

# faith at home

Weekly Resources for Schools

**PHASE: PRIMARY**

## Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Christian hope – how does faith help  
Christians navigate grief and loss?



## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

Funerals are an important ceremony in the Christian faith. They are an opportunity for those gathered to grieve for the person who has passed, to thank God for their life, to entrust them to God and to comfort one another. During this difficult time, the service expresses the biblical promises that God will comfort those who mourn and has prepared a place for those who have died death is not the end. Many draw upon these promises to help them navigate grief and loss.

As we prepare for the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, I wonder how we might be thankful for a life well-lived and comfort each other at this time?



## BIBLE STORY OF THE WEEK:



'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.' (John 14: 1-3)

## Gathering

Follow the school's normal gathering routines, using words of liturgy which are familiar to your children.

or

Light a candle and offer the following prayer: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you'. Response: *and also with you*.

Today, we gather to reflect on the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. As we spend this time together in worship, we may also be reminded of those close to us who have died, and so we take a moment to bring them to mind and give thanks for the love and light they brought into our lives.

## Engagement

### Slide 2

Many people find it helpful to mark significant life events through rituals. Some Christians choose to celebrate the birth of a new baby through a christening. Here, family and friends gather within the church to say 'welcome'. Later in life, some couples may choose to get married. Friends and family support the couple as they promise to love and care for one another. These are both happy occasions - celebrations. Here you can see pictures of the Queen's christening (1926) and wedding (1947).

### Slide 3

When someone dies, a funeral service is held to mark the ending of their life. Whilst christenings and weddings are happy occasions, funerals are sad and sombre. They are a chance for family and friends both to be thankful for the life of their loved one, to comfort one another in their sadness and to say goodbye.

The funeral of Queen Elizabeth II will be taking place soon. The funeral will be a sad and difficult occasion, particularly for members of the Royal Family. Whilst we mourn the death of the head of our country, the Royal Family will be mourning for a treasured family member – a mother, grandmother, aunt – who is no longer with them. The Queen herself spoke about such sadness during her lifetime: 'Grief is the price we pay for love'. We are sad when people die because of our love for them.

Many will wear black at the funeral. *Why do you think people dress and act in certain ways at funerals?*

### Slide 4

In the Christian funeral service that Queen Elizabeth II will have, those watching and listening will hear promises found in the Bible. The Bible describes Jesus' comforting words to his disciples at a time when they were worried about the future:



"Do not be worried and upset," Jesus told them. "Believe in God and believe also in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so. And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am." (John 14: 1-3)

*I wonder what words stand out to you in these verses?*

Many Christians take comfort and hope from these verses. Here, Jesus says, 'I am going to prepare a place for you' to his disciples. Christians therefore believe that there is life after life. Although the details of eternal life are unknown – it's a mystery that we can't fully know in our lifetimes – many find hope in the belief that Jesus has prepared a place for those who have died; that there is hope in new life with Jesus in the life to come.

### Slide 5

These beliefs and hopes are seen in the funeral service. Through the words of the service, readings and prayers, the service gives an opportunity for family and friends to do three things:



#### Thanking

- to remember the life of the person who died
- to thank God for the gift of their life and treasured memories
- to thank God for their hope in the life to come



#### Commending

- a collective entrusting of the person to God and to the hope of new life



#### Comforting

- words of hope are shared – the hope of new life and that God's love is with all, always (Romans 8: 38, 39)
- prayers that God would comfort those who mourn and give them strength at this difficult time

*I wonder, what do you find comforting in times of sadness and grief?*

*How might we comfort one another?*

## Response

### Slide 6

Remind the school community of the upcoming funeral of Queen Elizabeth II.



As we and others prepare for the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, let us spend a moment of silence together – perhaps one minute – to remember the Queen...

... we can use this opportunity to be thankful for her life and all she did. How she was 'a good and faithful servant' who led with love to make the world a better place for all (give time for reflection) [images from the second Queen Elizabeth collective worship plan are added here to prompt reflection] ...



...at this time of great sadness for us as a nation, we think of those who need comforting and strengthening. We think particularly of her family at this difficult time (give time for reflection) ...

### **Slide 7**

Show this quote from the Queen, given during her Christmas message in 2002:

“I know just how much I rely on my own faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning, I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God. Like others of you who draw inspiration from your own faith, I draw strength from the message of hope in the Christian gospel.”

*As we prepare for the Queen’s funeral, I wonder which of these words particularly stand out to you? Where do you draw strength from?*

### **Slide 8**

I am now going to offer a prayer. Make the prayer your own if you’d like; if you’d prefer not to pray, you are welcome to sit quietly with your own thoughts.

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of life you gave to Queen Elizabeth II.

We remember all the ways in which she cared for and loved others.

Please comfort and give strength to all who mourn at this time,

And remind them of the hope that you have prepared a place for the Queen.

In Jesus’ name we pray,

Amen.

## Sending

### **Slide 9**

As pupils are sent, you may wish to play one of the Queen’s favourite hymns – ‘The Lord is My Shepherd’ or ‘Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven’. If you choose to use one of these, draw attention to the words of the third verse.

# SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

## **EXPERIENCES** that can help us **ENCOUNTER:**

Read and consider Steve Turner's poem 'Heaven' (<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/heaven/>). The poem offers an opportunity for some deep thinking and reflecting through its use of questions. The first two stanzas read:

What happens in heaven?  
Will I sit on a cloud?  
Is walking or talking  
Or jumping allowed?

Will I be on my own  
Or with some of my friends?  
Does it go on for ever  
Or eventually end?

You may wish pupils to engage with this through a 'silent debate'. For this activity, each stanza should be printed in the middle of an A3 piece of paper and placed on tables around the room, with two different colours of pencil available next to them (e.g. red and blue). To start, pupils have a few minutes to read the verses and, with their own pencil, write down any thoughts, first impressions or questions about what Steve Turner writes in the poem. After a few minutes are up, invite pupils to go round again. This time, pupils can:

- write down any further questions they may have about heaven (and write in red)
- respond to a question posed by their peers (Do you agree? Disagree? Have an alternate view? Another reflection to add?) (in blue)

You may wish to close this activity by inviting pupils to reflect on some of the things the activity has made them think about.

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

Create a simple wreath of hearts for pupils to hold or refer to during the funeral itself. Traditionally, wreaths are used to honour those who have died and circular ones are often linked to the belief in eternal life.

As the funeral takes place, pupils can use the wreath to consider:

- who needs love and comfort at this time?
- how is love and comfort shown throughout the service?

A set of instructions and resources to create a wreath of hearts can be found [here](#)



Pupils may like to write the quote from the Queen, 'Grief is the price we pay for love' on the wreath to aid reflection.

## CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES

*Funerals are important. When someone loved dies, a funeral service helps in so many ways.*

- Do you agree with this statement? In what ways do you think funerals are helpful/important to so many?
- What difference do you think it would make if funerals didn't exist?
- How can we comfort one another at this time?



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### **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?