

# SPECIAL TIMES IN RELIGION

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# How to use this book

This book provides ready to use, practical, photocopiable activity pages for children, plus a wealth of ideas for extension and development.


## TEACHER IDEAS PAGE

## PHOTOCOPIABLE ACTIVITY PAGE

Clear focus to the activity.

Suggestions for introducing and reinforcing the topic.

Suggestions on how children can undertake the activity.

**Easter and Holy Week - Ideas Page** 

**Aims**

- To discuss the events of Holy Week and their importance for Christians.
- To encourage the children to see how the sadness of Good Friday gives way to the joy and hope of Easter Sunday.

**Starting points**

- Talk with the children about why Easter is the central Christian festival. (It celebrates the resurrection of Jesus from the dead).
- Explain that it falls on the first Sunday after the Spring full moon, in March or April. The festival derives its name from pre-Christian celebrations of Spring (the Scaron Easter and Old German Easter). The egg and hare, representing new life, have become assimilated into Easter traditions. What do the children normally associate with Easter?
- Share with them the story of Easter and Holy Week, either in your own words or from the Bible. (Mark 11-16; Matthew 21-22; 26-28; Luke 19-24).

**Palm Sunday** The Sunday before Easter, Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem on a donkey. His supporters waved palm branches to greet him, believing him to be the 'Messiah' (their saviour) come to rescue them. The Jewish religious establishment of scribes and Pharisees saw him as a threat to their power and were angry at his claims of divinity as the Son of God. They plotted to get rid of him.

**Good Friday** Jesus was crucified on a hill called Calvary along with two common robbers. Christians call this day Good Friday because they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life to restore their relationship with God and to give them the hope of everlasting life with God.

**Maundy Thursday** On the Thursday of Holy Week, Jesus ate a Passover meal (The Last Supper) with his disciples. Knowing he was to die, Jesus gave his last instructions to his disciples. Soon afterwards he was crucified in the Garden of Gethsemane after being betrayed by the disciple Judas. Jesus was humbly tried by the Roman Procurator, Pontius Pilate, who eventually succumbed to public pressure and the Jewish authorities and condemned Jesus to die as a heretic.

**Easter Sunday** Jesus rose from the dead, leaving an empty tomb. Over the next 40 days, he made subsequent resurrection appearances to his disciples and to more than 500 others.

**Activity sheet**


- After hearing the story of Holy Week or researching it themselves in the Bible, the children could match the pictures to the captions, in order to clarify the events, and then place the pictures in chronological order.

**Developments**

- Discuss what Easter means to the children, and why Easter, though celebrating Jesus's death, is also a joyful occasion.
- Research and record 'Easter Traditions around the World'. This could be made into a class display.
- Investigate the symbolism of eggs at Easter. Children could:
  - decorate hard-boiled eggs;
  - organise a class egg hunt around the school grounds and afterwards mark on a plan where the eggs were located;
  - design and make Easter cards using other religious symbols.

**Holy Week**

- Label the events of Holy Week.
- Put the pictures in the correct order of events.



© Foote      IDEAS BANK - Special Terms      41

↑  
Extension activities suggested to take the work further.

↑  
Independent activities for children to work with.



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# Introduction

Many educators feel that the purpose of education is to educate the whole child, catering for the child's spiritual, moral, social, emotional, aesthetic and intellectual development. The reality in many primary schools, however, is somewhat different. Children's spiritual development is frequently given a low priority, according to recent research<sup>1</sup>.

It is easy to understand why this might be. There are enormous burdens on the already hard-pressed teacher. As well as this, RE is a subject about which many feel uncertain, anxious or insecure. Research<sup>1</sup> suggests that many feel they have insufficient personal knowledge, especially if they do not espouse any particular faith themselves. Another concern is that too little training is given and that there is a lack of good resources which are easily accessible and useable in the primary classroom. *Special Times* is designed to help address this latter concern.

Over the last few years there have been many serious attempts to 'map out' more systematically what it is believed RE teaching in schools should involve. The view that has emerged is that RE teaching should include:

- a 'knowledge' component relating to important facts, information and concepts;
- an 'experience' component helping children to reflect on and respond to, their experiences so that knowledge can lead to understanding and insight.

Recent syllabus recommendations have focused upon two key Attainment Targets:

- Learning About Religion
- Learning From Religion.

QCA suggests that skills and processes should include investigation, interpretation, reflection, empathy, evaluation, analysis, synthesis, application and expression, and that attitudes developed through RE should include commitment, fairness, respect, self-understanding and enquiry. *Special Times* sets out to incorporate these suggestions as far as possible.

In *Special Times* children will learn about the major world religions through festivals, celebrations and through their own personal experiences. The experiences they encounter through working on units from *Special Times* will encourage them to reflect, ask questions of meaning, develop values and commitments and foster a greater understanding of themselves, each other and the world in which they live.

*Special Times* resources provide accessible, flexible and immediate support for RE teaching. The units include essential background information, as well as ample opportunities for extending and developing the themes. Each unit may be treated as a single lesson, teachers taking from it only what is appropriate, although potentially each could be extended.

The resources include a wide range of stimulating and relevant photocopiable activities capable of being used across a wide age and ability range. The teaching notes generally include starting points for introducing main ideas and further ideas for extension and follow-up.



**Aim**

To introduce the concept that there are 'special times' in all our lives, whether they relate to major, or to relatively smaller, events or experiences.

**Activity Sheet**

- Talk about the fact that the brain is rather like a memory bank, storing up memories of experiences until they are called up.
- Ask the children to complete the activity sheet individually. Next, in pairs or small groups, discuss their individual responses together.
- Compile the finished response sheets into a class book or display them in a 'Memory Corner'.

**Starting points**

- Discuss memories. What are they? What sort of things do we remember? Share some 'funny things that happened to me'. Discuss the fact that we tend to remember very special things, things that are meaningful to us individually. Are memories always good experiences? If appropriate, talk about frightening, sad or unusual experiences.

Memories are like	Because
Shadows Treasure Old photos	You can't feel them

- Do we remember everything? Discuss how memories can sometimes lie long-forgotten until we sit quietly and begin to focus our minds. Write on the board 'Memories are like ... because ...' Suggest one or two possible answers, for example, like shadows, like treasure, like old photos. Brainstorm ideas and make up a class list poem.



**Developments**

- What sort of times have been special in our lives? List some, for example the first day at school, holidays abroad, the arrival of new baby. Initially the children may offer the more major events in their lives. Lead them into thinking about small things which they have enjoyed doing and have given them pleasure. For example, playing computer games, reading a bed-time story, going shopping or being with my best friend. In pairs or groups, the children could continue the lists and share their thoughts together.
- Ask each child to compile, and list, their best ten 'special times'. Display, compare and discuss these.
- Think of 'not so good' special times. What could we put under this heading? Your last visit to the dentist? The day a pet gerbil died? When you did badly in a school test?
- Discuss how the children have celebrated various religious festivals over the last year and list some. Ask them to talk about customs related to these and how their families celebrate them. Discuss briefly the reasons for the festivals and their significance. Why are they 'special times' in a religious sense?

My Special Times

1. Playing football
2. Going shopping
3. Skipping in the park with Sally
4. My gerbil died

# Memories



Name \_\_\_\_\_

- Draw and write to complete your memory bank.

The earliest thing I can remember is

---

---

---

The happiest time I can remember is

---

---

---

The most exciting time I can remember is

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One thing I enjoyed doing when I was younger was

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### Aim

To reflect on the significance of birth and our early years.

### Landmarks in a baby's life

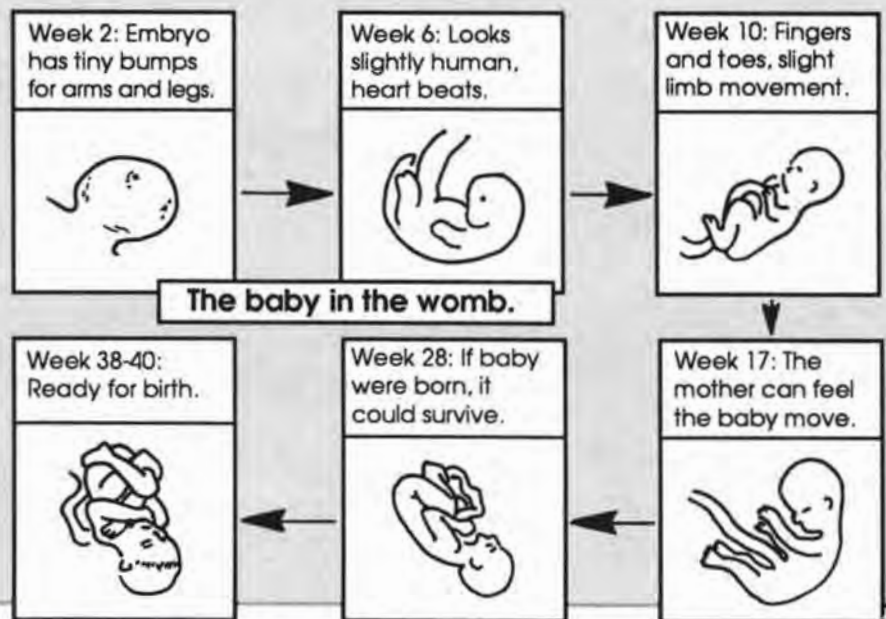
1. Being born
2. Learning to read
3. Learning to crawl

### Activity sheet

- Using the activity sheet, cut out the pictures of the development of the foetus in the womb. Sequence the pictures and ask the children to describe what is happening in each one.
- Discuss aspects of foetal development in the womb.
- Ask the children to read the poem and write their own second verses. Combine these in a special class book or display them.

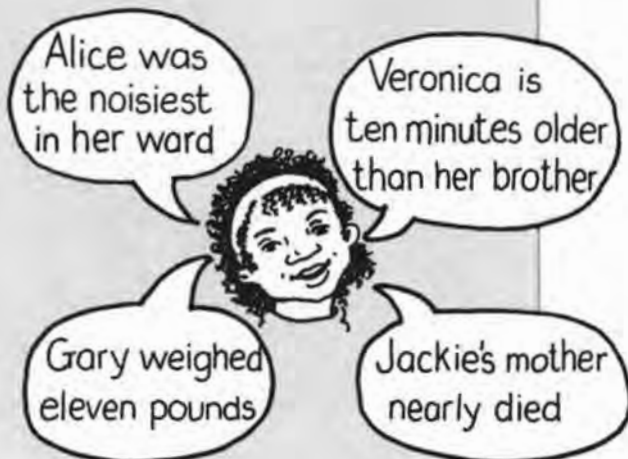
### Starting points

- Ask the children to bring in photos of themselves as babies and have a 'guess who' competition. What are our earliest memories? Is it possible to remember our babyhood years?
- Pregnancy is often a very special time for the mother. If possible, ask the children to talk to their mothers and learn about their experiences of pregnancy.
- Everyone is special to God. Psalm 139: 3-14, says 'for You (God) created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' Read the psalm and talk about what this could mean.



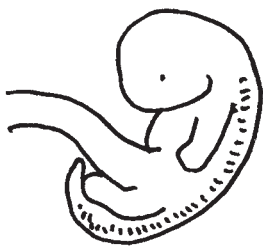

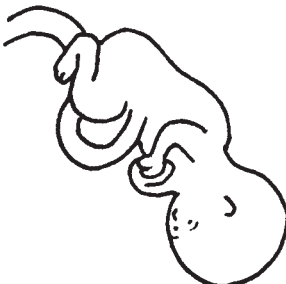
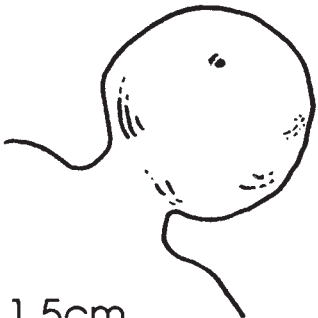
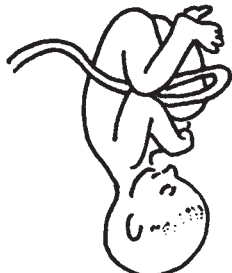
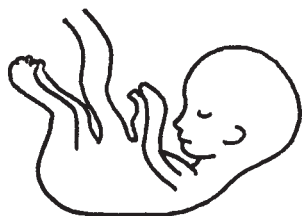
### Developments

- Challenge the children to ask their parents about how they were as babies and to collect interesting 'baby stories' about themselves. They can swap anecdotes with others.
  - The first few years are a very special time in the life of a child, when enormous developmental changes occur. Ask children to think about things babies can and cannot do. Try and piece together some of the major developmental landmarks in the early years.
  - Research the customs and ceremonies of different faiths related to marking the birth of a child. The children could write and invite a minister or priest to talk to them if possible. Ask the children to talk about any family experiences they have had. They could bring in any mementoes they may have of their own baptism, for example baptism cards, gifts, baptism gowns and candles. Using these, the children could role-play a christening service.
  - Read the Nativity story in the Gospels, for example Luke 2: 1-20, and discuss its significance and symbolism.



# When I was a baby

- Do some research. Put these pictures in the correct order to show how you developed in your mother's womb. Write a sentence to go with each one.

 <p>Size: 2.5cm</p>	 <p>Size: 12cm</p>
 <p>Size: 33cm</p>	 <p>Size: 1.5cm</p>
 <p>Size: 50cm</p>	 <p>Size: 13cm</p>



- Read the poem below. Talk about it and write a second verse about your entry into the world:

I was in a world of my own – a dark, safe, cosy world.  
I felt secure hearing my mother's regular heartbeat.  
I wanted to stay, but I knew my time was coming.  
I knew there was a bigger world waiting for me.



**Aim**

Starting school is an important benchmark in growing up. This unit encourages the children to reflect on their experiences of school and special times related to it.

**Starting points**

- Read and discuss this poem about a child starting a new school.

*This school is horrible, I want to go home.  
Even though Mum is with me I feel all alone.  
I knock on the Head's door. 'Come in' calls a voice.  
My knees tremble. In we go. I have no choice.*

*In the classroom faces turn and stare at me  
I feel all awkward, like a fish out of sea.  
The desk is too small, my chair has a wobble.  
I want to go home. This school is horrible.*

*What a difference a friend makes.  
This school is great – I love it!*

- Ask the children to share their memories of their first day at school. Use trigger questions to prompt responses if necessary: Who took you? What were your impressions of the building? Who welcomed you? What do you remember of your first teacher? If appropriate, this could be turned into a written account or a poem.

Things we remember most at school

1. The teacher slipping over
2. Tim spilling paint on Paul

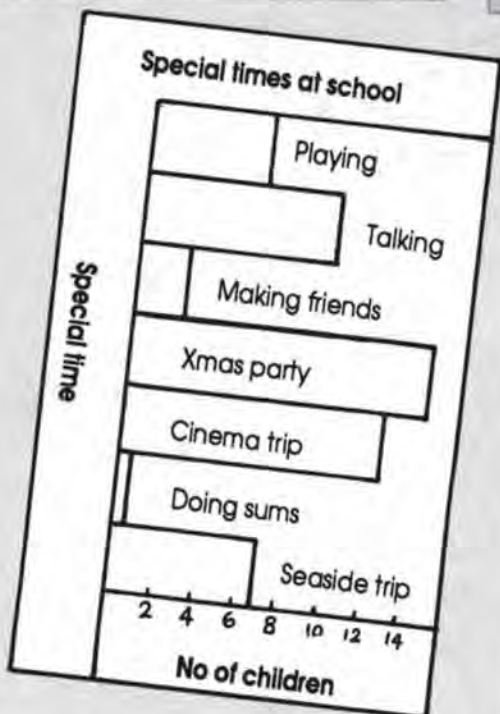
**Activity sheet**

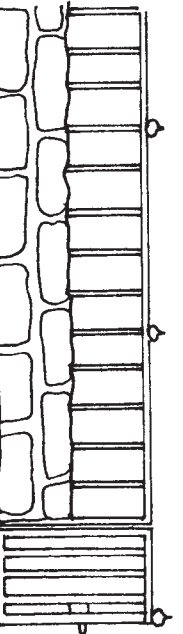
- In pairs or groups of three, the children could use the activity sheet to play the game. By throwing a dice and moving their counters, the children can race through their first day at school.



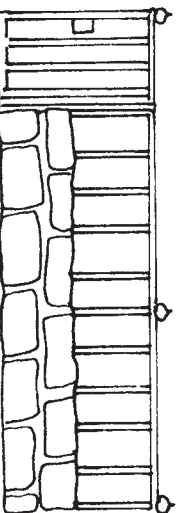
**Developments**


- Ask the children to imagine that a new child is starting in their class tomorrow. Brainstorm suggestions about how they could make sure this is a special, happy time for the child and take the anxiety and worry out of the situation. Perhaps some children could design and make a 'Welcome card'.
- Ask the children to look back over their time at school. What special events will they remember when they leave? Working individually, they could list them and give reasons, for example when we went to London on a trip because..., when Mrs Smith slipped over while we were pond dipping because..., and so on. In pairs, ask the children to share and display their results.
- Talk about the fact that we all find some aspects of school more enjoyable than others. These are often 'special times' for us. Pin up a 'Some of our Special Times' poster. Children could write on their ideas (anonymously if they wish!).





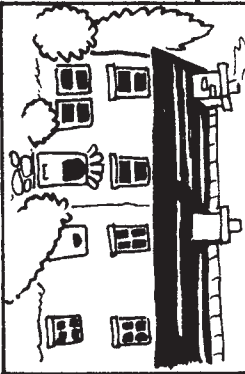


# First day at school



START First day at new school.		The secretary welcomes you. Move forward 2 spaces.			Your new teacher smiles a lot. Throw again.			
---	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--

	There's a nice assembly Move forward 2 spaces.		You feel a bit worried. Miss a go.				
--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

		You fall over. Miss a go.			You can relax now. You have got through your first day!		You wish you were at your old school. Go back 2 spaces.
--	---	---------------------------------	--	--	---	---	---

	It's nearly home time. Throw again.				Someone invites you to tea. Have another go.		
--	---	--	--	--	---	---	--



You don't  
like school  
dinners. Miss  
a go.



You enjoy  
art:  
throw again.

Someone plays  
with you.  
Move 3 spaces  
forward.



You get lost.  
Go back  
2 spaces.