

Understanding Scripture

A day course of creative good practice for teaching KS1 RE

Lat Blaylock, RE Today

Referencing the new RE Curriculum Directory

*Religious
Education in
times of
change*

*hear, believe,
celebrate, live*

The needs of pupils in their religious education in our contexts are about:

- Knowing and understanding Catholic faith and practice
- Discerning the significance of what they have studied through critical and creative skills
- Responding for themselves, reflecting on all they learn about Christian community and faith and on their own lives and communities
- Expected outcomes are framed around these three areas throughout the RED's new programmes



Do these pupils understand key elements of Christian theologies of God?

Can they express ideas about God with age-appropriate clarity, vision and connections to Bible ideas?

www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts

What do Christians say God is like?

For the teacher

RE is a demanding subject to teach to younger pupils because the concepts are difficult and the questions are uncertain. The subject looks at beliefs, which are varied, and so teachers need to be relaxed about saying 'I don't know' or (even better) 'That's a great question Carly, does anyone else have an answer for it, or a thought about it?' The temptation to duck the issue when children ask big questions is strong, but good teachers are brave and self aware enough to resist!

This work approaches the question of beliefs about God. The method uses the motto 'hard concepts are learned through simple activities.' The activities used here are card sorting, thinking, talking in pairs, choosing an image. The concept of God is as diverse as the number of humans on the planet; this makes it too difficult to handle all at once. This work looks at 5 things Christians say about God, inviting children to respond to these ideas simply.

If you think for a moment about the essential core knowledge of RE, then thinking about Christian understandings of God would surely be part of it: the UK's and the globe's largest religion God is the key idea in the Christian religion. Those are good reasons to tackle this topic with 5-7s. Another is that they are rather interested in God-talk.

Curriculum links

This work has some good connections to literacy, where in Year 2 pupils begin to see how metaphors can make writing interesting, and in their poetry they look at patterns on the page. The 'Kenning' poem used here is a good example of page patterns in two word lines.

Achievements and outcomes This work is aimed at the outcomes of RE for 7 year olds, with possible extensions.

Pupils working towards the outcomes will be able to:

- Use religious words like 'belief,' 'God' and 'Jesus'
- Recognise one thing Christians believe about God
- Talk about God and about their own feelings for themselves

Pupils working at the standard of the outcomes will be able to:

- Identify two or more ideas about God that Christians believe
- Recognise how difficult some questions about God are to answer
- Respond sensitively to questions about God for themselves
- Collect ideas they find interesting about God

Pupils working at the outcomes expected of most 9 year olds will be able to:

- Describe two different things Christians believe about God
- Use a metaphor to express an idea about God for themselves
- Make links between Christian beliefs and their own ideas
- Discover and explore different ideas, simply.

Three activities to enable understanding about God: big ideas and big questions

1. **Different roles.** The teacher can begin by explaining some of their own roles – as teacher, son or daughter, parent, friend and so on. The children like to hear about their teachers lives beyond the classroom. Ask the children to think about the different roles they have, for example as:

Son / daughter

Pupil

Sister / brother

Friend

Granddaughter / grandson

Team member (e.g. in sport, clubs, games, class)

Ask them to say two things they do in each role. Some things we do as a son or daughter (give a kiss? have a cuddle?) which we don't do as a pupil. Other things we do as a pupil (put hand up to speak? Ask before going to the toilet?) which we don't do when we are being a grand daughter or grandson. Some things we do as a team member, but not as a friend. Gather some examples, and praise the children who give them. Tell the children that Christians believe God does lots of different things. Can they make some suggestions about what they think God does (some may say 'nothing')? Can the class make a list of ten or more ideas?

2. Using a poem to learn what Christians think God does.

Tell the children that Christians believe God has lots of different roles. Use the 'kenning' poem in the box to the right to start this work. Read it to the pupils, and ask them what or who they think it is about. The poem actually has two three line stanzas each about God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, so it is a simple way to help children think about Christian ideas about God. Put the lines of the poem on the whiteboard (there is a download PowerPoint on the RE Today members' website from which you can do this, or make a big copy on some cards to use in circle time). Ask the pupils if they can see why each line is something to do with what Christians say about God. Any lines they don't understand? Maybe someone else in the class can explain? Maybe the teacher can? Ask the children to take one line (i.e. 2 words!) of the poem each, and draw a picture to show what it means. If two children do a picture for each of the lines, then a class book could be made of the results.

Who?

Time starter

Space maker

Earth shaper

Mud modeller

Garden planter

Fruit grower

Stable sleeper

Miracle maker

Eye opener

Cross carrier

Devil crusher

Grave buster

Promise keeper

Hand holder

Heart warmer

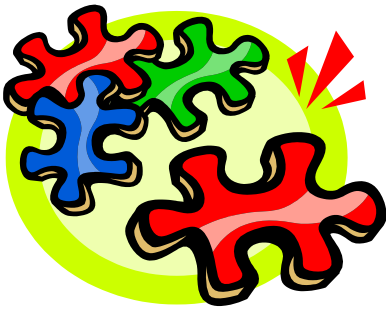
Cheerer upper

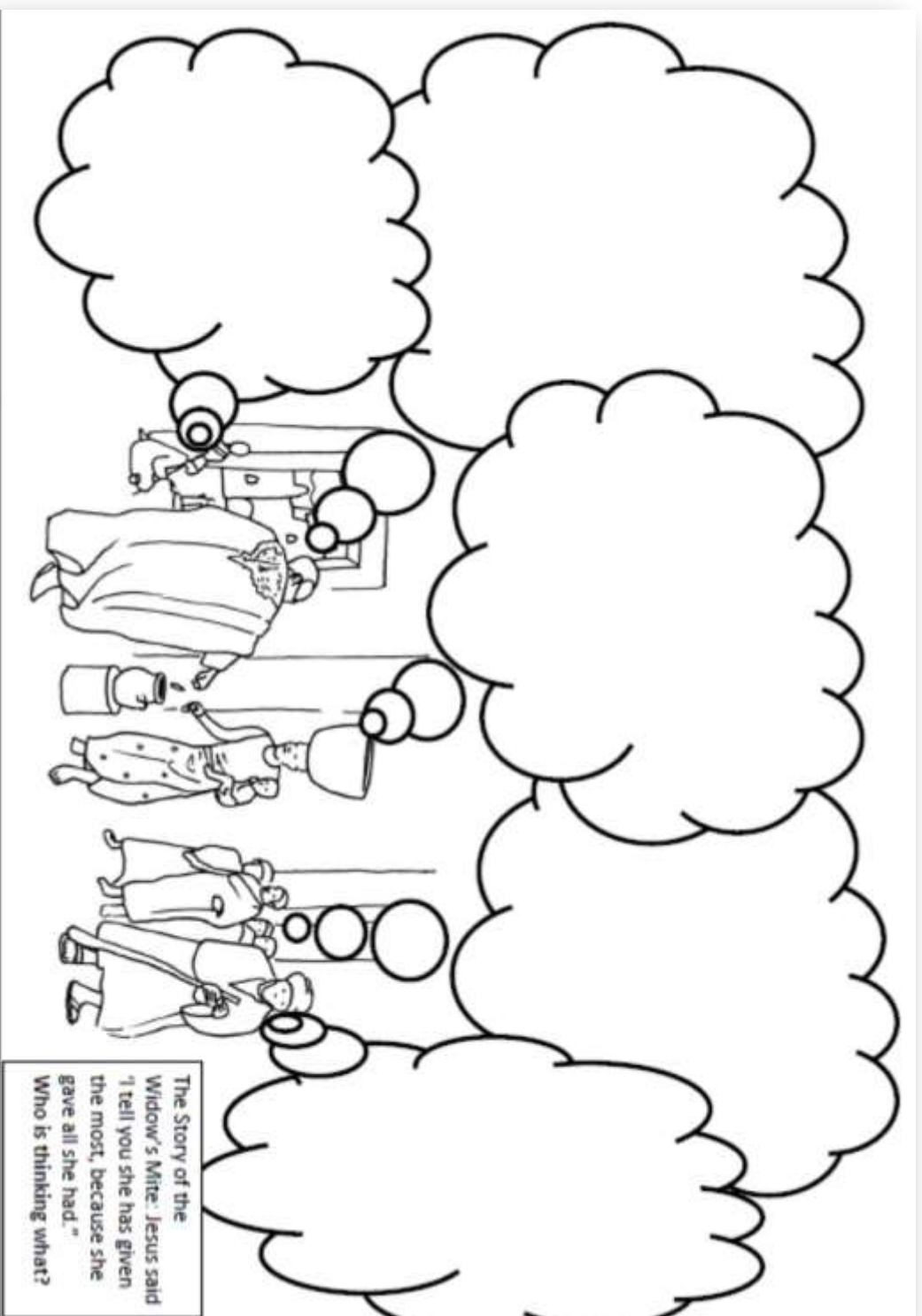
Energy booster

Life giver

Match up: What is God like?

We asked some older Christian children aged 10: what God is like? They had lots of ideas. Here are 5 of the ideas. Can you match an idea with a picture? Can you match them with a reason?

God is like a tree		Big and strong
God is like my mum		Cares for you
God is like a light		Shows you the way
God is like your shadow		Always with you
God is like a jigsaw		Puzzling



Use this kind of 'capture sheet' to get children to show their understanding of the story. It's a simple way to get them to interpret the stories of the Bible for themselves.

Ask two children to work together, talking about the story and give them some words to put into the bubbles if you like

Jesus rode a baby donkey into Jerusalem. He wasn't proud, but he was the king.

Jesus was sent out to die, carrying his own cross through the city streets.

Crowds welcomed Jesus on the baby donkey, waving palm branches and cheering: 'Hosanna, Hosanna!'

Jesus fell down under the weight of the cross, and an African man called Simon from Cyrene helped him to carry it.

At the temple, Jesus threw out the money lenders. They had made a place of prayer into a money-market. He was really angry.

At Calvary, Jesus was crucified. Two thieves were crucified with him. Three crosses against a dark sky.

The leaders of the country of Israel plotted together to get Jesus. They wanted to shut him up. They were jealous.

Jesus prayed for his killers to be forgiven by his Father God.

On Thursday night, Jesus and the disciples ate a last meal together. Jesus washed their smelly feet – he wasn't too proud to serve.

Pilate, the Roman governor ordered a message to be put on the cross: 'This is Jesus, the king of the Jews'.

At the table, on the last night, Jesus shared a loaf of bread with the disciples.

The soldiers played a betting game for Jesus' possessions – one robe and a few belongings.

After the bread, Jesus shared wine with them all. He said it was a reminder of his blood, poured out.

As Jesus was dying, he promised one of the thieves crucified with him 'Today, you will be with me in paradise'

At Gethsemane garden, Jesus prayed while his three best friends, fell asleep. He knew what was going to happen next.

Joseph from Arimathea took the body of Jesus and buried it in his own cave-tomb. A huge stone was rolled into the door.

Judas arrived at the garden with a gang of soldiers. He had betrayed Jesus to his enemies. He gave him away with a kiss.

On Sunday morning, Jesus' women friends set off for the tomb to put oil and spices in the grave.

Jesus was arrested and taken in chains to the courtroom. They accused him of speaking against God.

But the stone was rolled away. The grave was empty. The women were puzzled, amazed and terrified.

At the Court Room, Peter followed the arresting soldiers. Servants asked him: 'Weren't you with Jesus?' He was afraid, and so he denied it 3 times.

Mary stood weeping in the garden. Then Jesus, who was alive again, met her. She couldn't believe it: she was bursting with happiness.

Later, Peter was in tears because he felt he had failed his Lord.

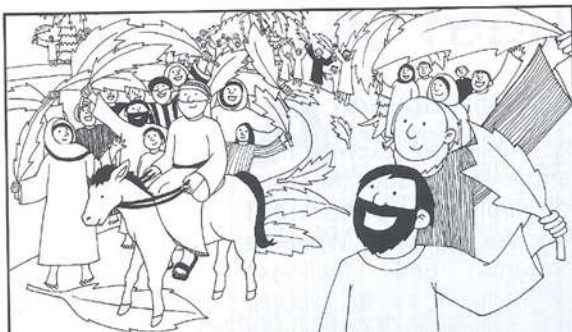
Peter and John ran to the grave to see what had happened. They couldn't work out what the empty grave meant at all.

<i>The leaders sent Jesus to the Roman governor, who was called Pilate. They wanted him to have Jesus nailed to a cross.</i>	<i>The rulers and the Romans told people that Jesus' disciples had stolen his dead body to pretend he was alive again.</i>
<i>Pilate offered the crowd a choice: "I'll set one prisoner free, Jesus – or Barabbas the murderer". The crowd yelled for Barabbas.</i>	<i>Two of Jesus' disciples walking home met him, alive again. They knew it was Jesus when they saw him break the bread.</i>
<i>Jesus was crowned with thorns by a bunch of bullying soldiers. They thought it was a joke.</i>	<i>On Sunday evening, Jesus met 10 of his disciples. They all believed he was back from the dead now.</i>

Cut the cards up into a pack of thirty. You can use them to retell the story, or to get pupils to rank them (all 30 is really hard – get pairs or trios to rank 6 or 8 each). Then give every pupil a drawing frame and a writing frame to do a work of art about one of the cards. Put the whole set of pictures together in a 'Holy Week Gallery' or a class book. You could take it to your local church – they would love it as an Easter display.

Zacchaeus	Keywords: Lonely / Rich / Mean / Cheating / Tax-collector / tree-climber / sorry / generous / different / jealous / salvation.
Before Zacchaeus met Jesus	After Zacchaeus met Jesus
What was he like? Choose three or more words.	What was he like? Choose three or more words

Team A: Here's the church... Build a cardboard box church. Provide the children with a huge box, and tell them it is going to be turned into a church. Talk a lot before this starts!	Team B: Here's the steeple... A Tower and a bell This team are also going to do some big scale box modelling. Get them to look at some pictures of a church tower or spire, and tell them their challenge is to make one
Team C: Lego furniture Talk to this team about the things they find inside church. There might need to be an altar for the sacrament, and a font to welcome new babies, some images and statues of saints or of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Team D: Making Windows from stories of Jesus Give the team members an outline on paper of a blank church window, and tell them that we are making some windows for our class's team built church. Ask what pictures
Team E: Open the door and here's all the people Tell this team that their challenge is to create the congregation for the church.	Team F: All around the church Ask this team to decide how the whole model church can be put into a churchyard or garden.



Jesus is welcomed into Jerusalem.



Jesus is angry in the Temple.



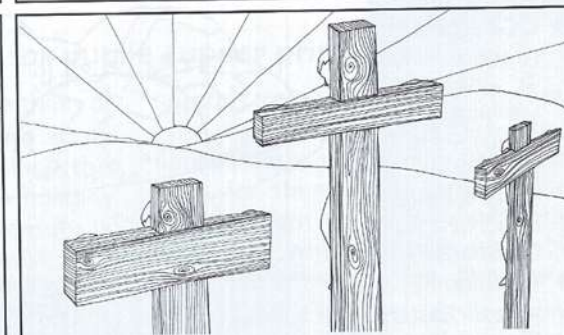
Jesus is questioned in Jerusalem.



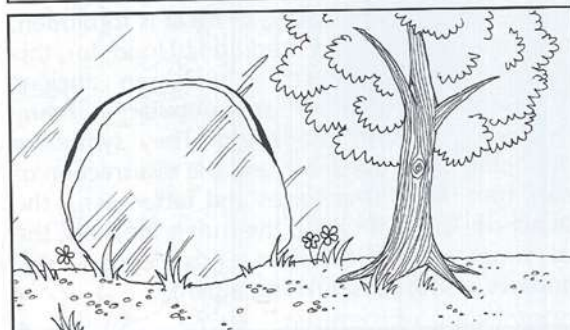
Judas Iscariot plots with the chief priests to betray Jesus.



Jesus and the disciples share their last meal together.



Jesus is crucified.



Jesus is laid in a tomb. The Sabbath day arrives, and everyone rests.

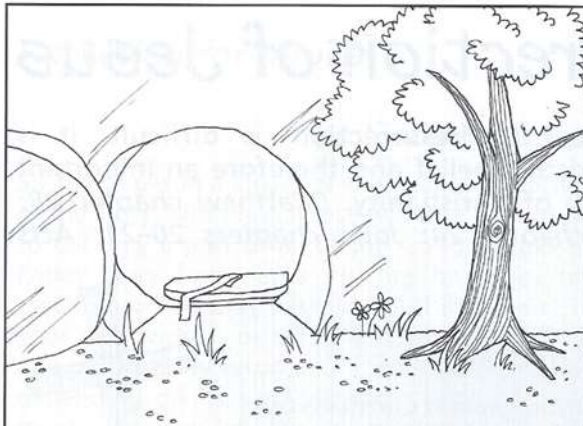
Use these seven pictures to sequence the Holy Week Story. There are 6 Easter pix on the next page.

Ask pupils to choose two emotional words: what would the disciples feel at this moment in the story?

Select a 'key colour' for each picture to show its mood and meaning.

What are the hidden messages in this part of the story?

How does each picture get remembered or used in the Church's life today?



The tomb is empty! Jesus has risen!



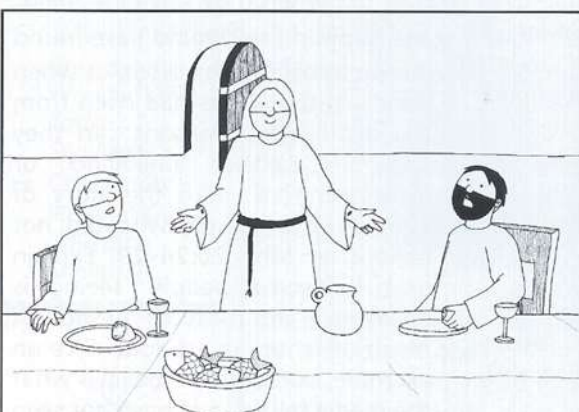
An angel appears to the women in the garden.



The women tell the disciples that Jesus has risen.



Jesus appears to two of his followers on the road to Emmaus.



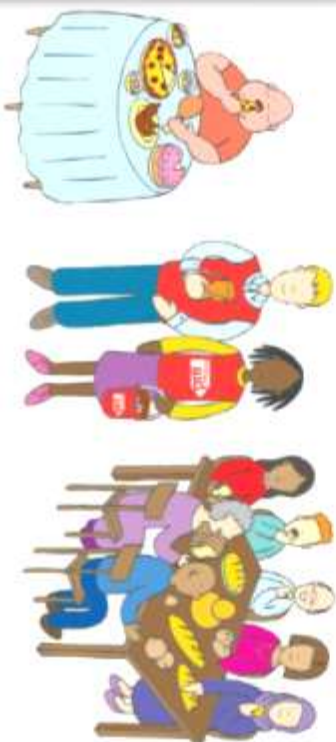
Jesus appears to his disciples.



Jesus is taken up to heaven.



Our Father, who lives in Heaven
 Thy name be kept holy
 Your kingdom come, your will be done,
 on earth as it is in Heaven
 Give us today the food we need
 And forgive us our sins
 Just as we forgive those who sin against us
 Do not lead us into temptation
 But free us from evil
 For the kingdom, the power and the glory
 Belong to you forever and ever
 Amen



How will you teach Holy Week and Easter to the 4-11s this year?

Most schools use the occasion of a festival to teach about it. We do Divali at Divali time and Eid at the end of Ramadan. Because there is always a school holiday around Easter, some schools find it hard to make the best use of the opportunity: children learn about Jesus' death, but the resurrection story has already fallen off the agenda by the time term starts. Here are some varied and possibly fresh ways of working that might energise learning about Holy Week and Easter for your younger pupils.

Teaching a festival well in RE should always add to their understanding of what kinds of things religious festivals might be. The 5 elements in the diagram are simple enough for pupils to understand: these 5 added together will make a festival.

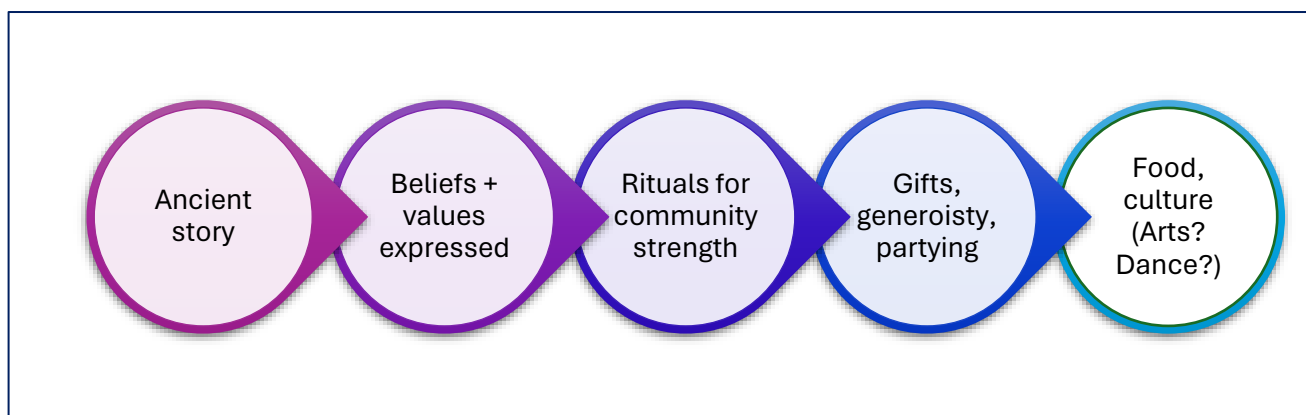
In the Christian celebrations around Holy Week and Easter, there are of course key events: Jesus' last supper, crucifixion and the empty tomb. These **events** connect to **beliefs** about salvation and life after death. They connect to **values** such as self-sacrifice, love and forgiveness. They connect to the **practice** of Eucharist, bread and wine to remember Jesus, the place of the cross in Christianity, and the practices of Easter worship across the world. Teachers who keep these links in mind as they tell the stories are often able to make helpful simple connections, showing progress for pupils in the 4-11 age range.

It's obvious in a way that the 'fun stuff' of festivals is what makes them religions' most popular offer – many more people do Christmas and Easter than do church on an average Sunday, even those loosely associated with Christian identity or community.

'What matters most at Easter?' A magic question.

The answer 'chocolate' is always contested! Make this into a real question by playing 'Kim's Game' with 9 artefacts. I'd use: a hot crossed bun / a large nail / 30 silver coins / a plastic donkey / a crucifix / an empty cross / a chocolate rabbit / a boiled egg / a bandage.

- **Recall and connect:** Put the objects associated with the story on a tray and ask pupils to look for 30 seconds, then cover them up. Who can remember them all? Who can say how each one is connected to the Easter Festival and the Jesus story?
- **Take away...:** ask the pupils to suggest a take away: which one of the objects doesn't matter too much? Which one can you have Easter without? Then another, and another, until you have 3 objects left. Why do these 3 matter most at Easter?
- **Connect up:** How does each object link to a belief that Christians hold? Beliefs include:
 - 'Jesus was like a great king'
 - 'Bread and wine bring people into Jesus' real presence.'
 - 'There is life after death'
 - 'Love is stronger than death'
 - 'Salvation from evil and death comes from Jesus.'
- **30 Sentences:** on the next page is a 30 sentence retelling of the stories of Holy Week and Easter. Give each pupil one sentence to illustrate and create a class picture book of the story. Share it with young pupils – you could make a classroom gallery and invite children from three years below yours to come and receive a guided tour.
- **If Peter was a tweeter...** (I know it's called X now). Give children mobile phone outlines and ask them to write Peter's tweets during this momentous week. And perhaps Pilate's wife's tweets. And maybe Mary's tweets. It is a curiosity-driven way to get a new take on the stories from different perspectives.
- **Press releases and newspaper pages:** a more challenging activity. Put pupils in role as witnesses and journalists to, first, the events of Good Friday, then the events of East Sunday. Run a role play press conference for both days, and get pupils



to write up the stories for the Jerusalem Star, the Roman Times and the Daily Disciple.

DETAILS of all these activities and worksheets and PPTs to run the lessons are available on the NATRE website. Please send in examples.

