



Weekly Resources for Schools

PHASE: PRIMARY

How do we Flourish Together?

**THEME: How do we make
sense of our feelings?**





KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Emotions – particularly the ones that we consider to be “negative” or difficult – can often be hard to understand. Look at these words from Psalm 139:

‘You know all about me... you know my thoughts before I think them’ and ‘I am wonderfully and mysteriously made’

We might often agree with David the Psalmist when he says that we are ‘mysteriously made’! Christians believe that Jesus was fully human and experienced the full range of human emotions – and that means he understands all that they are feeling, too.

BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:

Jesus raises Lazarus, his friend, from the dead

[John 11:1-16](#)

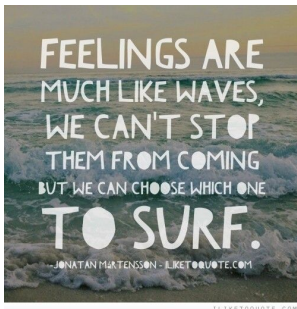


JESUS MAFA. Jesus raises Lazarus to life, from Art in the Christian Tradition, [a project](#) of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. This is a painting of how a community in Cameroon acted out the story.

To prepare:

The video material that accompanies this resource references the story of Jesus and Lazarus, which we expand on in this resource. The pictures we use here are from stories about Jesus that children will probably have encountered already, but if not, you can find the stories in most Children's Bibles using the references included. The stories encourage children to talk about both positive and "negative" (difficult, challenging or painful) emotions that Jesus displayed – and consider why it is so important to Christians that Jesus felt 'like them'. There will not be the time to share each story completely during one collective worship session, so you might want to select a different emotion for each day of the week, or the ones that you think children in your class might benefit from at this time.

Gathering



Some questions to think about:

How are you feeling today?

What emotions have you felt already today?

What emotions do you bring to this worship time today?

Which emotions do we like feeling? Which are challenging to experience?

Some further options to explore as you begin your time together are:

- 'Quick-fire' emotions – 'Show me a sad / happy / amazed / angry face.' etc.
- 'Play' with your school greeting – can you greet each other happily, sadly, excitedly etc. or express emotions just with your hands.
- Show children a range of emojis and ask them to identify which emotions they think the emojis are displaying, and think of a time when they might have felt that way.
- Or if you are in your class bubble, create statues that show a particular emotion – either specified by the teacher, or by children for others to guess. You could extend this activity into a 'Sculptor / Sculpture' pairing, where one child is the sculptor, giving instructions to the other child, the sculpture, as to how to place hands, what emotions to show on their face etc. with the sculptor giving instructions to help 'refine' the sculpture. This is a **strictly no physical contact** activity, to encourage the verbalising process, so perhaps better for older children. What works really well when you have more time is to 'sculpt' the emotions in contrasting pairs e.g. someone who's feeling left out, turned into someone who is feeling included.

Engagement

Today's act of worship is going to consider some of the vast array of emotions that we experience – sometimes on an hourly basis! Christians believe that because Jesus was human, like them, he experienced human emotions – just like we do.

We're going to visit some stories from Jesus' life and talk about the emotions he showed....[use the pictures and questions here to help you. You can also find them as a PowerPoint in the additional resource, using images from www.freebibleimages.org]

Jesus weeps at Lazarus' tomb – John 11:28-35



Retell the story very briefly – asking children to identify the emotion Jesus shows here.

It's not difficult to imagine why Jesus was **sad**, when his friend Lazarus died.

When you look at the words in the Bible, it also says that Jesus was sad because Lazarus' family were sad.

Sensitively talk about times when sadness has seemed overwhelming – and how we are affected when others are sad. How might it help Christians to know that Jesus experienced this emotion?

Jesus feels compassion for crowds (& feeds them!) – Luke 9:10-17



When Jesus saw the needs of the people, he had **compassion** on them.

Why do you think people came to Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus wanted to heal them?

He also performed a miracle and fed them with 5 loaves & 2 fish because they were hungry.

What difference do you think it makes to Christians to know that Jesus showed compassion?

(Remember, the word 'compassion' means to suffer with others)

Jesus feels angry in the temple – Luke 19:45



What emotion do you think Jesus is showing here?

Does it surprise you to know that Jesus could be **angry**?

What do you think made Jesus feel this way?

Was Jesus right to do what he did? [He said that the Temple was a place for prayer, not selling things. The sellers were also stopping people from coming into the Temple to pray.]

Can being angry sometimes be a **good** thing? How might Christians learn from Jesus' example here? Talk about how it's important to be allowed to express anger – but not to act in a way that hurts others.

Jesus feels lonely in the Garden of Gethsemane – Mark 14: 35&37



Jesus was facing the hardest choice of his life – to go and suffer on the cross.

He needed his friends to keep him company, but they fell asleep.

How do you think Jesus felt?

Have you ever felt like this?

We can all identify with how it feels when friends aren't there for us or let us down in some way.

How might it help Christians to know that Jesus understands this emotion too?

Jesus is amazed at the centurion's faith – Luke 7:1-10



What have you experienced recently that has made you say 'Wow!'?

Why do you think that Jesus was so surprised in this story?

Do you think that there were other things about being a human being that surprised Jesus? (who Christians believe is God **incarnate** – in human form)

If Jesus could be surprised by people, what do you think this teaches Christians, the people who follow him?

Now think about the emotion(s) you've explored through the eyes of Jesus in this worship. Which have left you with questions to ask? Which have taught you something about yourself? How might these stories help you to understand and accept the emotions that you feel?

Response

Christians would say that Jesus being so sad gives *them* permission to feel sad when hard things happen and when others are sad, angry at things that they know would make God angry, comfort knowing that Jesus understands how it feels to be abandoned and a commitment to live compassionately, feeling for other people, as Jesus did. This means that no matter what, they can bring all the confusion, hurt and pain – as well as joy and wonder – that they feel to Jesus, believing that he understands.

Spend some time in quiet, bringing all your emotions – the more difficult ones as well as the easier ones – before God, or holding them in your heart if you prefer. Think about the people around you who support you when you need them and give thanks for them.

Use your hands to express this response – if your children know the BSL or Makaton signs, you could use these instead of our suggestions.

When I am angry [close fists tightly]..... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

When I am sad [use fingers to draw tears on your face].... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

When I am worried or afraid [hide behind your hands]... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

When I am happy [clap hands].... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

Whatever I feel [go freestyle!!]..... **Thank you God, that you understand me** [open hands out and up]

Amen

Sending

Read these words together from Romans 12:15&16:

Be happy with those who are happy. Be sad with those who are sad. Live together in peace with each other. Do not be proud, but make friends with those who seem unimportant. Do not think how smart you are.

How might these words inspire you to help others this week?

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

1. **Make a set of emotion stones** for your classroom – or children could make individual sets from smaller stones. Draw a different emotion on each stone – you could look at [emojis](#) to help you decide what works best. At times when you need to, hold a specific stone in your hand and bring how you are feeling to God.
2. **Set up a sand tray** in your reflective area. Encourage children to use the sand to draw a face that expresses how they are feeling: it's especially good as a way of 'stalling' any negative outward expressions of anger and gives adults in the room the chance to come alongside children and help them to talk. There are some [ideas](#) that you could adapt on the Prayer Spaces in Schools website.
3. **Play the Emotions Game:** One player thinks of an emotion and writes it down secretly on a piece of paper. With younger children, you may need to focus on very simple emotions such as angry, sad, happy etc. Older children could use more complex emotions such as distraught, overjoyed, exasperated etc – think about the vocabulary levels of those playing. The other players now ask the first one to do or say something e.g. mime baking a cake, say 'I really love you', walk into a room etc and that person has to do what they say but try to convey the emotion as they do it. They need to use body language and tone of voice and facial expression to make their emotion clear. The challenge is for the other players to identify what the emotion is within ten guesses. This is a good game for helping children learn to recognise how body language, tone of voice and facial expressions can give a clue as to how someone is feeling.
4. **There are some excellent resources to help children connect with the emotions that they might feel as we return to lockdown, from Together at Home:** they could easily be used to set up some prayer stations in your reflective area. Click [here](#) for the complete set of cards, covering a range of differing emotions, both positive and negative.

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Use the EXAMEN prayer to reflect on your emotions. It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS for the vast range of emotions that we as human beings can display.
2. ASK FOR HELP with the more difficult emotions, the ones that cause us pain.
3. REFLECT on your day and think about how you have felt at different times. Be curious about why you may have felt that way.
4. SAY SORRY for the times your feelings have hurt others, or when you have ignored others' feelings.
5. DECIDE how you will support others when they are happy / sad / anxious / angry etc.

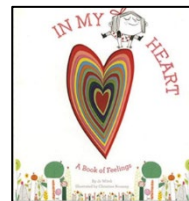
Umbrella Prayer activity – Put up a large umbrella in your reflective classroom space. Cut out shapes that identify with a specific emotion and help children to think about their feelings e.g. spikey for angry, clouds for confusion, raindrops for sadness etc. Hang threads from the spokes within the umbrella and attach your 'emotions' to them. Spend time sitting under the umbrella, thinking or talking to God about how you are feeling. It might help you to imagine that God is like the umbrella, covering you and protecting you.

There are so many picture books available, especially for younger pupils, that help them to think and talk about their emotions. Here are some suggestions:



The Colour Monster by Anna Llenas (left)

In My Heart by Jo Witek (right)



Both these stories try to put into words how emotions can have physical manifestations, which can be very confusing for younger pupils.



When Sadness Comes To Call and **Where Happiness Begins** by Eva Eland

Two contrasting books about two contrasting emotions. You might need tissues for the first one!



The Rabbit Listened by Cori Doerrfeld, a story about the animals' response to a little boy's sadness and how sometimes, a listening ear is the most important thing of all.

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

There is a brand new set of resources produced by Engage Worship called '**Jesus and Emotions**' – whilst this is aimed at families, there would be elements that could be used in school collective worship or as part of family support at home, helping children to talk about and process their emotions, using stories and passages from the Bible. Find out more [here](#).

Explore the BSL or Makaton signs for differing emotions with your class. You can find many videos readily on the internet, or your SENDCO might have a good resource for you to use. This is a really good way of helping younger pupils to express their emotions. Being able to sign is a useful skill, and includes anyone who communicates non-verbally.

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?