it didn't end there. Three days later Jesus came back to life again. He had given everything, including his life, but God raised him to life again.

APPLICATION

A Christian viewpoint

Read John 3:16 with a reminder that the Bible says that God was prepared to give his own son to save people.

For Christians, Easter is the most important festival. It reminds them of their belief that God gave everything so that they could be friends with him. For Christians the only way to respond to what God has done for them is to give themselves to God – loving him and being determined to live the way he wants.

For everyone

We all have dreams and ambitions. Is your dream worth doing your very best to achieve? Are you willing to give your all for your dream? And is there any one you care about enough to give everything for?

RESPONSE

You could use this prayer to finish:

'Dear Lord, thank you that you gave everything, so that people could be your friends. Help us to be people who are prepared to give everything for the people we care about. Amen.'

As the pupils leave, play a quiet Easter hymn. Introduce it as a song that Christians sing at Easter which will help them remember the story.



Great timing!

SERIES THEME: FAMILY FESTIVALS

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SESSION TOPIC

Harvest

AIM

To teach pupils that Christians believe God created the world.

To encourage a sense of wonder at the amazing precision and balance which sustains the plant kingdom.

SUITABLE FOR

Years 3 to 6

BIBLE BASE

Genesis 1:11; 8:22; Ecclesiastes 3:1,2

YOU WILL NEED

An alarm clock, apples, the word 'photoperiodism' written on card, a knife, chopping board, pieces of apple (one per pupil)

BEFORE YOU START

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

INTRODUCTION

Show pupils the alarm clock (or mobile phone with a timer function). Make the alarm go off. Talk about time and how a few minutes can seem like a long time when we're doing something we don't like doing (like sitting still waiting for something), whereas time seems to fly by when we're enjoying ourselves!

Ask all the pupils to stand up in silence. Say that you want them to try to judge when a minute has passed. You are going to tell them when the minute starts. They must sit down when they think the minute has passed. Praise (or give a prize to) the pupil who was closest to guessing the time correctly. Make the point that it's hard to guess time without a clock.

Show the apples and ask if any of the pupils has an apple tree in his or her garden, or if they have seen one in a park. Do they know when apple trees blossom? Talk about how important it is for the trees to blossom in spring so that insects can pollinate it and the fruit can grow in the warm summer months.

Ask the pupils how the trees know it's spring? Explain that it's as if each tree has a clock inside it! Hold up the clock again and explain that it's not a clock like this. It's more like a microscopic computer programme. Explain how in the winter it gets light quite late in the morning, and gets dark early in the evening. Then as winter turns into spring, the days start to get longer. It only changes very slowly, but the trees can tell how

much daylight there is each day. When the days are exactly the right length, it's like an alarm clock going off inside the tree and the tree starts to produce the blossom. From the blossom the fruit grows until the apples are ripe at harvest time.

Tell pupils that there is a long word which describes this ability trees have to tell the time. Hold up the card with the word 'photoperiodism' written on it. Ask if anyone can read it? Practise saying the word together.

Ask pupils what they think would happen if the trees didn't have this special clock? They wouldn't know when to produce the blossom. If the blossom came on the trees at the wrong time, the fruit wouldn't grow and there would be no harvest.

APPLICATION

A Christian viewpoint

Read some of the Bible verses from the Bible base (eg Genesis 8:22, Ecclesiastes 3:1,2)

The Bible teaches that it was God who made all the plants and trees. He decided the seasons and he made sure that the trees obeyed the rules. He put his clock inside them!

For everyone

Talk about how amazing the precise timing in the plant world is. Encourage a sense of wonder in the pupils.

RESPONSE

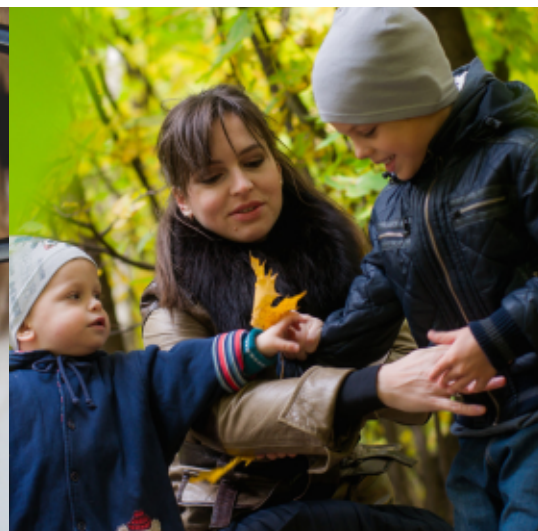
Cut one of the apples in half. Talk about the pleasure of biting into a ripe apple. If there aren't too many children, you could pass round segments of apple for the pupils to eat at this moment (taking care to ask about allergies). As they do so, remind them of the precise timing that was needed for apples to exist so that we can eat and enjoy them.

Ask the pupils to help you write a prayer of thanks for a fruit of their choosing. Write their ideas up on a flip chart. You could use the pattern given in the Key Stage 1 option below. Finish by saying the prayer and inviting those who would like to do so to join in with the 'Amen'.

KEY STAGE 1 OPTION

Instead of asking the pupils to write their own prayer, you could finish with this one:

'Thank you, Lord God... for apple trees, for the clock inside them so they know when it's time to make blossom, for the sun that makes the apples grow, for the juicy flavour of ripe apples at harvest time. Amen.'



Learning from the past

SERIES THEME: FAMILY FESTIVALS

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SESSION TOPIC

Remembrance Day

AIM

To help pupils understand that it is important to learn from others in history.

SUITABLE FOR

Years 3 to 6

BIBLE BASE

Daniel 5

YOU WILL NEED

A variety of objects on a tray, a tea towel (or pictures of different objects on a PowerPoint)

BEFORE YOU START

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

INTRODUCTION

Ask for two volunteers to play Kim's Game. Allow the volunteers thirty seconds to look at the objects on the tray, then cover the tray with the tea towel. Ask the volunteers to take turns to name one object at a time. See who can keep going the longest. If using a PowerPoint slide, let pupils look at it for 30 seconds, then remove it. Split the pupils into two teams and take answers about what was on the screen from each team in turn. See which team can keep going the longest.

BIBLE STORY

Now tell the story of Belshazzar's feast from Daniel 5. Explain that God expected Belshazzar to learn from his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar had learnt that he was not

more powerful or important than God. God expected Belshazzar to remember and learn that lesson.

The story:

King Belshazzar was a rich, powerful, proud ruler who thought he was more important than God and could do whatever he liked.

One night he gave a huge party and invited hundreds of his wealthy, important friends. There was a lot to drink and they drank too much. They didn't care what God thought. They even drank wine from special ceremonial cups they had stolen from God's Temple.

Suddenly, something amazing and terrifying happened. A hand appeared all by itself and

began to write strange words on the wall. King Belshazzar went white. His knees knocked together. The great king was shaking with fear!

King Belshazzar sent for Daniel – who did care about what God thought, and had a special gift for understanding things like this.

Daniel told the king that he should have learnt from his grandfather, King Nebuchadnezzar. He had been a proud man who thought he was more important than God and did all sorts of evil things. God punished him. He lost his throne and became an outcast. But he had come to his senses and realised that he wasn't as important as he had thought and he began to do things right. Then God let him become king once again.

King Belshazzar hadn't remembered and learnt this lesson from history. He had carried on doing what he wanted, not what was right. Daniel explained to the king that the strange words written on the wall meant that God was going to punish him for all the evil things he kept on doing. The message said that his life and his kingship were over. He should have remembered what had happened to his grandfather.

That very night King Belshazzar was killed.

APPLICATION

A Christian viewpoint

God expects Christians to look back at what he has done in the past and to learn from that. Usually that means looking at the Bible, but also it means looking at what God has done in the lives of people since the Bible was written and learning from them.

For everyone

Remembrance Day is a time for us not to be like Belshazzar, but to look back and learn. We can look back and see how people hated others because of their religion or nationality. We can learn from that and decide that we will respect and be friends with those who are different from us, not hate them.

RESPONSE

Finish with this, or a similar, prayer:

'Dear God, thank you for people who stand up for what is right. Thank you for people who have learnt from what others have done. Help each of us to learn from others and from what we know happened in the past. Amen.'



Surprise surprise!

SERIES THEME: FAMILY FESTIVALS

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SESSION TOPIC

Christmas

AIM

To show that Christmas is about discovering more than the birth of a baby.

SUITABLE FOR

Years 3 to 6

BIBLE BASE

John 3:16a

YOU WILL NEED

Three shoe boxes with lids, Christmas wrapping paper, three gift tags, three presents that no one would want, sticky tape, paper money, a flip chart, a marker pen, a wrapped box containing enough sweets for all the pupils in the assembly (for the Key Stage 1 option; check for allergies, you could have stickers instead)

BEFORE YOU START

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

INTRODUCTION

Before collective worship, wrap the boxes and the lids separately with the Christmas wrapping paper. For each box, hide some of the money between the wrapping paper and the box. The paper has to be removed during your presentation, so don't tape the edges down too well.

Once you've wrapped the boxes, place a 'gift' into each one and write the name of the person who will receive it onto the gift tag. Choose adults who will be at collective worship to receive the presents, to avoid upsetting pupils.

Talk to the pupils about Christmas – the story of the birth of Jesus which is celebrated all over the world by millions of people.

- Ask some questions to make them think about Christmas being celebrated all over the world (eg do they know which parts of the world will be hot/cold at the end of December?)
- Ask if they know where we can read the story.
- Explain that we give presents to each other at Christmas in the same way that the Wise Men gave their presents to Mary and Joseph for their son, Jesus. Ask if the pupils can remember what the gifts were.

Tell the pupils that you have gifts for three people. They are for... surprise, surprise... Read out the names on the gift tags. You could ask three pupils to deliver the gifts to the appropriate adults.

When the three people have received their presents, ask each one in turn to open them and show everyone what they have been given. Ask each person what they think of their 'gift'! Ask them to give their honest reactions (eg 'Rubbish!' 'Disgusting!' etc). It shouldn't take too much persuasion to encourage them to give you back your presents (and the boxes). When they do, act as if you are really disappointed about having your gifts rejected.

Once all the gifts have been returned to you, let the pupils see you smiling as if you know something that they don't! Then choose one of the boxes and show everyone the present (eg the brick). Put it to one side and then pull out the money which is hidden in the box and lid. As you are doing this talk to the pupils about how X (give the person's name who received the gift) was so busy looking at what she thought was the gift, that she managed to miss the greater present. It was there for her and she would have found it if she had only looked a bit harder. Show the money. Ask the adults who were given the gifts how they feel about their loss!

APPLICATION

A Christian viewpoint

Read the first part of John 3:16 from the Good News Bible.

Explain that the Bible teaches that this is what the Christmas story is all about. Christians believe that God gave the greatest present ever – his own son, born as a baby in Bethlehem, born so that people could be friends with God.

Say that today [*Name your adult helper*] looked at the presents they were given and decided to reject them. We all know what they missed out now on don't we? Explain that the Bible teaches that God gave the gift of his Son Jesus at Christmas. Some people say 'Thank you' to God for his gift. Some people say 'No thanks'. And some people are still thinking about it (which is OK with God).

For everyone

For those who believe the Bible's teaching about Jesus, Christmas is one of the most important times of the year. Those who don't believe, or who are not sure, can still enjoy the presents, the parties and all the good things of Christmas, and in school we can all enjoy the celebrations together.

RESPONSE

Ask the pupils what things we can enjoy together about Christmas. Write their ideas on a flipchart, and then use them as a focus for their thoughts or prayers.

Allow about 15 seconds of silence to think – or talk to God – about what has been written.

KEY STAGE 1 OPTION

Instead of the surprise 'horrible' present, give a member of the staff a Christmas-wrapped box which contains enough sweets (or stickers) for all the pupils (could be expensive!).

Ask the pupils whether the person receiving the gift said 'Thank you'. Point out that they don't know what the gift is. It could be something really horrible. Let the member of staff open the box. Then ask him/her to show the pupils what the gift is, explain who it is for and when they will be allowed to eat the sweets!

Talk about the gift God gave at Christmas and what different responses people might make to it.

Then as above in the 'Application' section.

Light of the world

SERIES THEME: FAMILY FESTIVALS

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SESSION TOPIC

Christmas

AIM

To think about the significance of light for Christians at Christmas, a festival which is all about the birth of Jesus, the light of the World. To consider ways in which we can show the qualities of 'light' in our lives.

SUITABLE FOR

Years 3 to 6

BIBLE BASE

1 John 1:5; Luke 2:32; John 8:12

YOU WILL NEED

A large sheet of paper divided into two columns – one labelled 'light' and the other 'dark', a note pad, a pencil, words which fit the categories 'light' or 'dark' (eg love, peace, kindness, fear, lies, fighting – include 'God' and 'Jesus') written on separate strips of paper, spare strips of paper, marker pen, Blu Tack, a candle, matches

BEFORE YOU START

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

INTRODUCTION

Show the sheet of paper with the two columns labelled 'light' and 'dark'. Talk about words linked with light and darkness (eg sunshine, shadows, lightning, night-time). Ask the pupils for their suggestions and jot them down as a reminder for yourself of what they have said.

Ask them to show you whether they think these words belong in the 'light' or the 'dark' column, in the following way. As you call out the words they have suggested they must either:

put their hands over their eyes to show the word belongs in the 'dark' column;

flick their hands open and closed in front of their eyes to show the word belongs in the 'light' column.

Introduce another way of thinking about light and darkness. Show the words on the cards you have prepared (love, fear etc) one at a time. Explain any they don't understand. Ask the pupils which column each card belongs in and then stick it in the appropriate place using Blu Tack.

BIBLE STORY

Explain that Christians believe that 'God' should go in the 'light' section because the Bible says: 'God is light, and in him there is no darkness at

all' (1 John 1:5, New Century Version). Ask the pupils what they think about this. How can God be like light?

Talk about Jesus, 'the light of the world'.

Explain that at Christmas time, Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus. The Bible says that when Jesus was six weeks old, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to dedicate him to God because that was the custom of his people.

There was an old man in the Temple called Simeon. When he saw Jesus, he took him in his arms. He said that Jesus would be a light for the people to see (Luke 2:32).

When he grew up, Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world. The person who follows me will never live in darkness' (John 8:12, New Century Version). Ask the pupils what they think about this. How can Jesus be like light? Give them a chance to think of some answers before providing answers.

The Bible shows that Jesus was a man who was loving and kind, a good man who helped people and spoke the truth, a man of joy and peace. (You could remind the pupils of some examples from Jesus' life).

So which side of the chart should we put 'Jesus' on? Christians believe that Jesus always showed these qualities of 'light' in his life and never those of 'darkness'.

APPLICATION

A Christian viewpoint

Light is special for Christians at Christmas time, because they remember the qualities of 'light' lived out by Jesus, as they celebrate his birth. Christians believe that following Jesus brings these qualities of 'light' into their lives as well.

For everyone

Look at the words you have stuck in the 'light' column. Ask the pupils which qualities of light others might see in them.

RESPONSE

Light the candle. Ask the pupils: If you go into a dark room and turn on the light, what happens to the darkness? Does the darkness ever put out the light? Christians believe that these qualities of 'light' are 'stronger' than the things that are on the 'dark' side, just like light is 'stronger' than darkness.

Look again at the words on the 'light' side. Ask the pupils to think about situations where they might be able to show 'light' in the darkness.

