

Intergenerational Projects for Schools and Parishes



Introduction

This booklet aims to provide schools and parishes with some informative and practical ideas for intergenerational projects that bring children and older people together in friendship and mutual respect.

Intergenerational work is one way in which our church schools can 'live out' the Church of England vision to serve The Common Good - allowing different generations to view themselves as members of the same community, while at the same time respecting and valuing each other as individuals.

These projects are designed to be fun but also provide missional opportunities for our communities. In the Diocesan Education Team we know that when older people work alongside our schools their experience, insights and inspiration are hugely important. Members of the older population often underpin our Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan ministries.

Intergenerational-based education encourages an examination of people's everyday ways of life. Over time we hope that projects such as the ones suggested in this booklet will give rise to new ways of living collaboratively in places that are formed through new intergenerational relationships. Programmes can bring generations closer together and contribute to social cohesion. Intergenerational-based education is an ethical practice founded on a process of the re-evaluation of parishes and of people's contributions across the generational divide. This includes the passing on of values and ethical practices from one generation to the next and the creation of new ones.

Our Dioceses are actively promoting and initiating projects that bring younger and older people together in our parishes. We want our schools to be agents of social transformation. We hope that your school, church or parish will get involved in this inspirational work and we pray that your project will benefit all those involved.

With our sincere thanks and blessings,

Rt Rev'd Dr Jonathan Frost

Chair, Diocesan Board of Education



Jeff Williams

Director of Education

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Memories and Seeking Peace - Le Bleuet



An alternative to the traditional poppy, the 'bleuet' or cornflower is the French symbol for the annual remembrance commemorations. Symbolising delicacy and innocence, the cornflower used to grow abundantly in France and, like the poppy, was often the only sign of life amidst the mud and desolation of World War 1. The flower was also used to describe the young soldiers of WW1, whose bright blue uniforms initially stood out in sharp contrast to the grey and muddy misery of the trenches.

Les poilus, as the French soldiers were known, suffered terribly. Survivors trailed home maimed, mutilated and mentally traumatised. Seeing the importance of keeping these men active, French nurses Suzanne Lenhardt, and Charlotte Malleterre, started up 'Le Bleuet de France', a workshop where former soldiers created cornflower blue lapel badges from blue tissue paper to sell to the public. The initiative spread slowly and in 1935, the sale of the Bleuets on Remembrance Day finally became official throughout France. Two thirds of French families lost a close relative in WW1. This is a far greater toll than in the UK, something that was true during the Second World War as well. As a result, communities are still very mindful of their loss. Many today will still recognise the family names listed on the memorials as the ancestors of friends or acquaintances.

In recent years the cornflower has become a sign of hope and peace for the future in France. At a time of Brexit and division, schools are encouraged to think about what binds us together. The Bleuet has seen something of a revival in recent years with President Francois Hollande wearing the symbol every year during Armistice Day events.

There follows a list of projects for children and older people to mark remembrance, uniting the generations and two nations by using both poppies and cornflowers.

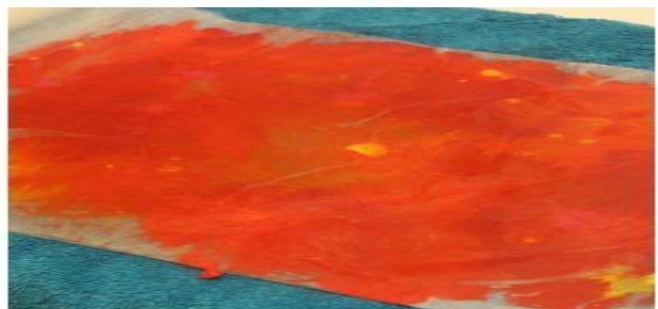
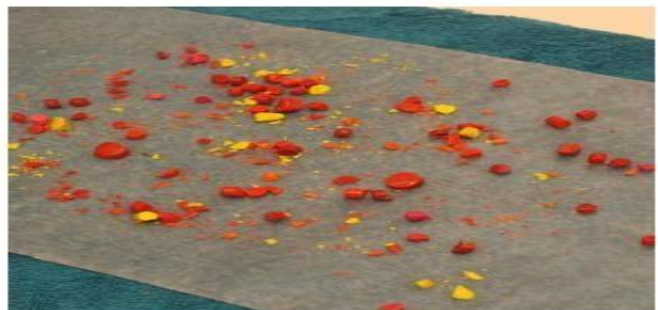
Quilling a cornflower

Cut thin strips of blue paper (or buy special quilling papers). Roll the paper strips round a pencil to create a spiral. Pinch the ends to create a petal shape. Put PVA glue onto a board or strong card and gently press the quilled shape onto the glue. This is an exercise in patience for older and younger participants as it takes some time to stick! Release the paper. See the picture for more ideas.



Melted wax poppies

1. Wax paper
2. Crayon shaving or small chippings in red, pink, yellow and purple
3. black buttons
4. Green pipe cleaners
5. Small whole punch

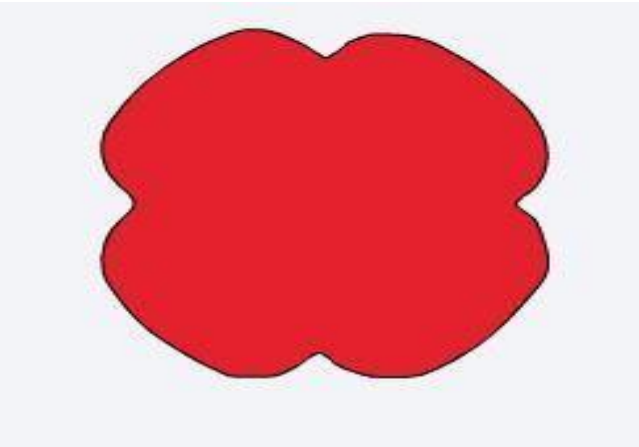


Chop up some used crayons into small chunks. If your children are younger then you can use a pencil sharpener to produce shavings.

Place the crayon wax between two sheets of wax paper and iron it on a low setting. For younger children a hairdryer will melt the wax between the sheets.

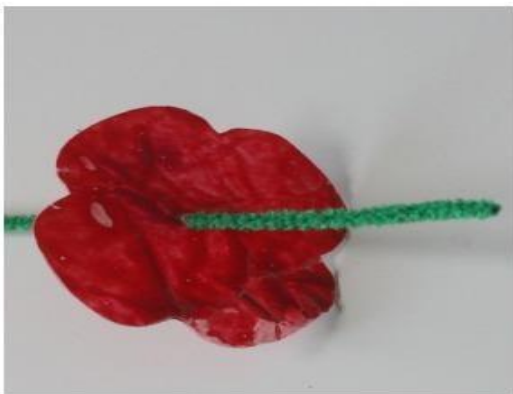
Allow the wax to set again and it will become stiff like card.

Create a card poppy template.



Make a small hole in the centre before feeding through a pipe cleaner and then securing it by threading

it through a button and back on itself through the second button hole and back through the punched hole in the poppy. It is possible to use the same technique to make a poppy brooch by adding a pin on the rear.



The same process can be adapted to make cornflowers, using an alternative template.

Edible Flowers

Cornflowers are edible. Harvested between May and the end of September each year, cornflower plants have a simple floral flavour – very slightly sweet and spicy but with a pleasant ‘barely-there’ taste. They grow in a variety of colours – the distinctive blue (wild cultivar) and vivid reds, pinks and blacks.

Cornflowers have many and varied uses – providing a key ingredient in summer salads, as decorative touches to sweet and savoury dishes or used as a base in making your own natural food colouring. See [Higgledy Garden’s Calendula and Cornflower Fudge Recipes](#) online and soft cheeses using petals to add to their visual appeal.

Cornflower and Berry Pavlova

This cornflower pavlova is straightforward to make and a very impressive dessert to share at a peacetime tea dance or school/church memorial day. Ask the older community to help the children make this recipe.



First gather your cornflowers and ensure that they are dry and free from insects and then crystallise them using egg white and caster sugar.

Using a fine paint brush gently paint egg white onto the flowers (on both sides of the petals) and sprinkle some fine caster sugar carefully over them, (on both sides and in all the cracks) so that it adheres. Knock off any surplus sugar and place on a baking sheet to dry. Depending on the temperature in the room, the flowers may take a few hours to dry and should then be kept in an airtight container until use.

Make a meringue base by beating 4 egg whites until stiff in a bowl. Gradually add 225 grms of caster sugar a spoon full at a time. Then add 1/2 teaspoon of white wine vinegar and 1 teaspoon of cornflower and give a final quick whisk.

Spread onto baking parchment and put in the oven at 120C (lower if a fan oven) or gas mark 1/2. Cook for 1 1/2 hours in the oven and then switch off the oven leaving the meringue base in the oven until it is completely cold (overnight is best). Add the seeds of 1/2 a vanilla pod and the zest of a lemon to a large carton of double cream and whisk until firm. Mound the cream on top of the cold meringue and add your chosen selection of berries and decorate with the crystallised cornflowers.



Use the often extensive knowledge of the local WI or cookery club to hold a wartime back off or simply to share their wartime recipes, exploring how to cook with rationed food. Maybe create a wartime cookbook to sell for an armed forces charity – or ‘buddy up’ with a French school and swap wartime recipe ideas.

Extend this idea to consider a sewing club with a ‘make do and mend’ mission – creating simple items such as brooches and pencil cases using left over materials. Link this idea to modern day

recycling projects.

Intergenerational choir

Contact the church or a local choir and invite members to join an intergenerational choir to learn and perform wartime favourites. Amazon has a selection of albums and lyrics.



Gardening

Contact the local gardening club or allotment society (or simply write an invitation to the local church congregation) appealing for help to plant a poppy and cornflower memorial garden.



When there are enough blooms, pick them and create small flower arrangements to display in local shops and businesses. Next to each arrangement, place some children’s research about wartime memories or a memorial to a local fallen soldier.

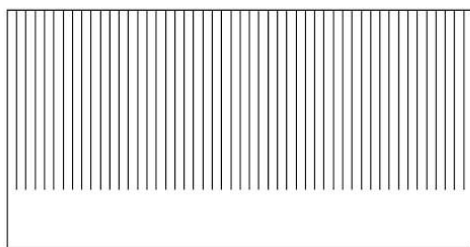
Make a paper cornflower using the following instructions.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS AND TOOLS

Crepe paper, in magenta, orange,
or another color, as desired

Step 1

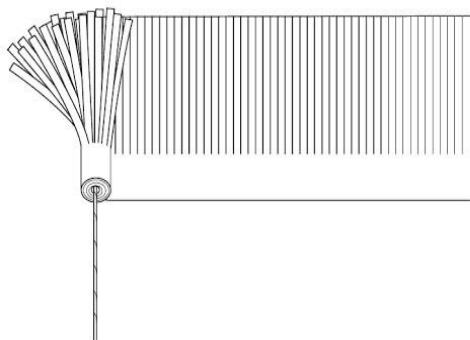
Make deep cuts that run parallel to the grain of a wide strip of crepe paper.



Cut a $2\frac{1}{2}$ " \times 10" (6.4 \times 25.4 cm) piece of crepe paper. Snip deep parallel cuts into the top edge of the strip at $\frac{1}{8}$ " (0.3 cm) intervals to make fringe along the full length of the strip. Repeat on a second strip of paper for a fuller stamen, if desired.

Step 2

Roll the strip into a brush.



Use your finger to apply a scant dab of glue along one end of the strip and press it to one end of the stem wire. Roll the paper strip around the stem wire to make a snug tube-shaped brush. Apply a scant dab of glue at the overlap to secure the strip. Add a second strip for more fullness, if desired. Then wrap a piece of fine wire around the base of the paper tube, leaving a 2" (5.1 cm) tail of wire.

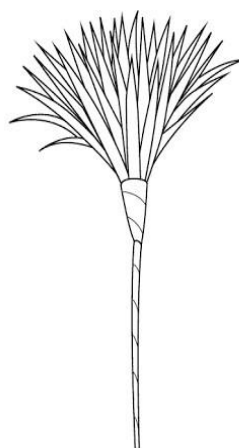
Step 3

Attach the stamen to the floral stem.

Place the stamen against the end of a length of stem wire and wrap the excess wire around the stem. Use floral tape to conceal the wire binding.

Step 4 (optional)

Trim the stamen.



Use the tips of the scissors to snip the top of the stamen so that it resembles a spiky brush.

Making Flowers

A flower can be made by one of two methods. One way is to cut a long strip of paper into continuous petals and wrap it around a stamen. The other way is to cut individual petals, wire them into a continuous strand, and wrap the strand around the base of a stamen. In both cases, the stem wire to which the petals are attached is concealed with floral tape to provide a nonslip surface.

Continuous-Petal Flowers

The construction method behind this style of flower is to cut a strip of paper, snip the top edge of the strip into the shape of the petals, and then wrap the strip around a stamen that is already attached to a stem wire.

Faith in the war – what binds us together?

Ask older pupils to consider how faith may have influenced the actions of people during World War 2. With the help of local older people discuss what life was like in the 1940s, rather than offering a detailed factual knowledge of it. Talk to children about the introduction of conscription. On 3 September 1939, all men in Britain aged between 18 and 40 became legally liable for call-up under the new National Service (Armed Forces) Act. Discuss with children what objections they would raise themselves to the possibility of going to war, and explain how for some people such views would be linked to their religious faith. At the time of World War Two, for example, fighting in a war went against some people's faith. Others simply did not believe in war, and others still were afraid to go to war. Discuss the fact that in World War Two in Britain most conscientious objectors were Christians. Consider 'hot seating' your vicar to explore this.

Conscientious objectors had to attend a tribunal. About 60,000 men and 1,000 women applied for exemption on the grounds of conscientious objection. Almost 3,000 were given unconditional exemption. Around 18,000 applications were dismissed. The rest were either recommended to do alternative civilian work, or put on the military service register as non-combatants. Non-combatant work involved duties such as bomb disposal, or working in medical units. Civilian work included agricultural, forestry, social or hospital work. Many tribunals wanted to send male objectors away from home, so that they made similar sacrifices to those of fighting men.

The BBC's WW2 People's War archive online is excellent on faith during the war. Read **Only I Can Speak for my Conscience** and **A Conscientious Objector's Wartime Story**, both are available on the [story extracts](#) page of the site. Consider why it was brave of the objectors to stick to their principles, despite the attitudes of others.

A God Of Peace

Look at references to peace and reconciliation in liturgy and the Bible, some examples are below. Discuss the concept that in worship Christians believe that they are a community gathering in the presence of God to celebrate the transforming love of God with each other. Hold an intergenerational session in church to look at the meaning of 'sharing the peace' with one another as a demonstrative act of community.

Matthew 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

John 20:19 *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."*

Changes Over Time- Mosaics

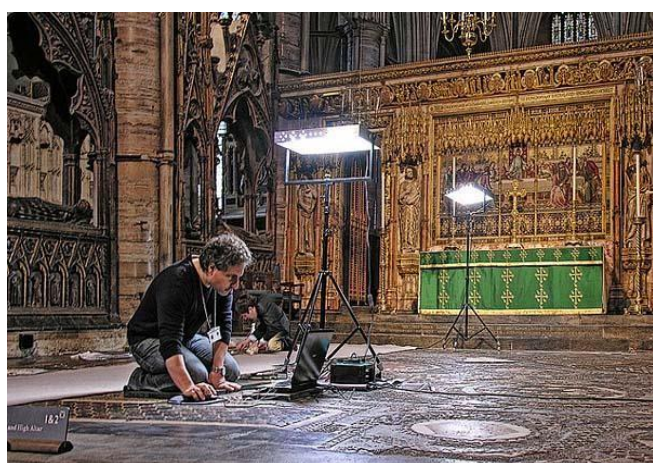
Background

Mosaics, pictures or designs made from small pieces of coloured tile, glass, or other material usually set in mortar, are the archetypal artwork to engender collaborative working. They demand discussion, planning, teamwork and more than a little patience! Once more mosaics have been widely used in Christian churches to decorate walls and ceilings, and so it seems fitting to include this particular artform in this booklet.

Discuss with the children the use of mosaics in a range of different religions.

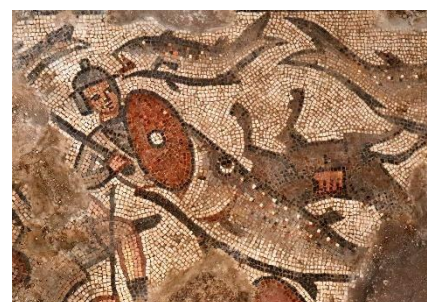


The [Jāme'h Mosque of Yazd](#) — originally constructed in the 12th century — was largely rebuilt in the 1300s. It is featured on the Iranian 200-rial banknote. The entrance — flanked by Iran's tallest minarets at 48 meters — is completely covered in mosaic tile work, as is the large dome, minarets, and interior chamber.



'[The Great Pavement](#)' in Westminster Abbey was laid down in the 13th century when the Abbot of Westminster, after seeing a new floor in the Pope's Roman summer home, brought back a ship full of marble, glass, and Italian craftsmen. The 24sqft floor is comprised of rare marbles, gemstones, and colored glass, with some of the material coming from recycled millennium-old monuments. The images inlaid depict the universe and its end.

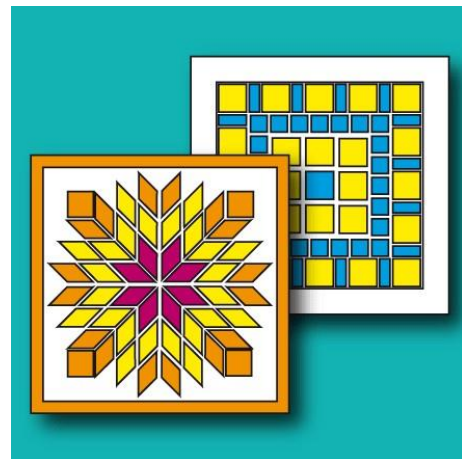
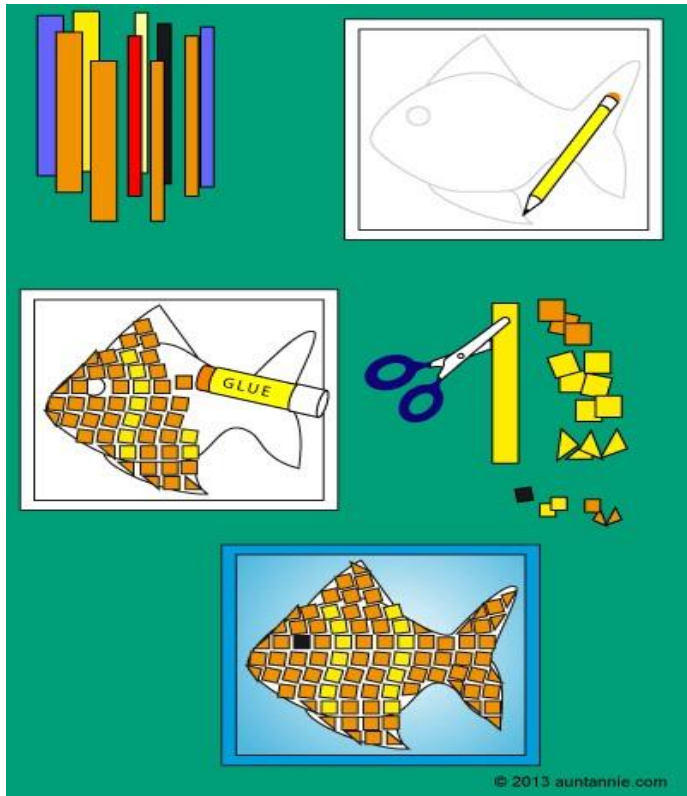
In July 2016 archaeologists discovered mosaic panels decorating the floor of a synagogue at Huqoq in Galilee, portraying two biblical stories: Noah's Ark and the parting of the Red Sea. The Noah's Ark panel depicts an ark and pairs of animals, including elephants, leopards and goats. The scene of the parting of the Red Sea shows Pharaoh's soldiers being swallowed by a large fish.



Basic mosaics of religious symbols for younger children

Mosaics can be simple or very intricate. The nature of mosaic demands coordination and teamwork, making them ideal for an intergenerational project.

The simplest mosaics are made using paper and glue – instructions below.



Geometric mosaics are also fun to create. Cut squares, rectangles, diamonds and/or triangles from two or more colours. Starting from a centre point, arrange the tiles in a geometric shape. Add a row of tiles in another colour around this shape. Continue adding rows until you have completed a pleasing design or filled the paper. These mosaics can be made individually by younger children and older adults and then put together to create an overall art installation.

Consider creating a mosaic to represent your school values, the relationship between the school and church, or the local area. Mosaics can also depict symbols from other religions.

The BBC [Hands On History](#) resources have excellent guidance on creating Roman mosaics.



Egg shell mosaic memories

Just like with all mosaics, you need a lot of patience for this one, but the result is great. Use these frames to capture memories from the short and long lives of the artists involved.

What you will need

Picture frame or cardboard to cut out a frame
White eggshell
Pictures from magazines / bible stories images
PVA glue scissors
paintbrush

Instructions

1. Clean, dry and white eggshell broken into small pieces.
2. Apply the eggshell pieces to photo frame with glue.
3. Cut pictures for the pattern layer.
4. Place the pictures in desired place.
5. Diluted PVA glue with water, half and half, gently brush drawing from center to edges.
6. Let the frame dry, then paint acrylic lacquer or PVA glue over the whole frame.
7. Carefully dry and enjoy.



3D Mosaics

The tealight or candle holders below can be used as a school/church project. Created by intergenerational groups, the holders can be given as gifts or used as adornments for the school, church windows or for the windows of local businesses linked to celebrations or memories. The holders can be made using the liturgical colours and used during worship.

You will need

- old jam jars
- glass nuggets (available in florists / Ikea / craft shops) mix of coloured and clear. □
clear silicone adhesive
- spreader



1. Spread the glue quite thickly over the jam jar – work in sections so that you can hold and rotate the jar.
2. Embed the nuggets firmly in the glue.
3. You will need to squish and move the nuggets around to fill the space without going over the edges.
4. Leave to dry – it will take a good couple of days to go clear.
5. If you want, you can grout the jar when it is dry – black grout is particularly effective

Edible mosaics Chocolate roll Ingredients

- 500g biscuits such as digestives
- 4 tbsp cocoa powder
- 250g Stork
- 2 eggs (preferably pasteurised)
- 300g sugar
- 200g pistachios or walnuts, chopped



Method

1. Melt the Stork and sugar in a saucepan; this should take 5-10 minutes.
2. Remove from the heat. Add cocoa powder and mix well.
3. Once, the mix has cooled a little, add the eggs and mix again.
4. Finally, break the biscuits into chunks and add them with the nuts to the mix.
5. Lay out some cling film onto a tray or in a tin. Pour the mix over the film. Wrap the mix and roll into a fat sausage. Put the cake into the fridge for 2 hours until set. Dust with icing sugar and serve cold, cut into slices.

Smarties mosaic cake - experienced older cooks' help needed!

Ask local older residents to teach the children how to make a basic Victoria sponge. While the cake is cooling make the frosting.

Ingredients for the frosting and decoration:

- 400g icing sugar
- 100g cocoa powder
- 160g unsalted butter – softened
- 50ml whole milk
- 12 tubes of smarties (or 450g)
- 3 packets of chocolate fingers



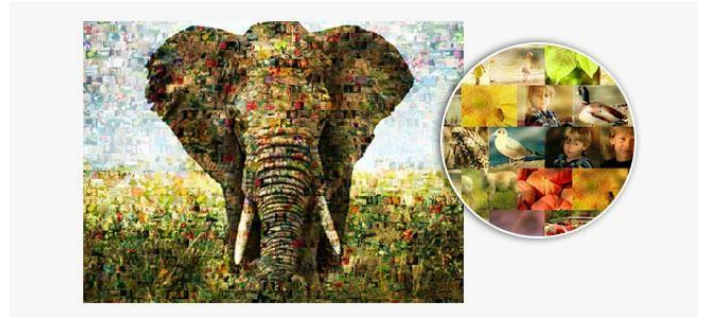
Before starting, empty the tubes of smarties and ask children to sort into colours.

- Whisk the icing sugar with the cocoa powder and butter on a low speed until the mixture is sandy in consistency
- Pour in the milk, still mixing on a low speed, then increase the speed to high and whisk the frosting until soft and fluffy
- When the cakes are cool, spread a layer of frosting between the 2 cakes. Then spread frosting all over the top and sides of the cake
- Place chocolate fingers around the sides of the cake

- Starting from the middle place the smarties on the top. Work your way round in colour batches

Photo memory mosaics

The modern photograph mosaic is based on the same idea as traditional mosaics, a large image created from many small, colourful pieces, however the mosaic stones are replaced by photos, each with their own image. This way there are two dimensions to the image. The main image, which gives the mosaic its overall effect, and the many individual images. A photo made of photos is created.



If you have a local photography club, see if members can help children to create a simple photo mosaic, using pictures of different colours.

Ask older members of the local community to bring in photographs cataloguing different parts of their lives and let them discuss these with the children. Allow the children to do the same. Photocopy the photographs and create a photo mosaic of different lives over time.

Living mosaics



This is an ideal activity to engage your local gardening club or dads and grandads. Using flowers to make mosaics involves planting colorful flowering plants, usually annuals, close together so that they resemble a carpet – which is why this method of planting may also be referred to as carpet bedding.

Look for dense, low-growing plants for carpet bedding in gardens. The plants should be bold colours that will show up. A few examples of carpet bedding plants include: Pansies, Nicotiana, Alyssum and Lobelia Set up a time lapse camera to record changes to area over time.

Symbols Of Balance – Building with Willow

A great hands on activity for an intergenerational project - 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, play domes (which could be interconnected with tunnels if you have the space) or 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.

Making a Twigloo

You will need

1. Living Willow Whips – *Salix Viminalis* variety - 6', 7', 8' or 9' lengths
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 your 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.

More 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. We did this at a later date. The floor of the den can be left as bare matting or play bark can be added.



Learning links for building with willow

LITERACY

- Instruction writing • Group discussion • Speaking and listening • Outdoor story telling

NUMERACY

- Measuring • Counting • Shape • Pattern • Size

SCIENCE

- Plants - growing • Propagation • Conditions for plants to thrive • Biodiversity
- Photosynthesis

HISTORY

- Celtic and Viking homes • Traditional baskets

ART

- Pattern • Weaving • 2D and 3D sculpture • Design
- Inspiration for drawing and sketching • Making and using willow charcoal • Traditional craft

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- Planning • Materials and their properties • Structure building • Using tools
- Evaluating and reporting

PSHE

- Curriculum enrichment • Team work • Environmental education • Health and safety
- Outdoor learning • Fine and gross motor skills • Eco Schools • Caring for plants • Improving school grounds • Biodiversity • Maintaining habitats • Citizenship

Willow spaces outside classrooms as excellent prayer or reflection areas

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 story stations.

Using Willow to investigate other faiths.

Invite a member of the Jewish community to talk to the children about the tradition of building a sukkah. A sukkah must have at least three walls. The walls of the sukkah can be made out of canvas, wood, bricks, even metal or stone. They may even include part of a permanent structure, such as the side wall of a house.

A sukkah must be made out of something which grew from the ground (e.g. branches are allowed, plastic or metal is not). The material it is made from must no longer be connected to the ground. e.g. not use a living branch as part of the sukkah roof – it must be cut off the tree before it can be used. It must be possible to see at least 3 stars in the night sky through the sukkah roof. Jews are commanded to 'live' in a sukkah for the whole week of Sukkot. This means that people of the Jewish faith should try to eat all their meals in the sukkah and say the blessings for bread, wine, and a prayer that thanks God for Sukkot. Some people, usually men, also sleep in the sukkah at night time.

Willow contests

Schools could consider challenging local older residents to a willow structure building challenge. This can be done with mixed aged groups or an older verses younger competition.

A step by step guide to building willow structures: willow tunnels



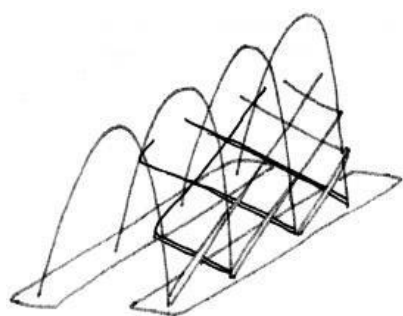
Step 1: Mark out 2 trenches, dig to a depth of 30cm and mix with compost. You may wish to make the tunnel curve or taper.



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.



Maze the Lord! In the 1980s Christian farmer Peter Gunner chose a Bible verse, made a plan, then planted thousands of willows on a seven-acre field with the help of some volunteers. As the trees grew he pruned them so their message would be clear. The words, from John 14:6, begin with 'Jesus' and read, 'I am the way, the truth and the life. The father of five planned how he would plant the trees on a computer

first. His dedication went largely unnoticed until it was spotted on Google maps. 'In a way the maze is a lot like life, nobody knows what it looks like from above. You can wander through life confused when in fact it does make sense from a different perspective,' said Peter who only saw the words from above for the first time in 2005 when a neighbour gave him a picture taken from a helicopter. Peter invites friends and people from the local church to use the maze 'Every time I see a plane go over I look at it and say a little prayer. I hope somebody sees the maze and feels inspired.' He said.

Discovering Pathways - Labyrinths

Labyrinths have been used for walking meditation and inner harmony across history. They are thought to be at least 5000 years old and are found throughout the world in many cultures. They are not connected to any creed, so many people feel comfortable using them. The Labyrinth is thought to be a symbol of the spiritual journey to our centre. Sometimes labyrinths are described as the outward sign of an inner pilgrimage. Children respond immediately to the pattern of a labyrinth. Of course, they first want to race to the middle and out again as fast as they can but 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.



Children and labyrinths

According to the renown Real School Gardens Project in America teachers in schools that have labyrinths report that walking the labyrinth can help children calm down, focus and concentrate. It can help them relax if they are angry.

If you hand a Finger Labyrinth (more later) to a child of almost any age, they will almost immediately begin tracing the pattern with their pointer finger. 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.

Four questions to ask before constructing a labyrinth:

1. Who is going to use the labyrinth? (children? staff? the elderly? people with disabilities?)
2. For what purpose is the labyrinth being created? (stress relief, prayer, healing, curriculum learning?)
3. What programs are you going to offer through it? (workshops? Worship? open ended walks? full moon walks?)
4. How much space do you have available?

The building process

- Introduce labyrinth to all the whole school community and older people due to be involved in the project
- Plan the location, type of labyrinth and materials to be used
- Schedule classroom presentations on the history and use of labyrinths
- Consider classroom activities relating to the labyrinth, including how to involve families
- Set a date to lay out the basic pattern
- Set a date for building the labyrinth
- Consider follow-up activities (e.g. inviting parents, a peace walk, a new term or end of term walk, a staff walk)

Integrating the labyrinth with curriculum can enhance the experience for children. For example, history can come alive through the study of labyrinths through the centuries. Maths can be meaningful in figuring out how many stones of a certain size will be needed to build a labyrinth of a given diameter.

- Plan for how to maintain the labyrinth (especially during the summer) and keep the labyrinth experience alive in the future.

If the whole school is going to participate in the construction of the labyrinth consider having one or two classes plan the publicity for the 'Labyrinth Building Day' (posters, announcements, invitations, Press Releases, etc.) This can involve your church congregation.

Using what you have

The creation of a school labyrinth can lend itself to an intergenerational 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 remarkably 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 children 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 need.



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 a festival such as Easter 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.

Consider starting a labyrinth book which might include:

- Journal experiences from the children (e.g. What did you like about building the labyrinth? What was it like to walk the labyrinth the first time? Other experiences?).
- Photos taken before, during and after construction.
- Drawings of labyrinths by the children.
- Samples of curriculum projects that relate to building and using the labyrinth.
- Results of student research. (a good website to start with is : www.labyrinthsociety.org and www.veriditas.net.)

Expand the Labyrinth Experience:

- Use your imagination for ways that will make the labyrinth more meaningful to your school.
- Do plantings or add benches around the labyrinth.
- Introduce class projects to learn more about the history and use of the labyrinth.
- Interview people about their experience with labyrinths.



Ask the children to create labyrinths of their own - on paper, with clay, Lego etc.

This is a finger labyrinth patterned after the walking labyrinth in the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France. A finger labyrinth is 'walked' by tracing the path with a finger of the non-dominant hand. This activity really concentrates the mind of the child or older person completing the labyrinth. The advantage of a finger labyrinth is its accessibility. It can be carried with you and used almost anywhere at any time.

Creating a tradition – Las Posadas

The celebration of Las Posadas is traditionally observed for nine days in December, from 16th to 24th each year. Although it originated in Mexico, Las Posadas has started to become popular in many countries. With its links to the nativity story, celebrating Las Posadas provides a fantastic opportunity for intergenerational celebration in church schools and can involve the entire parish. Here we look at both the traditional and alternative posadas.

Traditional celebrations

The name Las Posadas means 'inn or shelter' and the traditional Mexican observance is to re-enact Mary and Joseph's search for shelter as they travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem during the days before Christ was born.



The Las Posadas celebration can take place differently in each area but traditionally all have the common theme of re-enactment of the nativity. In Mexico, entire villages observe this tradition which begins with a group of neighbours and friends visiting each other's homes re-enacting Mary and Joseph's search for a place to spend the night. The villagers traditionally carry lit candles and often a child is

dressed as an angel and leads the procession.

In some locations, the word "posadas" is synonymous with "parties." These parties are given every night for 9 nights during the celebration leading up to Christmas Day. On the 9th day, everyone will gather at a specific house, where the situation of Mary and Joseph's search for lodging is re-enacted at the door of each room. Then, on the stroke of midnight, the host of the house, leads the actors to a table that has been prepared. Images of Mary and Joseph are placed on this table and the feasting begins. At the party, children are usually treated to a Pinata - a decorated container (sometimes created with papiermache) filled with sweets, fruits, or gifts and hung up to be broken with sticks by blindfolded persons as part of especially Latin American festivities.

Pinatas can be made by using a balloon covered in papier-mache or made simply as below.

Making a Pinata

You will need

Styrofoam cup

Crayons

Pencil

String/ribbon

Small sweets

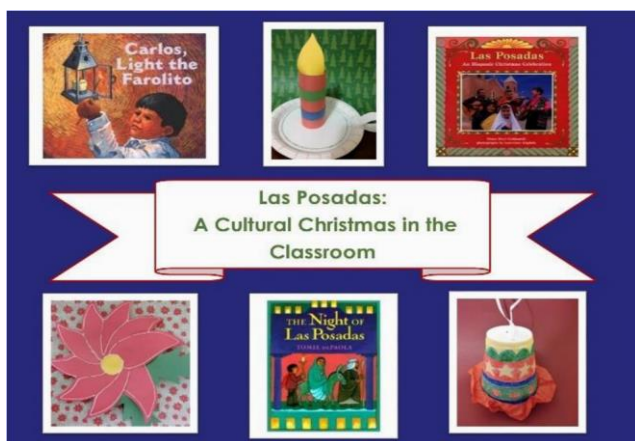
Scissors

Tissue paper

Rubber band

Method

1. Use crayons to decorate the outside of your upside down foam cup. Encourage your students to include designs that represent the Mexican culture and celebration of Las Posadas, such as stars, Mary and Joseph, angels, etc.
2. Use your pencil to poke two holes in the bottom of your cup.
3. Thread your string/ribbon through the two holes and tie at the top so you can hang your piñata. Fill the cup with sweets.
4. Cut a tissue paper circle about an inch larger in circumference than your cup. Place the circle over the opening of the cup and secure it with the rubber band. This keeps the sweets inside the pinata until you are ready to break it open!



This is a useful book produced by Scholastic. It contains a wealth of ideas to celebrate the tradition.

There are several fiction books that older members of your community may like to read to your children (see links below).

- [**Carlos, Light the Farolito by Jean Ciavonne**](#): Children learn about the Posada tradition through the eyes of a young boy and experience the fun of the procession, music, and *fiesta*. More appropriate for Key Stage 2.
- [**Las Navidades: Popular Christmas Songs from Latin America by Lulu Delacre**](#) — If your class is planning to throw their own Posada party, this book can be used to find a few songs to sing in your cultural celebration. [lyrics and translation of the posada song](#).

Alternative posadas

In some countries the word 'Posada' has become the term used for the collection of figurines used during the celebrations, Traditionally these were the nativity characters carried from house to house.

Consider enlisting the help of older people to be involved in creating the school's posada figures using the links below.

Homemade Nativity Scenes

1. [DIY Block Nativity Set](#)
2. [Nativity Stocking Holders](#)
3. [O Holy Night](#)
4. [Nativity Ornament](#) 5. [Rustic Holy Family](#)



DIY Nativity Crafts

1. [Wooden Doll Nativity](#)
2. [Flower Pot Nativity Set](#)
3. [Clothes Pin Nativity Set](#)
4. [Nativity Scene made with Recycled Items](#)
5. [Nativity Scene Made from Legos](#)

Instructions for mixed aged groups to making an angel posada (Full instructions are at www.clay-it-now.com)

You will

Your choice of clay (either soft clay, such as Crayola, which stays soft and squishy after it's dry or for a hard figurine, use air drying clay or salt dough)

- Glue
- Glitter glue (gold or silver)

- Toothpicks
- Cutter
- Gold string

Method



Make the body/robe by making a round clay shape. Continue rolling the clay in between your palm and change the shape to a cone.

Use the toothpicks to make some creases so the robe looks natural.

Let the clay dry.



Roll more clay again to a pipe/spaghetti shape for both arms.

Taper the centre part of the pipe and flatten it a little bit.

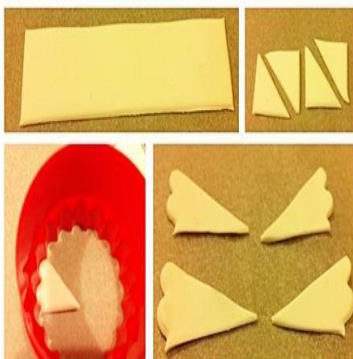
Add glue to the top centre of the body and attach the pipe shape, forming the arm to the position you like. Insert toothpick to strengthen the body and also to hold the head later on.



Roll out more clay to a ball shape, use your thumb to press the middle part of the ball and use clay tool to form a mouth. You can draw the smile line or create a small hole as if the angel figurines are singing.

Hand: roll two small ball shape clay and attach it to the arms. Add the hair and the halo.

Draw the eyes and eyebrows to the shape you like.



Flatten the clay to a rectangular shape, cut it to several triangle shapes, use cookie cutter for the tip of the wings.

Attach the wings to the back of the body with glue. Decorate figurines with gold/ silver glitter.

These figures could be used as an Ascension Day posada.

Once complete the posada figures can be carried from classroom to classroom and then out from house to house around the school, or systematically around shops and businesses in the parish ending at the church. Explanatory sheets with the figures at each shop or business are excellent opportunities to explain the real meaning of Christmas, and to invite people to join in community events. Some schools place a list at the back of the church for parishioners to sign up to 'host' the figurines for a night and then the hosts complete a diary entry or write a prayer for the next host house. Alternatively, ask older ladies in the community to help the children knit angels and attach an invitation to the church or school carol service – whoever finds the angel brings it to service.

Posada figures need not only be for Advent. Alternative posadas can be created by intergenerational groups which tell a bible story or celebrate Easter.

The following links contain templates that can be used by your group to create an Easter posada.

[Resurrection Set Page 1](#)

[Resurrection Set Page 2](#)

[Resurrection Set Page 3](#)

[Resurrection Set Page 4](#)

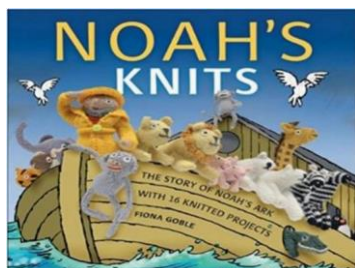
[Resurrection Set Page 5](#)

[Resurrection Set Page 6](#)

[Resurrection Set Page 7](#)



Consider pairing up children and older people to make animals for Noah's Ark posada Use the skills of older people (knitted, crochet) to create characters for posada. There are a wealth of patterns on the internet. The books below may be of help.



Take your posada to the local nursing home/lunch club and ask your children to tell the story behind the characters.



Gathering the flock – A lesson in knitting

This project (successfully trialled by a Southampton school) is a practical and fun way to 'live out' the theological teaching on 'Serving The Common Good'.

It offers a structured opportunity to 'create and make', while engaging in deep conversation and discussion and a chance for children to learn new skills from older people. It is a project that involves the community and can be adapted for different purposes. The project involves the creation of knitted animals (in this case sheep for Christmas). After they have been made, the knitted sheep are displayed by local businesses and members of the public are encouraged to go on a sheep trail, recording their journey on the way. Below is a step-by-step guide to 'Knitvity'.

Tasks

1. Source a group of older people who can knit!
2. Consider local businesses to donate elements (eg. prizes, wool)
3. Publicise in the community
4. Purchase black and white wool; luggage labels; stuffing;
5. Print sheep trail recording sheets (colour coded for school / age / church /community etc – to ease judging!)
6. Print free online knitting patterns (there are plenty available online)
7. Inform existing older people's groups; local press
8. Meet pre-school leaders and encourage them to undertake the sheep trails accompanied by older people guides from the project
9. Decide the time frame for (i) visiting shops and businesses to explain the project and secure firm commitment; (ii) delivery of sheep (iii) collection of sheep (iv) date of service / celebration of the project when the sheep all 'flock' to church [for all of these, best if they can be done with older people and children working together / visiting / delivering / collecting together where possible]
10. Decide if the older people will teach the children to knit &/or will the older people knit (while children discuss/converse with them) and the children stuff the sheep?
11. Decide if there be a class or school (or both) competition for naming the sheep?
12. Alert clergy / church children's ministers to begin planning an interactive / fun inter-generational service/celebration with relevant stories, carols etc (invite local care homes to the service &/or take elements of the service to the care homes with the children/older people leading the project)
13. Consider opportunities for wider curriculum links (creative writing; music etc)
14. Ensure two sheep are unnamed (blank tags) – the sheep trail sheets are designed to encourage creative naming of these two sheep.
15. Engage local councillors and mayor to promote and support (the benefit to local businesses and shops can be significant)

16. Print fun certificates for all entrants completing the sheep trail
17. Purchase sheep-related Prizes under different categories for age groups etc – to present during the celebratory service
18. Encourage the local church to use the sheep in Christmas Services
19. Link the sheep for an Easter project
20. Research Messy Church ideas on Knitivity
21. Ask an older person to build with the children a sheep pen to hold sheep pre-delivery and retain for the church service
22. Ask an older person to make with the children a Sheep Trail post-box (to receive the completed sheets)
23. Train pairs of children/older person to record from day 1 (photos; videos; interviews; etc)
24. Learn and write/create the nativity from a sheep's / shepherd's standpoint
25. Enjoy watching short episodes of Shaun The Sheep with older people/children in the early stages to build relationships over laughter – and to begin shared conversations
26. Children to write Thank-you letters to the shops/businesses to be delivered after Christmas in person by the older people
27. Plan a reflection time in the New Year for children with the older people; celebrate the project, discuss the impact..... what next?

Promote ideas-generation from children and older people and encourage flexibility to develop and widen the project: inspire and enhance!



This introductory booklet with just a few ideas is offered to grow this ministry and disseminate further examples and ideas in subsequent publications.

If you are engaging in any of these, please contact us as we have interest from local, regional and national media sources to share and publicise this important and transformational work in our schools and churches.

We are available to advise and offer support to schools, churches and individuals to enhance and promote these and similar ideas – give us a call, please!

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