

## What's on in a Church of England School

# JANUARY

# 2018

**What to do with your old Christmas Cards?** Bring them into school ..... it's a great RE lesson. Spread them all out on a table - or better still, on the floor in the hall.....and then make big groups of them.

Group 1 Funny Cards - jokes and cartoons



Group 2 Winter Scene cards - snowy scenes and street scenes



Group 3 Christmas Celebrities - Santa, snowman etc



Group 4 Christmas tradition cards (celebration cards) Christmas trees, puddings, holy, Robins and much more



Group 5 The Christian Christmas story - The Birth of Jesus



You may have to invent one or two more categories, but it's a great activity - fun for the children and good practical RE learning for all ages. For older children you could make sub-groups eg. Annunciation, Bethlehem, Epiphany, - and what's more - you can lend the same group of cards to other classes. **Don't waste a brilliant opportunity for learning and changing the way children look at cards.**

## Christian Festivals

Epiphany: 6th January

Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist: 13th January

St Hilary's Day: 13th January

World Religion Day 21<sup>st</sup> January

Week of prayer for Christian unity: 18th - 25<sup>th</sup> January

St Agnes Day 21<sup>st</sup> January

The Conversion of St Paul: 25th January

## Other Festivals and Awareness Days

Big School's Bird Watch January 2<sup>nd</sup> - February 23<sup>rd</sup>

Blue Monday - 15<sup>th</sup> January

Winnie the Pooh Day 18<sup>th</sup> January

National Hug Day 21<sup>st</sup> January

Holocaust Memorial Day 27<sup>th</sup> January

National Storytelling Week 27<sup>th</sup> January - 3<sup>rd</sup> February

National Bug-Busting Day 31<sup>st</sup> January

## Epiphany: 6th January (or Three Kings Day)

The Western Church began celebrating the Epiphany in the 4th Century where it was, and still is, associated with the visit of the magi (wise men) to the infant Jesus when God revealed himself to the world through the incarnation of Jesus.

Epiphany, or **Twelfth Night**, marks the end of the Christmas and New Year season and the start of a New Year and Church season.

Although common culture tells us that there were 'Three Wise Men' - Biblical reference does not give a number (a usual pub quiz question!) - nor names. In the East, the magi traditionally number twelve. Their identification as kings in later Christian writings is probably linked to Psalms 72:11, "May all kings fall down before him". Traditions identify a variety of different names for the Magi. In the Western Christian church they have been commonly known as: [Melchior](#) - a [Persian](#) scholar [Caspar](#) - an Indian scholar [Balthazar](#) - an [Arabian](#) scholar

These names probably came from a Greek tradition in about the year 500 and were reinforced again in early centuries.

EPIPHANY



There are some really good images on line for older children to find out about. The Adoration of the Magi has been a major artistic subject over the centuries - Google it.



Sandro Botticelli 1745



Leonardo Da Vinci 1482

You could get the children to google epiphany works of art and have a look at them (Google 'Epiphany' and then look at 'images'). There are lots to look at and some of them will be famous paintings by great masters. See if you can find some. Children can discuss and identify the people in the paintings - and the dates that they were painted.

For many Protestant church traditions, the season of Epiphany extends from 6 January until Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent leading to Easter.

Some Christians attend special church services on January 6. Figures representing the three wise men, or the Magi, are placed in some crib scenes on Epiphany. This is especially true of crib scenes in or close to churches or church schools. A good short extract to use with the children is



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzIESPA\\_-Uw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzIESPA_-Uw)

or for KS1 children

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9FWTb6FG6w>

An epiphany (from the ancient Greek ἐπιφάνεια, epiphaneia, "manifestation, striking appearance") is an experience of sudden and striking realization. Generally the term is used to describe breakthrough scientific, religious or philosophical discoveries, but it can apply in any situation in which an enlightening realisation allows a problem or situation to be understood from a new and deeper perspective. **The children could have an 'epiphany' in their Maths lesson, for example - this is a good addition to worship. The 'epiphany' moment!**

People in the UK remove their Christmas decorations from their homes, schools and workplaces on or before Twelfth Night. Many people believe that it is bad luck to display Christmas decorations after January 6. Decorations in town centres and shopping malls may

stay on display for longer, as it can take many days or weeks to remove them all. The lights in these decorations are not generally turned on after January 6.

Some people hold Twelfth Night parties. They may serve a hot spicy punch called wassail or a Twelfth Night cake. A Twelfth Night cake usually contains one whole dried pea and one whole dried bean. The people who get the pea and the bean in their portion of cake are crowned king and queen for the evening.

**Why not re-dress up the wise men from the Christmas Nativity? – this would make a really good worship. Christmas is such a busy time so Epiphany is a good opportunity to look at the wise men's visit in detail. Maybe look at the gifts and their significance.**

**Make the worship 'An Epiphany'**

**Here are a few assembly ideas for you to use**

<http://www.assemblies.org.uk/pri/1588/epiphany>

<https://assemblyideas.wordpress.com/tag/epiphany/>

And this is a really good site for worship ideas

<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2014/12/epiphany-abc-tuesday-january-6-or.html>



Until the 19th century, people would keep decorations of holly, ivy, box, yew, laurel and mistletoe up until February 2nd, Candlemas Day, the end of the Christmas season, 40 days after the birth of Jesus.

## **Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist: 13th January**

A good short youtube clip for showing to children is

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVVP\\_ONDY1Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVVP_ONDY1Q) or

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgIIAIdU3ik>

or, do you have 'The Miracle Maker' stored in a cupboard at school. There is a good animated section on Jesus' baptism.



*Here is another for younger children*

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=THaAcyLs1OE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THaAcyLs1OE)

**Why not get your local vicar in to talk to the children about baptism? Maybe they could bring in all the elements. You could have a baptism service for one of the class dolls. Do you know what a Ewer is? Your church will have one, and the minister could bring it in to show the children. There are a huge variety of Ewers. The children could draw your own church one or invent a new one. Google 'Ewer' for lots of ideas. If you have clay in school you could make some different ewers and put them on display.**



Some schools focus on the new intake of children and send a letter to parents like this one. Why not have a talk in the staff meeting about it. Lots of schools do it, and January is a

good month to think about it for September - it could be a part of your school's 'Welcome' pack.

Dear Parents,

Have you thought about baptism for your child?

Many of you will, I know, already have taken this step, but, for one reason or another, it may have been overlooked. It's never too late to have your child baptised and indeed, many of those baptised in our church are small children rather than babies.

As your children start their Church School education, now would be as an appropriate time as any to seek baptism for them. Over the next seven years they will be involved in daily acts of worship and all things to do with Christian celebration. If, later in life, your child should wish to be confirmed, they will need to have been baptised. This year some children from Y5 and Y6 decided to be confirmed.

Baptism, or Christening, as some call it, is a beautiful way to celebrate a child's life and is a sign of membership of God's Church (and is also a terrific excuse for a family party!) Baptism is free of charge and is easily arranged by contacting the vicar, Stephen on .....

Why not think about it.

Yours

Headteacher and Vicar

## St Hilary's Day: 13th January

This has gained the reputation for being the coldest day of the year!

Hilary was a Bishop, born in Poitiers in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century. For more information about St Hilary go to <http://www.sthilarychurch.org/about-st-hilary/life-of-st-hilary/>

One of the most severe winters in history began on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1205, when the River Thames froze solid - frozen wine and ale (which people drank instead of water) were sold by weight.





This is a great time of year to keep track of the weather outside. Have you got a Maximum/minimum thermometer outside? There are loads of them on Amazon - some of them stick on the classroom window. Keep a graph of the outside temperature - it really helps the children (and staff) to have the concept of winter temperatures. When the children say 'It's freezing' - do they know what that feels like? Lots of lovely ideas on this done in many schools.

## World Religion Day 21st January

15th January 2017 marks World Religion Day across the globe.

The aim is to unite everyone, whatever their faith, by showing us all that there are common foundations to all religions and that together we can help humanity and live in harmony.

At the World Religion Day website, you can find out all about this day and ways to get involved. Whether you are a Native American, a Jainist, Hindu, Christian or Jewish, everyone can take part. Special services will be held in spiritual centres around the world to observe the day.

By celebrating the similarities in different faiths and understanding other religions, the day shows us how we can work together to create a better world.

To find out more visit the website and get involved. You can also find links to learn more about other religions, like, for example, the Sikh faith. So there's no excuse not to get learning and celebrate together.

A brilliant website is <https://www.truetube.co.uk/event/world-religion-day-0>

You will need to 'sign in' but you will not be pestered by them. The site is well worth it.

On this website you will find some really useful information given in a very child-friendly way.

On the truetube site there is a section called 'Alien Abduction' where an earth person has to answer questions about their faith - it is an excellent site and well worth using in your RE lessons. There is Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Hinduism. **A great resource for all KS2 teachers - especially Y5 and 6**



Alien Abduction: Christianity

# Week of prayer for Christian unity: 18 - 25 January

First celebrated in 1908. The days of 18-25 January (regardless of the days of the week involved) were originally chosen because they covered the days between the feast of St Peter and the feast of St Paul. Some churches and regions use a different week. This is a good opportunity to think of Christians around the globe and to pray for them.



A great website is 'Churches Together in Britain and Ireland' [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)

On the website you will find lots of ideas - it's a bit different and has some good resources...try it.

We hope that local churches will be creative in the ways they mark the Week of Prayer.

Sometimes a pilgrimage around the churches of various denominations can be organised - Each church worships in its own style and is usually keen to offer hospitality to others. Some people organise daily prayers in their place of work. Church schools may put on services or events. Why not invite ministers from your various local churches to come to school - this could be a great way of sharing faith with others. Involve your local minister from the start.

## What are the aims of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity?

- To pray as Christ prayed " - "that they may be one".
- To pray for the unity of all Christian people as we share in Christ's ministry.

Each Week of Prayer offers opportunities to meet and pray with fellow Christians of different denominations in your locality. Often new local initiatives emerge out of such meeting and praying together.

## Is there all-age material for the Week of Prayer?

All-age material for the Week of Prayer is available from ROOTS for Churches, the worship and learning resource.

See their website [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com)



## A personal prayer

God of the mountain-top and of the valley,  
when the mountain is steep and I am tired,  
bless me with your strength.  
When the mountain is misty and I am afraid,  
bless me with your peace.  
When the mountain is covered in the snow of  
uncertainty,  
bless me with your courage.  
When the mountain is beautiful,  
bless me with gratitude  
and a sense of wonder that you are with me always.

**Amen**



### **How do we advertise the Week of Prayer locally?**

A3 size posters are available to order or from the website. You can add local details to the space on the poster.

ROOTS contains lots of resources for children's and 'All Age' worship. Why not have a look and see if there is anything available that would give a boost to your school worship.

## **St Agnes' Day 21<sup>st</sup> January**

Agnes is the patron saint of girls. She is depicted in art with a lamb, as her name resembles the Latin word for "lamb", *agnus*. According to tradition, Saint Agnes was a member of the Roman nobility born c. 291 and raised in a Christian family. She suffered martyrdom at the age of twelve or thirteen on 21 January 304.

Agnes, whose name means "chaste" in Greek, was a beautiful young girl of wealthy family and therefore had many suitors of high rank. Details of her story are unreliable, but legend holds that the young men, slighted by Agnes' resolute devotion to religious purity, submitted her name to the authorities as a follower of Christianity. The palm she holds depicts martyrdom.

The St Agnes we sing about each year in 'Good King Wenceslas' is a different Agnes of Bohemia - a sister of King Wenceslas 1 and founder of hospitals and monasteries.



# The Conversion of St Paul: 25 January

Saint Paul is undoubtedly one of the most important figures in the history of the Western world. Just a quick look at the headlines of his life are enough to understand his impact; his works are some of the earliest Christian documents that we have, 13 of the 27 books of the bible are written by him, and he's the hero of another, Acts of the Apostles.



Find out all about him from this website - or get the children to research him in your library - there are lots of books about the exciting life of Paul.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/history/paul\\_1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/history/paul_1.shtml)

**Check out these facts with the children - how many do they know? - you could make a quiz and send it home for a mini-project ..... perfect.**

- Fact 1 - He is the Patron Saint of London, Authors, Press, Publishers and Writers
- Fact 2 - His name was Saul but this changed to Paul following his conversion
- Fact 3 - He was born at Tarsus, Cilicia (modern Turkey)
- Fact 4 - His date of Birth was c 3AD
- Fact 5 - He died in A.D. 64
- Fact 6 - His cause of death was Beheading
- Fact 7 - His family were tent-makers by trade
- Fact 8 - He was brought up according to the strict doctrine of the Pharisees who enjoyed the distinction of Roman citizenship
- Fact 9 - He was a bitter opponent of Jesus and the new Christian religion
- Fact 10 - He travelled from Jerusalem on the Road to Damascus to arrest a group of Christians.
- Fact 11 - On the road to Damascus he was struck blind by a heavenly light and converted to Christianity.
- Fact 12 - He was baptised with the name of Paul
- Fact 13 - He undertook many evangelical missions
- Fact 14 - He was arrested and held as a prisoner for two years at Caesarea. He claimed his right as a Roman citizen to have a trial in Rome
- Fact 15 - On his journey to Rome Paul was shipwrecked and delayed on the island of Malta
- Fact 16 - In 64 AD the Roman Emperor Nero set fire to Rome and blamed the Christians for its destruction.
- Fact 17 - Paul arrested and sentenced to death by beheading.

A short video for use with the children is on

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4ZJxb4uW-E>

**Paul's story makes a great topic to use in primary schools. There is something for everyone.**

## Other Faiths

### 5 January - Sikh: Birth of Guru Gobind Singh

Guru Gobind Singh was the last of the 10 human Gurus of the Sikh faith. He was born in 1666.

Guru Gobind Singh is known for creating the Khalsa, historically a community of committed Sikhs who wore visible symbols of their faith and trained as warriors. Today the Khalsa refers to the community of baptised Sikhs who've undergone the Amrit initiation ceremony, said to have been

introduced by Guru Gobind Singh. He's also known for naming the Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib, as his successor Guru for all time.



### 14th January - Hindu: Makar Sankranti

This is one of the most important festivals of the Hindu calendar and celebrates the sun's journey into the northern hemisphere. See site for details.

<http://www.vmission.org.in/hinduism/festivals/sankranti/>

Makar Sankranti is celebrated with utmost happiness and zest in every state of India. The playful nature of the festival allows everyone to fly kites during the day, and therefore is also known as the kite flying festival.



### What else is on in January 2018?

### January 2nd to 23<sup>rd</sup> February - Big Schools Bird Watch



Go to <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/schools-birdwatch/> for all the information you need. How to take part video, counting sheets and lots more. This is something that the children will love. And just an hour to do.



Making 'Lardy Cake' bird feeders.



Join in the 2018 Big Schools' Birdwatch. The Big Schools Birdwatch runs from the 2nd January – 23rd February 2018 and is an educational activity that gets your class closer to nature. It takes just an hour and works for all ages and abilities.

Every year, educators from every corner of the UK take part with their classes. There's plenty of flexibility to run it with any age group of children and we have resources to help. (See our page to request a resource).

## 15<sup>th</sup> January - Blue Monday

The third Monday of January has been awarded the gloomy title due to a combination of post-Christmas blues, cold dark nights and the arrival of unpaid credit card bills.

Apparently, a university professor managed to precisely calculate the most depressing day of the year.

Well, what to do about that?? How about creative teachers working out lots of ways of cheering up children - we'll leave that one up to you.



## 18<sup>th</sup> January - Winnie the Pooh Day

On 18th January 1882, the creator of Winnie the Pooh was born. AA Milne has created many children's characters and is the author of many books. Now, every year we celebrate Pooh Bear on the day of the author's birth. His most famous creation springs to life on the page along with Eeyore, Piglet, Tigger and don't forget



Christopher Robin! With his caring nature the oh-so-loveable old bear appeals to all ages. Who could resist a bear that utters the words "If you live to be 100, I hope I live to be 100 minus 1 day, so I never have to live without you." It just makes us melt inside.

So on 18 January make sure you celebrate Winnie the Pooh Day with Pooh and Friends. Perhaps you can create some Winnie the Pooh artwork? Or dress the kids up in Winnie the Pooh costumes, create your own hundred acre wood and have a teddy bear's picnic?

With a whole choice of things to do you can really get involved. I'm going to watch all the Disney films and cuddle up to my very own cuddly Pooh toy. Or why not dust off your Winnie the Pooh books and make a visit to the House at Pooh Corner - you could also take a walk through your own local "Hundred Acre Wood" to find "The Enchanted Place" or why not have a game of poohsticks, just like the characters in the book. Whatever you do, celebrating on January 18th is the perfect way to get in the classic Winnie mood!

Can you name all the characters?



## 21<sup>st</sup> January - National Hug Day

**National Hug Day** or **National Hugging Day** is an annual event dedicated to hugging. It was created by Kevin Zaborney and occurs annually on January 21. The day was first celebrated on January 21, 1986 in Clio, Michigan, USA. The holiday is also observed in many other countries. The idea of National Hug Day is to encourage everyone to hug family and friends more often



WHAT  
THIS  
WORLD  
NEEDS  
IS A  
GROUP  
HUG.+

# 27<sup>th</sup> January - Holocaust Memorial Day



HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
DAY TRUST

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27<sup>th</sup> January each year. It's a time for everyone to pause to remember the millions of people who have been murdered or whose lives have been changed beyond recognition during the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia,

Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. On HMD we can honour the survivors of these regimes and challenge ourselves to use the lessons of their experience to inform our lives today. 27<sup>th</sup> January marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp.



**The power of words is the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2018. Words can make a difference - both for good and evil.**

*'I want to go on living even after my death! And that's why I am so grateful to God for having given me this gift, which I can use to develop myself and to express all that's in me. When I write I can shake off all my cares; my sorrow disappears; my spirits are revived.'* - Anne Frank, written in her diary, 5 April 1944



Spoken and written words from individuals, corporations, community organisations or the state, can have a huge impact, whether good or bad. The theme for HMD 2018 explores how language has been used in the past, and how it is used in the present day.

HMD activities could focus on the impact that words had in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, through propaganda used to incite, through slogans written in resistance, and through memoirs written to record and respond to what was going on. The words that we see and hear all around us today - in newspapers, online, in conversations - the words that we choose to use, all have an impact upon us and those around us.

## **Scope of the theme:**

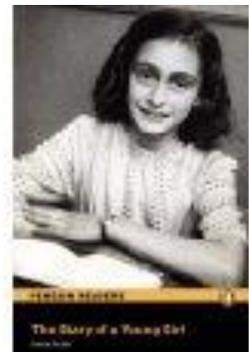
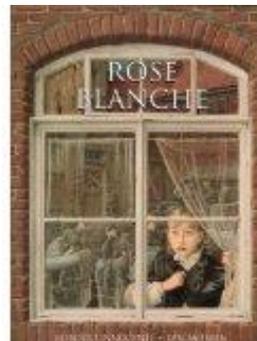
- The power of words
- Words written during the Holocaust and during the subsequent genocide
  - by perpetrators
  - by people who wanted to criticise perpetrator regimes, or stand up against them
  - by people who wrote to survive, or to record their experiences for the future
- Words written as a response to the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and the subsequent genocides
- Words today
- How we respond to words
- The power of definitions
- Free speech and censorship

Bucket-loads of ideas for use with KS2 children on <http://hmd.org.uk/content/for-educators>



Hate and racial intolerance is with us always - and, at the moment we can see its ugly face in our national football grounds and in our streets. The word 'Islamic' is now associated with 'terrorist' in the minds of all who watch TV . There is some very interesting work to be done in our schools .... Why not find out more?

Read 'Rose Blanche' by Ian McEwan



The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank

Clara's War ... written by Clara Kramer, a Holocaust survivor - listen to her speak on youtube video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=522UsZMVfJA>



All books that you definitely should have in school.

## January 27<sup>th</sup> - February 3<sup>rd</sup> National Storytelling Week

Oral storytelling is one of the most ancient artforms, and continues to this day as a vibrant part of culture throughout the world. The Society for Storytelling was founded in 1993 to support and promote storytelling in England and Wales. We provide a central place to find out about storytelling events, to ask for advice on using storytelling, and to find storytellers.



Go to <http://www.sfs.org.uk/> for lots more information.

# 31<sup>st</sup> January - National Bug-Busting Day

Recommended by the Department of Health, Bug Busting Day is an educational programme in head lice detection and treatment. The treatment works by combining specially designed combs with a usual shampoo and conditioner.

There are three National Bug Busting days every year, 31 October, 31 January and 15 June.

The programme can be followed at any time of the year, but the participation of schools in united action is recommended to prevent lice circulating, i.e. if all cases are identified and treated successfully at the same time there will be fewer opportunities for lice to circulate amongst children and their families.

Why not have a school bug-busting week - encourage parents to check their child's hair daily.....

Show them this

The Nitty Gritty Nit Free Comb is a fantastic way of grooming children. It really works.

Look it up on the internet or get one from your local 'Boots'

Tell parents - they will be so pleased.

An excellent website with some brilliant ideas to keep children and families informed is <http://www.chc.org/homedir/whatisbugbusting.cfm>. There is a wonderful 'Mistaken Advice' section which would be really good to use with KS2 children.

[Kipper Gets Nits](#) by Roderick Hunt, Annemarie Young, and Alex Brychta  
A sensitively written story about finding and dealing with head lice from Oxford University Press

- Ideal for parents to read with young children

