

Ten:ten

#flourishing

Diocesan Education Team Project 2021-22 Secondary Schools Edition



Our Vision : Deeply Christian, Serving The Common Good



Introduction

Two years ago while visiting my family in the USA, at Ground Zero in NY City we gathered under *The Survivor Tree*, then sat in silence pondering on the amazing story behind the now-flourishing natural gift to the community and memorial site.

October 2001 - one month after the devastation of the collapsed Twin Towers, some workers were removing the still-smoking rubble. An incredible moment occurred. Poking through the crumbled grey concrete and ash some live, green leaves were visible.

The workers carefully uncovered the tree : most of her limbs had been sheared off, and only a few roots remained, but the green leaves were a sign of hope that she could be saved.

For nine years the tree was tended and loved at a nursery, and the Callery Pear Tree was returned to a place of honour, near where it had lived, in the newly- named 9/11 Memorial Plaza.

I often re-read the picture book we bought that day. It's a metaphor for hope, endurance and flourishing, even when the odds seem stacked against it. I was reminded of it recently when a flyer dropped out of the predictable bundle in the Sunday Supplement titled *The Tree That Should Never Have Grown*. The charity *Practical Action* requested a donation to fund families severely affected by extreme weather events in North Darfur, Sudan. A smiling woman who had planted an Acacia Tree that flourished, was beaming from the flyer. In this context where families are losing their homes, crops and livelihoods, planting life-changing trees to prevent desertification is critical.

Thinking about such things, and especially being practically involved, not only helps other people, the environment, the climate and creation, but also has a tangible impact on our own well being and mental health.

There has been a great deal of research highlighting the benefit to child mental health of spending time in wild places. By exploring their natural environment, children and adults have opportunities to think and speak about their relationship with the world in which they live, how they feel about themselves, their relationships with others, the world and their faith.

Our 2021 **Ten Ten # flourishing** project is focussed on developing spiritual wellness in our school communities. Our aim is that children and adults in our schools will learn, worship, pray and meditate in the great outdoors to support positive mental wellbeing for both pupils and staff.

This project draws on contemporary research that shows being involved with nature improves child and adult mental health. At the same time, it is a project that focuses on ancient Christian traditions when sacred places and practices were outside.

Tough problems need ingenious solutions, and the Education Team wishes to support school communities with practical advice and activities to improve mental health at this challenging time for schools. It is important for our school leaders to nurture their own mental health and to support employee wellbeing during this time. Therefore, this year's project is for the whole school community, not just pupils.

Sometimes of course, as adults we will not see the long-term impact of our immediate actions, whether those are impacting on the environment, or on the mental and spiritual health of the children with whom we learn. But we earnestly commit ourselves to the privilege of serving them. Somewhat like the allegorical tale of Elzeard Bouffier – *The Man Who Planted Trees*. This is subtle parable of the life-giving shepherd who chooses to carry out the work of God for over forty years in the desolate hills and lifeless villages, with only partial knowledge and sight of the enormity of his commitment and service.

This Project Booklet contains some suggestions for developing spiritual wellness for the school community. This includes active, physical projects, as well as stilling activities. Many resources for the activities are free of charge and use things found in the natural environment, regardless of whether your school or church in an urban, rural or coastal setting.

Our hope and desire is that by the end of the academic year, each of our schools will have created an outdoor Spiritual Space – be that a Garden, a Sunflower or Willow construction, or just re-thinking and presenting an existing area of the school grounds. Lots of ideas are in the booklet, but do let us know of more!

So I invite you to join us in **Planting Hope and Reaping Happiness**. Feel free to share this resource booklet widely!

Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves.

Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other.

No matter how difficult it is... Life is good when you are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you.

Best wishes

Jeff

Jeff Williams
Director of Education



The project title **Ten Ten #flourishing** is derived from John's Gospel Chapter 10 Verse 10 : I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

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Why go outside?

'Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God. But only he who sees, takes off his shoes.' Elizabeth Barrett Browning

According to the mental health charity Mind, spending time in green space or bringing nature into everyday life, can benefit both mental and physical wellbeing. Activities like growing food or flowers, exercising outdoors or being around animals can have numerous positive effects. They can:

- improve mood
- reduce feelings of stress or anger
- help you take time out and feel more relaxed
- improve physical health
- improve confidence and self-esteem
- help you be more active



It is hoped that being involved in one, some or all of the projects in this booklet will contribute to improving student and adult mental health and provide a common ground for shared experience of God's wonderful world.

Blue text indicates a Bible reference related to the activity. Schools are encouraged to use these to enhance children's learning and understanding.

Recognising Spiritual Development

The Stapleford Centre in Nottingham completed helpful work looking at spirituality through the concepts of windows, mirrors and doors. Many schools now use this vocabulary to teach children how to recognise their own spiritual development. A basic outline of this is below:

MIRROR MOMENTS: Give students opportunities to *reflect* on their experiences; to *meditate* on life's big questions and to consider some possible answers. In this they are learning *from* life by exploring their own insights and perspectives and those of others.

WINDOW MOMENTS: Give students opportunities to become *aware* of the world in new ways; to *wonder* about life's 'WOWs' (things that are amazing) and 'OWs' (things



that bring us up short). Students learn *about* life in all its fullness.

DOOR MOMENTS: Give students opportunities to *respond* to all of this; to **do** something creative as a means of expressing, applying and further developing their thoughts and convictions. In this they are learning to *live* by putting into action what they are coming to believe and value.

CANDLE MOMENTS: Give students opportunities to think beyond all this: to think of what is higher: something that they cannot see, but perhaps feel or see reflected in the words and actions of others or the stories from their faith or beliefs.

Spiritual Wellness is a personal matter for each individual but something nevertheless that universally involves the values and beliefs that provide a purpose for our lives.

Trees of Hope

For the Ten Ten # flourishing project, the Diocesan Education Team is again working with Richard Pollard (formerly of Kew Gardens and now leading The Tree Council National Schools Programme). Richard was involved in our hugely popular Bee Inspired project and has been working with us on developing an orchard planting offer to schools that will teach children resilience and connectivity using the example of trees.

Working in collaboration the Orchards for Schools and Tree Champions projects outlined below have been written through the lens of developing spirituality wellness, connectivity with God's Creation and the teaching of Christianity in our schools.

Trees feature through the whole story of the Bible and are present at nearly every major occurrence. From the tree of knowledge in Genesis, the wisdom of Solomon who was said to have a great knowledge of plant life to the burning bush and finally to the tree on which Jesus was crucified nailed to his own creation, we encounter trees in the heart of worship ([more references to trees in the Bible can be found at the end of this booklet to aid teachers](#)).

Trees appeal to all the senses, fresh smells, the sound of moving leaves and birdsong, the texture of the bark – all of these are appealing, especially in modern towns and cities. Trees connect us to other people, whether our contemporaries or those in the past or future.

By planting saplings that may take years to become fully grown, children are offering a gift of God's creation to other students yet to be born.

Orchards for Schools



Orchards for schools has been setup in partnership with the Daily Mail. All diocesan schools are encouraged to apply for a FREE orchard tree pack, or fruiting hedgerow pack by using the link below:

<https://treecouncil.org.uk/schools-and-education/orchards-for-schools/>

Schools will receive a pack containing five mixed fruit trees or 30 fruiting hedgerow samplings. Five trees or more constitutes an orchard. The pack will contain all the advice needed on preparing the ground, planting, connecting, caring and sharing in unlocking the wonder of trees. There will be helpful resources that can be downloaded from the website including a simple application guidance and a planner. There will also be a gift box that schools can receive to fill with prayers, photographs, memories and poems etc of their project, and then gift to another neighbouring school complete with an invitation to encourage their neighbouring school to apply for their own orchard tree pack.

Teachers will be able to join a training webinar with Richard Pollard and partners Learning through Landscapes in which they will discuss the project, activities and a simple guide on the tree planting process to ensure the success of the trees.

“We have consulted with teachers and heads from across the UK this summer to understand the demands that are currently being placed on schools during the COVID crisis. Subsequently the project is being tailored to help schools have some fun, reconnect with each other and catch up in core subjects, specifically English. After such difficult times this is a special opportunity for schools to look forward to a better world and help create a healthier future for all life on Earth”, said Richard.

Tree-related activities that schools may like to take part in to run alongside the tree-planting project are below.

The Tree of Life

The book of Revelation (that last book of the Bible) talks about a future time when the garden of Eden will be restored:

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. (Chapter 22, verses 1-2)

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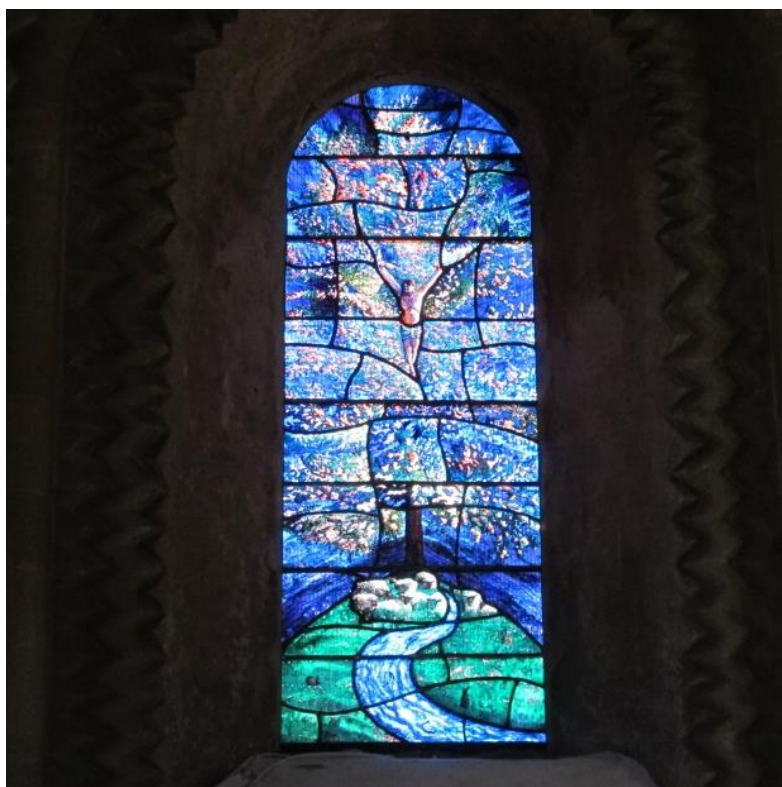
Revelation 22:2



These verses picture Jesus himself as the tree of life whose leaves heal all divisions, wars, hatred and violence in the world. There is a beautiful, stained glass window illustrating this in a church near Oxford (St Mary the Virgin, Iffley)

For this time of restoration to come, we all need to be at peace within ourselves so that we can forgive the hurt that others may have caused us.

When the students have made the leaves from the activity below, they could be used as a prayer space activity or simply displayed as prayers that through Jesus, all people may come together in forgiveness and healing



The Tree of Life can be used as a metaphor to encourage students to discuss their feelings.

Ask students to think of a tree, its roots, trunk and branches. Go outside and look at different species of trees, their shape. Discuss the roots that lie beneath the surface.

Using large pieces of paper, ask the children to draw a simple tree, making sure they leave enough space for writing.

Roots: The roots of the tree are a prompt for students to think about and write on their tree where they come from (village, town, country), their family history (family name, ancestry, extended family), names of people who have taught them the most in life, their favourite place at home, a treasured song or dance.

Ground: the ground is the place for students to write where they live now and activities they are engaged with in their daily life.

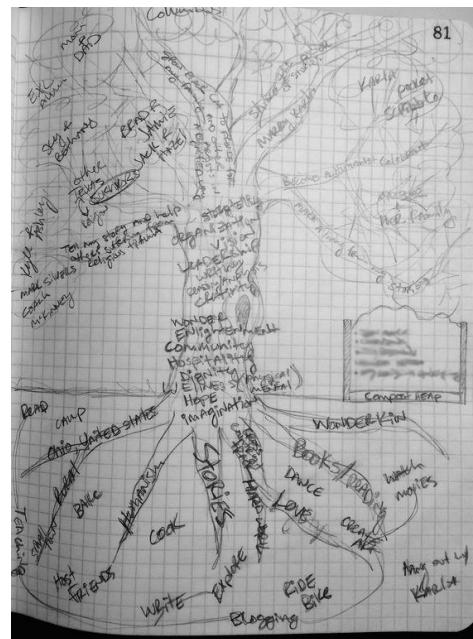
Trunk: the trunk of the tree is where students write their skills and abilities (i.e. skills of caring, loving, kindness) and what they are good at.

Branches: the branches of the tree are where students write their hopes, prayers and dreams for the directions of their life.

Leaves: the leaves of the tree represent significant people in their lives, who may be alive or may have passed on.

Fruits: the fruits of the tree represent gifts students have been given, not material gifts; gifts of being cared for, of being loved, acts of kindness.

The tree of life is first described in Genesis chapter 2, verse 9 as being 'in the midst of the Garden of Eden.' The term "tree of life" also appears in Proverbs (3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4) and Revelation (2:7; 22:2,14,19).



Colours of Creation

This is a lesson that could follow a spiritual walk (see below). The technique relies on tissue paper, which "bleeds" when water is added and produces a mingled effect.



You will need:

Tissue paper of various colours (the colours should bleed)

Thick Card

Instructions:

Print a leaf template on to the card. One is provided in this link:

[Leaf Template 4](#)

Here is the fourth of our printable leaf templates, available in three different sizes. This one is a little trickier to cut out

Rip some yellow, orange, red, brown and green art tissue paper into small pieces.



Paint part of the leaf template with water and stick on the tissue paper, adding lots more water over the top to make sure the tissue paper is stuck down. Keep adding more water and tissue paper until the leaf is covered. Leave to dry.



When the tissue paper dries, it peels off easily leaving a lovely mix of colours, which will fade a bit too. When the tissue paper dries, it peels off easily leaving a lovely mix of colours, which will fade a little.



Making Natural Paints

Berries:

Mush together some berries with water. Make sure you use non-toxic berries. Blackberries for are great for purple.

Rosehips:

Rosehips produce red 'paint'. Soak the rosehips in boiling water for a couple of hours to soften first and remove the seeds.

Mud:

Stir warm water into some dry mud to make brown paint.

Grass and leaves:

Soak grass in boiling water over night, and strained the next morning, for green. You can also rub some leaves directly onto paper, but make sure you don't use any with irritating sap.

Flowers:

Rub dandelions onto paper for a yellow colour.



Prayer activity with sticks

Students hold a stick in each hand..

Ask students to think of the things that they hope for and things that they fear.

Focus on the sticks, their weight in each hand and think about asking God to show you how to hold your life in balance.

Andy Goldsworthy

Sculptor and photographer, Andy Goldsworthy not only works *with* nature, but *in* nature.

In his artwork, stones, rocks, branches, twigs, leaves and ice are arranged carefully and patiently, making use of various repeated snaking lines, spirals, circles and holes. A collection of his work can be seen following the link below:

https://youtu.be/B4jV87O_cMI

Schools will find a variety of YouTube films of Goldsworthy discussing his art. In the film below, he talks about his art being connected to something deep within nature. This may provide an interesting start to a discussion on connectivity.

<https://youtu.be/l051qmxvDIE>

For the Ten Ten #flourishing project , schools are encouraged to focus on those pieces in which Goldsworthy places himself in the centre of his art (see below).



This will give the students an added sense of connecting with the environment and being physically part of the creative process. Involve the children in creating large pieces of art in which they feature and then consider creating a photo album of the creations.

Walking to Wellness

Walking is a great way to maintain not only physical but mental health. Encouraging students to form positive habits later in life.

Walking to improve mental health does not have to be gentle or slow. A brisk walk through around the field, playground or along the road can be equally invigorating and inspiring.

Schools should follow the latest government Covid 19 guidelines for these activities.

Walking has been proven to encourage feelings of calm and happiness. It is also a great way for children to explore God's world in all its various forms, feeding their curiosity and promoting independence.

Below are four ways in which walking can help improve mental well-being.

1. Connecting with Nature

Lack of connection with the outdoors is now considered to be one of the major factors in the rise in young people's mental health problems. Spending time outdoors allows students to clear their heads and connect with God's creation.



2. Reduce Chances of Developing Depression

The number of students developing mental health issues such as depression and anxiety has soared: one in four teenagers now experiences depression. Physical activities such as walking can help prevent student developing depression. One study conducted on children between the ages of 6 and 8 found that moderate exercise leads to fewer symptoms of depression in those same children 2 years later.

3. Better Concentration

A Danish study conducted on 20,000 youngsters between the ages of 5 and 19 found that those who walked or cycled to school have better concentration. The youngsters were asked to perform a number of concentration-based tasks such as solving puzzles.

Spiritual walking

Walking from a place of relaxed intention is a freeing practice. Schools planning on bringing regular walking into the timetable for pupils, may like to talk to the students first about the act of walking as an ancient spiritual practice.

Following a track with students (or as a staff team) can develop into a prayerful activity—the hypnotizing rhythm of the action of walking helps instill feelings of calm

Since we live by the Spirit,
Let us keep in step with the
Spirit.

Galatians 5:25

Jesus walked from town to town healing the sick.

Mahatma Gandhi walked 150 miles on the infamous

Salt March that forever changed the future of India. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. walked the roads of Alabama and Georgia, and the Quaker Susan B Anthony spent her life walking for the right of women to vote in America.

Pilgrimages are a part of every spiritual tradition. Jews go to Jerusalem, Christians go to the Holy Land and Muslims go to Mecca.

Ask students to imagine something they want to learn or focus on before you leave on your walk, and tell them that when they return they will have gone on their own journey and have been part of a Christian tradition. On your walk notice the birds, the sky, the clouds, the trees, the sounds, the smells and colour. Your walk is packed with a kaleidoscope of possibilities. Walk with a safe number of children and adults to ensure that they can be socially distant. Allow walkers to spend some time alone for some introspection, reflection or prayer time

Walk with reflections

Walking with reflections is a simple activity and can be calming for both students and staff. The idea is to walk as a group (socially distant if necessary) and stop a few times to listen to a site-specific Bible reading, a prayer, poem or meditation. To prepare this activity, you will need a route in mind that has a few useful features such as a bridge, a crossroads, an old tree etc. This will help you put together a theme that connect the features with the material that you want to read. Hopefully, in this way, walkers will end up making an external and an internal journey.

A good way to start is to ask the group to walk in silence for three periods (perhaps five minutes each) where they focus only on what they can see, then to focus on what they can hear and , lastly, on what they can feel (their feet on the pavement, the clothes against their skin, their balance or perhaps the air on their face).

A similar suggestion, maybe for a later walk, is to have the group walk in silence and solitude with 20 metres between each person. If someone stops to make a note or to look at something, then everyone else has to stop too.

Digging deeper

The analogy of walking and the Christian life is used throughout Scripture. Schools may like to talk further on this with students by exploring what it means to 'walk with God.' It is not merely living by rules and regulations or making daily resolutions that we quickly break. It is much more than that.



The prophet Amos revealed what it means to walk with God when he asked, "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3). The word he used for "together" gives the idea of two people moving in rhythm together, as in riding a tandem bicycle. But it is not about getting God into rhythm with us; it is getting ourselves into rhythm with Him. That is what it means to walk with God. Here is a discussion starter that schools may like to use:

If I walked with a friend of mine and I started speeding up and tried to leave him behind, then he'd wonder what I was mad at. If I walked behind him and slowed way down, he might wonder if I was hurt or injured. If we were walking together, we might not agree on everything but we wouldn't have to fall out. How can people walk together and show grace when they don't agree?

Gracious words are a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Proverbs
16:24

Walking activities to build into busy timetables

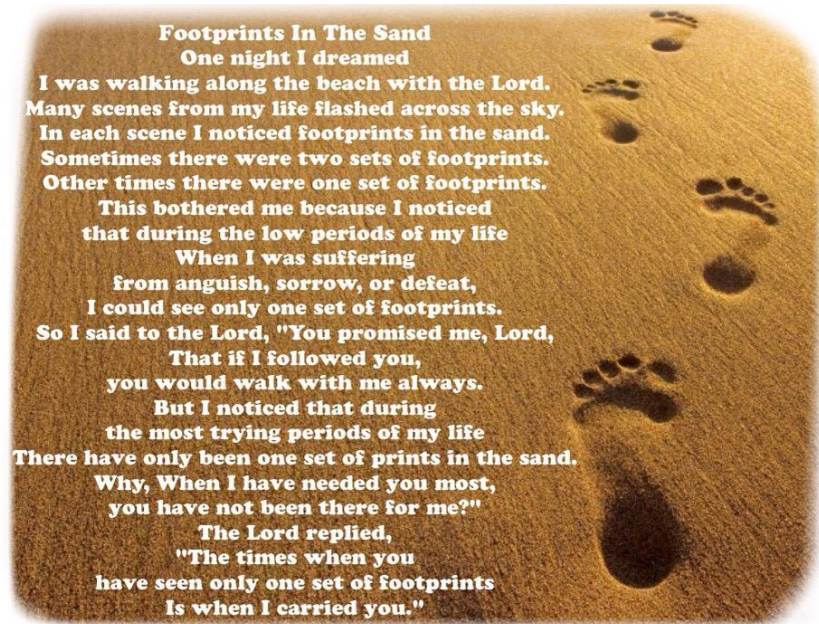
- Fast or slow walks of awareness - synchronise breathing with your steps – this could be a helpful mindfulness activity to prepare the mind and body for productive learning.
- 'Sauntering' – derived from the French phrase 'à la sainte terre' which means 'to the Holy Ground'. It reminds children and adults of a different way of moving – not always rushing breathlessly from A to B.

These two ideas could be linked to schools doing the daily mile. Consider a half-mile walk carried out slowly and mindfully as described above.

"Footprints," also known as "Footprints in the Sand," is a popular allegorical religious poem that schools may like to use whilst walking with children.

This popular text is based on Christian beliefs and describes an experience in which someone is walking on a beach with God. They leave two sets of footprints in the sand. The tracks represent stages of the speaker's life. At various points the two trails

of prints merge to one, especially at the lowest and most hopeless moments of the person's life. When questioning God, believing that the Lord must have abandoned him during those times, God gives the explanation, "During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."



'Sit Spots'

Having a familiar place within the school grounds to be alone to think or reflect can be powerful for some children. A 'sit spot' is simply a favorite place in nature that students can visit regularly to reflect or to study patterns of local plants, birds, trees, animals, etc.

By choosing one place outside that they visit over and over again, students can develop the self-awareness and gradually acquire enhanced sensitivity to God's world.



With practice, this activity is said to facilitate a transformation of some students' ability to observe patterns through all aspects of the outdoors and help them develop a greater understanding of their involvement in the world around them.

It is also a place where students can connect with their faith. For a students, their sit spot can become a place for contemplation or meditation, sometimes in what is happening around them, and other times on issues that they have brought with them to their spot.

The instructions below may be helpful for teachers wanting to develop this practice in schools.

- Choose one spot in the school grounds where you feel comfortable and safe and move to it slowly and peacefully
- Look around at where you are...
- Notice what's happening with the plants, trees & birds of this place
- Are there birds? Insects?
- Listen to the sounds, smell the air, open your eyes to all that you can see
- You are sitting in the middle of God's wonderful world
- Try to breathe slowly and gently
- Think about the peace of this place
- Pay attention to whatever is present in this environment, and tuck it away in your memory so you can think about it if you ever feel anxious

Dew Ponds

***'Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace,
the beauty of thy peace.'***

To begin this activity, it is worth teaching children the hymn 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind', notably the verse above.

It is a hymn with words taken from a longer poem, "The Brewing of Soma" by American Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier. The language may appear very old-fashioned for students, but unpicking the meaning behind this verse and the final verse of the



hymn is likely to lead to some interesting discussions on the power of God in nature.

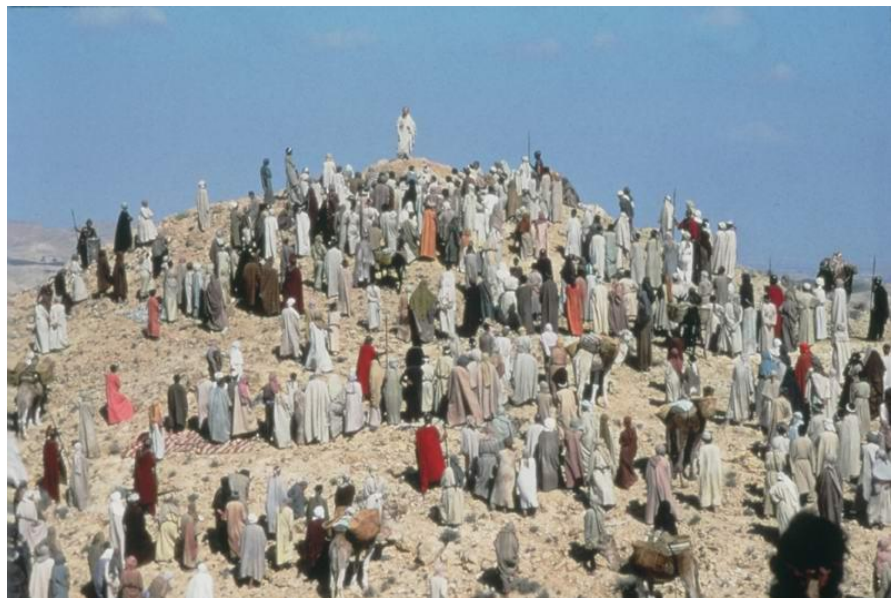
The follow up activity for this is a study of dew ponds. Dew ponds are artificial ponds often found on high ground for livestock to drink and rest in areas where surface water is not easily accessible; the practice dates back to at least Saxon times.

This activity is simple and does not take a great deal of time. Simply create a 'dew pond moment' in everyone's schedule (students and adults); everyone should pause to breathe more deeply, to give thanks and to refresh yourself, ready for the next challenge of the day.

Who needs a mountain?

Mountains and hills are mentioned more than 500 times in the Bible. Many of Jesus' pivotal sermons occurred on mountain tops. For many Christian, mountains remain a place to experience God.

In the Old Testament, the mountains of Sinai and Zion are most significant. Mount Sinai is the place where Moses received the Ten Commandments. Thus, Mount Sinai is a symbol of God's covenant with Israel. Zion is the location of the Jerusalem Temple. In the New Testament Jesus appoints the 12 disciples on a



mountain. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus delivers the Sermon on the Mount, conjuring an image of Moses who received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

Perhaps the most significant mountain scene in the Gospels, however, is the Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17:1-13).

Rachel Summers in her book *Wild Worship* suggests that, no matter where young people are, they can find a 'mountain' to climb. It may turn out to be a slight incline, a set of long stairs, climbing to the top of a multi-storey car park or, if lucky enough, a hill in the countryside. Walking to the top of something can help to shine a new light on things.

But those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah
40:31

The book suggests spending time preparing for the climb – checking clothing, the route and equipment. Then, when the walk begins, discuss the preparations that had to be made and how that may reflect a Christian journey of faith. What is the spiritual equivalent of walking boots for example.

Once at the top, encourage students to look back down the route and talk about which bits were easiest and the hardest. Then ask if the trickier bits look so tricky from the top. Ask the students when students have needed support, holding a hand out to steady them for example, and discuss how this can reflect our lives. Ask the students to discuss what their next step would be, if they had a view into the future where would they be and what help may they need. Who could they ask for help? You may like to offer a chance for prayer or reflection before heading back.

Prayers and reflections

The Diocesan Education Team has already distributed practical prayer activities to support schools during the pandemic. However, below are several suggestions for reflection and prayer with an emphasis on ‘noticing’:

- Marvel with a magnifying glass – allow students time to look closely at things, perhaps with a magnifying glass and marvel at minute beauty in nature before giving thanks.
- Look out for insignificant things that you might ordinarily miss. Consider why they might actually be significant and what would happen/how would you feel if they were not there.

Schools may like to record anonymous comments from pupils and adults; display them in a communal space. In a similar way, identify a part of the school grounds you treasure. Contemplate it and give thanks for it. Can you articulate why it is special to you? Give students a digital camera and ask them to take pictures of these places for the display.

- ‘Soft Eyes’ – students and adults stand outside for a few minutes, still and with a relaxed gaze. Do not focus on any one thing in particular. Try to breathe slowly and sense the world around you. This is a relaxing and meditative process.
- Try physical ways of praying. After a vigorous walk or run, ask the students to simply try lying down in the school field or playground, and feel their bodies supported by the earth. Ask students to relax in the moment and feel part of creation. Watch the clouds –do nothing but watch them for a few moments. Breathe in God’s air as if it were God’s love.

- On a clear day in the autumn/winter, watch a sunset and give thanks for the events of the day. Perhaps arrange for the students to arrive at school for the sunrise and give thanks for the new day ahead!

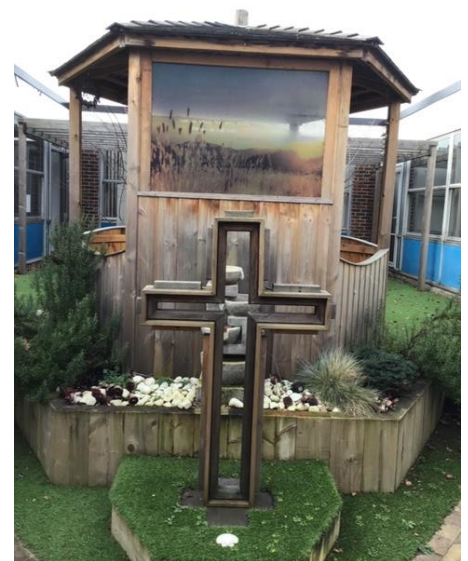
All these ideas above could also be considered as prayer/reflection and incorporated into worship if time in the day is difficult to find.



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Developing a Spiritual Garden at your school

A spiritual garden is a place where students and adults can sit quietly and enjoy the peace and calm of natural surroundings. The garden may contain a range of features representing elements that are important to the community using it. There may be a wonderful array of plants which stimulate the senses with their bright colours, fragrance and textures; the soothing sounds of a wind chime; a beautiful bird bath; a cross or Christian symbol that reflects the foundation of the school; stepping stones and paved areas; fountain or water feature as a reminder of Jesus as the 'Water of Life'; seats, benches, raised timber planting beds, and lighting. Natural stone may suggest silence and strength, the wooden features and trees provide a sense of warmth and shelter. The list goes on.



If space allows a maze or labyrinth might be considered. There are no set rules. Gardens may be any size or shape and will be dependent upon the particular context of the school. For example, some schools have made use of a quadrangle in the centre of the building to establish a quiet, reflective area, such as the garden at St James Church of England Primary School in West End, pictured here.

This provides a quiet contemplative place for children and staff to visit before, during and after school.



From a plan to reality at St James.



In addition to the suggestions above, it may be that a new school is able to incorporate an architectural feature of the previous building such as a bell. Willow sculptures, gazebos and so on may also form part of the garden. Whatever is included should contribute to the feeling of a special sacred space for the whole school community.

Developing a garden

It is good to involve as wide a range of stakeholders as is practicable in the planning and ideas for the garden. Ensure that everyone understands the vision for the project and the benefits that will ensue. Many people can be involved in the creation, for example, by designing, planting, landscaping, building structures, laying a patio, donating plants and lots more. Some tips to bear in mind:

- Do some research and find examples of existing gardens (see below). This can stimulate ideas to get you started.
- Begin the actual design process by discussing and sketching lots of ideas—everyone who wants to can have a go. In one school, children and parents built models of their garden designs which made a fabulous display.

- Select a working party team of ‘experts’ to collate designs and draw up a final plan for implementation.
- Make garden spot plan layouts on graph paper to scale.
- Consider future maintenance and development of your garden.

Finally, don’t be afraid to ‘phone a friend’. Schools who have been through a similar process will be only too pleased to share their expertise. The following schools are happy to help:



St James Church of England Primary, West End
Alverstoke Church of England Junior School
(pictured above and left)

Longparish Church of England Primary School
St Albans Church of England Primary School,
Havant (pictured below)

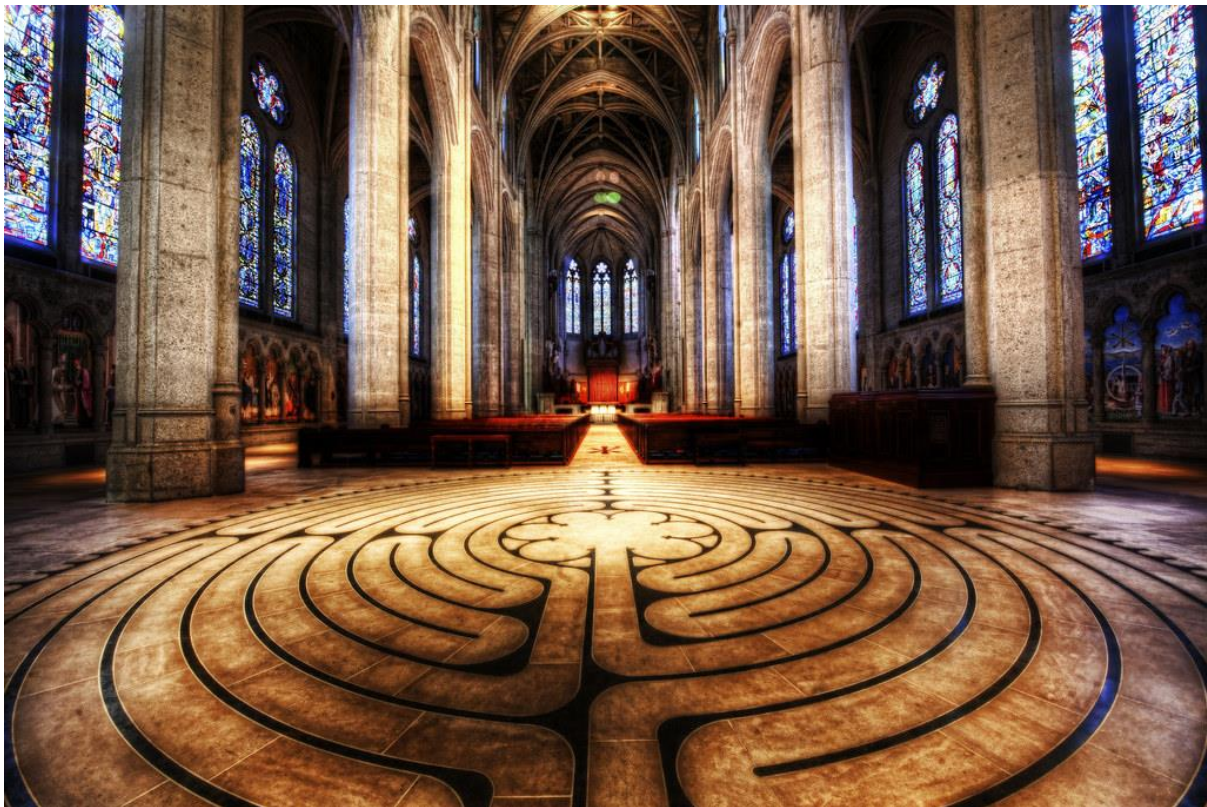
Breamore Church of England Primary School in
the New Forest



Labyrinth - A path to the core

But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul. Deuteronomy 4:29

Labyrinths can be found in churches across the world and many cathedrals have portable labyrinths that people can use. One of the most famous labyrinths can be found at Chartres Cathedral in France (below) which dates back to 1205. Pilgrims travel from all around the world to use the Chartres labyrinth. The idea is that, as pilgrims walk around it, they walk towards God. At the central point, the person comes to the center of his or her relationship with God.



Labyrinths have existed for more than 4,000 years with labyrinth stone wall carvings dating back to the Bronze Age. Labyrinths have been featured in Greek and Roman mythology and, in the Middle Ages, they started to appear in churches around the world. Labyrinths have been used by many different cultures and religions across time as they have been known to be used for relaxation, meditation and prayer that can bring spiritual and



emotional well-being to the lives of those who used them. Sometimes labyrinths are described as the outward sign of an inner pilgrimage.

Labyrinths can be found in hospital gardens, parks, schools and home gardens as they are known for their meditative properties.

What is a Labyrinth?

A Labyrinth is **not** a maze; a maze has blind dead ends that are used to confuse and trick the mind. A labyrinth is a spiral course having a single, winding unobstructed path from the outside to the centre that is used to calm and relax.



Finger Labyrinths – start simple

A finger labyrinth is similar to a full sized labyrinth you would walk, except it is on a much smaller and more portable scale. The user traces the path to the centre using your finger rather than with their feet. There are many different kinds of labyrinths differing in size and complexity.

Finger Labyrinths are known to help students relax, feel better when they are sad or anxious, deal with situations when they feel ashamed or embarrassed and help them to concentrate.

Finger Labyrinth Meditation.

1. Take deep breaths to begin to relax and focus on the entrance to the labyrinth.
2. Place a finger from your non-dominant hand on the entrance of the labyrinth. If you find this too awkward at first, use your dominant hand. However, over time, keep trying your non-dominant hand. This helps keep the mind focused on the meditation due to the challenge it presents.
3. Slowly trace the pattern of the labyrinth with your finger allowing your mind to clear from extra thought and focus solely on following the path of the labyrinth.
4. “Walk” to the centre of the labyrinth and rest momentarily, taking deep breaths observing how you are feeling.
5. Retrace your path out of the labyrinth.
6. Sit back, breathe deeply and relax. Observe how you are feeling again.

Note: The same steps apply for a Walking Labyrinth, except you slowly walk the path.



Free Printable Finger Labyrinths are available using the link below:

<http://www.relax4life.com/paperlabyrinths.html>

Other Activities:

- Make a 3-D Finger Labyrinth: <http://heatherplett.com/2015/01/make-finger-labyrinth-also-piece-art/>
- Create Walking Labyrinths using jumping ropes, cones, bean bags, chalk etc. outside or in the hall for students to walk.

With some training labyrinths can be used to support a wide range of learning, including dealing with grief, problem solving, conflict resolution, building community and celebrating joyful events. Many teachers have found ways to use the labyrinth to enrich learning experiences and a place for the whole school community to find peace and calm.

According to the renowned Real School Gardens Project in America, students in schools that have labyrinths report that walking the labyrinth can help students calm down, focus and concentrate. It can help students relax if they are angry. It is thought that moving through the left and right turns of the Labyrinth helps a person shift out of the linear left brain into the right brain, which is more spatially oriented and creative. Our right brain gives us our “Ah ha” moments when we suddenly figure out problems or are able to think outside the box.

Using what you have

The creation of a school labyrinth can lend itself to community project. Heavy lifting and practical design will encourage dads, grandads or even the local sports team/keep fit club to get involved.

The construction of a labyrinth can be simple. The most basic, and easiest, way to build a labyrinth is to place stones on the earth to form the pattern. The school may want to have a base of gravel, coarse sand or bark on which to place the stones. The benefit of students bringing the rocks to be used is that they feel a part of the construction. If the whole school brings in rocks, perhaps each class could have a way of identifying ‘their’ rocks. The stones should be about the size of a grapefruit - small stones make the task tedious and can be easily displaced.

In the grounds of the school, any turf can be removed and bark chips placed directly on top. Broken tiles or stones can be used to create the lines of the labyrinth. This lack of formality means that the labyrinth is very easy to change. Different or changing layouts can reflect interest, ability and emotional need of the children.

Other possibilities are paint on pavement, playing field liner on grass or earth, bricks or tiles buried in grass, bottles buried in the ground, short stubs of branches set on end in the ground or temporary labyrinths of almost any materials. Schools may like to consider creating labyrinths based on particular emotions, Christian values or a Bible story.

Encourage the participants to paint stones to put in the labyrinth. Stones can represent family members, local groups, classes, subjects, Christian values or emotions. Consider starting a labyrinth book which might include:

- Journal experiences from the students
- Photos taken before, during and after construction
- Drawings of labyrinths
- Samples of curriculum projects that relate to building and using the labyrinth
- Results of student research. (a good website to start with is : www.labyrinthociety.org and www.veriditas.net.)
-

Christian artist Hannah Dunnett joins project

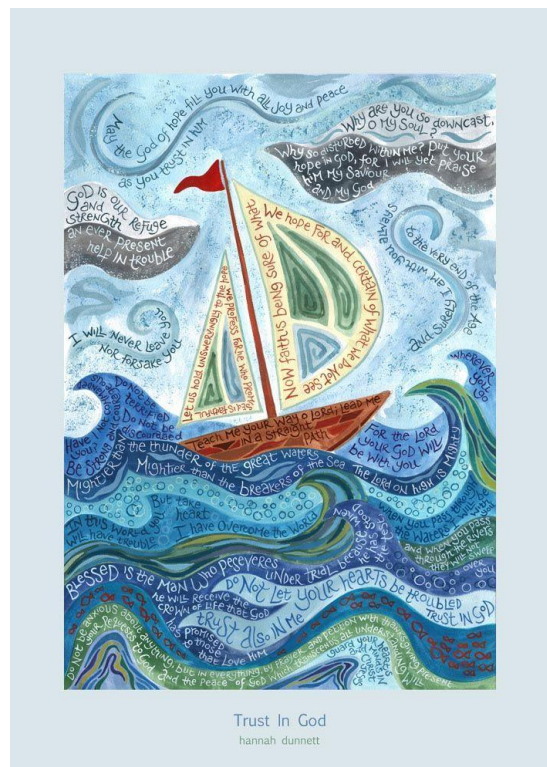
Christian artist Hannah Dunnett produces artwork intertwined with religious texts.

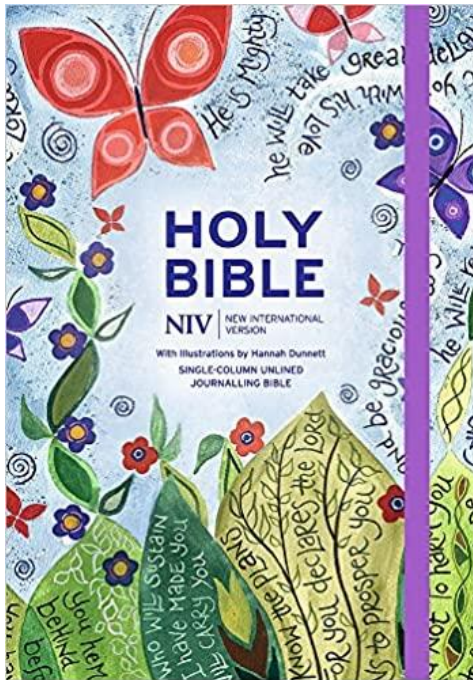
Her designs are reproduced on a range of items from greetings cards to calendars, mugs and bookmarks. Each drawing is inspired by the scriptures and prayer.

She is said to have an ability to visualise the symbolism of scripture in a way that makes it tangible and accessible; inscribing God's word onto landscapes, seascapes and everyday environments with her brushstrokes and creating deeply meditative images. Looking at her work, students get the chance to soak up scripture through her pictures. Hannah originally studied medicine and worked as a family doctor before becoming a full-time artist in 2011.

After hearing about the Ten Ten project, Hannah and her husband Ben (a Christian composer and musician) contacted the Diocesan Education Team and have been working on supporting schools to promote positive mental health through art.

Hannah has recorded a short film for our schools in which she discusses the feelings that she has when she designs and paints. This will be sent out to schools





Hannah has also produced a Journaling Bible which encourages adults or students to reflect and journal creatively in God's presence. The single-column setting and blank margins allow for plenty of room beside the Scriptures for notes, drawings, stencilling or prayers.

Also included are shortcuts to key stories, events and people of the Bible, lists of references for help and guidance and a reading plan to help you familiarise yourself with the Bible.

The book won Bible of the Year at the Christian Resources Together awards 2018.

Royalties from all sales of the NIV Bible help Biblica in their work of translating and distributing Bibles around the world.

Symbols of Balance – Building with Willow

Biblical tradition

The Willow is a tree referenced many times in Christian tradition. The Bible tells us that God commanded the Hebrews to take branches of the 'handsomest trees, particularly of the willows of the brook' and to hold them in their hands before the Lord, as a token of rejoicing, at the feast of Tabernacles

One of the greatest traits of the willow is its flexibility. It is one of the few trees capable of bending into outrageous poses without snapping – a powerful metaphor for people needing healing, recovery or a spiritual path. The message of the willow is to adjust to life rather than fighting it. Its strength comes from its adaptability. It is a tree able not only to survive, but to thrive in challenging conditions.

Willow spaces serve as excellent prayer or reflection areas and can provide safe havens for students to talk about their feelings or have some time alone.



The collaborative nature of the building of the space builds self-esteem and confidence and the domes themselves provide space for quiet contemplation and peace.

Willow 'cocoons' can also be used inside quiet places inside school (and can be purchased readymade fairly cheaply). Domes can be used as stimulus and prayer or Bible story stations.

Building willow structures

Long unrooted willow cuttings (whips) can be used to make functional and attractive structures/barriers that grow and develop throughout the years as well as the seasons. Willow structures can be used for tunnels, domes (which can be interconnected with tunnels if you have the space) and as prayer or reflection areas. You do not need to be especially creative and even the simplest structure can look very impressive, and there are no rigid rules to follow - just handy guidelines. Schools can either work out their own design and order the number and size of whips needed or kits can be ordered online. Ask the local photography club to chart the progress of your structure in pictures for a display in the school/church.

Willow roots easily when you plant freshly cut willow (long whips *or* short cuttings) in the ground in Winter. If you order willow whips online you will receive a bundle of sticks, but push them in the ground and you can create attractive, environmentally friendly, practical structures to form dens, tunnels, shaded seating areas and much more !

Making a Twigloo – a prayer or spirituality space

You will need

1. Living Willow Whips – the *Salix Viminalis* variety - 6', 7', 8' or 9' lengths is best
2. Strong garden string
3. Spade or garden fork
4. Weed matting (optional)
5. Play Bark (optional)

Find a suitable spot for your willow den and mark the footprint using a spade, some string or sand.

If weeds are a concern, weed matting is a good idea. Play bark can then be added for a more natural feel. Secure the weed matting into the ground.

Now you're ready for your willow. *Salix Viminalis* or other *Viminalis* species are generally recommended as they are quick growing, hardy and ideal for living willow dens.

Start by finding 6 of the sturdiest willow whips to make your entrance, bringing them together to form an arch. Tie these securely together using the garden string.

The main structure can now be built. Begin with several of the thicker stems and plant these vertically at about 30-40cm intervals around the willow den base. Tie opposite whips together where they meet to begin to form a dome shape. Then begin planting and weaving in the diagonal willow whips. The top of your willow den can be left open to grow before then weaving together.



Stems should be planted about 10cm into the ground. Cut a small cross into the matting (if used) and push the stem into the ground if the soil is soft.

Smaller stems can be planted diagonally, working around the willow den base. These stems will produce more shoots and will make your den nice and bushy, whereas the vertical stems grow long and add to the height.

When your living willow den is complete you can add more structure by weaving in horizontal willow whips around the structure and from the top of the entrance arch to the rest of the structure. The floor of the den can be left as bare matting or play bark can be added.

A step by step guide to building willow tunnels

Step 1: Mark out 2 trenches, dig to a depth of 30cm and mix with compost. You may wish to make the tunnel curve or taper.

Step 2: Insert 2 poles opposite each other along the length of the trenches at a spacing of approximately 25cm. Shorter poles can be used towards the rear of the tunnel to enhance the tapering effect.

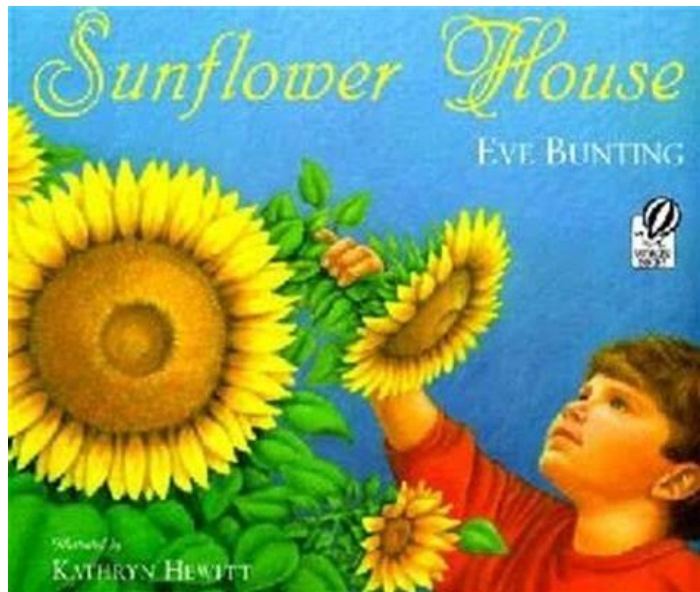
Step 3: Bend each pair of poles together to form an arch and tie at the end of each pole.

Step 4: To increase the stability of the structure you can secure a pole(s) along the length of the tunnel at the apex of curves.

Step 5: In order to build up the growth on the sides of the tunnel insert two woven poles at an angle of approximately 45 degrees at the base of each upright on each side. These are then woven back along the tunnel to finish near the top of the curve.

Sunflower Houses as Prayer Spaces

“Sunflower House” by Eve Bunting is a story for young children about a boy who plants a circle of sunflower seeds into the ground. It tells the process of how he watches them while they grow and what happens when they are fully grown. The book is a nice starter for this project, to build a sunflower house in your school grounds.



The house, which will need to be built as early as possible in the Spring in order for it to grow in time for students to use it later in the summer term, can be a focal point for prayer.

An added element to this project is that the seeds from your first sunflower house will be able to be replanted for the following year's house. This enables students to contribute to the ongoing prayer of students in years to come.

Building a sunflower house

The seeds of the giant varieties, when planted in a square or circle, create the perfect setting for a prayer or gathering space.

You will need:

- One packet of sunflower seeds - choose a tall variety like Mammoth or California Greystripe
 - Stakes
 - String or twine
 - A hoe
 - Compost
1. In early spring, find a suitable location with good soil, flat ground, and at least six to eight hours of direct sunlight during the growing season.
 2. Decide whether the sunflower house is going to be a square or a circle.

3. Stake off the agreed design in the chosen location. Tie a string to one of the stakes and stretch it around the perimeter to designate the walls of the house – remember to leave an opening for the doorway, approximately two-feet wide.
4. Remove any rocks, grass, and weeds from inside the perimeter. To make the ‘floor’ of your house weed-free, place flattened layers of cardboard inside the marked area, then cover the cardboard with straw or mulch. If you want to, later you can plant a cover crop inside the house to form a comfortable ‘carpet’! Using the string around the perimeter as your guide, use a hoe to clear the perimeter area.



5. Use a trowel to dig a small hole, 2cm deep, every 30 cm along your marked outline. Place two seeds in each hole, following the packet instructions. Cover the seeds with loose soil. Water seeds thoroughly and daily.

Once your sunflowers are in full bloom, you’ll have around 20 days to enjoy the beauty of the house. The blooming phase provides the opportunity for bees to pollinate the flower and fertilize the seeds. When the back of the sunflower head turns yellow, you’ll know the seeds are ripening.

To harvest the seeds of your sunflower, wait until your sunflower droops and turns brown. Then, cut the stem leaving four inches from the head of the sunflower. You must store the sunflower head upside down in a dry and breathable bag. Your seeds should be ready to harvest within 110 to 125 days after you planted the flower and can be stored ready for planting the following year.

The Power of Drumming

Research by the Royal College of Music found that drumming has a positive impact on mental health, with a 10-week course of group drumming reducing depression by as much as 38% and anxiety by 20%.

Making music can be a powerful tool for promoting mental health and wellbeing and the shared experience of drumming in a group facilitates feelings of belonging, acceptance, safety and care.

Drumming accelerates physical healing and has even been found to boost the immune system. In addition specific studies conducted by professionals in the fields of music therapy and mental health show us that drumming:

- Reduces tension, anxiety and stress
- Helps control chronic pain
- Boosts the immune system

- Releases negative feelings and emotional trauma.
- Induces deep relaxation and lowers blood pressure
- Research also suggests that drumming serves as a distraction from pain and grief.

Drum Circles also provide an opportunity for adults and students to feel connected with others and gain a sense of interpersonal support. There are great benefits to feeling connected to others, especially those in similar situations. A drum circle can also provide students with an opportunity to connect with their own spirit at a deeper level.

Pictured right are children attending a diocesan leavers service at Winchester Cathedral which included a drumming workshop.



Founded in 1996 by drummer Teri Bryant, the Psalm Drummers' vision is to stir up prayer, praise and worship and lead people to Christ through drumming.

Follow the link below to watch the Psalm Drummers praising God at the Albert Hall.

<https://youtu.be/0cXtx7q1C-s>

The group calls on drummers everywhere to drum out beats that carry the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit. Psalm Drummers encourage a life lived in time with the heartbeat of God and in the worship of Jesus Christ.

Psalm drummer, Reverend Mike Griffiths from Winchester, has worked with diocesan headteachers, promoting good mental health through drumming. He recommends using packs of flat drums, the details of which are below:

<https://www.inspire-works.co.uk/remo-sound-shapes/>

e: info@inspire-works.co.uk t: +44 (0)7798 603180



Also, Amazon has a bongo Cajon for around £20. See the link below.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Meinl-MYO-BCAJ-Bongo-Cajon-Construction/dp/B009VDW4OM>

Marking the Way with a Cairn

A **cairn** is a man-made pile (or stack) of stones, often used as a waymarker. The disciple Peter wrote that we are like living stones being built together. (1 Peter 2:5) Just as stones start off with rough edges which are eroded away as they are jostled by other stones, so our rough edges are made smooth by the experiences life throws at us. Similarly, cairns can be a visual prompt to travellers, showing them a safe way to go.

Cairn building can be a chance to teachers to talk to students about these concepts. Students might like to write their hopes and fears for the future onto pebbles using marker pens and symbolically 'hand them over' as they build them into a cairn.

Cairns are used as trail markers in many parts of the world, in uplands, on moorland, on mountaintops, near waterways and on sea cliffs, as well as in barren deserts and tundras. They vary in size from small stone markers to entire artificial hills, and in complexity from loose conical rock piles to delicately balanced sculptures and elaborate feats of engineering. Cairns may be painted or otherwise decorated. Your school cairn could highlight your school values or demonstrate teamwork and friendship. It can be a positive metaphor for building together, reliance on each other and interdependency.



This activity lends itself to prayerful reflection. It is a project that shows students that being prayerful does not always have to involve sitting still and having your eyes closed.

Building a cairn can have lots of wonderful benefits for children– working as a team, finding appropriately shaped stones, deciding which to place at the bottom and how to build them up.

Please do not forget to share with us any of the above projects that your school enjoys. Your work and pictures can then be published in our newsletters. Please email anything that your school wants to share to sue.bowen@portsmouth.anglican.org

Please make sure that you have parental agreement to share pictures of any children before you send.

Appendix 1

Trees in the Bible

The bible opens and closes with trees (they are mentioned on the first page of the Old Testament and the last page of the New Testament) and – apart from people – there are more references to trees than to any other living thing. The trees in the garden of Eden were ‘pleasing to the eye and good for food’ (Genesis 2:9) and the first command given to Adam is to tend the trees and the rest of the garden. They are a source of beauty and also provide shade, shelter and building materials. Their fruit and seeds can be used for food, medicines, and cosmetics.

The prophet Ezekiel has a vision of the future, with a river flowing out of the Temple with trees growing on the banks:

“Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.” (Ezekiel 47:12)

This theme is picked up again in the book of Revelation, where the vision of the new heaven and earth includes “the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God ... down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.” (Revelation 22:1-2)

The tree of life is an important theme in the bible, it is often seen as the reward for those who stay true to God’s teachings, for example Revelation 2:7 holds out a promise to Christians who are being persecuted, that those who stay true will be rewarded with the right to eat from the tree of life. The idea is found in many other religions and mythologies, where it is often understood as a cosmic tree, connecting all life forms, but the biblical idea is more that it is a source of nourishment and mental or physical wellbeing. The wooden handles of the Torah scrolls are known as *etz hayim*, or tree of life and Proverbs 3:18 tells us that wisdom, or the bible, “is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed.”

It is probably no coincidence that Jesus was brought up as a carpenter, so would have been used to handling wood of all kinds, and that after the resurrection, Mary mistake him for a gardener.

Psalms 1 describes the benefits of being like a tree planted by the waters with deep roots that draw up nourishment and keep it strong and stable.

**[They are] like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers. (Psalm 1:3)**

Other verses also use the metaphor of having deep roots, such as Ephesians 3:17 which encourages us to be rooted and grounded in love. If the roots, the hidden part of the tree, are what gives it its strength, perhaps the suggestion is that it’s the inner, unseen parts of our lives that make us strong and resilient.

Another biblical theme is the idea of bearing good fruit. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus encourages us to be fruitful, saying that whatever is in our hearts will be seen in our lives.

“Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. (Matthew 7:17-20)

Jesus teaches about the vine in John 15, which needs to be pruned to make it fruitful. “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”



Useful contacts / further information

Books for Children:

The Promise, Nicola Davies

The Tin Forest, Helen Ward

Green Poems for a Blue Planet, Martin Kizsko

Finding Wild, Megan Wagner Lloyd

Get Your Boots On, Alex White

'The Day the Crayons Quit' -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=489micE6eHU&app=desktop>

'The Dot' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Clpw7PG7m1Q>

You've Got This – A mental health journal promoting positive thoughts,
Steve Turner

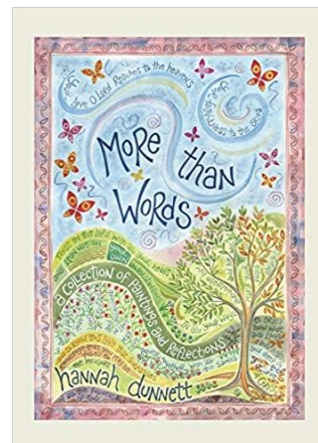
My Body Sends A Signal, Natalia McGuire

The Survivor Tree, Cheryl Somers Aubin

The Tell-Me Tree, Karen Inglis

The Tale of The Three Trees, Angela Elwell Hunt

The Proud Tree, Luane Roche



Books for Adults:

Wild Worship, Wild Lent and Wild Advent – 3 books by Rachel Summers

Soulful Nature, Brian Draper and Howard Green

Spiritual Intelligence, Brian Draper

Earthed in God : Four movements of spiritual growth, Christopher Chapman

Nature Spirituality – praying with wind, water, earth, fire, Mark G. Boyer

Saying Yes to Life, Ruth Valerio

Forest Church, Bruce Stanley

Think Like A Tree, Sarah Spencer

Stilling, Michael Beesley

Planetwise, Dave Bookless – book and resource pack

Sacred Space Sacred Place, Barnabas

Teaching Children the Magic of Silence and Stillness, Maggie Dent

Creating a Multi-sensory Spiritual Garden in your school, Shahne Vickery

Outdoor Worship: Engaging with God in his Creation, Sara and Sam Hargreaves

The Nature Fix: Why Nature makes us Happier, Healthier and more Creative, Florence Williams

The Man Who Planted Trees, Jean Giono

Websites:

<https://thirdspacelearning.com/blog/13-outdoor-maths-activities-early-years-year-6-plus-bonus-ages/>

<https://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/learning-library/articles/maths-in-the-great-outdoors>

<https://www.planetdolan.com/15-beautiful-examples-of-mathematics-in-nature/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/>

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/services-for-schools/mental-health-resources-for-schools/>

<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/get-involved-schools/school-resources>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/stories-and-features/primary-school-pupils-given-targeted-mental-health>

http://thesanctuarycentre.org/resources/creative_prayer_idea_wild_worship_field_guide.pdf

<https://engageworship.org/ideas/outdoor-worship-garden-prayer-stations>

<https://arochoa.org.uk/wildchristian/>

<https://thriveglobal.com/stories/19-must-read-books-to-help-kids-understand-their-emotional-and-mental-health/>

<https://childmind.org/article/best-childrens-books-about-mental-health/>

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/m/mental-health-awareness/>

Opportunities to use Understanding Christianity to support the Ten:Ten #Flourishing project.



Unit 3:2 Creation explores the role of humans as stewards of God's creation, using their God-given intelligence to care for and work the natural world. It also examines the negative environmental impact we have had, and discusses whether human beings are doomed.

Unit 3:3 Fall looks at 'the glory and wretchedness of humanity.' It discusses what it means to be made in the image of God and considers how this concept might help a Christian who is feeling down or anxious. The resource also unpacks the idea of human dignity and everyone having equal value.

The 'Digging Deeper' materials explore the consequences of the Fall and whether the story of the Fall is persuasive as an explanation of the dark side of humanity. It also considers other explanations for the human condition, such as Evolution, Humanism, Psychology and Socioplogy, asking whether they are realistic, trustworthy and persuasive.

Unit 3:5 Wisdom considers the story of Job and asks why there is suffering in the world. It asks what image of God the story portrays and whether the story is helpful for a Jewish or Christian believer. Is it possible to believe in a God of love, given the evil and suffering in the world? The materials suggest that for many Christians, the answer to the problem of evil lies in practical, social action, rather than philosophy. Students are encouraged to suggest their own answers to the question 'What do we do when life gets hard?'

You may also be interested in the [Spirited Arts competition](#). The themes for 2021 are

- 'WE have far more in common with each other than that which divides us.'
- God's Good Earth?
- Where is God?
- Inspiring
- Healing

The Natre website gives all the information you need to inspire your students and support them in talking and writing about their artwork. The website also contains galleries of past winners to get the discussion started. Why not create an exhibition of their work and invite parents and the local community in to view it? (COVID permitting, of course!)

