

SPECIAL PLACES IN RELIGION

Louis Fidge
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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 developing work on the photocopiable pages.

The road to Damascus - Ideas Page

Aim
To introduce children to the story of Paul's conversion in a variety of ways.

Starting points

- Ask the children to write down times when they have changed their mind about something important. Who or what changed their mind?
- Paul (Saul) felt very angry about Christians. What makes the children really angry? Why? What sort of things do people do when they are angry? They could carry out a survey and record their findings in a graph or a chart.

Developments

- Talk about what Saul's feelings and thoughts might have been while watching Stephen's stoning, on his way to Damascus before, during and immediately after his experience. How would Ananias the priest have felt about seeing this fierce persecutor of Christians? Ask the children to imagine that they were Paul escaping from the city in a basket, and act it out.
- What sort of man was Saul before his conversion and after it? The children could divide a piece of paper into two halves and write down their ideas.
- Damascus was a very special place for Paul. The children could imagine they are Paul and write their account of events as if they were writing their diary. They should explain why Damascus will be forever an important place in their life.
- Paul's whole life is full of incident and drama. Read about his travels, accomplishments and adventures in Acts in the Bible, and produce newspaper headlines or articles on them. Why not interview Paul for a radio programme?

The road to Damascus

- Match the pictures to their labels.
- Put the pictures in order to tell the story of Saul.

Saul sees again when Ananias blesses him.	Saul is baptised a Christian. He becomes Paul and speaks the Christian message.
On the road to Damascus, Saul sees a bright light. Jesus asks him, "Why do you persecute me?". Saul is made blind.	God speaks to Ananias, the priest and tells him that Saul must become a disciple. Ananias visits him.
Saul wants to search for and persecute Christians in Damascus.	Saul, a Jew, hates Christians and is involved in the stoning of Stephen.

Extension activities suggested to take the work one stage further.

Independent activities for children to work with.



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Introduction

A frequent claim made by educators is 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 research¹.

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 suggests that many feel they have insufficient personal knowledge¹, 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 usable in the primary classroom. *Special Places* 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 is believed RE teaching in schools should involve. The view that has emerged is that RE teaching should include:

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

Recent syllabus recommendations² have focused upon two key Attainment Targets:

- Learning About Religion
- Learning From Religion.

QCA suggest 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 Places* sets out to incorporate these suggestions as far as possible.

In *Special Places*, children will develop their understanding through thinking about places which are special to them and the local and world community. They will learn about pilgrimages to special places and some important religious journeys. They will learn about world religions by focusing on faith community buildings. Wherever possible the resources should accompany visits to places of worship, reinforcing what they have learned about the way buildings, artefacts and symbols play a part in the worship, rituals and ceremonies. The *Special Places* resources will help fulfil the broadly accepted aim of religious education emphasised in the QCA document: 'Pupils should be helped to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religions represented in Great Britain.'

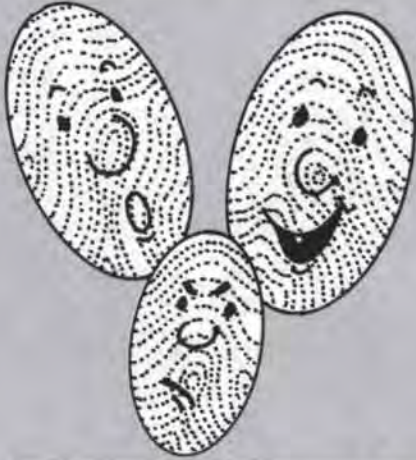
Special Places resources provide accessible, flexible and immediate support for RE teaching. The units include essential background information, as well as ample opportunities for extending and developing the themes. Each unit may be treated as a single lesson, teachers taking from it only what is appropriate,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



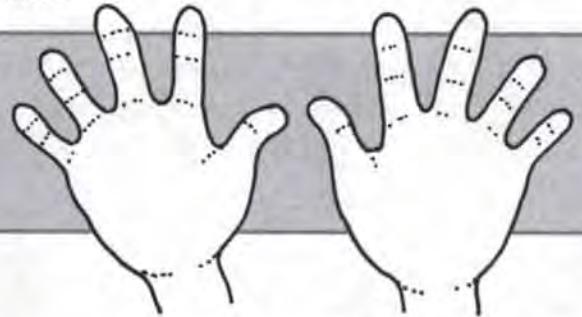
Aim

To encourage the children to see themselves as unique and their inner selves as special places.



Starting points

- Talk about outward appearances and the way everyone looks different (facial features, clothes). No two people have the same fingerprints, everyone is unique.
- Ask the children to think of the different ways we categorise people. Then ask them to invent and label as many different characters as possible, using thumbprints (ink or paint) finished with detail. Make a collage of them and discuss their characteristics. How many of these characters do we meet in everyday life?
- Isaiah 49: 16 tells us that God knows us all individually and personally and has 'written your name on the palms of my hands.' Psalm 139 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.' Discuss what these verses could mean.



Activity Sheet

- Use the activity sheet in pairs to stimulate some thought on the question, 'Who am I?'
- Ask the children to make up more questions which have no real answer. If they could talk to the wisest person on earth, what sort of things would they ask him or her?

Developments

- Ask the children to draw their handprint and write their name inside it. Pass them around a group, and ask each child to write something they especially like about the handprint's owner. Then return the handprints to their owner, and ask if this is how they really are.
- Working in pairs (with a friend), ask the children to each think of, and write down, two things they would be able to tell a stranger, a neighbour, their parents and their good friends. Is there a difference in what they are prepared to tell different people?



What I can tell people

A stranger

Nothing unless I'm with an older person

A neighbour

*Mother's not well
I'm doing well at school*

- If possible, bring in some Russian dolls. Explain that we all have an exterior self which we show off to others. Ask the children how they behave in different situations – in school, to a policemen or with our friends. However, we also have a private inner self which may be very different. Ask the children to write down what they are like on the inside.

What would we be?



- Work with a partner. Each of you should answer the questions without talking about them.



If I were a colour, I would be
If you were a colour, you would be

If I were something to eat, I would be
If you were something to eat, you would be

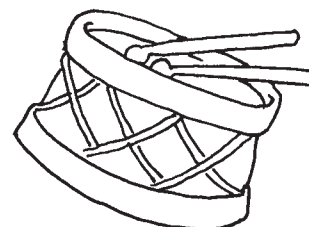
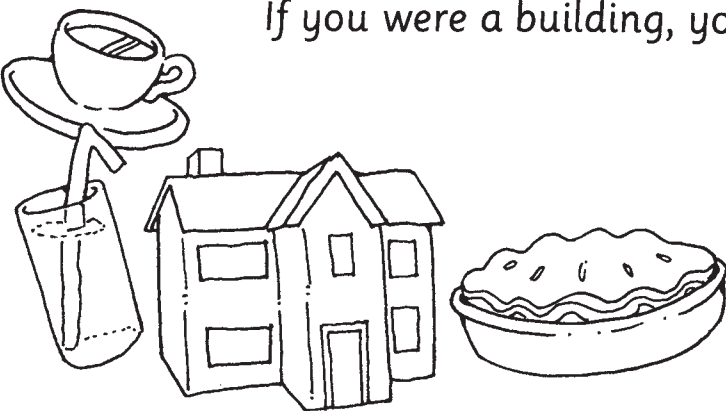
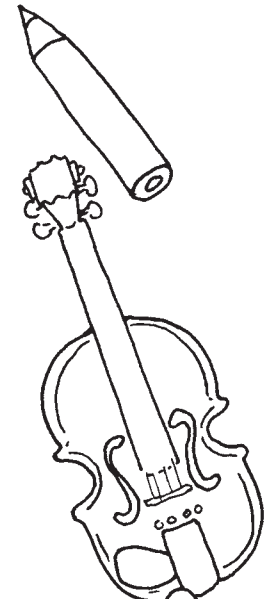
If I were an animal, I would be
If you were an animal, you would be

If I were a drink, I would be
If you were a drink, you would be

If I were a musical instrument, I would be
If you were a musical instrument, you would be

If I were a flower, I would be
If you were a flower, you would be

If I were a building, I would be
If you were a building, you would be



- Compare your answers. Talk about your reasons.



Aim

The aim of this unit is to encourage children to use their imaginations through fantasy. They might think about magical places, strange planets and the unknown, engendering a sense of mystery and awe.

Starting points

- Read the opening part of the *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C S Lewis, where some children discover a doorway to the magical kingdom of Narnia in a wardrobe. Talk about the excitement of discovering unexplored places and imagining our own wonderful fantasies.
- Explain that you are going to take the children to an unexplored wood in their imagination. Create a suitable atmosphere by darkening the room and perhaps play some suitable pastoral music. Ask the children to sit comfortably and quietly, and talk them through the experience. Now invent the story.

'The air is heavy and still. The sky is clear except for a few fluffy clouds. Birds are singing, bees buzzing...'



My Space Fantasy

- Meet friendly aliens.
- Visit strange new worlds with lots of adventures.
- Eat strange food.

Developments

- Start exploring the theme of space by looking at pictures of planets, space craft, Earth seen from space. Play some suitable 'space' music if possible. Ask the children to discuss what they imagined and to produce a poem or a painting.
- Consider Psalm 8 which says: 'When I look at the sky which you have made, at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places – what is man, that you think of him; mere man that you care for him?'

What Heaven might be like

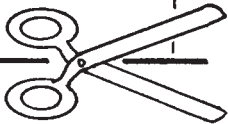
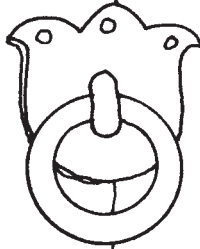
Full of smiling, happy people.
 Very bright and colourful.
 Nobody does anything bad.

Activity Sheet

- After undertaking one or more of the above activities, ask the children to create a special place from their own imaginations, in poetry or through a drawing.
- Use the activity sheet. The children could paste their idea behind the door so that it remains hidden until someone opens the door and reveals it. Make a class book.

- Ask the children to write down what they think Heaven might be like. The book of Revelation in the Bible paints a glorious picture of Heaven in various ways. It says that people will be with God for ever and there will be great rejoicing. There will be no night, for the glory of God will fill it with light. There will be no more death, crying or pain. God will wipe away every tear. Everyone will live in peace. Even the fiercest lion will be friends with the lamb.

Doorway to a special place





Aim

This unit considers places of very personal significance for the child, in the home or at friends or relatives. It asks children to consider what makes them special.



Starting points

- If possible read a little of Clive King's book, *Stig of the Dump*, and talk about the fact that the dump assumed enormous importance for Barney and Stig. It was their own special place, secret to them, where they could make their own world undisturbed by others.
- As a class, discuss places that are of special importance to different children. Ask where they are, and what is special about them. Are they places to be alone in or to share with others? Is there a difference?



My bedroom is a place to...

1. Read my books.
2. Play with my toys.
3. Think about tomorrow.
4. Listen to pop music.
5. Take my friends to.

Developments

- Bedrooms are often special places for children. What is it that they like about them? Do they ever escape there? From what or whom? What else do they do there? Make a list of at least ten things besides sleeping that children can do in their bedrooms. Set it out as a list poem and start each sentence with 'My bedroom is a place to...'
- Are there other rooms or places that have special significance, like the kitchen or garden? If so why?

Activity Sheet

- Ask the children to talk about stories of the 'Famous Five' type. Have the children ever formed a secret club or fellowship?
- Discuss any secret clubs they have been part of. Do they have a 'secret' meeting place? Are the members the same age?
- In small groups of four or five ask the children to brainstorm some ideas. Imagine they are forming a 'secret' club. Use the activity sheet for planning and collecting their ideas. Come together again as a class and share ideas.

My special place	Why it is special
My bedroom	I can be on my own
My friend's bedroom	We have lots of fun with his toys
My living room	Watch TV with family

- Discuss how we rarely have a chance to be alone with our thoughts. Is this important? Why? Read what one child wrote about bedtime: 'I love the time just before I go to sleep. I lie awake and go over all the events of the day and think about tomorrow. As I lie in bed I can hear familiar household noises, the TV, voices, the creaking stairs, someone coughing.' Where do children do their private thinking?

Our 'secret' club

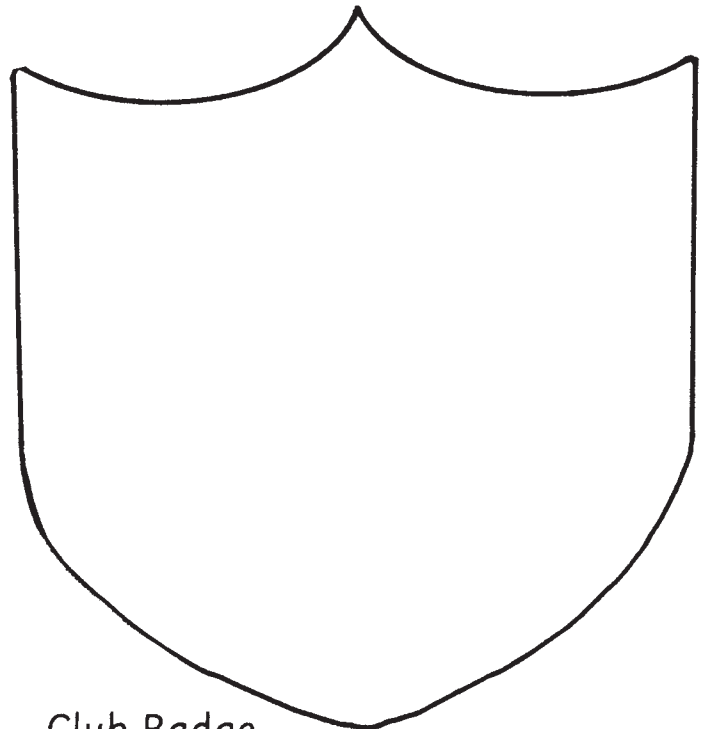
- Write in the boxes and spaces the details of your secret club.

Club name

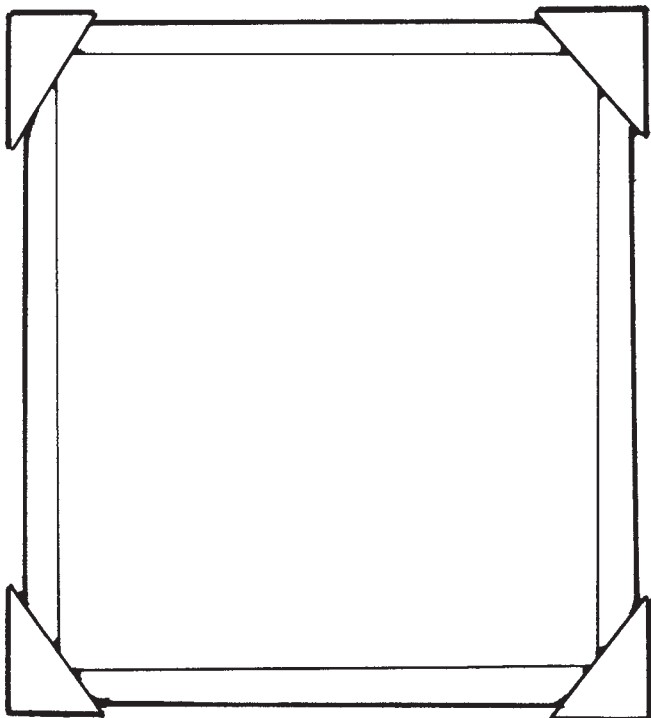
Password

Club members

Membership Rules



Club Badge



Our meeting place

Activities