**The Christian Value of Hope**

**Key Stage 1 – Reflection 1**

This reflection follows on from the whole school collective worship on Christian hope. In line with the diocesan TenTen#Flourishing project for this year, it takes examples from nature to explore the Christian value of Hope.

Birds can be used as a powerful spiritual symbol. They can inspire us to have hope and reach our goals despite the obstacles we might be facing along the way. This reflection asks children to think about the enormous hope shown by migrating birds as the summer ends and they start their mammoth journeys.

**You will need the associated Powerpoint and a fine day as some of this reflection is outside.**

**Slide 1**

Show the children the image of birds migrating.

Discuss with the children what they think the picture shows. Where are the birds going?

Tell the children that birds are a group of animals with the fantastic ability to fly. It is estimated that around 10.000 species of bird exist on the planet today. They are always present in our lives as part of the nature which surrounds us every day, and some people keep birds in their houses, as pets.

Tell children the story of the Willow Warbler (pictured on **slide 2**)

## The journey of a willow warbler

The willow warbler weighs no more than a box of matches and fit snugly into the palm of your hand, but every year it goes on a huge journey.

Each year it flies all the way to the UK from Africa, travelling more than 8,000 kilometres (5,000 miles) across seas, mountains and desert to arrive in time for spring. As if that’s not enough, in autumn it flies all the way back again!

The willow warbler is not alone in making this incredible journey. Many different birds, from swallows to ospreys, fly to the UK from Africa each year. Many others visit us in winter from colder northern regions, or briefly stop off here as they pass through. Other birds fly from the UK to hotter countries in the winter. All over the world, every year, millions of birds are on the move. This movement is called migration. It is one of the greatest wonders of God’s wonderful world.

All birds need is to find a good place to feed and a good place to breed. But places change with the seasons, and what seemed like a perfect summer home can become a death-trap in winter.

Ask the children what the birds are hoping for as they fly all those miles? Would they fly there if there were not certain of finding food and warmth?

Tell the children that migrating birds do not just point themselves in the right direction and hope for the best. They **know** that at the end of their journey that everything will be okay and that their journey will be worthwhile.

Ask the children to look at the picture in slide 1 again and in silence think about the certain hope that the birds are feeling as they fly over God’s world.

What must that feel like?

Tell the children that they are going to imagine themselves as birds full of hope. Take the group outside.

**Christian hope**

Ask the children to lie on the ground and look up at the sky to watch any birds that fly by. As they do, ask the children to think about the hope of the migrating birds. Remind the children that this certain hope is the kind of hope that the Bible talks about – the hope that God will look after us and is with us all the time as we journey through our lives. Even when thigs get hard, He is there for us. Ask the children to stand, put out their arms like wings. On the count of three ask them to run fast and jump (if you have logs or something to jump off even better). As they do, tell them that they need to be silent like birds so that they can properly feel the joy of and exhilaration of speed. Tell them to imagine that their bodies are full of certain hope that God keeps his promises to listen to us and help us as we go through our lives.

Finish with a discussion of how the running felt in order to calm the session down.

**Closing prayer**

Lord Jesus,

Hope helps us to do anything

Hope always makes things better

Hope inspires us to give hope to others

Hope frees us from worry

Hope is your gift to the world

Thank you Amen.