

Project helped pupils portray life of Jesus

IT was a way for pupils to focus on Jesus's life – and then to portray it via artwork.

Children from Hook-with-Warsash CofE Academy spent 12 weeks learning how to be creative at after-school art sessions. They tackled different painting techniques and looked at a different aspect of Jesus's life each Tuesday afternoon.

They heard the stories of Jesus' baptism, the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus stilling the storm, the Last Supper, Jesus's crucifixion and his resurrection. And they portrayed these stories using everything from watercolour landscapes to charcoal drawings, and from abstract paintings to realistic portraits – led by three artists from St Mary's Church, Warsash.

Many of the paintings and drawings were then displayed within the church to inspire worshippers and visitors as part of the project – which was entitled 'Art of Jesus'.

Among the 12 children who took part was Nancy Cooper, aged 10. She said: "I got to draw a dove when we looked at the baptism of Jesus. I also enjoyed painting a lamb when we studied the crucifixion. I knew some of the stories, but not all of them. I hadn't heard about the Garden of Gethsemane. It was really nice to do and to see them in church."

And Elsie Tyler, 10, said: "We did watercolours and acrylics and other things. I enjoyed painting the houses for the Mary and Martha story, and the abstract paintings. I



Pupils from Hook-with-Warsash CofE Academy in St Mary's Church with their paintings

felt very special and famous when the pictures were displayed in the church."

Alfie Cooper, 10, enjoyed painting the still life images of the fish and bread that Jesus shared with the 5,000. He said: "One thing I learnt was that Jesus's cousin was the one who baptised him. I felt proud that my pictures were up in church and people could see my work."

When the school initially asked for volunteers, more than 70 pupils were interested in taking the 12 spaces on offer. The project was the brainchild of Lesley Stevens, who was assisted by Lynn Buckle and Ian Downie from the congregation.

Each 90-minute session included a snack, a story about Jesus, prayer, the teaching of art techniques and putting them into practice. The sessions were funded by a

grant from St Mary's Church, which allowed the leaders to buy materials, including brushes, paints and table coverings.

Leader Lesley Stevens said: "Enthusiasm was high, so after initial instruction, we let them get on with it and tailored any teaching later on an individual basis.

"With time, you could see their painting characters coming through, and could encourage them in that direction. We even had one who enjoyed abstract art. All increased in confidence and ability in painting and developed their own styles.

"We also had some marvellous conversations that would just come up. There was a discussion on miracles and another concerning what Jesus might have actually have looked like."