

## Ascension & Pentecost – the birth of the Church and Jesus' commandment

Ascension and Pentecost stories build upon the children's understanding of the Easter story. Ascension is 40 days after Easter (on Thursday) and Pentecost is 10 days later (on Sunday). Jesus' last words to his disciples were to 'Go and tell all people...' and that has been the mission of the Christian church ever since. Wind and fire are the symbols of the Holy Spirit, and kingship of Jesus is the main theme.

This unit links with growth and development as the children begin to explore the beginning of the Christian church.

## The Church as the body of Christ

St. Paul wrote letters to groups of believers, and these letters form a substantial part of the New Testament. In his letters to the Christians in Corinth, Paul was worried about dissent, and urged the believers to unite. He likened the body of believers to the human body that is one unit comprising different parts and working together. Paul's contention was that anyone who chose to follow Christ automatically became part of his church. This unit links the biblical idea with the Knowledge and Understanding strand of the Foundation curriculum, and demonstrates the importance of working together in different practical situations.

KS1

### WHY?

*Why does the Church exist at all? Why do Christians want to share their faith with others? Why do Christians think of themselves as one family, even when they belong to different nations? What beliefs do Christians hold in common?*

## We believe – The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer, as its name shows, goes back to Jesus himself, and has become the one prayer which all Christians use, uniting the Christian family. The prayer is a pattern for all prayers: it begins and ends with praise of God. It also includes prayer for a person's own needs and their relationship with others; all within the context of God's eternal kingdom.

Because the Lord's Prayer is so fundamental to the Christian faith, one would expect it to be known and used in collective worship in all schools, particularly church schools. This makes it important that time is spent in RE looking at the meaning of the prayer, so that pupils are enabled to pray it with confidence and understanding.

KS2

## The Mission of the Church

Children (and adults) often assume that their personal experience and world view is normative. When asked about the church they therefore think immediately of the church they know, which may well be a medieval building with an aged and dwindling congregation. The reality is that worldwide the church is a living, thriving, dynamic force numbering over 2,015,000,000 believers (over one third of the total population of the world). Christians can now be found in every country of the world, fulfilling Jesus' final commandment to take his message to the ends of the earth,

For pupils to begin to understand the worldwide nature of the church, the easiest way forward is to begin to explore the church in another country which is significantly different from the local experience.