

Religious Education for the Foundation Stage

Planning overview for Unit 5 ~ Special Books

This unit can be adapted for any story, but it does take more planning than the other units do, whether you wish to produce a whole-class special book, or special books in small groups. We did make use of other curriculum time, particularly Creative (art and DT) and Literacy. I have made a summary below so that you can decide how to deliver the unit in the time you have available, and I know it looks like a lot of work; all I can say is that it is one of the most worthwhile projects we have ever undertaken.

Choose your story, which can be from any aspect of RE, bearing in mind that the illustrations are a central part of the book, and that some stories are easier to illustrate than others. Your story will need to be divided into a multiple of four, minus two pages for covers.

Make two mock-ups of the book at the beginning (one large one the final size, and a little one for your own reference) and decide how the text and illustrations might relate. We found that it is easier to use postits or blutack to move plans around at first. This is also good literacy planning: we found lots of our work was quite integrated.

Provide each group with an old A4 envelope in which to keep all their work. Label the front with both the page number and the names of children in the group. We always refused to help any group that could not agree on their task.

It is worth investing in exceptionally good card for this project, and it will need to be sewn together to make it sufficiently strong. In order for the children to have enough to do, make lots of extra flowers/ animals/ insects/ leaves etc., as these can be used on various pages. Mosaic work for borders occupied lots of children. Always make paper mock-ups of moving items so that fastenings are hidden inside.

The lettering for the covers was cut out by adults, and the book was put together outside school. Sticky-back plastic made it much more robust against dirty small fingers, but only use it if it is new. This task is impossible to do on your own! Put the finished result on a display table.

Each page needs a text outline: this is not the final version, but provides a guideline for that page.
eg on this page Joseph's brothers throw him down a deep dry well.

Sponge printing the background produced some lovely results. Use a neutral-coloured paper, like sand. We helped the children to decide on a colour range to suit their page, which was good for colour appreciation; and using red/ yellow/ orange/ brown, for the example above, would give an appropriate effect. Use a variety of card combs to add texture, and mix paint with flour/ glue/ sand to vary it further.

The children could do a surprising amount of work on their own, and we did not help with drawing, but did put little marks to encourage them to make things big enough. The text was done by re-telling the outline, and encouraging the children to put it in their own words, allowing only the words that the children genuinely understood. After scribing the text, it was word-processed by an assistant, and the children then added their own names before printing. They particularly loved laying out their own items on a sheet of card, which was then stuck on to the page once any moving devices were added. Add washers made from acetate behind fasteners for anything you want to revolve.

The children could use their own drawings cut from white card as templates on other materials.

We used Pop-o-Mania by Barbara Valenta for ideas. It is published by Hamlyn Children's Books ISBN 0-600-59252-9. We also did a huge amount of cutting out! Happy book making! PSK 30.12.01