

# faith at home

## Resources for Schools

**PHASE: Primary**



## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE

In focussing on 'a word in season' we need to acknowledge the weariness that must surely have affected the whole education sector as it has coped with the disruption of COVID-19, but we also need to keep in mind the strength that will make it possible to open up all the incredibly positive possibilities that lie ahead. A word in season at a time such as this must bring encouragement and hope as well as understanding and support, to student and teacher alike. It cannot be a trite word.

Now is the time for us to be bold; to speak out clearly and to seek God positively.

For well over one hundred years there has been an annual recognition of Education Sunday in England and Wales. It is a national day of prayer and celebration for everyone in the world of education. It used to be just before Easter but in 2016 it moved to the second week in September. This was to celebrate the beginning of a new school year.

## BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK

*Isaiah 50 verse 4*

The Lord GOD has given me  
the tongue of the learned,  
that I should know how  
to speak a word in season  
to him that is weary...

— Isaiah 50:4

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## Gathering

Watch this video of an eagle in flight:

[Chopper 11 Captures Incredible Video Of Bald Eagle Flying Over Fall Colors In North Texas - Bing video](#)

While watching this film read this verse:

*"But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;  
they shall run and not be weary;  
they shall walk and not faint."*



Explain that in ancient Hebrew culture people thought of eagles as mighty warriors that also cared fiercely for their young. Eagles carry their eaglets to safety, away from the threat of predators. Eagles are also known for their strength and courage in dangerous, stormy weather, soaring above storm clouds and to safety. Eagles' wings was a figure of speech commonly used to attribute these fine characteristics to a person.

Think back on the past year: who has carried you on eagles' wings?

Give thanks for them.

## Engagement



This is a painting by American artist Daniel Bonnell of the story in the Bible where Jesus joined two of his followers who were walking the seven-mile journey from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus where they lived.

They were trying to make sense of the events of what we now call Easter week. They were shaken, confused and scared. They were weary. Jesus came alongside them on their journey.

He listened to their story, he helped them make sense of what they had been through, he supported them on their journey.

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Over the past year and a half, we have all been on a journey, we pray that we are coming toward the end of that journey. As we start a new school year, a new journey is about to begin. Some people will expect all things to go back to just how they were before the pandemic, others are worried that we will not have learnt lessons from what we have been through. We have all missed a lot over the past year and a half, we have missed learning, we have missed time with friends, we have missed out on doing the things that previous year groups took for granted. It's going to be a tricky journey; it's going to be a stressful year...a difficult season.

- » Who will be walking alongside you?
- » Who will you walk alongside?
- » Who listens to your story?
- » Whose story do you listen to?
- » Who helps you make sense of your experience?
- » Do you help others make sense of their experience?

## For adults



If you walk alongside anyone in education – the teachers...the pupils...the school governors – do you listen to the stories they have to tell? Or do you tell them yours? Is your tongue that of the learned? Do you speak a word in season?

To get through this journey we will need to be understanding of each other and the pressures we are under, to think about how we speak to each other, to build each other up and not tear each other apart.

*The Lord has given me the tongue of the learned,  
that I should speak a word in in season to him who is weary.*

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## Response

A modern Buddhist saying offers this advice:

‘Water the flowers you want to see grow rather than feeding the weeds’.

Gardeners will water those flowers they want to see grow, they will avoid feeding the weeds: in fact they will try and get rid of them. This is true in our relationships with each other. Instead of finding fault with other people, try and applaud or compliment them on what they do right. What you encourage will grow!

Think back to the conversations you had yesterday...did you say something encouraging to someone? Did you say something negative? What effect did it have on other people? What effect did it have on you?



## Sending

Reflect on how you talk to people as you watch this video: [\(196\) Harry Styles - Treat People With Kindness \(Official Video\) - YouTube](#)

*Maybe we can find a place to feel good  
And we can treat people with kindness  
Find a place to feel good*



## Prayer

Loving God,

We thank you for the gift of education, and for all who support us in our learning: our teachers, our families and our friends. Thank you for giving us the ability to use kind words to encourage others and to reflect your love for us.

Amen

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## SPRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

*(PRACTICAL WAYS TO HELP US EXPLORE FAITH AND DEVELOP SPIRITUALLY AT HOME TOGETHER)*

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

On a flip chart or whiteboard make a list of words that are related to encouraging

- cheering, comforting, reassuring, soothing, assured, confident, decisive, doubtless, positive,
- sure, unhesitating, good, favourable

Do the same for words that are discouraging. Which do you use most often?

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

When speaking to someone, try starting by saying positive: Here are some examples of 'positive affirmations' but just say something nice about someone, compliment them on what they are good at, or what you appreciate about them.

*You are the strongest person I know.  
 You have a heart of gold.  
 You are the best listener.  
 I am so grateful for your friendship.  
 The world is a better place because of you.  
 You can do anything you set your mind to.  
 Thank you for being such a great role model.  
 I look up to you.  
 I am so grateful to have you to lean on.*



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PRAYERS that can help us REFLECT:

Use the Examen prayer to reflect on finding a direction and the stamina to stay on track:

It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 1) GIVE THANKS  | for those that have walked alongside you and listen to you.              |
| 2) ASK FOR HELP | to make sense of the journey ahead of you this term.                     |
| 3) REFLECT      | on the way you talk to people. Do you build people up or tear them down? |
| 4) SAY SORRY    | for the times you have spoken harshly to others and undermined them.     |
| 5) DECIDE       | to water the flowers you want not the weeds.                             |

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:

Discussion starters for groups:

You might have heard of the idea of random acts of kindness. The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation (RAK) was founded in 1995 in the US. It is a non-profit organisation based in Denver, Colorado.

Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) day began in 2004 in New Zealand. Promoters of the day suggested paying for another person's meal in drive-thrus, letting someone go ahead in a queue, buying extra at the grocery store and donating it to a food pantry, buying flowers for someone, helping someone change a flat tyre, posting anonymous sticky notes with validating or uplifting messages around for people to find, complimenting a colleague on their work, sending an encouraging text to someone, taking cakes to work, letting a car into the traffic ahead of you, washing someone else's car, taking a gift to new neighbours, or paying the bus fare for another passenger.

The idea has spread to many other countries. Do you think having a special day like this is a good idea?

Play random act of kindness bingo. You can find some bingo cards to download here:  
[RAK kindness bingo cards.pdf \(randomactsofkindness.org\)](https://randomactsofkindness.org/RAK_kindness_bingo_cards.pdf)



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## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – OUR APPROACH

### Invitational

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

### Inclusive

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that...

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

### Inspiring

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?

