



HM Queen Elizabeth II

A Life Poured Out





KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

With the death of Queen Elizabeth II, our faithful and faith-filled long-serving Queen, we now have an important opportunity to think about and to personally respond to her example of a life poured out in service to God and to the Commonwealth nations. As we join together to remember and give thanks for her life at her funeral, we have the opportunity to stop, to ponder, and to pour out our own responses both (as appropriate) to God and to one another.

Gathering

As your young people gather in their usual Collective Worship groups, mark out today as an important and special day. If you have formal Collective Worship litany or prayers, offer these now. Then encourage an atmosphere of reflection. A song which accompanies today's theme is the lyric video for Alabaster by Rend Collective.

<https://youtu.be/zJsLcwScEDA>

BIBLE STORY OF THE DAY

The Woman with the Alabaster Jar

Matthew 26:6-13



While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

(Image from www.LumoProject.com)

Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26%3A6-13&version=NIV>

ENGAGEMENT – A Life Poured Out

Explain that today we are going to consider the life and reign of HRH Elizabeth II in terms of her being 'poured out' in devotion and service. We will look at a woman in the Bible who poured out her love and adoration upon Jesus in recognition of who she believed Him to be, and we shall have an opportunity to pour out our own feelings and responses to the life of our Queen.

A life Poured Out –

HRM Elizabeth II's life was one poured out in service to God and to us – a life of devotion which should inspire and give us hope that our lives can make a huge difference in the world.

We are going to look at her 21st Birthday speech to the Commonwealth, by listening and responding to her voice.

On her twenty-first birthday, 21 April 1947, Princess Elizabeth was on a tour of South Africa. In a speech broadcast on the radio from Cape Town, the Princess dedicated her life to the service of the Commonwealth.

Listen carefully to the speech once, you might like to close your eyes and get comfortable so you can concentrate.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/the-21st-birthday-of-princess-elizabeth/zmq68xs>

Give out a copy of the sheet accompanying this resource, and encourage your young people to mark the sheet as they listen a second time using the inductive key on their sheets.

When they have marked their sheets, pair up and discuss. What inspires us from how HRH Elizabeth II has poured out her life since reading this speech? How does this give us hope?

ENGAGEMENT – Love Poured Out

Love Poured Out

The story we read about the woman with the alabaster jar is a story we find in all 4 gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Although the details of the accounts vary because of the different writers, we know that this woman felt the need to come to Jesus and to pour out all she had upon him, literally pouring very expensive perfume on Him as an act of devotion, repentance and faith.

Jesus' close friends, the disciples, misunderstood what she was doing. They thought this was a reckless and wasteful thing to do because the perfume could have been sold and the money given to the poor. Of course, they were not wrong, but Jesus was illustrating a different point here.

This woman was pouring out all she had, anointing His body just like a body is often prepared before a burial. This is an act of selflessness, an act of love and an act of respect. She was not being reckless or wasteful – it was in fact the opposite. It was very much intentional, and she was responding to who Jesus is by worshipping Him.

In our nation, we are rightly seeing an outpouring of emotion towards our Queen and Royal Family – love, sadness, respect, uncertainty, awe and wonder. These things are not worship – it is only God alone who can be truly worshipped – but they are a recognition of a life well-lived in servanthood to us and to God.

Take a few minutes as a group to think about this. What have we already seen or can we expect to see in the coming days? Think about media, public buildings and churches, workplaces and events.

ENGAGEMENT – A Nation’s Grief Poured Out

Talk as a group about bereavement and loss (be aware that these topics and this time can reignite embers of sadness from bereavements in anyone, students or staff alike).

What are the common feelings/emotions that people feel when they grieve? Explain that grief can include not only the loss of a person, but also other losses such as loss of a job, loss of a house, loss of a pet, loss of an opportunity.

Have your young people offer these and write them up randomly on a whiteboard. They may include (amongst others):

Sadness

Tearfulness

Relief

Despair

Anger

Ambivalence/ feeling numb

Surprise

Fear

Sleeplessness

Uncertainty

At the funeral of Queen Elizabeth, we are likely to see people experiencing some of these emotions.

What does the Bible teach us about grieving and showing our emotions when we mourn?

Read the story of the death of Lazarus from John 11:1-44. Lazarus was the brother of Mary, the woman who anointed Jesus. She was acquainted with grief.

Ask the young people to listen carefully and as they spot one of the named emotions to say ‘STOP’, then tick them on the board and continue. You might like to read from The Message Version for a helpful aid to understanding the biblical story.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+11%3A1-43&version=MSG>

After you have finished the story, look at the number of emotions described in this bible story. However – there is hope to be found in this story!

1. The name Lazarus means God **HAS** helped. Past tense! When he was named by his parents, I’m sure they had no idea what was going to happen to him. God is in control, and wants to help us. The power of Christian hope is that before we even need Him, God knows and has a plan.
2. Jesus wept. Even though He knew that God would raise Lazarus back to life. He wept. Jesus was and is fully man and fully God and even He wept because His beloved friend was dying. Jesus understands grief. He is not a cold deity, detached from His creation. We can relate to and trust Him.
3. Jesus said:

“You don’t have to wait for the end. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all. Do you believe this?”

It is likely these or similar words will be used in Queen Elizabeth's funeral. They sum up Christian hope. Jesus was using the death (and soon resurrection) of Lazarus to explain who He was, and also what was about to happen to Him. Even more than this, it explains that for the Christian, the belief that they can experience resurrection from death to life eternal with God. For the Christian, death is not the end. This can give real comfort and strength in times of despair and fear.

HRH Elizabeth II was a strong and passionate Christian. Throughout her years she loved, followed and served Jesus herself. From this place of security, she was able to serve us. For her, death is not the end, and Jesus' offer is life eternal for each person, with Him, too.

As you watch or learn about her funeral, look out for the signs of hope which lie amidst the necessary sadness and grief. Take a moment to reflect upon your own sadnesses, griefs and also the sources from which you draw hope.

Finish by lighting a candle and either praying or reflecting upon the hope represented both by HRH Elizabeth II's life and by her funeral service.

You might like to use this prayer, or one from the Church of England's funeral liturgy:

[Funeral | The Church of England](#)

Dear God,

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

We remember all the ways in which she poured her life out for others,

Always seeking to do what was right and good for those she served.

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

For her family, those who knew or met her, and for those whose lives she touched.

Thank you that amongst our sadness, we can also hold onto the hope of eternal life,

Offered not only to the Queen but to all who follow you.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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

EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

Tearing Clothes Activity

Take a look at the attached Prayer Spaces in Schools activity around grief and use this to express feelings around the death of HRH Elizabeth II, or personal losses that this brings to mind.

[Torn Clothes - Prayer Spaces In Schools](#)

ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Holding or Pocket Crosses

'Holding crosses', 'pocket crosses' or 'comfort crosses' are small handheld smooth crosses traditionally made of wood. They are designed to fit comfortably in the palm of your hand, and bring strength and comfort to those in distress. It can help to have something to hold as we feel things deeply.

Either draw small cross shapes, laminate them and cut them out, or find small smooth pebbles and use permanent marker/paint to draw an image of a cross on them. Carry this with you for when you need to be encouraged, and to resurrect your hope.

CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:

Elderly wisdom

Challenge your young people to speak with the oldest person they know in their families or friendships, or choose one of your oldest members of staff. Ask them whether they have ever lost someone important to them and looking back, what it was that brought them the most hope.

Funeral Traditions

Speak to a range of different people within your community, or connect with different communities, and find out how funerals are practised in different traditions, cultures and religions. What are the key elements that funerals tend to have in common? Why might this be? Which elements differ? What does this tell us about the beliefs that underpin this particular methodology, belief or world view?

Consider the nations of the Commonwealth. What can you discover about how different nations are mourning and marking the death of HRH Elizabeth II?



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?