

faith at home

Resources for Schools

PHASE: SECONDARY

THEME: Lent



KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Does our behaviour really matter? In JK Rowling's book: Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Albus Dumbledore says **"We must all face the choice between what is right and what is easy."**

Lent offers Christians a time to reflect on their behaviour and the choices they have made for example if they have been selfish or if they have taken time to think of others. It is a time to prepare, and rethink. A time to seek reconciliation, a renewal of faith and a new direction. Lent enables Christians re-evaluate their conduct and relationships in all aspects of their life and to look at the direction life is leading them.

BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:

Jesus is tested in the wilderness: Matthew 4: 1-11 | New Revised Standard Version

Jesus in the Desert: Macha Chmakoff



4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. ² After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.' ⁴ Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."^[b] ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down.

For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."^[c]

⁷ Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."^[d] ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ⁹ 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.' ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, 'Away from

me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."^[e] ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Gathering

(Something you may want to try as each student, or any adult arrives to model how they can greet each other, or you can use 'Peace be with you')

Start your time together by saying something positive to each other as a greeting: I hope you have a great day today.....

Said reflection: I wonder....

Does the way we behave really matter? why?

What difference does making the right choice, have on us?

Is what is right always easy to achieve?

If it is too easy could it be wrong?

How does it make you feel?

Take a few moments to think about how behaviour and choices impacts on you and others around you or who you know.

Engagement

The film Hail Caesar! follows a day in the life of Eddie Mannix, a Hollywood fixer for Capitol Pictures in the 1950s, who cleans up and solves problems for big names and stars in the industry. At times Eddie's life is filled with the dilemma of making the right choices and decisions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UILLd-uBMk4>

Reflect/think about a time: In the clip the Eddie has gone to talk through things with a priest, his lifestyle choices and behaviour.



Why do you think Eddie felt the need to talk things through?

What impact had Eddie's choices had on him?

When Eddie talks about a decision he has to make, the Priest talks about the inner voice and listen to the voice until you hear what is right.

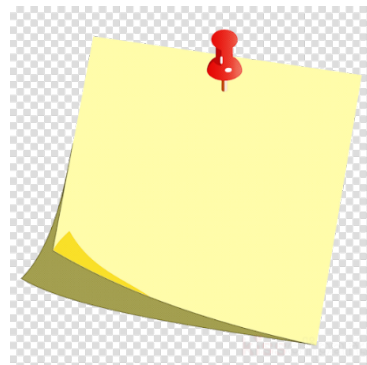
Have you ever had an experience like Eddie's?

In the Bible reading from St Matthew's gospel, Jesus has been led into the wilderness at a pivotal moment in his life. He has just been baptised by John the Baptist and he is about to start his ministry. The wilderness is a place where traditionally believed to be a place where ordinary life is suspended, a place of reflection, a place where new possibilities can emerge. In the Christian tradition the wilderness or desert is seen as a place of danger and temptation, as well as a place of solitude with God. In the story, Jesus is led by the Spirit to take time out to be with God. It is a time for questioning what God wants him to do. A time of choices and fulfilment of prophecy and destiny. A time of silence to listen to the inner voice. However, it is also a time when doubt and challenge creep in. Matthew's account highlights this in the form

of the devil offering an easy alternative. Jesus is challenged to making the right choice. One choice will be the more difficult but the result will be a life which is the one God has ordained Jesus to lead, or the easy one which will lead Jesus away from God's plans.

Response

Give each person a 'post it' note and two different coloured pens: Ask if they had a difficult decision who would they turn to for help and advice to talk things through or do they seek out a place where they can find 'silence' to discern what to do? and to write the name of the person or place on the 'post it'.



Does the inner voice ring with a louder tone when you are torn between two choices?

How do you know which one is the better?

Ask them to plead their case for choices being between right and easy, being selfless or selfish.

or

host a silent debate using the question 'Does our behaviour really matter? why?'

Sending

Conclude with I wonder....

How you might help people who are trying to change and from poor choices to better choices?

What do you feel are the important words or phrases of encouragement that someone needs to hear to help them move forward?

Write them down on your 'post it' note and keep this note safe to look at in the coming weeks to encourage you and enable you to support friends and family, when considering choices and responses.

Share one of the following prayers



Deep Listening

God of silence and God of all sound,
help me to listen.

Help me to do the deep listening to the
sounds of my soul,
waiting to hear your soft voice calling me
deeper into you.

Give me attentive ears
that begin to separate the noise from the
sounds that are you;
you who have been speaking to me

and through me my whole life,
for so long that you can seem like background noise.
Today help me hear you anew.

- Author Unknown

You showed us through the life of your Son Jesus Christ,
that You are willing to do something different for the sake of generosity.
Please give us hearts of compassion like yours
and help us to be alert to those in need of Your transforming love.
Help us to be ready to be changed ourselves as we reach out to others.
Show us ways to restore our relationships, our community and our world.
We ask this, in the precious name of Jesus
and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

40 Acts - Stewardship

May we be agents of peace and change so that we may reflect selfless love and generosity to everyone we meet today.

Amen



SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

EXPERIENCES that can help us **ENCOUNTER:**

How might choices and random acts of kindness and generosity help us grow?

Watch this video clip from the film *The Fight Within* and hear how a chance decision to act generously to a stranger, leads to an unexpected exploration about making decisions and choices.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOzp6lplsNY>

What do you think prompted the man to buy and share pizza? What other things were shared other than pizza? Who benefitted from the encounter?

ACTIVITIES that can develop **PRACTICES-HABITS:**



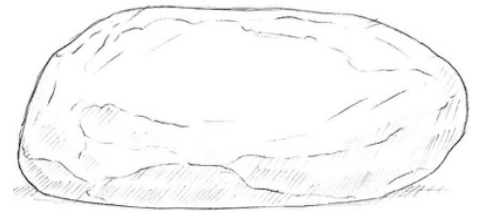
In the Christian tradition the word stone or rock has many symbolic meanings. The word stone and rock are used over 400 times in the bible and signify strength, steadiness, protection and durability. 'So I will call you Peter, which means "a rock." On this rock I will build my church, and death itself will not have any power over it.' (Matthew 16:18) Peter had followed Jesus but he had not always behaved well or made good choices in his life. However, Peter was the first to recognise Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus knew that Peter would go onto betray him but did not give up on Peter. He could see how in the future, he could trust Peter and how

Peter would ensure that the message of salvation for God's people would spread across the world. Read the account (Matthew 19:13-18)

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the

Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be[d] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be[e] loosed in heaven.” Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Draw a stone and cut it out or find a small stone from the garden wash and dry it and use an indelible Sharpie) or glitter glue pen. Think about all the good habits, actions and behaviours you want to develop or improve e.g. kindness, selflessness, faithful generosity etc. Then place your ‘stone’/‘rock’ somewhere in your room where you will see it every morning and evening as a reminder of your intention.



PRAYERS that can help us REFLECT:

Create a prayer doodle using the verse: ‘So I will call you Peter, which means "a rock." On this rock I will build my church, and death itself will not have any power over it.’

(Matthew 16:18)

Draw a shape around it and begin to doodle.

Pray as you draw and ask God to be part of this prayer time.

Keep drawing as you release these prayers to God

Prayer at the end of your doodle

Dear Lord

I pray for hope and for my faith to grow.

I pray for a generous heart and a forgiving nature

I pray for wisdom and loving kindness

That I may always hear your voice when doubt creeps in

Amen

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:

Discussion starters for groups:

Are we always in full control of our choices and our actions?

Are we here to learn that the hard decisions we have to make are what helps us grow as humans? why?

What is the impact of making the right choices?

How can other people’s behaviour help or hinder us in our choices and decisions?

What could we say to help them reflect on what they are doing?

Who can you see in the Bible who had to make difficult decisions and make the right choice, who were asked to trust the ‘inner voice’ and keep faith with God?

How does God enable us to get back on track – does this give us clues of how to help others?’

How are we through acts of generosity and kindness God’s Children?

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?