

# Understanding Spirituality



## World

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THE CHURCH  
SCHOOLS OF  
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# Creation and wonder

## Opening

*Light the candle with these words:*

As we come together, we light this candle.

If you are Christian, you may think the light is like Jesus, shining out everywhere.

If you are a theist, you may think the light symbolises the presence of God in the world.

If you are an agnostic, the flickering light may make you wonder about the existence of a God.

If you are an atheist, the light may make you consider what meaning there is in the world.

Or the candle may have a particular meaning for you today.

## Stimulus

Have you ever thought about the world and all the variety of things in it?

Have you ever thought about how it grows and changes?

*This is a story from the Magician's Nephew by C.S. Lewis. It is his idea of what a Christian creation was like.*

## Response

I wonder, what do you think Nothing is like?

I wonder, what do you think the Voice is like?

I wonder, why do you think the voice turned Nothing into everything?

Who or what is the singer of creation for you? What are they like? Why and how do you think the world was created: God, chance? What is it that makes or keeps everything beautiful today – or is it not beautiful anymore?

On the paper on your table, you might want to draw something to represent what you have

reflected on today. Do you want to draw the world, or the voice speaking into the Nothing?

*After a few minutes, invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle – either on display or in the basket.*

*Closing thought/prayer:*

(Dear God)

Thank you for our world and all of creation. May we continue to recognise and be thankful for beauty in the world.

(Amen)

## Closing

*Ask one child to blow out the candle.*

As we blow out the candle, we imagine our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers spreading out, ready to go with us.

Let us go with hearts filled with love.

*Note:*

*Children may find it hard to think of something to reflect on. You could encourage them to draw the world and everything in it.*

# Creation and wonder

## Singing into Nothing

*from C.S.Lewis: 'The Magician's Nephew'*

Polly said, 'Oughtn't we to be nearly there now?'

'We do seem to be somewhere,' said Digory. 'At least I'm standing on something solid.'

'Why, so am I, now I that come to think of it,' said Polly. 'But why is it so dark? This is an empty world. This is Nothing.'

And really it was uncommonly like Nothing. There were no stars. It was so dark that they couldn't see one another at all and it made no difference whether you kept your eyes shut or opened. Under their feet there was a cool, flat something, which might have been earth, and was certainly not grass or wood. The air was cold and dry and there was no wind.

In the darkness something was happening at last. A voice had begun to sing. It was very far away and Digory found it hard to decide from what direction it was coming. Sometimes it seemed to be coming from all directions at once. Sometimes he almost thought it was coming out of the earth beneath them. There were no words, there was hardly even a tune, but it was, beyond comparison, the most beautiful noise he had ever heard. It was so beautiful he could hardly bear it.

Then, two wonders happened at the same moment. One was that the Voice was suddenly joined by other voices; more voices than you could possibly count: cold, tingling silvery voices. The second wonder was that the blackness overhead, all at once, was blazing with stars. They didn't come out gently one by one as they do on a summer evening. One moment there had been nothing but darkness; next moment a thousand, thousand points of light leaped out – single stars, constellations, and planets, brighter and bigger than any in our world. The new stars and the new voices began at exactly the same time. If you had seen and heard it, as Digory did, you would have felt quite certain that it was the stars themselves which were singing and that it was the First Voice, the deep one, which had made them appear and made them sing.

The Voice on the earth was now louder and more triumphant; but the voices in the sky, after singing loudly with it for a time, began to get fainter. And now something else was happening. Far away, and down near the horizon, the sky began to turn grey. A light wind, very fresh, began to stir. The sky, in that one place grew slowly and steadily paler.

You could see shapes of hills standing up dark against it. All the time the Voice went on singing. It was soon light enough for them to see one another's faces. The two children had open mouths and shining eyes; they were drinking in the sound, and they looked as if it reminded them of something.

The eastern sky changed from white to pink and from pink to gold. The Voice rose and rose, till all the air was shaking with it. And just as it swelled to the mightiest and most glorious sound it had yet produced, the sun arose. Digory had never seen such a sun.

You could imagine that it laughed for joy as it came up. And as its beams shot across the land the travellers could see for the first time what sort of place they were in. It was a valley of mere earth, rock and water; there was not a tree, not a bush, not a blade of grass to be seen. The earth was of many colours: they were fresh, hot and vivid. They made you feel excited; until you saw the Singer himself, and then you forgot everything else.

# All creation is important and best together

## Opening

*Light the candle with these words:*

As we come together, we light this candle.

If you are Christian, you may think the light is like Jesus, shining out everywhere.

If you are a theist, you may think the light symbolises the presence of God in the world.

If you are an agnostic, the flickering light may make you wonder about the existence of a God.

If you are an atheist, the light may make you consider what meaning there is in the world.

Or the candle may have a particular meaning for you today.

## Stimulus

Have you ever thought about the world and all the variety of things in it?

Have you ever thought about whether we need every part of creation in the world or if one part is better than another part?

This is a story about how God's rainbow came to appear in the sky.

*Read 'The Rainbow.'*

## Response

I wonder, why do you think all the colours wanted to be the bow in the sky?

I wonder, why do you think the colours had never really looked at each other properly before?

I wonder, why do you think all of our world, all of creation is needed?

In the story of Noah's ark, all of the animals are taken onto the ark so that all of creation will start again. No one animal is left behind. In this story, all of the colours are needed to make the most beautiful bow in the sky, to be a promise to Noah. What would happen if we didn't have one part of our world? Are we losing parts of our world today? How can we make sure we see everything in creation as important and beautiful?

Listen to the song (*For the Beauty of the Earth/Think of a World without any Flowers*).

On the paper on your table, you might want to draw or write something to represent what you have reflected on today. Perhaps you want to think about a part of creation that is in danger or you might want to draw a rainbow to remember all of the world is important.

*After a few minutes, invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle – either on display or in the basket.*

*Closing thought/prayer:*

(Dear God)

Thank you for all of creation and how beautiful everything is. May we look after all of the world, remembering that every part is equally important.

(Amen)

## Closing

*Ask one child to blow out the candle.*

As we blow out the candle, we imagine our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers spreading out, ready to go with us.

Let us go with hearts filled with love.

# All creation is important and best together

## The Rainbow

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God rubbed his hands in glee. The terrible Flood was over! There were the animals coming out of the ark – trotting, wobbling, slithering, flying or trundling down onto the mountaintop! There was Noah and his family building the altar to say thank you for their rescue! And God had a lovely surprise ready for them. Something that would finish off their adventure with a beautiful ending that would be remembered for thousands of years to come.

‘Oh, colours!’ called God. ‘It’s your big moment!’

The gorgeous colours appeared around God’s throne. But God could see something wasn’t right. Orange was scowling. Red was grumpy. Blue was kicking the floor. Green was in a strop. Yellow had turned his back on everyone else and Purple seemed about to burst into tears.

‘What in heaven is going on?’ demanded God.

The first colour to speak was Red.

‘You said you want to put a bow in the sky,’ she said. ‘Well I think it should be red. Just red. Nothing but red. Don’t mess about with this bunch of losers. Make it red.’

‘Why?’ asked God.

‘Red is the boss of the colours. People really notice red. Red is hot and bright – the colour for fire and blood and traffic signs. If you want this bow to be noticed, you need it to be red.’

‘I see,’ murmured God.

‘No! No! No! No!’ squeaked Yellow. ‘Your bow should be a beautiful yellow colour, Lord! Make it as yellow as the sunshine! As yellow as bananas! Make it bright and cheerful and shiny as me! Make it just yellow!’

‘You are very beautiful,’ agreed God.

‘But you’re not as important as me!’ Purple said pompously. ‘Look! It’s obvious your bow should be purple. Purple is the colour of emperors and kings. Purple is the sign of the most important. If you want power, pick pure purple.’

‘I do like purple,’ he said.

‘But you don’t want a poxy purple bow!’ shouted Green. ‘Wheee! Look at me! Imagine a green bow in the sky! Now that would be really wow! Green is so zingy! So fizzy! So fresh! Like a bottle of green limeade sprayed across the sky. Don’t mix me up with these other dull colours – make your bow green!’



## All creation is important and best together

‘Oh please,’ called Orange. ‘It’s so obvious that Orange is the colour you want. Orange like the sunrise. Orange is fruity and juicy and ripe! Make your bow orange, Lord!’

‘You are so, like, unhip, man,’ said Blue. ‘It is so like, obvious that God’s bow should be blue. Blue as the sea and sky, blue like rhythm ‘n’ blues. Blue like Sonic the Hedgehog blue. Blue is like the coolest colour in your box, Lord. I just know you’re going to make your bow blue, blue, blue.’

Instantly all the colours started shouting at each other.

‘Blue is boring!’

‘Red is rubbish!’

‘Purple’s pathetic!’

‘Yellow is so last year!’

‘Green is gross!’

‘Orange sucks!’

‘Make your bow Red! Blue! Yellow! Orange! Green! Purple!’

God raised one hand and spoke in a voice that no-one could disobey. ‘Be quiet.’

When the colours had settled down, trembling, God smiled at them.

‘You are all just what I want you to be. Each of you does a different job. Without you, I couldn’t do this most important job of all. I need to give my people a sign of my promise. I need them to know it is a perfect promise that will never be broken. I need them to know that it is for all people of all ages from all countries for all times. And so, my dear dear colours, I need you all. Please, just for a moment, look at each other through my eyes.’

The colours looked at each other and, now they looked through God’s eyes, saw how beautiful each of the others was. With a big smile, they stood together and together counted 3, 2, 1. Down below, Noah and all the animals looked up in amazement. For there, between heaven and earth shone a radiant multi-coloured rainbow. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple – all the colours, all different, all together.

# Making a difference

## Opening

*Light the candle with these words:*

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Or the candle may have a particular meaning for you today.

## Stimulus

Have you ever wondered what difference you make in the world? Have you ever felt too small and insignificant to do something?

There are times when we can feel like there are big problems in the world that we can't do anything about.

I wonder, has there ever been a time when you've felt like that?

Here's a story about what someone did when faced with a big problem in the world.

*Read 'The Starfish Story.'*

## Response

I wonder, how do you think the girl felt when she first saw all the starfish?

I wonder, what did the man think when the girl told him what she was doing?

I wonder, how do you think the girl felt when she looked at the starfish she hadn't thrown back?

Listen to the music. Is there anything in the world you want to change? What small difference could you make?

Now use the materials on your tables to respond to what we have thought about. You might want to

draw a starfish and write what you want to change or who you want to help on it.

*After a few minutes, invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle – either on display or in the basket.*

*Closing thought/prayer:*

(Dear God)

Help us to make whatever difference in the world that we can.

(Amen)

## Closing

*Ask one child to blow out the candle.*

As we blow out the candle, we imagine our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers spreading out, ready to go with us.

Let us go with hearts filled with love.



# Making a difference

## The Starfish Story

*adapted from The Star Thrower, by Loren Eiseley (1907 – 1977)*

Once there was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions.

Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small girl approaching. As the girl walked, she paused every so often and as she grew closer, the man could see that she was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The girl came closer still and the man called out, “Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?”

The young girl paused, looked up, and replied “Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can’t return to the sea by themselves. When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water.”

The old man replied, “But the beach goes on for miles. There must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. How can your effort make any difference?”

The girl bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she turned, smiled and said, “It made a difference to that one!”

# There is a time for everything

## Opening

*Light the candle with these words:*

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## Stimulus

Time passes. Tick tock, tick tock. The seasons change. Tick tock, tick tock. There is a time for everything.

This is a poem (from the Bible) about time and our lives.

*Read the passage: 'There is a time for everything'. Create a PowerPoint of accompanying images - each line should have a new slide on the PowerPoint.*

## Response

I wonder, which of these times was your favourite?

I wonder, which of these times was your least favourite?

I wonder, why do you think there is a time for everything?

This poem is about all the joys and sorrow in life. There is a time for everything – the difficult moments as well as the joyful ones. There may be some moments that we don't want to happen; there may be moments we would love to occur all the time, but in our lives there is a time for all of these.

The world is full of joys and sorrows, for each of us and for everyone. There is a time for each of these things because there is a time for all of these things. It is like the seasons – we need all of them to grow fully.

What is today a time for, for you? For your friends? For others in the world?

*Give a few moments for reflection.*

You might want to use the materials on your tables to respond to what we have thought about. There is a time for everything. What is today a time for?

*After a few minutes, invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle – either on display or in the basket.*

*Closing thought/prayer:*

(Dear God)

Thank you that there is a time for everything. Thank you for the joys in our lives and help us find comfort in the sorrows.

(Amen)

## Closing

*Ask one child to blow out the candle.*

As we blow out the candle, we imagine our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers spreading out, ready to go with us.

Let us go with hearts filled with love.

*Note:*

*Some children may not want to remember difficult times in their lives, especially if they are recent or ongoing events. If so, they may find it easier to think about the seasons instead of their own lives.*



# There is a time for everything

## A Time for Everything

*Taken from Ecclesiastes 3*

There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens:

a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,  
a time to injure and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,  
a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,  
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,  
a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,  
a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,  
a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.

There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens.

There is a time for everything.

What is today a time for?

# God's power over Earth

## Opening

*Light the candle with these words:*

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## Stimulus

Have you ever been in the centre of a storm?

Have you heard the rain lashing at the windows and the panes of glass shake in the wind?

This is a story from Christianity about the power of storms, and of God.

*Read the story 'Jesus Calms the Storm.'*

## Response

I wonder, how do you think the disciples felt being in the storm?

I wonder, how do you think the disciples felt when Jesus calmed the storm?

I wonder, why do you think storms happen and can harm people?

In this story, the disciples are afraid of the storm – they fear their lives are at risk and can't understand why Jesus is still asleep. When Jesus wakes, he is more powerful than the storm and can calm the waves.

I wonder, what are the storms in your life? What are you afraid of? As we have seen from this story, storms are scary. But if you ask for help, we can be helped out of the storm.

Have a few moments to reflect.

What are you afraid of at the moment? Who do you want to ask for help?

*Give a few moments for reflection.*

You might want to use the materials on your tables to respond to what we have thought about. Perhaps you could draw the storm, or write a prayer asking for help.

*After a few minutes, invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle – either on display or in the basket.*

*Closing thought/prayer:*

(Dear God)

Help us not to be afraid when we are facing difficulties in our life, but to ask for help in facing and calming our own storms.

(Amen)

## Closing

*Ask one child to blow out the candle.*

As we blow out the candle, we imagine our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers spreading out, ready to go with us.

Let us go with hearts filled with love.



# God's power over Earth

## Jesus Calms a Storm

*Taken from Mark 4: 35-41*

Jesus had been teaching and preaching to crowds all day. He was exhausted and needed a rest. That evening he said to his disciples, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they left the crowd, headed to the shore of the lake and got into a small wooden boat. Suddenly the wind began to whip around them, dark clouds gathered overhead and rain lashed against their faces. The waves began to spill over into the boat and it started to fill with water. Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The disciples couldn't believe he could just sleep through such a disaster. They woke him up and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die? Save us, please!"

Jesus stood up and commanded the wind, "Be quiet!" and he said to the waves, "Be still!" The wind died down, and there was a great calm. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Why are you frightened? Do you still have no faith?"

The disciples were terribly afraid and began to say to one another, "Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

# Not using all our resources

## Opening

*Light the candle with these words:*

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## Stimulus

Have you ever found anywhere peaceful in the world?

I wonder how you found being in this place?

I wonder what you would think if other people took over this peaceful place and changed it?

This is a story from Christianity about a peaceful place needing protection.

Read the story 'Jesus Goes to the Temple'.

## Response

I wonder, what do you think a peaceful place in the world should be like?

I wonder, do you think Jesus did the right thing to drive the merchants out?

I wonder, do you think humans try and turn anywhere in the world into somewhere to make money?

In this story, Jesus is angry that this important, peaceful place was no longer set aside for praying to God. People were not looking after the world in the way he thought they should.

Have you ever been in a place and found it spoiled? Perhaps it was covered in litter, perhaps people were shouting and making others feel scared, perhaps people were trying to make money?

Have a few moments to reflect. What places do you

want to protect in the world? How will you look after the world and protect these places?

*Give a few moments for reflection.*

You might want to use the materials on your tables to respond to what we have thought about.

*After a few minutes, invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle – either on display or in the basket.*

*Closing thought/prayer:*

(Dear God)

Help us to look after the world. Ensure we don't use up all our resources or spoil places for our own benefit, instead of looking after them.

(Amen)

## Closing

*Ask one child to blow out the candle.*

As we blow out the candle, we imagine our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers spreading out, ready to go with us.

Let us go with hearts filled with love.



# Not using all our resources

## Jesus Goes to the Temple

*Adapted from Luke 19: 45-48*

It was the holy festival of Passover in Jerusalem. Thousands of people had flocked to the city to spend time together with their families and to celebrate the festival. The focus of the events would be worshipping and praying to God in the temple.

However, for some people the focus was not on prayer. For them, the crowds of people provided a great opportunity for making money. In the courtyard they set up tables of goods to sell. They offered to change money for a huge profit and sold animals and birds that could be freed or sacrificed as a symbol of the occasion.

When Jesus entered the temple, he was shocked. He began to push their goods off the tables and drive the merchants out from the courtyard, shouting:

“My father’s temple should be a house of prayer. But you have turned it into a place for thieves!”

Some of the leaders were angry with Jesus for doing this. However, many others wondered about Jesus’s actions and they listened to what he had to say. They wondered, “Is there nowhere in this world which remains cared for or are we turning every place into a money-making scheme.”