



Irises of Hope

School Leavers' Special Project Summer 2021



Dear colleagues

We are all disappointed that we will not be able to gather at the Cathedrals and The Priory at the end of term to mark the transition of four thousand Year 6 pupils from our CofE Primary schools to their secondary schools.

Marking such life events is important, and with the relaxation of Covid restrictions enabling individual schools to do more this year, we know that the children will appreciate your local plans.

The video we produced last year was well-received, and we plan to create something similar this year, using aspects of the mini project to reinforce the messages.

We were unable to launch our 2021 Diocesan Project : **Ten Ten #flourishing** due to so many uncertainties and Lockdown constraints, so have decided to focus on something quite specific and related, just for next term for our leavers. The **Irises of Hope** mini project is linked to our main **Ten Ten #flourishing** project which will be the focus for the new Year 6 in the Autumn and Spring Terms.

The myriad ways in which our schools have been able to live out their Christian values in such creative, pragmatic and tangible ways during the past year, has been admirable. Thank you for all you continue to do for our children, their families and communities, and we look forward to engaging with you on this mini project.

Do please encourage your families and the local church community to take part as well.

Best wishes

Jeff

Jeff Williams
Director of Education

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 the Iris?

With over 200 varieties in a wide spectrum of colours, Irises can be found in virtually every part of the world, growing both naturally and on farms. While Irises can be several different colours, the flower's cut versions are mostly blue (the most popular type), white, and yellow. Why the Iris as the symbol for the leavers celebrations this Summer? :

- Blue Irises symbolise **hope** and **faithfulness**. After a year of lockdowns and disrupted school and family life, these are fitting Christian values for our Year 6 pupils to take into the next stage of their schooling.
- **Irises** have Christian symbolism - associated with the passion of Christ and the resurrection because Irises bloom around Eastertime.
- The Iris fittingly takes its name from the Greek word for 'rainbow' – the biblical sign of God's promise. God attached special meaning to the rainbow so that every time we see it, we may be reminded of God's covenant to never destroy everyone and everything on Earth again with a flood. The rainbow illustrates God's promise of redemption, to not only spare Noah and his family but also to give humanity a chance to start again. In this sense, the rainbow is a symbol of new beginnings. All sorts of Rainbows featured prominently in our communities over the past year, so is highly relevant.
- Iris essential oil is used in aromatherapy as a scent that helps calm the mind and promotes well-being.



In this booklet, teachers will find a range of activities centred around the Iris and designed for schools to enjoy with children leaving school at the end of the Summer Term.

It begins with a 'legacy' school planting activity which enables children to leave a last reminder of their resilience through the last year and a symbol of hope for all pupils in the future.

The booklet ends with an RE cycle of enquiry linked to hope.

Please do not forget to email us pictures and text of any activities that your school completes. We have traditionally had a huge response to our follow-up celebration booklets from our own schools and other dioceses.

Iris Planting Project

Introductory information for to share with children

Flower symbolism has been around for hundreds of years. People used flowers as not only decoration for special occasions, but also as strong symbols of happiness, joy, love and care for other people.

When we think about a flower like red rose, the instant reaction or thing we think about is love. This flower is something that reminds us about Valentine's Day and love we have inside for someone really special.



Every flower has its own symbolic meaning. The meaning behind a flower is something that has been created by people who spent their lives believing in stories surrounding certain flowers, because these flowers were so interesting and important to them.

The meanings behind the Iris flower are:

Faith

- The Iris flower represents faith and hope for a better tomorrow. This beautiful flower was often given to someone who needed additional support and love in tough moments. Irises symbolized everything that is good in the world and everything we have yet to look forward to in the future.

Hope

- Similar to the above, the beautiful Iris flower also symbolizes hope and belief that one day everyone will be happy. This flower was gifted to people who needed to be uplifted and reminded that there is a lot of good in the world, but sometimes we have to be persistent in finding it.

Schools are encouraged to plant Irises with their school leavers this summer term as a sign of hope for the children's future – and for the future of the children who remain at the school.

Whether your school has extensive grounds or room for just a few garden pots, consider talking to all children about the symbolism of the Iris outlined above before planting begins. Next Summer, the resulting display of Irises will create opportunities for the school community to find time for prayer, silence and refreshment, as well as giving time for children to remember their past friends. Whatever you create, whether big or small, it is hoped that the Irises will provide:

Hospitality – the offer of a warm-hearted, simple welcome to all.

Contemplation – a place to practise silence, stillness, meditation and prayer.

Nature Connection – the opportunity to deepen children’s relationship with the natural world, known to promote well-being.

Creativity – The provision of a quiet outdoor space to inspire.

The practicalities

When to plant:

The best time to plant Iris rhizomes or bulbs is July, allowing them plenty of time to establish roots before the growing season ends. **Gloves should be worn when handling Iris plants, rhizomes, or bulbs, as the sap can cause skin irritation.**

Where to plant:

Choose a sunny location for your Irises where they won’t be subject to standing water. Raised beds or pots are ideal, as they provide the good drainage needed.

How to plant:

Prepare the planting beds up to two weeks ahead by loosening soil to a depth of 20 cm to establish good drainage. Fertilizer can be mixed in. Iris rhizomes should be planted so that they are slightly visible on the soil surface. Iris bulbs should be planted at a depth of 12 cm, pointed end up and roots down, spacing them at 6 bulbs per 30cm square. There are two reasons Irises don’t bloom: they are planted too deep or they do not get enough sun. Water newly planted Irises well.



They should flower next May/June – shortly before next year’s Year 6 children prepare to leave.

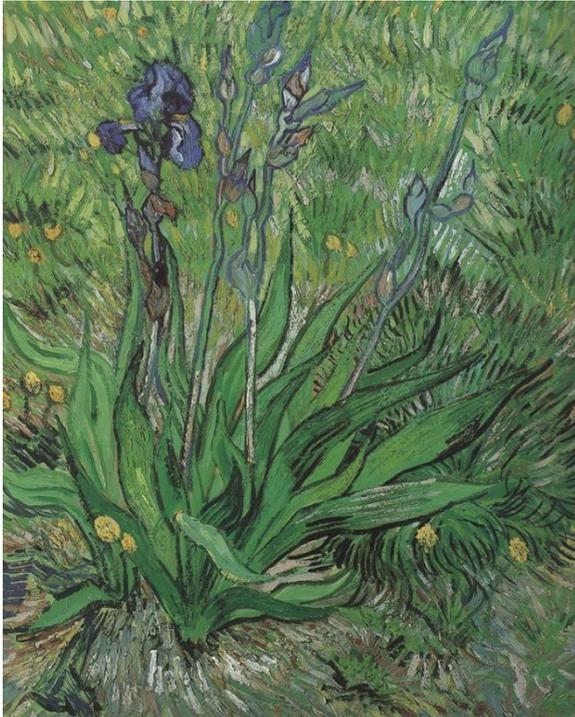
Where to buy

Iris bulbs are widely available to buy in garden centres (including Homebase), Etsy and Amazon. They cost between £5 and £10 a bulb but can be bought in larger sets which makes them cheaper (15 for £20 on Amazon).

Vincent van Gogh's *Irises* – An Art appreciation activity

"If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere." Vincent van Gogh

Vincent van Gogh is the most famous artist to have painted Irises. He painted a series of four paintings in 1889 and died shortly after in 1890.



Van Gogh lived in poverty, yet his *Iris*es painting (pictured right) now ranks as one of the most expensive paintings of all time, selling for 54 million dollars in 1987. Currently *Iris*es is on display at The Getty Centre in Los Angeles.



A simple painting can have a big impact on people. Van Gogh had no idea about the impact his simple painting of flowers would have on the world after his death.

Here are some key facts to provoke discussion and explore with the children:

Van Gogh outlined many of the Irises with dark blue to emphasise their beautiful shape.

To make the flowers look like they are moving in the breeze, van Gogh drew S-like shapes for the leaves.

The background is 'busy' compared to most paintings. This draws your attention away from the main flowers, but van Gogh wanted to give the idea of nature's vastness

It's a colourful painting, as many van Gogh are, but it's not garish or overdone. All the colours work in harmony.

There's a balance between warm and cool colours. Warm being the reds, oranges, and yellows in the foreground and background and cool being the pale greens and rich blues of the Irises. There are also two pairs of 'complementary colours': orange and blue; red and green. Complementary colours oppose each other on the colour wheel and contrast when paired.

Van Gogh made clever use of bright accents throughout the painting. Notice the yellow dabs in the blue flowers; and the yellow and orange flowers scattered throughout the background. They help our eyes 'jump around the painting'.

Van Gogh used a large, fully-loaded brush to paint. Artists sometime use brushwork and texture to create interest in otherwise bland areas (a clear blue sky, the wall of a building, or in this case, soil and rocks).

Below are some close-ups of van Gogh's brushwork.



I Spy Colours, Shapes, and Lines (Follow-up discussion)

Remind children about some of the elements of art that they have previously learned about - colours, shapes, and different types of lines.

Display a reproduction of the painting *Irises*. Lead a discussion about Irises, using phrases from the game 'I Spy'. Children must begin each answer with 'I-Spy.....'

Ask the following questions:

- What do you see?
- Look at the colours in this work of art. What colours do you see? Show us where you see similar shades.
- What shapes do you see in this work of art? Show us where you see each shape by pointing. ("I spy triangles," for example.)
- Do you see any lines in this work of art? What kinds of lines do you see? Where do you see them? Show us where you see each type of line.
- Have you ever seen any flowers like these before? Where might you see flowers like these?
- Where do you think the painter was when he was painting this work of art? Why do you think that?

Distribute copies of the *Irises*. As a warm-up, ask children to trace the shapes and lines that they see on the handout using different coloured crayons. Point out the long lines of the stems and the oval shapes on the petals. This is a calming task. You may like to use this as a meditative exercise, or to say a prayer of hope as children trace the painting's shapes.

Play-Doh Pictures

This activity uses Play-doh in a different way to the traditional model making and enables children to achieve the create texture.

You will need:

- Play-Doh or similar soft modelling clay (in purple, blue, white and yellow)
 - Cardboard (reuse the front of a cereal or cracker box)
 - Scissors
 - Felt tips or oil pastels
 - Dark-coloured construction paper
 - PVA glue
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- Cut the cardboard into a square or rectangle. This will become the base that the picture is built on.
 - Pull the clay apart into pieces about the size of a 10p piece
 - At the bottom of the base, draw tall, thin leaves using the felt tips or pastels.
 - Press the pieces of clay above the leaves using a 'Finger Paint' technique to create a thin background layer in blue and white for the sky. Encourage children to layer the clay on top of the cardboard and on top of other colours. It will stick as it is smeared onto the board.
 - Now form the flower shapes using purple. Use fingers to make swirls, curves and textures in the clay to form the Iris petals.

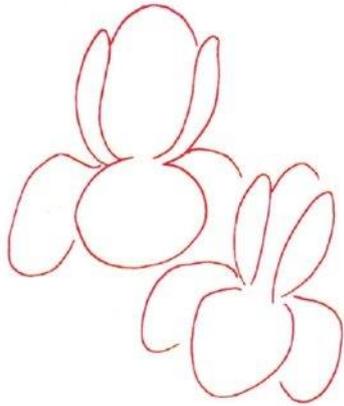
This picture is created in the impressionist style and should be representative of flowers, not a perfect, intricate design.

The picture can also be recreated using beads or seeds (see below) .

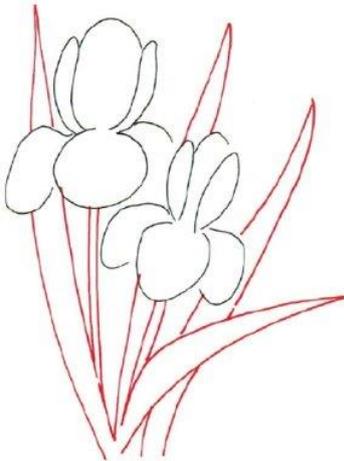


A drawing lesson for more able children

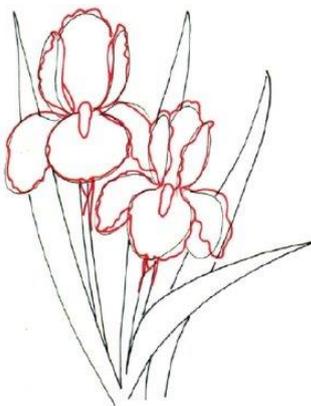
This activity takes a step-by-step approach to an intricate drawing of Irises. It is best completed by more able children in a small group.



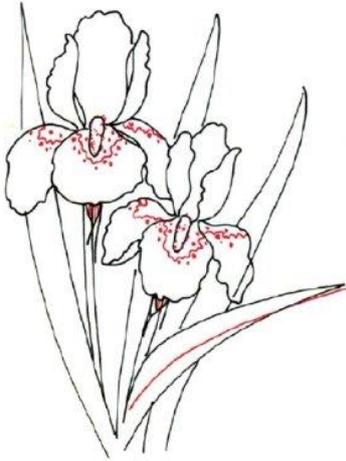
Lightly sketch an oval shape for the top of the flower. Underneath it, sketch a circle. For the second Iris, sketch another oval and circle to the right and a little below the first set. To make petals, sketch a sausage-shaped loop on both sides of the ovals. Sketch half-circles on both sides of the circles.



Add stems to the flowers by drawing two slightly curving lines coming down from each flower. Draw three long, narrow leaves behind the flowers. Make sure the leaf lines don't go into the petals of the flowers. Draw another leaf curving below the two flowers.



Give the flowers frilly edges with wavy lines along the petal edges. Draw a rough, long oval in the middle of each flower. Add a fold at the top of each stem by drawing two vertical lines to make the top of the stem wider. Then draw a diagonal line across the stem. Draw a second diagonal line from the top of the stem to the centre of the first line.



Sketch many short lines all around the middle of the flowers to make them look fuzzy. On the lower petals of each flower, sketch in a wavy line as shown. Draw many tiny circles on both sides of the line. Draw a series of parallel lines in the top area of each stem above the fold you drew in step 3. In the bottom leaf, draw the fold of the leaf with a long line through the middle, following the curve of the leaf.



Add short, curving lines to the petals for shading. Vary the lengths of the lines. Use short lines to add shading on one side of each of the centres. For the stems, draw in several long lines at the bottom and a few short lines at the top. Draw a series of long, vertical lines in each leaf, following the curve of the leaf.

Tactile Poetry

Well. Then we had the irises, rising beautiful and cool on their tall stalks, like blown glass, like pastel water momentarily frozen in a splash, light blue, light mauve, and the darker ones, velvet and purple, black cat's ears in the sun. Margaret Atwood

1. Introduce the definition of *habitat as* a place where an animal or plant normally lives.
2. Display the picture 'Iris Field' by Timothy Easton to the class (available in Google images). Prompt discussion with the questions:
 - What flowers can you identify in this work of art?
 - How would you describe the habitat or space they are growing in?



3. List children's responses in a word bank that has two columns, one for identification of objects they noticed in the painting, and one for adjectives.
4. Provide children with objects of different textures for children to feel. These should include textures that correspond to objects in the painting, such as soft or feathery items to denote petals and rougher textures that represent a thistle, a stick, grass, bark or possibly some earth, etc. Ask children to feel an object and describe its texture to their partner.
5. Ask the children to look at the painting and identify where they see an object that might feel like the texture they are feeling. When children think of an adjective describing the texture of an object in the painting, add it to the descriptor/adjective column in the word bank, next to the object it is describing; some objects will have more than one adjective associated with it.
6. As a class, review the poem template below and fill in the descriptor words and objects that the children found in the work.

In the painting Iris Field:

I feel a _____ .
(adjective) (noun)

7. Once the poem is collaboratively written, read it aloud as a class.

The significance of colour

Schools may like to explore the following, using the colours to promote a discussion with children about the importance of the values associated with the colours of the Iris.

Blue. Blue is a symbol of faith and hope. Together with the symbolic meaning of the Iris flower, this colour complements the symbolism and it represents a perfect gift for everyone who needs a little bit of support and help in achieving the desired goals.

Purple. Purple is a symbol of royalty and nobility. This Iris can also therefore be a symbol of beauty and respect. Giving someone this flower means you respect the person and you are willing to show that person respect in every way possible.

Yellow. Yellow symbolizes friendship. This flower colour is going to be a perfect flower for someone who is your loyal friend or family member. The yellow Iris flower sends a strong message to the other person that they are valued as a friend.

Prayer Pictures

As a symbolic representation of hope, Irises are frequently used in religious settings. They are associated with the Passion of Christ and the Resurrection, probably because the flower blooms in spring around Easter. Some people say that the three prominent petals remind them of the Holy Trinity.

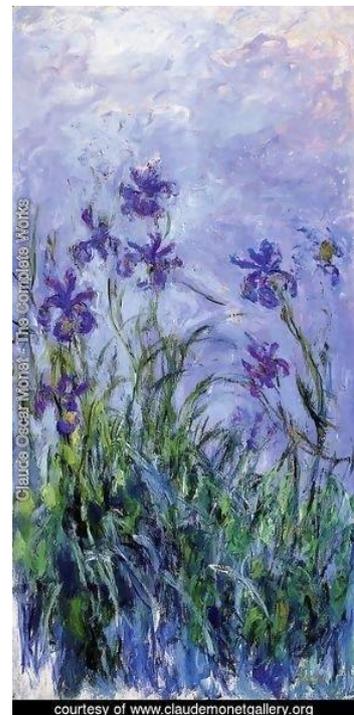
You will need:

- Green, Purple, and Yellow Pipe cleaners or Wikki Stix
- Blue and purple paint
- Paper towels
- Scissors
- Heavy paper

Claude Monet painted '*Lilac Irises*' with bold brush strokes in blues, purples, and greens. To re-create the effect, children can use paper towels or napkins to apply shades of blue and purple paint to the white paper. Let the paint dry thoroughly.

While the paint is drying, children can use the pipe cleaners to create the Irises.

There is no wrong or right way to create the flowers. Each iris creation will be as unique as the child's abilities who create the art.





Leave a space at the top of the picture for children to write a prayer of hope.

Basic Directions for Creating the Irises:

- Stems are created with green pipe cleaners cut into various lengths with scissors.
- The irises can be created by folding lengths of purple pipe cleaners and pressing to the green pipe cleaner stems.
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- Cut tiny yellow pipe cleaner pieces and form into small balls for the centre of the flower.

When the painted background is completely dry, attach the created pipecleaner Irises to the paper and press firmly. The created irises can be re-positioned as desired to create a 3-D effect on the paper.



There are number of hope prayer space ideas in the Prayer spaces in Schools website.

<https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/resources/27>

Iris Flower Hand Print

This activity is more suitable for Year 2 children leaving infant school.

You will need:

- Construction paper; colour of your choice
- Paint; one to two colours for petals, two colors for stem and leaves.
- Paper plate or tray for paint
- Hand wipes or damp towel
- Paint brushes



On the paper plate, place a small amount of the main colour. Dark pink for example. Next to the dark pink paint, place a lighter pink colour or make your own light pink by mixing white with the dark pink. Do this to make two shades of pink.

Once you have your paint colours ready to go take one paint brush and paint the bottom portion of your child's palm with one colour and with another paint brush paint the top portion of your child's palm with the other colour.



Ask the children to paint their hands as shown using the two colours. A thick layer is required to get a good print.



After the paint is applied place the hand on the opposite side of the page. For example, the left hand print will be on the right side of the paper and the right hand print will be on the left side of the paper.



Allow the children to look at a picture of an Iris for reference, to help them in completing the remainder of your hand print. This is helpful because an iris does not typically have a straight stem. An Iris's stem will have buds for new blooms coming off it. First, paint a wide diamond at the base of the hands. This will help make the hands look more like one flower. Add white lines that go across the palm then yellow dots for the pollen.

Then take the off white paint or light green paint and make a small oval bud with a line going across to show where the bud attaches to the stem. After the small bud move onto the larger bud below. Do this by making an open triangle with an oval over the top of the triangle. Allow the off white or light green paint color to dry. Using a darker green, add detail lines showing the separation of the buds and leaves. Once you have these little details added make your stem. You can also add additional leaves to the sides.



Make Some Perfume



A delicate, 'powdery' scent commonly found in makeup products, Iris is also known as **Orris** and is a wonderful ingredient in perfumes. The Egyptians cherished Irises as a symbol of majestic power while the Ancient Greeks and Romans bottled it as an **essential oil**. Iris Oil is extracted from the roots of the plant that are known as Orris roots. Today, Iris is still a popular ingredient of ladies' perfume and men's aftershave.

Below are two 'recipes' for children to create their own Iris scent – a simple recipe followed by a more complex method in which the children can experiment with different scents. **There is some new vocabulary to learn here too.**

Before making perfume, you may like to watch the clip below which shows a discussion of five different Iris scents for men. It is a good clip to show children the different adjectives to describe a fragrance.

<https://youtu.be/ufax5oJYNEU>

Carrier oil (which can be a variety of skin-safe oils including Grapeseed oil) costs around £8 a litre. Ten glass bottles with rubber stopper are priced at around £8 and Iris essential oil retails for around £2.50 a bottle. All are freely available online including on Amazon which also sells sets of different essential oils for less than £20. Some schools will have policies about glass bottles in school, a plastic bottle works just as well. **Please adhere to Covid guidelines when carrying out activities which involve sharing resources.**

Simple Recipe

1. Add 80 drops of carrier **oil** to a bottle.
2. With a dropper, add in 10 drops of the Iris essential **oil** base notes to the bottle.
3. Seal the bottle and shake well (and again before each use).
4. Create a fancy label your creation and name it.
5. Store in a cool, dark place.

Advanced recipe

1. Take your carrier oil and add to your perfume bottle. The more carrier oil you use, the more essential oils you'll need to achieve your desired scent.
2. Add the **Base Note** - Add drops of essential oil that will create the base note of the fragrance (the longest-lasting part of the scent). Cinnamon, jasmine, cedarwood, rose, vanilla, myrrh, and clove essential oils all make good base notes. Use roughly 10 drops of the base essential oil of your choice.
3. Add the **Middle Note** - Essential oil for the middle note (the scent that comes out a little while after applying the fragrance) is next. Iris is usually considered to be a middle note. Use roughly 10 drops of your chosen essential oil. Chamomile, geranium, juniper, pine, rosemary, ylang-ylang, nutmeg, lavender, cypress, and bay all make good middle notes.
4. Add the **Top Note** - The top note (the scent you smell right away after application) is the last essential oil to complete your perfume. Again, add around 10 drops to your perfume bottle. Some good top note essential oils include eucalyptus, lemon, grapefruit, peppermint, spearmint, sage, tea tree, and orange.
5. Let the children try different combinations of base, middle, and top notes until they find a combination that they like.
6. Add a **Fixative**. Your homemade perfume is not complete without a fixative, which preserves the perfume and keeps it fresh. An effective and skin-friendly fixative is a vitamin E capsule. Simply stick a small pin or other sharp object into the capsule and squeeze out the contents into your perfume bottle.
7. Place the lid on the perfume bottle and give it a good shake to combine all of the ingredients.

Ask the children to name their perfume and create a label displaying the name and the ingredients. Names could include the word 'hope'. The perfume can be used right away. However, if you let it rest for a couple of weeks, the oils will have time to blend and the scent will be stronger and last longer when worn.



Did you know... that the average human nose can identify 10,000 different odours and that the sense of smell is the most powerful of all our senses? No other sensory input can change human consciousness so quickly and completely.

Research has shown that the **olfactory nerve**, which senses fragrance, is directly connected to the part of the brain which plays an important role in the processing and storage of memories and emotions. This accounts for the direct and immediate experience that smell provides us, as well as the profound effect it has on our mental and emotional states. The smells that surround us affect our well-being throughout our lives

Using scent to relax, reflect and pray

Essential oils can be dated as far back as 6000 years ago. It was the Egyptians who first used essential oils in baths and massages. The scent of Iris is said to calm nerves and create a feeling of relaxation, similar to Lavender.

Try lighting an Iris scented candle or use the essential oil in a bowl of warm water to create the scent in the classroom. Use this time to complete some breathing exercises with the children or ask them to reflect, silently or quietly, on their hopes for the future as they come to the end of their time at the school.

Finally, you may like to offer the following prayers:

A Prayer For Hope



I pray that myself, my friends, and my family are filled with joy, hope and love each and everyday.

I pray that I know a peace and love beyond all measure.

I pray that every soul in this world be granted the peace that faith can bring.

I pray for the strength and fortitude to be a shining example for others.

I pray that love showers upon all of us all the time.

Amen

Lord, help us to share the hope of our hearts with one another. Enable us to give hope to others as we move on to our next school and all the exciting things to come.

Use us to spread Your hope to others.

May we flourish by learning from Jesus' life and the example he showed us.

Amen.

There follows as associated RE cycle of enquiry

Hope: An RE cycle of enquiry to support the 2021 leavers' resources.

The Christian idea of hope is more than just wishful thinking, it is based on the belief that God is loving and powerful and actively involved in the world. In particular, it draws on the idea of Jesus' Resurrection.

Christians believe that Jesus rose from the dead and so death doesn't have the final word, there is hope for the future. This hope is also supposed to motivate Christians to make a difference in the world today, it's not 'pie in the sky when you die,' but a rallying call to work for peace and justice and human flourishing here on Earth.



Communicate and Apply



What are your hope and dreams for your own life? For the world? This could be anything, from an end to the pandemic and being able to see family members again, to one day being a dancer, computer game designer or vet....

You might like to start with a short film such as ['The Wish Granter.'](#) If you could grant any wish for yourself, or for somebody else – or for the world – what would it be? Why?

Do most of us have the same hopes, or is there a wide range? Is hope more important to some of us than to others?

What happens when our hopes don't come true? Does that matter? Is it better to have small hopes that are likely to come true, or big hopes that are less likely to come true?

Enquire



What do Christians believe about hope? Ask pairs - or small groups - to sort through the cards at the end of this resource and choose the ones that they think are most relevant to the question. Ask them to report their findings to the rest of the class. You can either specify that they choose maybe five cards to put into their own words, or let them decide how many ideas to choose.

Alternatively, you can place A4 cards around the classroom (or school building) and ask the children to collect relevant information, before sharing their ideas with the class.

Contextualise



Choose one of these three case studies – depending on the interests of your class. ['Hope in the Pandemic'](#) explores some of the ways that Christians responded to the first lockdown in 2020. Some chose to encourage others with a message of hope and worked to make a difference in their local communities. Others trusted that God would protect them from Coronavirus, or heal them if they were infected, and chose to keep

meeting, despite lockdown restrictions. The class can discuss whether putting your hope in God is always a good thing, or whether it can be misguided.

'Faith, Hope and Charity' looks at some of the many Christian charities that have 'Hope' in their name and asks what motivates them and what they are doing to make a difference. The children have the opportunity to talk about who benefits from these charities and whether their aid is always unconditional.

'Hope and Freedom' looks at the hopes that helped African Americans survive slavery in the Southern States of America and how those same hopes motivated Martin Luther King and others to campaign for civil rights in the 1960s. The class can discuss whether having hope for the future helps people cope better with life today, and whether people who believe in life after death are more likely to live life to the full – or those who believe that this life is the only one they have.



Hope in the Pandemic

When the Pandemic first struck in 2020, Christians were keen to express their faith and confidence that God would help them through it. ['The UK Blessing'](#) was recorded by singers from churches across the UK and expressed the hope that God was watching over the country. It reached over a million views within 48 hours of being released. Another video that went viral, was the medical staff at Cartersville Medical Centre in Georgia USA singing the Christian song ['Waymaker'](#) on the hospital roof. The song states their faith that God is always at work, 'Even when I don't see it, you're working, Even when I can't feel it you're working, You never stop working.' Many churches came together to bless their communities during the first lockdown, by delivering food parcels, collecting prescriptions, phoning the elderly and isolated etc. Obviously, many other groups reached out in a similar way, not just Christians. For example look at this BBC news report about the [Sikh community kitchen](#) feeding their neighbourhood during lockdown.

Can hope in God be misguided? Some churches chose to carry on meeting, despite the lockdown rules, because they believed that God would protect them. For example, a mega-church in Seoul, South Korea continued to meet and was responsible for spreading hundreds of cases of the virus. [\(BBC News\)](#) Their leader claimed that God would keep them safe and would heal them if they caught Covid. A similar phenomenon took place in the US, where some churches claimed that their freedom to keep meeting was more important than fears of the pandemic. One church in California was reportedly responsible for causing 70 cases of the virus. Another Florida church leader claimed that, "If you cannot be safe in church, you're in serious trouble." [\(BBC News\)](#)

What do the class think? Is it sensible to put our faith in God during a pandemic? (Or at any other time?) What, or who, should we put our hope in?

1. Pose



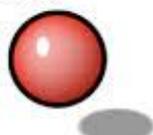
2. Pause



3. Pounce



4. Bounce



Use a strategy such as Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce to debate this question. Pose the question, pause for a minute to give the children thinking time, then pounce on a pupil (who you know will be able to give their opinion confidently) and then they bounce it to someone else in the room. It helps to use a formula such as 'I wonder what Archie thinks?'



Faith, Hope and Charity.

Many Christian charities have the word 'Hope' in their name. For example, ['Projects Delivering Hope'](#) is a small charity based in Salisbury, that works in refugee camps in South Sudan. They liaise with local people to meet specific needs, such as wellies to protect women growing vegetables for their families, or packs of soap, hand sanitiser and face masks. They have run training courses to help people set up their own small businesses. At the moment they are running a seeds appeal, and describe seeds as 'the gift that keeps on giving.' (Why?)

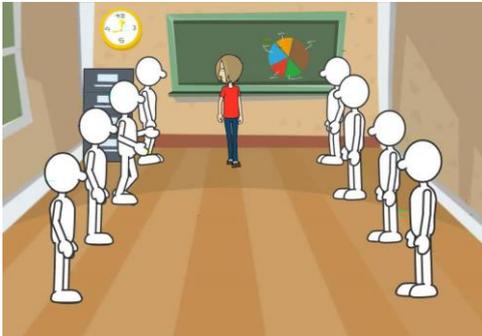
[Hope Africa](#) is a charity that provides healthcare, clean drinking water and education in Malawi. They say that 'Poverty smashes hopes and dreams.' Their projects include training young women to sew, so they can earn an income for their families, helping young people access secondary school education and providing football and netball coaching for primary school children.

Local charities – which aren't specifically Christian, but are committed to transforming lives – include [H.O.P.E](#), a Hampshire based charity working to support people in Nilgiri, India, with education and farming and environmental projects; and [HOPE New Forest](#) dedicated to supporting and befriending older people who may be isolated and lonely.

Ask the children to work in groups to research one of these charities, or one of their choice. They might like to focus on a charity that your local church or community supports. What motivates them? What kind of a difference do they make? Would the children recommend them to someone who is looking for a charity to get involved with? How is their work linked to the idea of hope?

Do charities always make a positive difference, or do they sometimes just make us feel better about ourselves? Some people argue that charity is toxic, that it encourages people to become dependent on others, rather than trying to help themselves. Sometimes aid comes with a catch; people are given food or help if they

agree to go to church, or vote for a particular party. Some charities spend a high proportion of their money on administration and publicity, rather than helping people on the ground. Yet there are many good reasons for supporting charities; what does the class think?



Use Conscience Alley to debate whether we should charities or not. Ask the class to stand in two lines facing each other and choose one child to walk between the two lines. Imagine that they have some money that they want to give to a charity, but they're not sure if this is a good idea or not. As they walk down the line, the class take it in turns to give them advice, e.g. 'You should be generous, it can make a real difference to somebody.' Or 'Don't give them money, it would be better to volunteer and give your time instead.' Or 'It would be better to help people take responsibility for themselves, rather than depending on handouts.' When your volunteer has listened to all the advice, they weigh up the different arguments and decide what they will do. Do the others agree with their decision?



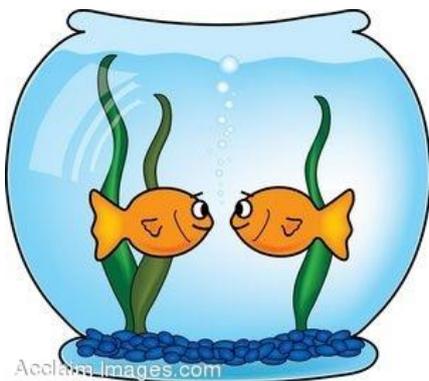
Hope and Freedom.

Slavery was very common in nineteenth century America and enslaved people often sang spirituals to express their hope that one day everything would be all right – that God saw their suffering and would give them justice, even if this didn't happen here on Earth, but when they got to heaven. [Steal Away to Jesus](#) is a typical example. The song has a double meaning, on one level it's about dying and going to be with Jesus in heaven, but it's also about escaping from slavery and 'stealing away' to freedom. Your class will probably know '[Swing Low Sweet Chariot,](#)' another American slave hymn that has become a rugby anthem. Originally it was both a song of hope that they would escape the problems of this life and go to heaven, but also a coded message about escaping slavery. Some people argue that dreaming about Heaven actually stopped the slaves from trying to improve their lives here on Earth, but perhaps life as a slave was so brutal that they didn't have any alternative.

Slavery was finally abolished, but black and white people still lived separate lives, going to different schools, eating in different restaurants and sitting in different parts of the bus. In the 1960s, civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, used these same hopes for the future to campaign to make life better here and now. There is a short biography of him [here](#), including information about segregation, Rosa Parkes and the Montgomery bus boycott. You can hear an extract from his famous 'I have a dream' speech [here](#).

(The Black Lives Matter protests show that racism still exists today. Many Christian groups are actively campaigning for racial justice, but interestingly some white churches are uncomfortable with being too political.)

Do the class think that people who have a strong hope in life after death would live their lives differently? Or do they think it would have more impact if someone believed that this life is the only life they have? E.g. who would be more likely to make the most of every day and live their life to the full? Who would be more likely to try to make a difference and make the world a better place for other people?



You could debate this using the goldfish bowl activity (aka speed dating). Place the class in two concentric circles facing each other. Give them two minutes each to share their ideas with the person opposite them. On a given signal, ask everyone to move one place to the right and share their ideas with their new partner – and so on. Encourage them to listen carefully to each other's points of view and to be open to changing their ideas.

Evaluate



Why is 'Hope' important to Christians? Is it important to me? Have my ideas about 'Hope' changed at all?

What would the world be like if there was no hope?

You may like to finish your enquiry with a practical activity to consolidate the children's learning. Any of the seed-planting or art activities in this booklet would be appropriate, or your class might have their own ideas for a project that would bring hope to their school, local community or to someone further afield. We would love to hear about your projects, so do let the Diocesan team know how you choose to put your hopes and dreams into action!



Christian Beliefs about Hope

Ask the children to work in small groups and choose the information that they think is most important for understanding what Christians believe about hope.

Christians define Hope as 'confident expectation' that God is in control. It is not just wishing for something nice to happen.	Christians have hope for the future because they believe that God is loving and powerful.	Christians believe that Jesus came back to life after the crucifixion. Because of this, they are confident that when they die, they will be with God.
The word 'Hope' is in the Bible about 150 times (depending on the translation).	For some people, Hope means believing that God will answer your prayers.	Because Christians have hope for the future, they believe that they should work to make the world a better place. They believe that nothing is ever hopeless.
In the story of Noah, the dove symbolises hope because it returned with an olive leaf in its mouth, showing that the flood had ended and life would continue.	The Bible says that Jesus is the Light of The World, and that however dark the world might seem, the light will always keep shining.	The Bible says that the three greatest values are Faith, Hope and Love.
The message of Easter is that good triumphs over evil. Christians have hope for the future, because they believe that good will win in the end.	In the Bible, God promises to give his followers a hope and a future. Many Christians use this verse to encourage them when they feel anxious about life.	Some Christians use the image of God being like a ship that will carry them safe to shore, through the storms.
In Roman times, Christians used an anchor as a symbol of hope and safety. They sometimes drew an anchor on their tombs to show that they were trusting in God.	Christians have hope for the future because they believe that God keeps his promises. For example, Jesus promises that he will always be with his followers.	The rainbow is a symbol of Hope. God promised Noah that he would never flood the Earth again and he sent a rainbow to remind people of that promise.