

Class Collective Worship



Supporting primary pupils' wellbeing in
the pandemic

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Autumn 2020



www.csoc.org.uk

taking childhood spirituality seriously

Godly Play ^{UK}

www.godlyplay.uk

A lit candle with a bright flame is on the left, and a colorful rainbow is on the right. The background is a mix of blue and white.

Introduction

This resource for primary schools provides sessions for reflective class collective worship. They are written specifically for Autumn 2020 to support the wellbeing and spiritual needs of pupils returning to school after lockdown.

The themes and stories are chosen to resonate with some of the challenges arising for children in the coronavirus pandemic. In each session, children are invited to wonder about the positives and negatives in their experiences - what they have lost and found during this time.

This form of class worship is inclusive, open to children (and teachers) of all faiths and none. It is designed to create a different time and space in the classroom for reflection. Using the insights of [Godly Play](#), the sessions aim to provide a careful balance of consistent structure and freedom. This is achieved in three ways:

- 1) The structure helps you to create a reflective atmosphere and a safe space. Children are invited to participate and find meaning in the way that is right for them.
- 2) The story provides children with a stimulus to make connections with their own thoughts and experiences: past, present and future.
- 3) The time for response gives freedom for children to respond imaginatively: verbally, to 'I wonder' questions, and non-verbally, drawing or creating what they need to. This time and space to play through their thoughts is particularly important for children's spiritual wellbeing.

The sessions are easy to pick up and use. We recommend allowing 20-25 minutes for each session, (although a little longer allows more time for the children's creative response). For each session you will just need:

- A copy of the plan and story from this pack.
- A candle and matches and a snuffer if you have one. (Battery-powered candles with a flickering flame, or a video of a candle are options if your school does not allow you to light a real candle.)
- Paper and pencils, or other open-ended creative resources (play-doh, collage, construction materials, etc.)



We suggest you watch this 10 minute [information video](#). It provides simple guidance about what to do from start to finish and tips to help you feel prepared and confident to lead class collective worship in this reflective way.

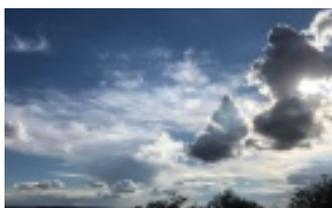


Overview of stories and themes



Stuck on the Ark: seeing signs of hope in a difficult time

The story of Noah's Ark, but from the point of view of Mrs Noah (Naamah). She recalls the difficulties of staying in the ark for so long, but also thinks about the signs of hope she has seen, like the rainbow.



Watching the Clouds: dealing with worries

A story about two animals watching the clouds. Squirrel finds it hard to see the dark clouds – the things that worry them – but Rabbit explains they can just let the clouds, like their worries, pass over them.



Sunflowers: coping with guilt and grief while recognising new life

Deepak grows a sunflower but eventually it dies; he worries he didn't look after it enough. His Gran helps him recognise that it wasn't his fault, that all life comes to an end, and the sunflower has left them seeds that will continue to bring joy and new life.



The Exile and Return: experiencing change and making new discoveries

This is a story from the Christian and Jewish faiths, when the People of God were forced to leave Jerusalem and sent to a new, strange place. They were really sad but made new discoveries. When they could eventually return, some people chose to stay.

More sessions will be available soon.

Depending on the needs of your class, it may be helpful for them to return to similar themes for reflection. At the end of each worship there is a suggestion of a picture book that could be used, or a class collective worship session available in further free resource packs.

To use one of the picture books, light the candle and say the opening words, but replace the story with one of these picture books. Then ask two wondering questions, followed by a time for personal, creative reflection. Finish the worship by putting out the candle and saying the closing words.

For these stories you may wish to use these wondering questions:

- I wonder, which part of the story do you like best?
- I wonder, have you ever come close to something like this?

More collective worships in this style are available on the [CSOC website](https://www.csoc.org.uk).

More information about training and resources for Godly Play and Children's Spirituality are available on www.godlyplay.uk.

We would really value your feedback. Please get in touch to tell us about your use of these resources, your experience of them and the response of your pupils. Send your comments to rebecca@godlyplay.uk.

A lit candle with a bright flame is on the left, and a vibrant rainbow is on the right. The background is a soft blue.

Stuck on the Ark

Difficulties of being stuck at home and signs of hope

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 believe in God, you may think the light symbolises the presence of God in the world.

If you are not sure about your beliefs, the flickering light may make you wonder about the existence of God.

If you don't believe in God, 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

I wonder what it might have been like being stuck on a boat with just your family and a whole zoo-full of animals?

This is the story of Noah's Ark from the Bible, but told from Mrs Noah's point of view...

Read the story 'Stuck on the Ark.'

Response

Choose 2 or 3 I wonder questions to ask, that you feel comfortable with and you think are most suitable for the needs of your class. Take 3-5 responses for each question. If no one has anything to share aloud, give about 10 seconds pause for personal reflection. Resist the temptation to fill the gaps with your own answers!

I wonder, which part of the story do you like best?

I wonder what Naamah found hard about being on the ark?

I wonder what Naamah enjoyed about being on the ark?

I wonder, what might it feel like to see a rainbow?

I wonder, have you ever come close to something like this?

It must have been difficult to have been on the ark for so long in all that rain. Naamah had been scared and worried but now she was hopeful too.

Begin a time of creative response by inviting the children to think about what they need to do to reflect today.

On some paper, you might want to draw a boat and write some of the things that might be difficult if you were stuck on an ark. Or you could draw a rainbow and write some things that you hope for in the future. Or you might want to sit and think, or to create something different – whatever is right for you today.

After a few minutes, you might like to invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle – either open to display to others, or folded to keep it personal. They don't need to share it with others.

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Stuck on the Ark

Difficulties of being stuck at home and signs of hope

Closing

Sit. Wait to create a moment of stillness. Perhaps suggest looking at the candle.

(Dear God)

Please help us to manage when there are difficult times. May we always find signs of hope.

(Amen)

Ask one child to blow or snuff out the candle.

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

Let us go with hearts filled with love.

Further resources

For further reflection on this topic, you may wish to use:

'Matilda and Theo: Looking after our lost and found things in the time of coronavirus' *The Australian Childhood Foundation* <https://www.childhood.org.au/app/uploads/2020/04/MatildaTheoLR.pdf>

A lit candle with a bright flame is on the left, and a colorful rainbow is on the right. The background is a mix of blue and white.

Stuck on the Ark

Naamah (or Mrs Noah as the animals called her) sighed. They had been stuck inside this boat for such a long time. It had kept them safe, but...

‘Roar! Squawk! Ribbett! Oo oo ah ah ah! Howl!’

“Oh be quiet!”

That was Noah. The animals were squabbling again and even her patient husband was getting fed up. 40 days and 40 nights had been a long time. Even the animals who had been really well behaved with each other at the beginning were finding it tough being stuck in the same place. It was a good thing the floods were nearly gone. She was getting worried about the lions. She wasn’t sure she could stop them eating the zebras for much longer...

Naamah looked around her. The water had been so dark and scary in the storms, but now it sparkled in the sunshine. Everything had disappeared under this water, but at last it was drying up. There was some land again. But would this world they were returning to be the same?

Most of the people they knew hadn’t been rescued from this flood. She wouldn’t see them again. The currents in the water had even changed the shape of the land – some places she thought she knew well already looked really different, and she hadn’t expected that. At least the stars were still in the sky; that had been reassuring her for a while.

Just then, there was a bump and the ark seemed to stop. Naamah turned to look at what had been her home for the last few weeks. It had been hard, but some things had been good. The animals had helped each other in new ways, like when the giraffes had helped rescue the snails, who’d slid down the side of the ark and almost into the water! She had liked having more time with her family too. She felt she knew her sons a bit better now, though she was worried about Shem. He had been particularly grumpy and she wasn’t sure why.

As Naamah stood there, it began to rain. “Not more water,” she thought. “I can’t cope with any more troubles or floods.”

Suddenly, Naamah heard her husband call from the roof of the ark.

“Hey, you lot, all of you, look!”

Naamah followed his pointed finger and gazed upwards.



Stuck on the Ark

Wow!

Where the sunlight met the rain, an arch of colours had appeared in the sky. The rainbow almost seemed to glow. Even though it was raining again, now, with the sun, there was hope. Everything seemed changed by the rainbow's beautiful colours.

Then, it was as if she could hear a voice. Was it in her head or from the heavens? Usually only Noah heard God, but now it seemed everyone, even all the animals, could hear something.

“Here is my rainbow. I promise to look after the world.”

Naamah looked again at the mountain tops, the sparkling sea and the rainbow painted in the sky. For the first time in a while, she smiled.



A lit candle with a bright flame is on the left, and a vibrant rainbow is on the right. The background is a soft blue.

Watching the Clouds

Dealing with worries: noticing they are there, but letting them pass

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 believe in God, you may think the light symbolises the presence of God in the world.

If you are not sure about your beliefs, the flickering light may make you wonder about the existence of God.

If you don't believe in God, 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

I wonder if you ever get worried?

This is a story about discovering shapes in the clouds.

Read the story 'Watching the Clouds.'

Response

Choose 2 or 3 I wonder questions to ask, that you feel comfortable with and you think are most suitable for the needs of your class. Take 3-5 responses for each question. If no one has anything to share aloud, give about 10 seconds pause for personal reflection. Resist the temptation to fill the gaps with your own answers!

I wonder, which part of the story do you like best?

I wonder, what shapes might the fluffy clouds be?

I wonder, what shapes might the dark clouds be?

I wonder, why do you think Squirrel didn't want to watch the clouds?

I wonder, have you ever come close to something like this?

It's not always easy to stop and notice what is going on in our lives. For Squirrel, it was scary to notice the dark clouds, but soon they always passed.

Begin a time of creative response by inviting the children to think about what they need to do to reflect today.

On some paper, you might want to draw some clouds. Perhaps you could write some of the worries you have at the moment in the clouds? Notice they are there and then let them pass. Or you might want to sit and think, or to create something different – whatever is right for you today.

After a few minutes, you might like to invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle – either open to display to others, or folded to keep it personal.



Watching the Clouds

Dealing with worries: noticing they are there, but letting them pass

Closing

Sit. Wait to create a moment of stillness. Perhaps suggest looking at the candle.

(Dear God)

Thank you that we are not alone when we face difficult things. Help us to only notice our worries and let them pass.

(Amen)

Ask one child to blow or snuff out the candle.

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

Let us go with hearts filled with love.

Further resources

For further reflection on this topic, you may wish to use:

'The Huge Bag of Worries' by Virginia Ironside.

A lit candle with a bright flame is on the left, and a vibrant rainbow is on the right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

Watching the Clouds

“What are you doing?” Squirrel shouted, as he bounded out of the tree and over to Rabbit, who was lying in the long waves of grass. “I thought you were busy today?”

“I’m looking at the clouds, Squirrel,” replied Rabbit. “Why don’t you come and join me?”

Squirrel flicked her bushy tail slightly and her eyes darted around for a couple of seconds. Could she stop for just a minute? Taking a deep breath, she slowly slid to the floor and turned to gaze at the sky above.

“I don’t see anything!” Squirrel grumbled.

“Just wait,” replied Rabbit calmly.

Squirrel looked towards the sky again. The clouds never stayed still; they were changing and travelling across the sky.

“Do you see that small, puffy cloud over there?” asked Rabbit, pointing to a spot in the sky just above her long ears. “I noticed it a short time ago. It reminds me of a horse.”

“It looks more like a duck to me!” remarked Squirrel, giving Rabbit a cheeky grin. “But I begin to see what you mean about the shapes. You see that cloud just coming past my tree? I think it looks like a delicious cake!”

It was quite relaxing and Squirrel was just beginning to enjoy herself when suddenly the sky became darker. The clouds overhead were no longer fluffy; they were dark and menacing, threatening to pour down with rain.

“I don’t like that one Rabbit,” Squirrel spoke quietly. “It reminds me of a monster that’s going to eat me up... And that one... that looks like...”

Squirrel buried her face in her paws. She didn’t want to think about that. Why had she stopped to watch the clouds?

Rabbit put her arm around her friend. “Squirrel, I know it can be hard to see the dark clouds, but look again now! They’ve already passed over our heads.”

Squirrel peeped out of one eye. Rabbit was right. The sky wasn’t quite so dark anymore. The monster was already far away and didn’t seem to have quite such sharp teeth. Above them now were a mix of different clouds, one of which looked like a balloon. All were there for a few moments and then they were gone.

“Try not to get worried Squirrel,” spoke Rabbit softly. “Just notice the shapes are there and then watch them pass over our heads. The dark clouds never last.”



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 believe in God, you may think the light symbolises the presence of God in the world.

If you are not sure about your beliefs, the flickering light may make you wonder about the existence of God.

If you don't believe in God, the light may make you consider the meaning there is in the world.

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

Stimulus

I wonder how you feel when something comes to an end?

This is a story about the life of a sunflower.

Read the story 'Sunflowers.'

Response

Choose 2 or 3 I wonder questions to ask, that you feel comfortable with and you think are most suitable for the needs of your class. Take 3-5 responses for each question. If no one has anything to share aloud, give about 10 seconds pause for personal reflection. Resist the temptation to fill the gaps with your own answers!

I wonder, which part of the story do you like best?

I wonder, what do you think Deepak will remember about the sunflower?

I wonder how you feel when something ends?

I wonder how you feel when something begins?

I wonder, have you ever come close to something like this?

It was hard for Deepak when his sunflower died. He worried he hadn't looked after it enough and his sunflower had gone. But in another way the

sunflower was still there. Now Deepak had happy memories of it, and he looked forward to the seeds bringing joy and new life.

Begin a time of creative response by inviting the children to think about what they need to do to reflect today.

On some paper, you might want to draw a flower. Perhaps you might want to draw some seeds too. Maybe the colours on your flower could remind you of joyful memories. Maybe the seeds could remind you of new things we receive. Or you might want to sit and think, or to create something different – whatever is right for you today.

After a few minutes, you might like to invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle – either open to display to others, or folded to keep it personal.

Closing

Sit. Wait to create a moment of stillness. Perhaps suggest looking at the candle.

(Dear God)

Please help us find comfort when we are uncertain about change. Thank you that there are always new discoveries to be made.

(Amen)

Ask one child to blow or snuff out the candle.

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

Let us go with hearts filled with love.

Further resources

For further reflection on this topic, you may wish to use:

'Goodbye Mog' by Judith Kerr



Sunflowers

“Gran! Help! The sunflower...”

Deepak rattled the door and tried to get outside.

* * * * *

Deepak had cared for this sunflower for months now. Mr Nazir from down the road had given all the neighbours a small seed. They had planted theirs in an old margarine tub and watered, watched and waited. It had been so exciting to see the shoot emerge out of the soil and then the leaves open.

Over a couple of weeks, the sunflower had continued to grow. It was still only a few centimetres high but it had lots of leaves. They had dug a hole in the ground and Deepak had watched carefully as his Gran placed the sunflower in and pressed down on the soil.

Days, weeks and months passed. The sunflower had grown taller and stronger – taller than Deepak, taller than his sister, and even taller than his Gran! His sunflower was taller than the others outside different houses on the road.

Then had come the bud. Deepak had watched as the petals unfurled into the vivid yellow flower. Bees had wandered over the flower, collecting its pollen, and butterflies had rested for a second on its leaves. Occasionally, on a hot day, the leaves had seemed to wither in the heat, but Deepak had always noticed quickly. Some more water had always helped it to recover.

* * * * *

Now Gran followed Deepak’s gaze and looked at the sunflower. Its head had drooped, although they had only watered it earlier that morning, and the petals seemed to be drying up and turning brown. A few petals had already fallen to the floor.

“Gran, what has happened to my sunflower? I was taking care of it. Did I not give it enough water? What did I do?”

Gran spoke gently. “You did everything you could. It’s not anything you’ve done. Sunflowers don’t keep growing forever. We have to enjoy them while they last. But look! Look in the centre!”

Gran lifted him up so he could see the middle of the sunflower where the bees and other insects had often visited. He could see something but wasn’t sure what.

“The flower may have died, but its seeds are still with us. For every beginning there is an ending, and for every ending there is a new beginning.”



A lit candle with a bright flame is on the left, and a colorful rainbow is on the right. The background is a mix of blue and white.

The Exile and Return

Dealing with change, and making new discoveries

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 believe in God, you may think the light symbolises the presence of God in the world.

If you are not sure about your beliefs, the flickering light may make you wonder about the existence of God.

If you don't believe in God, the light may make you consider the meaning there is in the world.

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

Stimulus

Change is always happening. Sometimes we might be really excited about a change; sometimes we might be really worried or sad.

I wonder what changes you have experienced recently?

This is a story from the Bible about when God's people were forced to leave their home.

Read the story 'The Exile and Return.'

Response

Choose 2 or 3 I wonder questions to ask, that you feel comfortable with and you think are most suitable for the needs of your class. Take 3-5 responses for each question. If no one has anything to share aloud, give about 10 seconds pause for personal reflection. Resist the temptation to fill the gaps with your own answers!

I wonder, which part of the story do you like best?

I wonder when God's people felt sad?

I wonder when God's people felt happy?

I wonder, which part of the story is the most important part?

I wonder, would you have decided to go back or to stay?

I wonder, have you ever come close to something like this?

The People of God experienced some really difficult times. They were forced to move away

from their home. They had to live and pray differently in a strange place. But they also made new discoveries. They found that God was still with them, and some then decided to stay in the new place.

Begin a time of creative response by inviting the children to think about what they need to do to reflect today.

You might want to draw a wall and a city and think of things that might make you sad to leave behind. Or you might want to draw a new place and write some of the discoveries you might make when things change. Or you might want to sit and think, or to create something different – whatever is right for you today.

After a few minutes, you might like to invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle – either open to display to others, or folded to keep it personal.

A lit candle with a bright flame is on the left, and a colorful rainbow is on the right. The background is a mix of blue and white.

The Exile and Return

Dealing with change, and making new discoveries

Closing

Sit. Wait to create a moment of stillness. Perhaps suggest looking at the candle.

(Dear God)

Thank you for the joy of life. Help us to recognise the seeds that others leave us.

(Amen)

Ask one child to blow or snuff out the candle.

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

Let us go with hearts filled with love.

Further resources

For further reflection on this topic, you may wish to use:

'The Paper Dolls' by Julia Donaldson

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The Exile and Return

The People of God lived in a place called Jerusalem. The city had a temple built for God. The people knew God was in the temple, but they thought it was the only place you could pray to God. Around Jerusalem there was a huge wall. The people felt safe because they thought the wall around their city would protect them from everything.

Then their city was attacked. Their enemies tried to break down the wall. There was fighting, people starved, and it was terrible for a long time. But finally, those enemies went away.

Then other enemies came from Babylon. They attacked Jerusalem. They did break down the wall. They stormed into the city and set fire to the temple. The Babylonian soldiers made most of God's people leave Jerusalem. As they were marched away, all they could see was smoke. They wondered if they would ever see their city and its temple again.

The people were taken a long way away to Babylon. They were in exile: they could not go home.

God's people sang sad songs. They could not go back, but they dreamed of Jerusalem and of the temple where they used to pray to God. Now when they prayed together, they turned to look towards Jerusalem.

But after a long while, the people discovered that God was still with them. When they were together, and read God's stories and prayed in this strange, far-away place, God was there too. Some people set up shops, others worked for the king of Babylon. They almost got used to being in a strange land.

Suddenly a different king, the King of Persia, took over Babylon. This king said some of God's people were allowed go back to Jerusalem at last! When they got there, they began to build the temple again. Then more people went back, and they built the walls around the city again. They had been away so long, it was not quite the same, but it was good to be back home and to pray to God in the temple.

But do you know what happened? Not all of the people came back. Some decided to stay in Babylon. Now they knew that, even in a strange place, God is there too.

This is an abbreviated and adapted version of "Exile and Return" in The Complete Guide to Godly Play, Vol. 2, by Jerome Berryman, 2017, Church Publishing.

