

Approaches to the Creation Story

There are many ways pupils can be encouraged to respond personally to the Creation story through creative writing, art, drama and music, we leave you to devise those for yourselves! The ideas which are contained in this section are concerned principally with linking RE and Eco-School materials, or with PSHE, Science and Geography. Schools may like to select from these suggestions the style of approach that fits most comfortably with their own curriculum needs and planning.

(1) The Creation Action Plan

The Creation Action Plan is devised as in the first instance, a one lesson follow-up to the Creation Story, but one with far reaching implications:

The Creation story tells us that people have a special responsibility to look after the world. Discuss with pupils how they and their family/class can fulfil this responsibility in their own personal environment – possessions, pets, relationships etc. Either in small groups or as a class create a “Creation Action Plan” filling in the template:

- C** – Conserve..... (e.g. fuel)
- R** – Recycle.....(e.g. glass)
- E** – Energy.....(e.g. energy saving)
- A** – Act(e.g. act as a class to....)
- T** – Transform.....(e.g. transform your wild garden)
- I** – Inform.....(e.g. inform families of school recycling schemes)
- O** – Only.....(e.g. only buy fair trade products where possible)
- N** – Never.....(e.g. never pick wild flowers)

Like all good action plans, you don't just write it, you implement it, review it etc! The Action Plan can be taken to the **Eco School Council**, or the **School Council** to consider the suggestions. If you do not have a Council in place, the children could be asked to present the action plan to some representatives from the **governing body** – if you follow this route, the governors must be prepared to take the plan seriously and agree to at least some of the points being actioned, or it will present a poor image to the children.

Geography Link: **QCA Geography Unit 21**, based on the book “**Window**” by **Jeannie Baker**, could be linked to this theme by encouraging pupils to look closely at their school locality and write the Action Plan based on their observations.

(2) The Tree of Life

This suggestion is envisaged as at least a half term topic:

The tree of life occurs twice in the imagery of the Bible: in Genesis chapter 2 verse 9 and chapter 3 verse 22 it stands at the centre of the Garden of Eden; in Revelation chapter 22 verse 2 it stands in the centre of the visionary new Jerusalem where its leaves are used for the healing of the nations. The tree is in fact a potent symbol in many different faiths and you will find it used as a representation of the cosmos, of the mystery of creation (tree produces seed which produces tree which produces seed which.....), of fertility, of wealth, and of wisdom and understanding (Buddha's bodhi tree). A tree can thus be a very useful image to use to discuss both the mystery of creation and one's own personal growth.

In the chart below the life cycle of the tree is matched to AT2/spiritual, moral, social and cultural development style questions on the pupils' own lives in addition to specific RE suggestions. It is intended that the two columns of the chart should be taught in parallel, thus inviting the pupils to think about themselves as part of the larger cycle of the natural world, and other elements of the natural world (such as the tree) also having their place and "rights". For reasons that will become obvious on reading the content, this approach fits well into the second half of a Spring Term and could be used as a lead in to Easter. Teachers will probably wish to develop different elements of the Tree of Life theme, according to their own interests, availability of resources or the age and ability of their pupils.

**Links may be made with Science SC2 "Life processes and living things" and QCA Science Units 3B and 5B. This is also an opportunity to include elements of the non-statutory PSHE curriculum e.g. 1a, 1b, 1d, 2a, 2e, 2f, 2j.*

Looking after Trees	Looking after Yourself
<p>Collect different tree seeds (real/pictures). Identify them and match them with their trees. You may have time to plant and grow some of the seeds. Alternatively, if it is the right time of the year, you could bring in a horse chestnut twig in bud and watch it open.</p> <p>Discuss together/research: How are trees different from each other? How does a tree alter as it grows? How long does it take a tree to grow? How long does a tree live? If you are undertaking this project in Spring, take some stethoscopes out into the grounds and listen to the sap rising in the trees (silver birch trees are particularly noisy!).</p>	<p>Discussion starters: In what ways are people different from each other? What are the difficulties and what are the advantages of everybody being different from each other? How do you change as you grow?</p> <p>Read together the parable of the Mustard Seed in Matthew chapter 13 verses 31-32. Think about small things that have great potential and what hopes and ambitions friends and family will have for a newborn baby as it begins its life.</p>
<p>Create a display of two large trees</p>	<p>The second tree represents a person.</p>

<p>(including root systems). On the first one label how the parts of the tree work together to support the whole system e.g. (1) roots taking up water (2) water travels up the bark (3) leaves taking in air (4) leaves making food from air and water by photosynthesis. Demonstrate the interdependency of the different elements of the tree</p> <p>Add a birds-eye diagram of a tree stump showing tree rings, and find out how a layer of bark is added each year. If you have real stumps or photographs available to you, try some tree-ring dating.</p>	<p>Get the children to each add their name to the trunk.</p> <p>Discussion Starters: What are some of the things a person needs to grow? (Make sure you are thinking in holistic terms, not just the mundane and practical.) Add the suggestions to the second tree's root system. Who do we need, and who needs us?</p> <p>Give each pupil a tree ring diagram and invite them to fill the diagram in by listing things that were important to them as a baby at the core, then to go outwards in (five or ten year?) steps, listing at each juncture what they expect to be important in their lives. Add these to the display.</p>
<p>The role of a tree in its local and worldwide environment: explore the different uses of trees at an appropriate level;</p> <p>(1) Trees as the lungs of the planet, taking out carbon dioxide and renewing oxygen levels.</p> <p>(2) Breaking the force of the wind and rain, thus preventing soil erosion etc.</p> <p>(3) Fruit and other resources such as rubber, medicine. (Remembering trees provide food for many forms of wildlife)</p> <p>(4) Wildlife habitat.</p> <p>(5) Natural beauty</p> <p>Add written work, diagrams and photographs to the tree display to show the importance of trees and the loss to the world if trees are destroyed.</p>	<p>Your place in your environment. Look at how people inter-relate in their environments – who do you rely on (from your immediate family to the sugar-cane grower in the West Indies.....)? Perhaps carry out a “store cupboard check” to see where all that you eat, or wear originates from. You may wish to use some of the materials supplied by charities to open up such issues as child labour in India, if you think this is appropriate.</p> <p>Who relies on you? What things do you do, or hope to do, in your life that affect others? Add your findings to the second tree diagram, so as to reflect the first tree.</p>
<p>The tree dies Collect together reasons why human beings fell trees e.g: to free land for crops or grazing, or for house building and roadways; for fuel; for furniture manufacture and building work; for paper manufacture. Of course, trees also die as part of their own natural life cycle or in natural disasters without help from us!</p>	<p>New Life What signs of “new life” or “new growth” are there amongst pupils in your class or people near to them e.g. a new baby in the family, someone recovering from illness, someone starting a new job or going away to university, moving into a new home, or looking forward to moving to a new school or class? Plan a new life map,</p>

Make a list of products made from wood, then ask the pupils to make their own list of everything they have at home or in the classroom which is made of wood. **Could anything they have found have been made out of alternative materials? What percentage of the wood products is (almost) immediately disposed of once bought** (e.g. packaging)? Discuss measures that can be taken to prevent the waste of wood products (e.g. recycling) that the class might be able to implement, or persuade other people to implement. Do it!

The tree lives

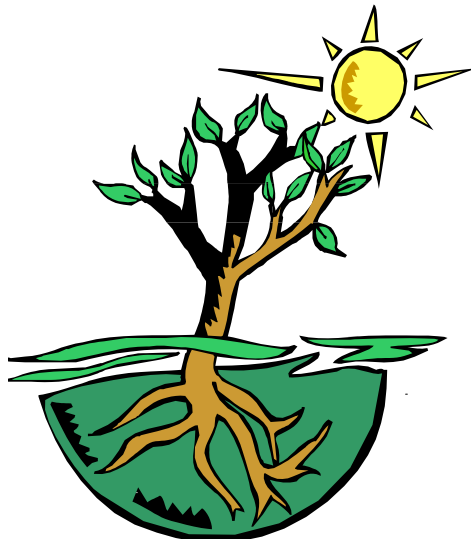
If you are following this project in Spring or early Summer, take the class outside to undertake a survey of seedling trees which you will readily find springing up around established trees, even in cracks in the pavement. You may even be able to find a “dead looking tree” springing back to life, or a stump gradually rotting away and insects and worms feeding its goodness back into the earth. Map your school grounds or village to show where there are established trees and “signs of new life”. You may even wish to consider transposing small saplings to sites where they have a better chance of growth or where you can “protect” them.

similar to your sapling map.

The greatest Christian message of new life from death is obviously the **Easter Story**. The cross, which of course was made of wood, is a strong visual symbol in Christianity and can be used in several different ways to retell the narrative of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the belief that this brings new life to those who believe in him. As well as a simple retelling of the story, you may like to use one of the following:

- The CMS pack “A-Cross the World” looks at the how the powerful symbolism of the cross is adapted to different cultures
- Undertaking a “pilgrimage” to your local church to follow the Stations of the Cross if they have them.
- A guided meditation on the resurrection appearances, with creative follow up.
- “The Tale of Three Trees”, an evocative folktale which you can find retold by Angela Elwell Hunt and published by Lion. ISBN 0745917437

(3) Tr



You can find a version of the Song of Caedmon in Come and Praise volume 1, number 13. This theme can be linked with RE strand "People"(C) or "Key Figures" (N) as well as Music and Literacy

The story of Caedmon:

Caedmon worked as a herdsman for the monks of Whitby Abbey in about A.D. 670. He was a shy and lonely person, he had had no education, and he had the most dreadful stutter. At special banquets in the monastery it was the custom for everyone present to take a turn at singing or playing an instrument to entertain the rest of the guests. Caedmon was terrified as his turn to sing approached, and he knew that his stutter would make the whole thing totally humiliating for him – so he ran away back to the shed with his animals where he hid.

Caedmon was ashamed and miserable as he fell asleep in the straw, but as he slept, he heard someone calling his name:

"Caedmon" the voice called "sing to me now!"

"Wwwwhat shall I ssssing?" stuttered poor Caedmon in amazement.

"Sing to me the song of the whole of Creation" said the voice.

To his great amazement, Caedmon found that, yes, he really could sing – but not only that, wonderful new songs came into his head about God and Creation. He sang everything without a stutter – he was completely cured!

Abbess Hilda was in charge of Caedmon's monastery. She heard him singing his wonderful creation songs and knew that this superb new talent was a gift from God. She made sure that Caedmon was taught more about the stories of the Bible, and he began to compose many beautiful hymns to tell the people the story of God.

Unfortunately very little remains of all Caedmon's songs, but part of his hymn of praise to God as Creator has been turned into a modern hymn, which is now known as "The Song of Caedmon".

Working with the Song of Caedmon

As well as learning about Caedmon's story and investigating the meaning of the song, you could use his story sensitively as a way to talk about personal feelings of embarrassment (here caused by stuttering).

The musical style of the Song of Caedmon will not appeal to all children, as, even in its Come and Praise version, it reflects the age in which it was first written. Discuss together what a more appropriate style for today might look like, and write something together e.g. a rap or chant to which each child could contribute a line in the Anglo-Saxon feasting style:

The whole world belongs to God

Sun shining
God made it
Water splashing
God made it
Ducks dabbling
God made it

.....
.....

Trees waving
God made it
The whole world belongs to God

The song(s) and story (perhaps as a drama) could come together in a class led act of collective worship.



(4) St Francis and the Wolf – the Steward of God

When one thinks of a saint at home with the world of nature it is always St Francis of Assisi who comes to mind; he is frequently pictured with animals and birds and wrote a hymn called “The Canticle of the Sun”, in which he speaks of the various elements of the natural world as his brothers and sisters within the glorious creation of God. One well-known story shows how he stopped one day to preach to a flock of birds, in order to share the good news of Jesus with them! The story of St Francis and the wolf, is perhaps not so well known, but it shows us someone totally in harmony with Creation, not seeking to dominate it or destroy it, but to work with it:

We remember Francis as a man who wanted to serve God. He had been born into the family of a wealthy cloth merchant in Assisi in Italy in the year 1181. He

didn't want to work at his father's trade, and he wasn't worried about a good education either, but when war broke out in his country, he decided that what he really wanted to be was a soldier. At first Francis enjoyed wearing the smart uniform, and showing off his warlike skills, but he soon changed his mind when he was captured by the enemy and imprisoned for a year. After his release, Francis fell suddenly and seriously ill. All these things happening in his life made Francis question whether he was living as he should and as God wanted him to do. He began to live the life of a beggar – he gave his rich clothes and wealth away and spent his time helping the sick and dying, and raising money to rebuild churches that had fallen into ruin. Many men came to join him, and to live the same way he did.

St Francis loved everyone, but he also had a special love for the animals and birds, and all the world of nature that God had created. He called them his brothers and sisters, and people would often spot him talking to the birds and animals about the love of Jesus for them, as if he expected them to understand what he said. Perhaps they did, or perhaps they just trusted Francis because he was kind and did not harm them.

There is a famous story about St Francis and a wolf. The wolf was terrorising the village of Gubbio, prowling around at night and attacking people in the dark. The villagers were scared to leave their homes, or to walk around alone. They wanted the wolf destroyed or driven far away, and, because Francis was a famous local man, they went to him for help. When Francis saw the wolf he felt very sorry for it – it looked thin and mangy and was clearly starving. Francis knew at once that the wolf had come into the village not because it was wild and vicious and wanted to kill people, but because it was desperate for food. For Francis the solution to the problem was very simple, and he told the villagers what they must do. If they left out food regularly for the wolf, then it would have no need to try to eat them, and all would be peaceful again. He explained the bargain to the wolf as well, and the animal seemed to understand. Both sides kept their part of the bargain – the villagers put out food on the mountainside, and the wolf became tame and did not hunt humans any more!

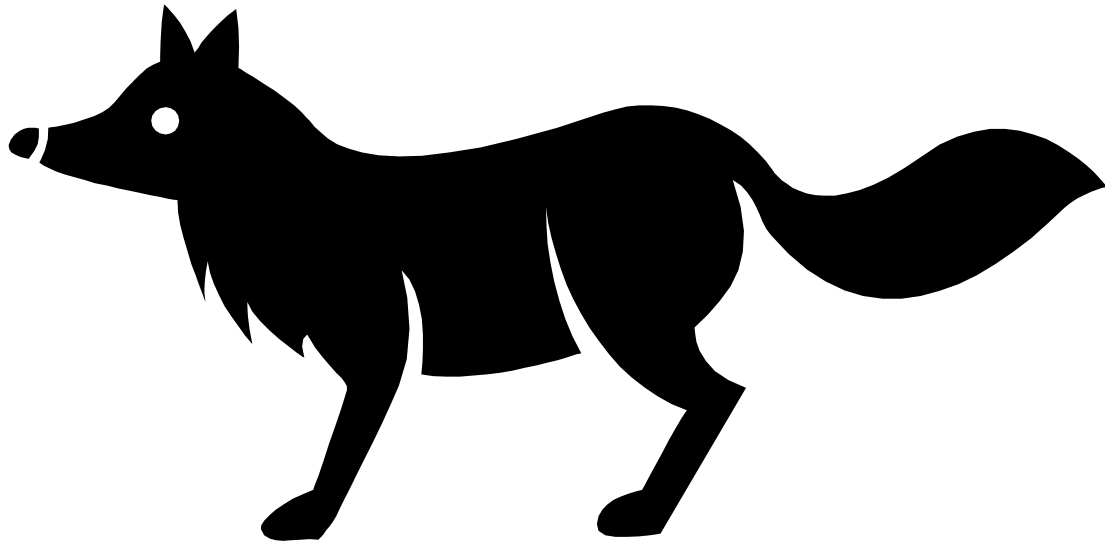
Task: Talk with the children about St Francis' actions. He was a man who always tried to set a good example. If we wanted to try to follow the example of St Francis in our lives, what kind of thing could we do? What would St Francis do today? Here you could make links as appropriate to television programmes such as "Animal Hospital" and "Pet Rescue", or the work of the RSPCA, which you may choose to develop further. You may also introduce into the discussion the Biblical notion of stewardship of creation and responsibility for the earth, which is outlined above (although, with younger children, you will probably not choose to express it in these terms!).

Extension Task: Francis once went to King Ferdinand II of Germany to plead for the protection of birds which were being hunted. Pupils can write a letter (or a speech) to the Prime Minister about an animal or bird they are worried

about and explain why it should be saved. Can they “think like Francis” and include Christian teaching too?

Poetry Extension Task:

Because Francis recognised God as Creator of all things, he called the whole of creation his brothers and sisters. This is seen most famously in his Canticle of the Sun, a simplified version of which is given here:



The Canticle of the Sun

*O most high, almighty and good God,
O most high, almighty and good God,
Everything belongs to you and gives you praise and glory!*

*Praise to you God,
From all your creatures,
And especially from our brother the sun,
Who brings us the day, and who brings us the light;
he is beautiful and shines with great splendour:
he shows us what you are like God!*

*Praise to you God for our sister the moon,
And for the stars which look so beautiful in the sky.*

*Praise to you God for our brother the wind,
And for air and the clouds and all of the weather, all things which we need to keep
us alive.*

*Praise to you God for our sister water
Who is so important to us, and precious and clean.*

*Praise to you God for our brother fire
Which you have given us so we can have light in the darkness
And it is very bright and pleasant and strong.*

Praise to you God for our mother the earth
which looks after us and keeps us
And is covered with fruit, flowers and grass.

Praise to you God, when people forgive each other
Because they love you.
Happy are those people who bear hardships without complaining.

Praise to you God for our sister Death
Whom nobody can escape from.
Happy are those who are doing what God wants when Death comes for them.

Praise to you God, may everything give thanks to you and praise you.

Task: What verses would pupils like to add to this Canticle? Use the same format of "Praise to you God for (name of creature) who (describe job creature does). They can choose their favourite animal or bird, insect or fish.... Is it a sister or a brother?

Questions to Discuss: How do you feel addressing a creature as a sister or brother? Will it make any difference to the way you treat animals etc if you think of them in this way? What does it mean if you say "the earth is our mother"? If the earth is our mother, are we treating her in the right way?

Alternatively, you might like to look in Literacy at Seamus Heaney's poem "Saint Francis and the birds"

Collective worship Link: blessing of the animals services are becoming more and more popular in churches (Wood Green Animal Shelter holds a big service of this kind at Ely Cathedral annually). Why not ask children to bring in photographs of their pets and share stories about them (those who do not have pets could be asked to look for photographs of indigenous British animals and birds). This could be linked with some of the material above on St Francis to form an act of collective worship. An appropriate day for this would be October 4th, which is traditionally celebrated as St Francis' day.

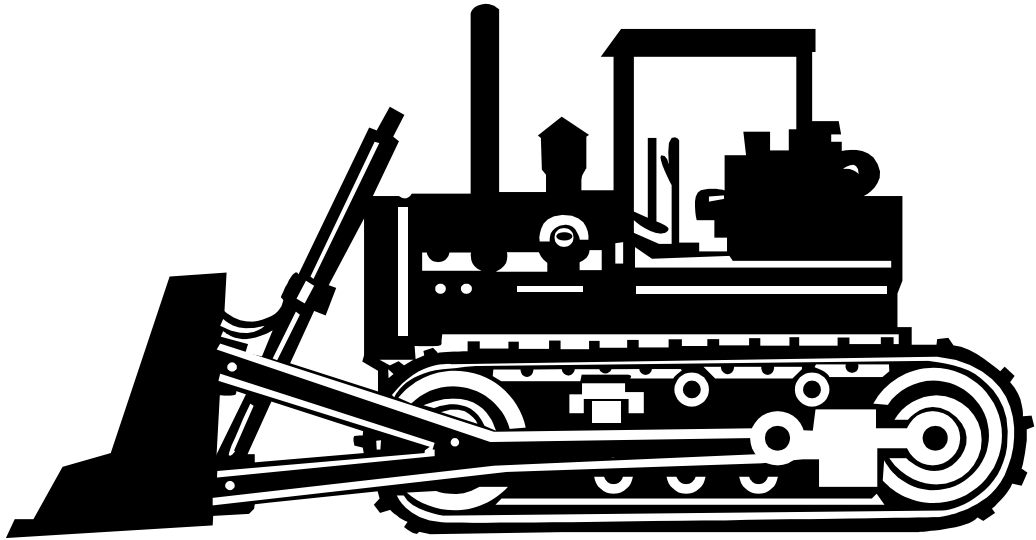
Citizenship Link: This material can be linked with QCA Unit 3 on Citizenship which is particularly concerned with the care of animals.

(5) A Class Debate – The story of the quarry

*The story below has been composed to encourage the children to debate the issue of the opening of a new quarry from both environmental and Christian perspectives. Read the story together, then divide the class into two parts (or an appropriate division of small groups). Give them their role play cards and ask them to think about the issue **in role** and come back together with their opinions. As you will see, the two cards show two differing viewpoints which can both be clearly backed by Christian beliefs and teaching – so what could the correct answer be? Hopefully, as well as raising Eco issues, the debate will help to demonstrate that there is not necessarily a cut and dried right Christian answer to everything, and thereby help pupils to understand something of how Christians’ beliefs can affect their behaviour. (see “Self and Community” in the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus or “Beliefs and Behaviour” in the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus .)*

With lower KS2, or KS1, it will probably be more fruitful to read the story and discuss it together, without attempting to get in role, unless they are used to this way of working.

**PHOTOCOPIABLE CARLA & MICHAEL
DISCUSSION CARDS CAN BE FOUND
BELOW, AFTER THE STORY PAGE**



Carla and Michael – the Story of a Quarry

Carla and Michael walked to school. They only lived a mile from school so there was no free bus for them. They were sad. They walked slowly, Carla with her head down kicking stones, Michael took out his feelings by hitting the hedges with a stick as he went by. They were sad and frightened because they would have to move. Their mum and dad couldn't afford to keep the house any more. Their dad had been out of work for over a year and neither of their parents could find work. To make things worse they had heard horror stories from their cousins about everyone living in one room in a bed and breakfast. Michael and Carla were worried.

Good News is coming:

When Michael and Carla go home there will be good news for them. Their dad has got a chance of a job working in a new local quarry. The quarry itself will not open for a year, but there is a lot of clearing work so their dad can start work as soon as the council say yes.

Information you need:

A quarry is a place where machines dig out the rock or stones hidden under the soil to build things like roads and houses. Quarries are usually in use for many years, and leave enormous holes in the earth many metres deep. This quarry will cover an area twice as big as most school grounds and affect natural habitats over an even wider area. For this reason, quarries are usually in out of the way places, where there are often few other jobs for people like Carla and Michael's parents.

There is Bad News too:

When Carla and Michael go to school they get a shock. The school is organising a protest against the new quarry. Michael and Carla find out that the for the quarry to open a wood with trees hundreds of years old will have to be chopped down and cleared. The wood is the last place with old trees in the whole area. Squirrels and woodpeckers and all sorts of wildlife live there but nowhere else nearby. Carla and Michael loved going to the wood with the school. There were flowers and butterflies there. There were trees to climb and places to explore.

What do you think should happen next?

What does Michael think?

Both Michael and Carla and their family are Christians and go to Church. Michael knows that God loves them and all His people. He knows that God can act to make things better. They have been praying in Church for their dad to get a job and for them not to have to move away. Michael believes that God answers prayers, so perhaps the new quarry is God's way of helping the family.

Spend some time thinking about what will happen to Michael and Carla if the quarry doesn't open. They will have no money, no nice clothes or holidays. They will have very little money for things like toys, or bikes. They might not even have a home for much longer. If they move they will even lose all their friends.

What do you think Michael will say about the quarry?

What should the council do?

Should the quarry be dug?

What does Carla think?

Both Michael and Carla and their family are Christians and go to Church. Carla knows that God created everything including the woods. She knows that God loves all the things that He has made. Carla also knows that people can be bad and not look after the beautiful things that God has made. She has learnt in school about factories polluting rivers and cars making the air unhealthy.

Spend some time thinking about what will happen if the quarry does open. The woods will go and all the wildlife. The woods took hundreds of years to grow but they would be gone in weeks and once the quarry happens they can never grow back. With the wood gone one of the last beautiful and natural places in the area will have gone forever. There will be big lorries going past the school.

What do you think Carla will say about the quarry?

What should the council do?

Should the quarry be dug?



(6) What the Bible says....

The Agreed Syllabus encourages pupils to learn about the composition of the Bible and be able to look up chapter and verse references. This lesson suggestion is based around Biblical work on the theme of the natural world. Of course, much of the Bible originated in an age when most of the population would have either been involved in agriculture or very aware of the natural world within their immediate environs. Many of Jesus' parables spring from natural sights that he would see around him (e.g. the Sower, the mustard seed..) and which would be immediately familiar to his hearers.

The verses chosen below all look at how the Israelites were told they should treat their animals, or their land, and come from a variety of styles of writing. Depending on the ability of your pupils, these could be looked at together as a class quiz, or given out as pairs work for pupils to report back on their findings. Some of the more old fashioned terminology will probably require dictionary work, and you should allocate verses to pupils accordingly. **A simple "join the boxes" worksheet can be found below if you would like to use this approach.**

Genesis chapter 1 verse 28	People are put in charge of all the animals by God.
Genesis chapter 2 verses 18-19	Animals and birds are created to be companions for people.
Deuteronomy chapter 5 verse 14	On the Sabbath everyone is to have a day off work, including the animals
Leviticus chapter 25 verses 4-7	Every seven years the farmer is just to let his land rest (lie fallow) for a year and not plant anything. Any food which grows is to be shared out with everyone, including the animals.
Deuteronomy chapter 25 verse 4	If an ox is being used to thresh grain, it must not have a muzzle put on it, i.e. it is allowed to eat as it works.
Proverbs chapter 12 verse 10	A good man looks after his animals....and a bad man doesn't.

As a class you can then move on to discuss which of these laws or pieces of advice would still hold good today, and which don't make sense any more to us because British farmers don't work in that way (although e.g. Indian farmers might well do).

Follow up Task: Write your own new law (or set of laws) on animal care.

This could be (a) pet care or (b) for modern farmers or (c) for a circus or zoo.

Citizenship Link: This material can be linked with QCA Unit 3 on Citizenship which is particularly concerned with the care of animals.

As well as the Bible itself, there are many excellent retellings of Bible stories which will also prove a fun way in to the question of animal rights. The story below is inspired by a wonderful storybook called "**Does God have a big toe?**" by the American Jewish rabbi Marc Gellmam (Harper Collins ISBN 0064404536).

Adam and the Animals

When God created the heavens and the earth He was busy naming everything He had made, but when he came to the animals he stopped. God did not name the animals because he wanted Adam to do it. He was going to give Adam and all his children (that's you and me) the job of caring for and protecting the animals. God thought if Adam named the animals then he would come to know them properly and love them more.

So Adam started on his job. There were so many animals he did not know where to begin, so he prodded a huge-brown-furry-mountain-thing that was sleeping nearby and yelled "I'm going to name you!" But what do you call huge-brown-furry-mountain-things? You can't call them huge-brown-furry-mountain-things because that's too long! Then Adam had a brilliant idea, he wouldn't bother with names at all, he would just give every animal a number! The huge-brown-furry-mountain-thing could be number one!

In fact the huge-brown-furry-mountain-thing was not very impressed with Adam's idea, so he just turned over and went back to sleep. But Adam kept on happily giving every animal he saw a number. Sometimes it was a bit difficult to decide what to do - should a small-black-crawly-thing with six legs be the same number as a small-black-crawly-thing with eight legs, or was it a different kind of small-black-crawly-thing? Adam was puzzled. Sometimes the animals looked as if they were friends and relations of each other and should have similar numbers, but Adam had called the big-striped-thing-with-sharp-claws number five, and he had reached four thousand six hundred and eleven before he spotted the big-blotchy-thing-with-sharp-claws which looked like it might be the cousin of the big-striped-thing-with-sharp-claws. What a dilemma!

Then, horror of horrors, Adam lost count! He was busy staring at a tall-patchwork-thing-with-the-longest-neck-ever when he forgot what number he had reached! And when he tried to go back and remember what all the numbers were, he soon got confused! Adam sat down on the ground and sulked, and the huge-brown-furry-mountain-thing sniggered!

So Adam started again. He decided that his first idea had been far too complicated - he couldn't be expected to remember all those numbers and which fitted whom. The easiest thing to do was to explain to all the animals that when he shouted "Oy!", that meant he wanted to talk to them. Adam was really pleased with this new idea, until he tried it out...

Adam found a wonderful tall tree with delicious looking fruit right at the top of the branches. He knew he couldn't reach the fruit, but he had seen active-brown-leaping-things-with-long-tails-and-clever-hands swinging around in the treetops and he was sure they could fetch the fruit for him. "Oy!" called out Adam, looking for the handy active-brown-leaping-things-with-long-tails-and-clever-hands. But the active-brown-leaping-things-with-long-tails-and-clever-hands did not

come. Instead a small-delicate-fluttering-white-winged-thing hurried over. "What do you want, Adam?" asked the small-delicate-fluttering-white-winged-thing, "I heard you call me". "I didn't call you" said Adam "I wanted Oy!". "But I am Oy!" said the small-delicate-fluttering-white-winged-thing, "At least, that's what you told me". Adam sulked again, he hadn't wanted small-delicate-fluttering-white-winged-thing Oy, he had wanted active-brown-leaping-things-with-long-tails-and-clever-hands Oy. There was no way that small-delicate-fluttering-white-winged-thing was going to be able to reach the fruit he wanted, and even if she did manage to fly that high, she certainly wasn't strong enough to pick the fruit off the tree. And over in the corner of the clearing Adam could hear huge-brown-furry-mountain-thing sniggering again!

The huge-brown-furry-mountain-thing decided to take pity on Adam. "Look here noisy-hairless-pink-only-walks-on-his-back-paws-thing" he said "Why don't you just ask us what we would like to be called? We are all different; we all know what we want to do and what we want to be! You can call me bear!" So Adam called huge-brown-furry-mountain-thing "bear" from then on, and when he asked all the other animals what **they** wanted to be called, they told him too!

For Discussion: Adam treated the animals as if they didn't have any rights, and he could make all the decisions concerning them. Do you think this is right? Can you think where people make decisions which affect animals and animals suffer as a result? Is this part of God's original Creation plan?

(7) Working with Psalm 23 - The Preciousness of Water

Before you begin...

The 23rd Psalm may have been written as much as 1000 years before Christ was born, and could even have been written by David himself, who started life as a shepherd boy with a talent for music. It is a wonderful poem, praising God who always loves and cares for us, providing for all our needs in the natural world. The Psalm can be used as a means of exploring the Bible, focusing particularly on the theme of **water**. Here are some teaching suggestions, and some extension materials which look at the role played by David in the Bible, the use of symbolic language in the Bible, and the use of water in baptism. The first section could fit into a single session, but by also using extension materials the unit could extend over several sessions.

The unit...

The purpose of the unit is to help pupils to understand that water is essential to life, that it is one of God's greatest gifts to man and that the Psalmist sees God as the source of all that is good in life, giving us strength and showing us the right way to lead our life.

There are many good translations of the psalms, and any can be used. For convenience, two versions of the Psalm are set out below, a new translation and a very traditional one which is still familiar to many people. Older pupils could compare the language in the two versions. Younger KS2 pupils could use whichever version the teacher thinks appropriate.

After reading the Psalm together pupils could discuss the main points made by the Psalmist. Pairs or groups of children could work on a verse each for a few minutes to discuss what point is made in it. They should be encouraged to bring out the positive things that God gives us:

- Fields/green pastures - safe food to eat and enjoy in a safe place
- Quiet streams/still waters - safe water to drink and enjoy
- Right paths/paths of righteousness - guidelines for a life lived well in accordance with God's will
- Not afraid/fear no evil - peace of mind and freedom from worry
- Shepherd's stick/rod and staff – guidance, comfort and protection at times of anxiety and sorrow
- Feast/table in the presence of my enemies - a safe place to eat where enemies do not attack but become friends
- Special welcome/you anoint my head - we feel so special - like a king or queen
- Fill my cup/cup overflows - we are never thirsty - we have more than enough
- Goodness and forgiveness/goodness and mercy - I shall always be aware of how God is good to me and forgives me when I do anything wrong.
- My home in your house/dwell in the house - I shall always feel protected by God and never forget that I belong to him

The Magic Pool: an activity based on the idea of conservation, and also on the idea of not taking too much, not being greedy, being grateful for what we have. This activity could lead on to a 3-D wall display of the new lake.:

Spread a large blue cloth on the floor and explain that this is a magic pool and pupils can choose to take anything they wish for out of it, but in return they must put something back in. After they have brainstormed the type of things they would choose to take out, explain that in the magic kingdom some robbers once came along and took a lot of gold out. They took and took but never put anything back in. As a result, the water in the pool froze over, and nobody could take anything out anymore. The kingdom was devastated, and the people asked the wise king what he could do for them. He answered: 'I cannot make the pool better, but so that we always remember this lesson, I will build a great park with another lake, and you can make it beautiful.' Pupils then talk about what to add to make the park and new lake beautiful, and what they will give back.

Link to National Curriculum geography

- Classroom follow-up could be linked to geography and learning about Palestine. Pupils could talk about what sort of landscape is described in the Psalm, how it may differ from the landscape you know locally. What

are the safe and dangerous features of the two types of countryside? What is the importance of water in Israel, and in your own area? How do patterns of rainfall differ? How do shepherds provide water for their flocks in the desert?

- Pupils might research the weather and geographical features of Israel using an atlas or the Internet. They can practise their mapping skills by drawing an imaginary map/landscape on a grid, showing safe and dangerous places e.g. houses, fenced fields, wolves, robbers, dangerous reefs, stores of food etc. Alternatively they could work on a map of their own area, putting in the pastures, the places where food and drink can be found and the places where there are dangers e.g. the main road. By putting in grid references, the activity can be used as a game in pairs, with pupils asking each other what is found at a particular grid reference. The activity could lead up to a classroom display with the appropriate verses of the Psalm written out and fitted onto the grid.

Extension Activity 1: People and writings

This activity is an opportunity for pupils to learn:

- why and when the Psalms were written;
- that their origin is Jewish, but that Jesus knew, loved and quoted them;
- that they are still used as part of worship by both Jews and Christians.

Link to writings and literacy: The nature of symbolic language and the typical Psalmist devices of repetition and a refrain or chorus could be briefly discussed (see teacher's notes at the end of this unit). Note how the Psalmist moves from speaking about the Lord as 'he' to 'you'. Older pupils can compare the two versions, noting how the meaning of words has changed over time. Pupils could then write a modern psalm for use in assembly perhaps using St Francis' prayer of thankfulness as a model (see page).

Link to people: Pupils could read some of the favourite stories about David, in particular the story of his anointing by Samuel, and his playing the harp to Saul. This would be an opportunity for them to find references in the Bible to David and to water, both in the Old and New Testament. Suggested references are:

Drama activity: Another activity would be to study the story of David's early life through drama. In small groups, pupils could explore the roles of David, Samuel, David's father, Saul etc. Goliath is always a possibility – but this can sometimes lead to things becoming somewhat unfocused! They could work on key words or phrases e.g. dangers to the sheep, looking for clean water, a safe place at home, David becomes somebody special, he helps Saul by singing – perhaps this Psalm?

Extension Activity 2: Rites of passage – water and baptism

Pupils should focus on the water God has given us: rain fills reservoirs, helps plants to grow, gives us water to drink, supports pond, river and sea life. We

use water for fun and enjoyment: at the seaside, in water sports, in the garden paddling pool. Water creates power through dams, and puts out fires. It is used in cleaning.

Water is used in baptism and pupils should understand that the water in baptism is a means of cleansing, symbolising a new life.

- Pupils could start by a brainstorming session, discussing the uses of water in making things clean. When do we wash, and why; what else do we wash (washing up etc), and why are clean sources of water so important? This links with work in science: how man has adversely affected water: acid rain (testing with litmus paper), added chemicals, pollution and its effect on us and on wild life.
- Pupils can then go on to read the story of John baptising Jesus (Mark 1:1-11) and why the early Christians saw this as so important. Pupils can be asked whether they are baptised or have been to a baptism; Christians believe that baptism is a special symbol, a sacrament, making us pure. It is also a way of welcoming us into the Church family and making us feel that we belong. It expresses our hopes for the baby's future and promises made on his/her behalf.
- A follow-up activity: pupils could write a list of promises to give to a new baby – promises for a better world. For example: 'I hope that the world will be I promise to play my part by"
- Another follow-up activity: a drama. Pupils discuss in circle time: if you were water, what bad things would you wash out of the world? Encourage them to think in more abstract terms – crime, hatred, anger, bullying etc. Divide the class into groups, who then choose one of these aspects. A group acts out its aspect, and the next group acts out washing it away. They then act out their aspect, which is washed away, until every group has acted out a bad thing and washed it away.

Background Information for teachers

David (1010-970 BCE) was a shepherd boy who became king of Israel after King Saul. The prophet Samuel picked him out from his brothers as a very special person, and anointed him as a future king while he was still a boy. He was a fine harp-player and musician and was called in to comfort Saul when he was ill and depressed, by playing to him.(1 Samuel 16:17-23) Later David became a national hero when he killed Goliath, the leader of the enemy Philistines, with a stone from a sling. (1 Samuel 17) His friendship with Jonathan (1 Samuel 19-20) is also a favourite story. Saul later became very jealous of David's popularity and they were to become enemies. When Saul died, David became king over his own southern tribe of Judah, and later king of all Israel, which was united under his rule.

David captured Jerusalem by climbing up a water shaft. As Jerusalem lay between the southern and northern kingdoms he made it his capital and built a palace there. He started building a permanent shrine there where God would be worshipped. Until now, the sacred writings of the Jews, the Ten Commandments handed down from Moses, were kept in a box (the ark of the covenant) in a tent (tabernacle), which was moved round as the Jews moved on from place to place. David's son Solomon made this shrine into a

wonderful temple, which has been the centre of Jewish worship every since. Jerusalem was called 'Zion, City of God' and became a place of pilgrimage. Although David later had many troubles, and did not always behave well, the Bible tells us that it was prophesied that David's descendants would rule Israel for ever, and that God would give them security and prosperity. The Jews have always believed that God would send a saviour, a 'Messiah' or 'anointed one' to fulfil their hopes. Christians believe that Jesus is the Messiah, come to fulfil God's promise. In Matthew 1 it is emphasised that Jesus is a 'son of David'.

The **Psalms** were written in Hebrew between 1000 and 586 years before the birth of Christ. Some of them are called 'Psalms of David', but this could also mean 'Psalms written for David'. David may have written some himself, and some were probably written much later. The Psalms are Israel's book of praise and prayer and express the response of the people to God's acts and words. Some are poems of private prayer, others were used when the people came together to worship God. When Psalm 23 speaks of 'I', we must think of the whole community joining together in song to express their faith. The Psalms express three main ideas; some celebrate God's majesty and faithfulness, some ask for help or express despair because of a terrible situation, and some thank God for delivering the writer or His people from their troubles. Psalms which express similar ideas to those in Psalm 23 are: 8, 33, 84, 100.

The Psalms were written to be sung - they are in fact a song book, which is very appropriate when we remember that David was a skilful musician. Jewish poetry was different from poetry as we know it, as it did not use rhyme. Each verse has two parts, and the second part repeats the ideas in the first part in a special way, rephrasing them, adding further detail which amplify and strengthen the ideas, or presenting a contrasting idea. Some psalms have a chorus or refrain. The poetry is rich in metaphor and simile; some of the images seem exaggerated to the modern ear, but many of them are extremely beautiful.

The Lord is my shepherd: sheep and goats were a major source of food and clothing, and an important financial asset. Israel has a hot dry climate and animals had to be taken to places where there was good grazing and water to drink. Quite often the younger sons would be the shepherd, as David was, and would spend all their time looking after the flock, protecting them from wild animals and robbers, building temporary sheepfolds, sleeping with the sheep, tending them when injured, and finding lost sheep. Unlike in the West, the shepherd did not round them up with dogs, but led them from the front. The sheep knew their shepherd well and followed wherever he led. At night he counted them into a sheepfold with his staff or crook. Jesus called himself 'the good shepherd'. (John 10:13-14)

Water is scarce and very valuable in the East. Flocks have to be taken to drink at waterholes and wells, as the pasture is often dry. There are many references in the Bible to water, its freshness, its value in making crops grow, and the beauty of the trees and plants near rivers. Water can also be

dangerous, as we know from the story of the wise man who built his house on the rock. So fresh, still spring water - living or running water - is particularly valued. God is often compared to a spring of living water. Jesus described himself as giving living water (John 4:7-15; 7:37-38). Water was used in worship to purify the worshipper; John baptised Jesus in the river, and baptism has played an important part in Christian worship.

Paths can be difficult to find, as anyone who has visited the desert will know. All travelers welcome a safe path. Dark valleys can be threatening and hide many dangers, wild animals or enemy ambush. A stout stick, or staff, would be essential in protecting the sheep.

Tables were not something in everyday use. The shepherd would lay a cloth on the ground and put his food on this. A table would be something very special, perhaps a box on which food for guests would be laid out. The East has a strong tradition of hospitality and a stranger is always offered food and drink. To be able to eat and drink at ease with one's enemies would mean that one feels completely safe and at ease. To offer an overflowing cup is a sign of great generosity, and has become a metaphor for feeling overwhelmed with happiness.

Anointing with oil was a special ceremony for crowning a king. Olives grow throughout the Mediterranean, and are a valuable source of food and cosmetics. Oil was used for cooking, as a cosmetic to soften the skin, to heal wounds and to show respect for someone. It came to be used in religious ceremonies, as an act of consecration, of 'making holy'. David was anointed with oil.

Suggestions for collective worship

Introductory music: Handel's Messiah *He shall feed his sheep*. Handel *Water Music*. Vivaldi *The Seasons*. Schubert *Trout Quintet*

Pupils could present the psalm they have written, with appropriate visuals. Alternatively, a group could present Psalm 23, taking a verse each and using their own artwork, linking it to the EcoSchools project. They could present their work in science on water, linking it to the Psalm, and describing how they are trying to make the world a safer place.

Pupils could also prepare for the assembly by making globes out of papier mâché on balloons or frames of wire, working in pairs. The globe is painted in blue, green and white. Pupils then display the globes, one of them perfect, the other with black patches added to show pollution. The black patches are labelled e.g. chemical pollution of the sea, destruction of the rain forest etc.

Suggested hymns from *Come and Praise*: 2 Water of Life; 6 The earth is yours, O God; 7 All Creatures of our God and King; 78, 79 The King of love my shepherd is; 81 The Lord's my shepherd.

There are many useful books with suitable prayers. Some that we like are:

Resources for teachers

There are many good Bible story books available and you are sure to have your favourite. A wide selection of books is available at the Ely resources centre.

- A useful reference book for teachers is: Drane, John: ***Introducing the Old Testament***. Oxford, 2000 Lion Publishing.

Psalm 23

A modern version	Revised Standard Edition
<i>The Lord looks after me like a shepherd looks after his sheep; he gives me everything I need.</i>	<i>The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.</i>
<i>He lets me rest in fields of green grass and leads me along quiet streams of fresh water.</i>	<i>He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters;</i>
<i>He gives me new courage.</i>	<i>He restores my soul.</i>
<i>He shows me the right paths to take, just as he promised.</i>	<i>He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.</i>
<i>Even if life seems dark and dangerous, I will not be afraid, for you are with me, Lord. Your shepherd's stick will protect me.</i>	<i>Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.</i>
<i>You prepare a feast for me, where all my enemies can see</i>	<i>Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my</i>

<i>me; you welcome me as if I were the King or Queen, and fill my cup so full it overflows.</i>	<i>enemies; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows.</i>
<i>You will be good to me, forgive me and love me all my life long, and your house will always be my home.</i>	<i>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.</i>

(8) My Awe and Wonder Calendar

The spiritual development term “Awe and Wonder” is often very difficult to describe. Some people like to speak of this as the “Wow factor”, but you don’t actually need to see something large and outlandish to be “wow-ed”, just watch children as they suddenly see a spectacular rainbow, or the first fall of snow, come to understand the intricacy of a piece of machinery or science experimentation, or perhaps begin to understand the workings of a maths problem for the first time. Different people are also wow-ed by different things; a country lover might find the broad reaches of the fenland, with their spectacular skylscapes, haunting and mysterious, but a town lover might find them disturbingly bereft of the familiar sights and sounds of their normal environment.

It is probably true, however, that the natural world is where most people will look for their examples of awe and wonder, and so work on these areas can flow readily from the work suggested at the beginning of this section on the Creation stories. Pupils can work together in small groups to think about what kinds of natural examples might come under the four headings below:

- **Awe** – big things in nature which amaze me
- **Wonder** – tiny things in nature which surprise me
- **Mystery** – things I don’t understand about how nature works
- **Sadness** – amazing things in the natural world which have been spoilt

It should be easy to find a calendar with pictures of the natural world on it, and this can be used to demonstrate how the photographs chosen all follow the theme of the calendar. Invite the children to now make their own calendars (individually or in groups), these can be “awe and wonder calendars” or “mystery” calendars – or any combination of the four themes above. Of course this activity is going to be heavy, in the first instance, on cutting and

sticking, so you will need to prepare the ground well in advance by asking people to bring in magazines and old calendars etc. You may also consider downloading art and photographs from CD Roms and websites. Pupils may also produce their own artwork for some of the months, especially if they are unable to find images which fit well into their categories.

Large picture calendars always have explanations of the image chosen for each month, and so the **main focus** of this project is *not* on the craftwork, but on the written work accompanying it. A pupil's own poem, prayer or a piece of free creative writing with the title "**Feelings of Awe and Wonder**" (or appropriate) can be the frontispiece of the calendar, based on the selected pictures. Younger pupils may wish simply to caption each image "I think this is amazing because..." etc. Older pupils, could be encouraged to research "amazing facts" to describe their choices, and add these to the calendar.

The final pieces of work will not only explain the pupils' understanding of some of the terminology of spiritual development in both words and pictures, but it will also have a long-term use! (Perhaps therefore a good pre-Christmas topic!)

(9) The Light of the World

Background information for the teacher

This unit reflects on light, colours and their symbolism in religious thinking. It would link well with work in science on light. In art, follow-up activities could link the theme of the rainbow with a study of the impressionists, and the paintings of Monet.

Light is central to religious thinking in many religions. The sun, which provides the energy for living and growing, has always been a potent religious symbol. Some of the most famous Bible stories concern a bright light, and the revealing of God's purpose. Darkness and blindness are the theme in other familiar passages. Darkness is equated with losing one's way, with being in a state of sinfulness and unaware of God.

Many miracles tell of the healing of the blind. The healing of the sick and alleviation of suffering through faith and prayer is a well attested phenomenon. Not all people believe that each individual healing occurred just as described in the Bible, but many do. Either way, the healings have a powerful metaphorical and symbolic message:- Jesus came to bring light where there was darkness, healing where there was sickness of any kind, knowledge of God - revelation - where there was ignorance.

An essential text for children to think about is John 8: *"I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* Pupils could be encouraged in their ICT work to find a beautiful font in which to write out the text for display.

Many Bible stories could be used to illustrate the theme, but the famous story of St Paul's conversion is retold below. The bright light brings a sudden and amazing realisation (or revelation) to Saul that his previous life and actions were very wrong. Light can blind, and Paul - or Saul as he called himself then - was temporarily struck blind. When Ananias laid hands on him, Saul regained his sight and became fully aware that from now on he must work to build Christ's church on earth.

Paul's conversion: Acts 9 tells the story.

Saul was born in modern Turkey, in the city of Tarsus. He was a Jew by faith, very well educated, and a Roman citizen. This means that he was quite a powerful man, as the Romans ruled over most of the Mediterranean area. He was a tent-maker by trade, an important job. He was very opposed to the early Christians and did all in his power to destroy them. He was delighted when Stephen, one of the first Christians, was killed. Stephen had been preaching about Jesus in Jerusalem, saying to the people: "All you think about is your beautiful temple, and your laws. What goes on in your hearts is surely more important. You are deaf to God's message and killed his messenger, God's Son." Stephen was taken to the High Priest and condemned to death. The members of the Council rushed at him, and seized him. "Take our coats", they shouted to Saul, and threw their coats at him to hold while they dragged Stephen out of the city. Then they picked up stones and threw them at him until he died. "Good riddance to bad rubbish", said Saul, "He deserved what he got".

Saul determined to see more Christians thrown into jail and killed. He set off for Damascus with this in mind. Riding along the road near Damascus he suddenly saw a dazzling bright light, and fell to the ground in amazement. "Saul, Saul", said a voice, "why are you persecuting me?" "Who are you, Lord?" shouted Saul. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting", said the voice. Saul was told to go into the city, but when he stood up he found he was completely blind, and could see nothing at all. "Help me, help me", he cried. His friends took him by the hand and led him to the city, unable to see, eat or drink.

After three days, a Christian called Ananias had a vision, in which God told him to find Saul, and lay his hands on him. Ananias was very unwilling to do this, because he thought Saul was a wicked man, but he did as he was told, went into Saul's house and laid his hands on Saul in the name of Christ. At once Saul regained his sight, leaped to his feet and was baptized a Christian. Then he had a good meal, and was once more full of strength. He changed his name to Paul and set out to travel all over the Middle East, preaching that Jesus was the Son of God. He was persecuted and attacked, and had many adventures. On one occasion he was let down from a window in a big basket, to escape his pursuers. In his travels he covered about 10,000 miles in the next 25 years, mostly on foot, sometimes by boat. He founded many new churches, and kept in touch with them regularly by writing letters. He was often arrested, beaten and flogged. Four times he was shipwrecked, the last time in Malta, when he was taken to Rome under arrest..

Some say he was beheaded in Rome. His letters, known as Epistles, are still read in churches throughout the world. He died in the year 64, about 30 years after the death of Jesus.

A variety of activities inspired by Light, and the story of the Conversion of Saul:

Activity 1 – Life changing moments - Pupils should discuss important moments in their lives, when things have changed for them, for example, the birth of a new brother or sister, a marvellous holiday, first days at school, moving house, learning to read, making a new friend, learning to swim or ride a bicycle. After some of them, they may find that things go on as before. Which of them have made such a change to their lives that things will never be quite the same? These could be charted as a personal timeline.

The timeline could also be projected into the future as a timeline of hopes, e.g. the first job, marriage etc, and this could in turn be linked back to the story of Saul /Paul, who when he started his journey to Damascus, probably had a very different career path mapped out for himself to the one he eventually followed!

Activity 2 - Why do we need light? Pupils should make a list of all that light does for them. They may mention such things as: seeing when it is dark, stars helping ships to find their way in earlier ages, the sun warming us, helping plants to grow, why plants grow better in summer than in winter, helping us to read, watching television - helping communications, making us see beautiful and interesting things etc. You could also use light deprivation / trust exercises with the pupils by blindfolding individuals who then have to be guided around by others and talk about the problems of lack of light (there may even be a blind person locally who would be prepared to share their experiences with you).

Activities using light: Pupils will learn in science about primary and secondary sources of light. They should reflect on the image of God's light shining on us (a primary source), and God's light that we should try to reflect towards others and towards the world (the secondary source). Using sunprint paper and different shapes to reflect a shadow, they should then talk about things that cast a shadow in our lives. This is a good task to help pupils to discuss the problems of good and evil or PSHE issues.

Activity 3 rainbows and prisms - Pupils should use a prism or crystal to reflect light onto card. Younger children could then choose coloured cards shaped like raindrops, and write God's promises on them, creating a 'rainbow promise mobile'.

Older pupils may like to try writing poetry inspired by the prism – here is a deceptively simple example by Citrus Tang called "Prism of Life":

I
would that I

Were a
Prism
To take white
Light
And send it through
Myself
To make a
Rainbow of
Life

Pupils read this poem in connection with their work on light and prisms. After discussing what they think it means they write their own poem on colours, rainbows, lamps, or light, starting: "I would that I were a ...". Of course, they could widen it to include other natural objects – a tree, for example.

Activity 4 Colour matching

The aim of the activity is to help pupils to see that colour is part of God's world and a great gift to mankind. They will also learn to appreciate a wider range of colours than they are already aware of, and the opportunity could be taken to explore the reasons why colour is useful in the natural world. For instance, insects use it to identify food plants and also for camouflage. Plants attract insects to help pollinate them by using colour as well as shape (e.g. a bee orchid). You will need a set of coloured cards and a bag to hold them. The cards can be made by cutting up, folding and sticking together paint colour swatches available from DIY shops. This is about an evening's work, but once made can be used for many years. There are sets available from the Ely Diocesan Resources Centre.

The teacher should ask the pupils to name their favourite colour/s, which are listed on a board, if possible in the right colour. Then ask if they know of any other colours and write these down also. Tell them that there are thousands and thousands of different colours and that you have them in your special bag. The pupils then go out of doors and choose a coloured card from the bag. Instruct them to find an exact match and call you to prove it before they can choose another colour. (*Tip: let them cheat when getting their coloured cards, pupils will invariably try and sneak a green as their first colour and they will soon find that green is actually the hardest colour to match!*) This can be turned into a competition to see who (or which group) can match the most colours. Ask the pupils what they thought of the activity: whether the activity was easy or hard, were they surprised by the number of colours etc.? This activity works best in a natural setting with grass, plants and a tree or two but can be adapted to suit whatever is available. For example if you have a bare concrete and brick area collect all the colours that could be matched and those that could not. Ask the pupils about the differences: What do they think of the lack of colour etc.? If possible follow up by repeating the activity in a different setting (natural or manmade) for the pupils to compare their findings.

A KS1 storybook which might also inspire some thought about the colours of the world is "The Day it rained in colours" by Roy Etherton (Lion ISBN

0745922333) which shows Greyland being transformed by the Maker's gift of colour.

The activity should be followed up by a discussion. Pupils could read Genesis chapter 1 verses 11 and 27, which tell how God made all the different plants and animals with their different colours and shapes and told man to look after them - a world full of those colours. Pupils should think about our power over God's world and about how we look after the world. Is it always beautiful and colourful? How have people made the world better/worse, more/less colourful? Can we help to make it better? How? – pick up litter, plant a garden, recycle, walk to school, turn lights off etc. Which ideas can they put into practice now?

This work on prisms and the beauty of light may form an effective assembly:

Ideas for an Assembly:

The theme of the assembly is how God created light and a world full of colours. It focuses on the beauty and variety of God's world. Explain that God wants us to work with him to make this world a more beautiful place. The assembly follows on from work on light in science. Children may already have worked with prisms, projecting their rainbows on to white paper or card. You will need some simple equipment, for example one or more prisms and light source/s.

Pupils could be asked who has seen a rainbow. Talk about the different colours and ask them which are their favourite colours. Explain that a rainbow is caused by splitting the light they see all the time, that all the colours are locked up in normal boring white light just waiting to get free. Demonstrate this by using a prism to split a source of white light from a torch or lamp and project it onto a white wall or board. How many colours are there? Have they looked at the areas where the colours change? What can they see there? They should see lots of extra colours or extra shades of colour.

Reading

A long, long time ago, before the wind blew and the sun shone, there was a silent emptiness. God was sad. Then God decided to fill the empty spaces with something good. First, God made a big bang and out of the bang, lots of stars appeared. They whizzed through space like giant balls of light.

Then God made a switch. God called the off-switch 'night' and the on-switch 'day'. Then God got really busy. God took all the hard bits from the big bang and made them into round shapes like balls. God called one of them Earth. The bits in between were sky and space. It was starting to get really exciting.

On Planet Earth God made some bits dry, which were called land and other bits wet, which were called rivers and seas. The sea would be really handy for the fish that would come soon.

Next, God decided that the earth needed a bit of life. Soon little bugs started to grow and the Earth came alive. After the bugs came plants and trees, fish and birds and then every sort of animal.

God looked and was delighted in all that was there. But God thought for a bit, and decided that there was something missing in the world. Can you guess what? Yes, God decided to make people like you and me.

God said to the humans, "I would like you to take care of the whole world, of all the plants and animals and all the living things." (Eco Congregation, module 4)

Recap: God made a good, beautiful world and gave it to us. We need to look after it, care for it, value its beauty.

Prayers – the one below may be used, and children may have written their own.

Dear God, thank you for all the colours, for the reds, the greens (list the children's favourite colours). Thank you for not making everything boring, dull and grey. Help me to love the beauty of all the things that you have made, all their colours and shapes. So that loving all things I will do all I can to make your world, the world I live in, a more beautiful place. Amen.

Music to start assembly - some of the wonderful music from Haydn's Creation.

Hymns - Colours of Day; Shine Jesus Shine; Who put the colours in the rainbow? When God made the garden of creation; Think of a world without any flowers; For the beauty of the earth; From the darkness came light; Light up the fire; When your father made the world.

Background Notes for teachers

Conversion: Paul was a devout Jew before his conversion, and remained one afterwards. Christianity was not yet seen as a different faith from Judaism, just a different form of Judaism. Paul did not reject Judaism completely, but now saw his faith in a different way. The seeing of a bright light and the hearing of a voice are reported in stories of other conversions and in other faiths. Amazing, sudden conversions to belief in Jesus are often described, but are not actually very common. For many people, faith is a gradual process of growth and development, and may pass through many periods of doubt and 'darkness'. St Paul is often seen as the founder of the Christian church, and the man who spread Christianity beyond the boundaries of Palestine to Asia Minor (Turkey), Greece (Macedonia) and Italy, particularly Rome.

Some more images of light and darkness are quoted below from the Good News Bible. These, like the quotation from St John (above) could be displayed in different fonts and colours using ICT.

Genesis 1:3. *"Then God commanded, "Let there be light" - and light appeared. God was pleased with what he saw."* The story of creation tells us that on the first day God created the earth, all covered in water and completely dark. Then God's power (spirit or breath as some translations say) moved over the water, and light was created.

Genesis 9:14. *"Whenever I cover the sky with clouds and the rainbow appears, I will remember my promise to you and to all the animals that a flood will never again destroy all living beings."* God makes a solemn promise to Noah. (see below)

Isaiah 9:2. *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. They lived in a land of shadows, but now light is shining on them."* This refers to the coming of the saviour, the Messiah, and is often quoted to refer to Jesus' coming.

Psalms 119:105. *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path".* The poet (psalmist) expresses gratitude to God for his guidance.

Isaiah 35:5. *"The blind will be able to see, and the deaf will hear".* Isaiah prophesies the coming of a new age of peace and happiness."

John 1:5. *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out."* The Bible says that light banishes darkness, and darkness (wickedness or sinfulness) can never put out light (truth and faith).

Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 13:** *"What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. what I know now is only partial; then it will be complete - as complete as God's knowledge of me".* St Paul writes about our very partial understanding of God's love.

A much-loved quotation from the Book of Common Prayer: *"Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee O Lord".*

Sight and blindness

Children may be aware of other examples of blindness in the Bible. Several of the miracles show Jesus healing the blind. One of the best known is the story of Blind Bartemaeus (Mark 10: 46-52). As so often, sight and faith (spiritual insight) are linked. We ourselves often use the word 'see' to mean 'understand'.

The **rainbow** symbolises God's promise to look after man and the animals. (Genesis 9: 8 - 17). Children will all know the story of Noah's Ark, but they may not know the end of the story as well. After the Ark reached dry land, God made a **covenant** (solemn agreement) with Noah. He charged Noah and his descendants to look after the animals carefully (Genesis 9: 2), and promised never to destroy the earth again as a punishment for man's wickedness. As a sign of this covenant, he placed his bow, the rainbow, in the sky, and every time it rains and the clouds clear, the rainbow will be there to remind us of God's promise. The story of Noah, like the creation story, is another 'myth', which we need not take literally, but which illustrates profound truths.

Colours are not mentioned very much in the Bible. However, many religious faiths use colours in a symbolic way. In Christianity the different colours have traditional associations, which often predate Christianity, and different colours are used in churches at different seasons. **Black** is a symbol of death and the underworld and of mourning. **Grey** symbolizes mourning and humility. **Blue** is the colour symbolizing Heaven and heavenly love. It is also the colour of truth. In paintings, Mary the mother of Jesus is usually dressed in blue. **Green** is the colour of vegetation and of spring and of life over death. **Purple** is associated with royalty, with God the Father, and also of sorrow and repentance. Christ was clothed in purple by the Roman soldiers in order to mock him. Bishops nowadays wear a purple shirt. **Red** is the colour of blood, and so symbolizes both love and hate. It is also the colour of fire and of Pentecost, when the tongues of fire were seen, symbolizing the coming of the Holy Spirit. **White** symbolizes purity and innocence. **Yellow** or gold has two opposing associations. It is the emblem of the sun, of divinity. But it can also mean jealousy and deceit. A yellow cross was often used in the Middle Ages to denote a house with the plague.

Lamps are often mentioned in the Bible. They were filled olive oil, with a wick made of flax, or linen, and could burn for four hours. They were the only way of guiding people safely when it was dark, at a time when there were no street lights. In the houses, lamps were usually placed in a niche or on a lampstand, and often had a religious significance. They were a symbolic reminder of God's presence and of man's promise to do as God commands. In Herod's Temple the lamp had seven branches, and this became an important Jewish religious symbol, the menorah.

Glory is a word often found in the Bible in connection with light. It originally meant weight or honour but is usually found to mean the visible brightness of God. The Bible often talks of God talking out of a bright cloud. Christians speak of 'Christ in glory', and in the story of the Transfiguration Jesus' face shone brightly. Artists portray Jesus and other holy figures with a bright halo, or surrounded with light. St Paul's famous letter in 1 Corinthians 13, speaks of our seeing God 'in a glass darkly', as in a mirror, a secondary source of light, but promises that we shall see him 'face to face' in the future. Glory is then a symbol of light, of transformation, and of the direct revelation of God's presence.