

## ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit the children study the story of Easter from the perspective of Thomas. The work contained in this unit will require them to think about reasons why Thomas did not believe in the Resurrection of Christ at first and why people today believe that Jesus is risen from the dead. Children will also learn about Easter and the promise of eternal life. They will be introduced to some associations with Baptism and the celebration of a Christian funeral.

## WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on children's previous learning of stories of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. It also builds on Year 5 work about Baptism at the Easter Vigil and the concept of dying and rising to new life in Christ.

## PRIOR LEARNING

It would be helpful if the children have:

- a good knowledge of the Easter stories
- some understanding of the symbols of Baptism.

## SKILLS

Thinking skills, discussion skills, speaking and listening, empathetic writing, interpreting symbolism, reference skills.

## VOCABULARY

Resurrection, doubting, faith, belief, eternal life, "My Lord and my God", Baptism, funeral, Paschal Candle, pall, holy water.

## ASSESSMENT

At the end of this unit:

**Most children will** know the story of the appearance of the Risen Christ to Thomas. They will understand some reasons why he failed to believe that Christ was alive. They will be able to describe how his meeting with the Risen Christ changed Thomas' life. The children will know that Christians believe in eternal life. They will also know some New Testament stories that speak about this eternal life and identify symbols from the Baptismal and funeral liturgy that speak about eternal life.

A.T.1 A.T.2

4a 4a  
4b 4b  
4c 4c  
4d 4d

**Less able children will** the story of the appearance of the Risen Christ to Thomas. They will be able to identify some of his thoughts and feelings. Pupils will know that Christians believe in the promise of eternal life and will be able to identify some symbols used in a funeral liturgy.

3a 3b  
3b 3c  
3c 3d

**More able children will** pupils will be able to ask lots of questions about why Thomas doubted the Resurrection of Christ and provide possible answers. They will also discuss confidently reasons why people today believe that Christ is alive. They will understand that Baptism and a Christian funeral liturgy both recall in a special way the death and Resurrection of Christ and the promise of eternal life.

5a 5a  
5b 5b  
5c 5c  
5d 5d

## PROGRAMME OF STUDY

## TEACHING STRATEGIES

**R4** Hear, read and explore the Gospel accounts of key events in the life of Christ: The Resurrection.

**R5** Hear about, read and explore Gospel accounts of how the lives of men and women were changed by their encounter with Jesus.

**C3** Signs and symbols and their significance in the liturgy.

- Children to brainstorm as much information as they can about the Resurrection appearances of Jesus.
- Children to work in small groups and identify some similarities and differences found in the different Gospel accounts of the Resurrection.
- Read as a class the story of Thomas and the Resurrection of Jesus.
- Hold a class debate about whether Thomas was right or wrong not to believe at first that Christ was risen from the dead. Divide the class in two and ask the children to speak to the motion.
- Ask the children to write a letter to Thomas as one of the apostles, trying to persuade him to believe that Jesus was alive.
- Write the reply that Thomas might have sent indicating reasons why he did not believe.
- Read again the appearance of the Risen Christ to Thomas.
- Hot-seat Thomas after the appearance of the Risen Christ to him. What are his thoughts and reactions now? What questions would you pose to him?
- As an alternative activity the teacher may act in role as Thomas and allow the children to put their questions to you.
- How do you think Thomas' life was changed by his encounter with the Risen Christ?
- Look at the words of Jesus in the text: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe?" What does Jesus mean by these words.
- Hold another class discussion about "seeing is believing". Do we always need to see something to believe?
- Ask the children to think of some moment when they have not believed something until they saw it (e.g. your friend has got a new bike).
- Why do you think so many people are prepared to believe that Jesus rose from the dead without seeing him themselves?
- Create some statements expressing why people of today believe that Christ is risen from the dead. Word-process the statements and add them to the Easter prayer focus.
- Why do you think that some people don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus?
- This might be another opportunity to hold a school survey about belief in the Resurrection of Christ from the dead.
- Record information found in the form of a chart or bar graph.
- Explain to the children that the Resurrection of Jesus is important to Christians because it is a reminder that death is not the end to life. Christ promises eternal life to those who believe in him.
- Explain to the children that although a funeral is a sad occasion, for those who believe in Christ there is also something joyful because of belief in eternal life.
- Explore some of the readings from the Scriptures for a funeral: *1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18*, *2 Timothy 2: 8-12*, *Revelation 21: 1-7*, *John 6: 37-40*.
- Children to read the texts in small groups and try and write down the message they contain.
- Bring the research work completed by reporting back to the rest of the class.
- Introduce the children to some of the symbols used in the funeral liturgy.
- The Pall is a large piece of white cloth that is spread over the coffin as a reminder of the dead person's Baptism when they received a white garment to show that they belonged to Christ.
- The Paschal Candle standing at the foot of the coffin as a reminder of the Paschal Candle that would have been lit at the person's Baptism and also as a symbol of the death and resurrection of Christ.
- The sprinkling of holy water on the coffin to remember the Baptism of the dead person when they became part of the Family of God.
- Why do you think the Church uses all these Baptismal symbols at a funeral?
- Read *Romans 6: 3-11*. Explore with the children the themes of death and new life associated with Baptism and about Christian death being full of the hope of the Resurrection.
- Ask the children to draw some of these symbols and explain what they tell us about Baptism and the promise of everlasting life.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

**R4** That Jesus is the Son of God.

- Know that the four Gospels contain accounts of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead.
- Be able to recognise some similarities and differences in the accounts.
- Know the story Of Thomas and the Resurrection.
- Understand some reasons why he did not believe that Christ was alive.
- Be able to think about his thoughts when he realised that Christ was alive.

**R5** That people's lives were changed by their encounter with Jesus.

- Know that believing in something demands more than being able to see.
- Understand some reasons why people today believe that Christ is Risen.
- Be able to express some beliefs that people have about the Resurrection of Christ.

**C3** Of patterns and forms of prayer.

- Know that the Church's belief in eternal life is founded upon the Resurrection of Christ from the dead.
- Know about some passages from the New Testament that talk about eternal life.
- Understand why some symbols are used at Baptism and at a funeral.
- Be able to identify the symbols and explain why they are important both for Baptism and a funeral.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

You may need to differentiate some of the texts for less able children to access them.

This is a good time to remind children of the importance of praying for the dead. Remember to pray the "Eternal Rest".

## RELATED SCRIPTURE

*Jn. 20: 1-29* – The Story of Thomas Doubting the Resurrection of Jesus

*Jn. 6: 37-40* – Jesus and Eternal Life

*1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18* – About Those Who Have Died

*Revelation 21: 1-7* – The New Heaven and the New Earth

*2 Timothy 2: 8-12* – The Promise of Eternal Life

*Romans 6: 3-11* – Baptism and Eternal Life

## OTHER LINKS

ICT Links: To explore the symbols used at Baptism and at a funeral use some clip-art images.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- Introduce the children to the Regina Caeli as special prayer of the Church for Easter.
- Remember the saying of Thomas when he saw Jesus: “My Lord and my God.” Use this as an Easter prayer.
- Make sure that the prayer focus has some of the Easter symbols including the Paschal Candle, some blessed water and an image of the Risen Christ.
- Pray for those who do not believe in Christ.
- Pray for those who have died that they may have eternal life.

## EVALUATION

**What went well?**

**Which areas of planning need to be developed/adapted next time?**

**What needs to be revisited/developed in a later unit?**