



DISCERNING DISCIPLES

A religious education programme
for Catholic primary schools in
the Archdiocese of Birmingham



Desert to Garden

Nursery
Week 1
Celebrate



Lent is a time to care for others. Simple signs of Lent – colour purple, seeds, growing.

Know

Lent is a special time before Easter.

Lent is a time we care for other people.

Purple is the special colour of Lent.



Discern

During Lent we can help other people by being kind and make good choices to grow into better people.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What does it mean to care for someone?
2. How does it feel when someone is kind to you?
3. Growing takes time, just like when you grow up. What can you do now that you couldn't do before?



Respond

Look for purple items around the room.

Set up a prayer focus together, including the purple cloth.

Plant cress seeds and take care of them. Watch them grow over time.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Easter	the joyful season when we celebrate Jesus rising from the dead
Lent	a special time when we get ready for Easter

Teacher Notes

In the Church's liturgical year, Lent is the penitential season of forty days that forms Christians in conversion, preparing hearts for the Paschal mystery, Jesus' death and Resurrection.

The colour purple signifies repentance and also Jesus' kingship, so it helps the classroom communicate the season visually. Lent expresses love of neighbour through almsgiving, choosing to share with those in need, and through prayer, turning to God with trust. Growing seeds offer a sacramental sign of interior change: care, patience, and daily attention help new life emerge, as grace quietly shapes virtues.

The Paschal Mystery is the central saving event of Christianity: Jesus Christ freely suffers and dies, is buried, rises from the dead, and ascends to the Father, sending the Holy Spirit to form the Church. 'Paschal' comes from Passover and signals Christ's definitive 'passing over' from sin and death to new life. In Catholic theology, this is not only something remembered but made present sacramentally, especially in the Eucharist, where the Church participates in Christ's self-giving love and Resurrection hope. The Paschal Mystery reveals God's mercy and the pattern of Christian discipleship.



Desert to Garden

Nursery

Week 2

Hear & Believe



Love God and love everyone

Know

Jesus tells us to 'Love God and love everyone'

This is the most important thing Jesus asks of us.



Discern

Jesus wants us to love God and be kind to everyone.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How do we show love for God?
2. How do we show love for everyone in Nursery?
3. What kind words and gentle actions help everyone feel safe and welcome in our Nursery family?



Respond

Start a '40 acts of kindness' display. Every time a child shows kindness, add this to the display.

Textual references

Mark 12:28-31

The Greatest Commandment

Key vocabulary

commandment

an important rule God gives us to help us live well

Teacher Notes

In Mark 12:28–31, Jesus identifies the heart of God's law: love of God and love of neighbour. This echoes Israel's Shema, where love means faithful commitment, not simply a feeling. In Catholic theology, this love becomes 'charity': self-giving action that recognises every person as made in God's image and therefore worthy of dignity.

For Nursery pupils, the 'greatest commandment' is made concrete through habits of welcome, gentle words, sharing, and including those who are left out. These everyday choices are a real way of loving God.



Desert to Garden

Nursery
Week 3
Hear



Jesus died on a cross. It is a sad time.

Know

Jesus died on a cross. It is a sad time.

Jesus' friends were sad because they loved Him very much.



Discern

Jesus died and his friends were sad.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How can we tell when someone is sad?
2. What do you do when you feel sad?
3. Who helps you to feel better?



Respond

Create a Cross shape and invite children to cover it with tissue paper remembering that Jesus died.

Include a heart to remember that Jesus loves us.

Remind children that when we make the Sign of the Cross, we are remembering Jesus on the Cross.

Textual references

Age-appropriate Crucifixion account based on Luke 23:33-36

Key vocabulary

Sign of the Cross a prayer we make with our hands to remember God's love

Teacher Notes

This lesson draws on Luke's account of the crucifixion (Luke 23:33–36) and introduces Nursery pupils to the Church's reverent remembrance of Jesus' death. In Catholic theology, Jesus' dying on the Cross is not an accident but a freely chosen act of self-giving love: he remains faithful to the Father and gives himself 'for us'. The sadness of Jesus' friends is therefore an important human response to loss, and it models compassionate love: when we love someone, we grieve when they suffer or die.

When pupils make or handle a cross, the focus is not on graphic detail but on meaning: the cross is the Christian sign of Jesus' love, forgiveness, and closeness to people who are hurting. The Sign of the Cross is a simple bodily prayer that helps pupils remember Jesus and entrust their sadness and worries to God.



Desert to Garden

Nursery

Week 4

Celebrate



Simple signs of Easter – colour white, growth, Easter Garden.

Know

After Lent has finished, we think about Easter.

White and gold are the special colours for Easter because it is a happy time.



Discern

Easter is a time of joy and happiness.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What makes you feel happy?
2. What do you do when you feel happy?
3. What colours or sounds make you feel happy?



Respond

Look for white and gold around the classroom.

Set up the prayer area together. Include items such as the colours white and gold, flowers and cards.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Easter the Church's big celebration that Jesus is alive

Teacher Notes

Easter is the Church's primary festival, celebrating that Jesus is alive and God's life is stronger than death. The season of Easter lasts fifty days, from the Easter Vigil to Pentecost, so the Church gives extended time to rejoice, not just one day.

In liturgy, white and gold express joy, holiness, and victory, shaping the classroom environment as a form of catechesis through colour.

At Easter, the Church foregrounds baptismal identity: Christians renew baptismal promises and are often sprinkled with holy water, highlighting participation in Christ's new life.

The Easter Vigil begins in darkness and moves into light with the Paschal Candle, a sign that Christ is the light of the world.

Easter symbols often focus on 'new life' and hope, so an Easter garden can communicate the movement from sadness to joy in an age-appropriate way.



Desert to Garden

Nursery
Week 5
Hear



Jesus was given new life by God his Father. Jesus rose and everyone celebrates

Know

God the Father gives Jesus new life!

This means that Jesus does not stay dead. He comes back to life.

We can make an Easter Garden to remember Jesus coming back to life.



Discern

After Jesus dies, he comes back to life.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How do you think Jesus' friends feel when they see Him alive again?
2. Have you ever been sad and then happy again? What happened?
3. What do you think Jesus wants us to remember when we hear this story?



Respond

Design and construct an Easter Garden.

Textual references

Age-appropriate Crucifixion account based on John 20:11-18 (Mary Magdalene meets the risen Jesus)

Key vocabulary

risen	alive again
tomb	the place where Jesus was buried
witness	someone who sees something happen and tells others

Teacher Notes

John 20:11–18 presents the resurrection as a personal encounter that turns grief into hope. Mary Magdalene remains near the tomb, showing faithful love even when she is confused and sorrowful. The risen Jesus addresses her by name, which is theologically significant: it signals relationship, recognition, and care. Jesus is not a ‘ghost’ or a symbol; he is truly alive, yet transformed, and he draws his followers into a new way of knowing him through trust. Mary becomes the first witness commissioned to speak to the disciples, which models a core Christian pattern: encounter leads to mission.

For Nursery pupils, the narrative supports simple, truthful language: Jesus is alive, Jesus knows us, and Jesus sends his friends to share good news.

An Easter garden can locate the story in a calm, familiar setting and help pupils express joy, wonder, and reassurance.

Why John’s account is the best choice for Nursery pupils, and why others are less suitable

John 20:11–18 is developmentally strong because it is short, emotionally clear, and centred on one recognisable relationship. The setting is calm and concrete (a garden and a tomb), the main movement is simple (sadness to joy), and the key theological claim is graspable without additional plot complexity.

Other resurrection accounts often introduce elements that raise cognitive and emotional load for very young pupils: Matthew includes guards, fear, and dramatic phenomena; Luke’s empty tomb scene involves multiple figures and requires more explanation to avoid pupils focusing on ‘the body is missing’; the Emmaus narrative is long and conceptually abstract; Mark’s ending can feel abrupt and unresolved without careful framing. John, by contrast, offers a gentle, relational story that communicates resurrection hope with minimal distraction.



Desert to Garden

Nursery
Week 6
Live



Celebrate with signs and symbols – hot cross buns, garden growth, Easter eggs.

Know

The Church has a special, joyful word which means 'Praise the Lord!' The word is 'Alleluia'.

At Easter we sing, 'Alleluia!' because Jesus is risen.

We can celebrate Easter in different ways.



Discern

We can celebrate Easter with our friends and family.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What do you see on top of a Hot Cross Bun?
2. Why do you think we eat Hot Cross Buns at Easter?
3. Why do we have Easter Eggs?



Respond

Hold an Easter party to celebrate Jesus rising to new life.

Include symbols of Easter, such as a 'risen cross', Hot Cross Buns, and Easter eggs.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

alleluia	a happy word we sing that means 'praise the Lord!'
praise	to tell God, 'You are good' and 'Thank You'

Teacher Notes

This week focuses on how the Church 'celebrates' Easter through signs, words, and shared joy. 'Alleluia' is a Hebrew biblical acclamation meaning 'Praise the Lord', used extensively in Christian worship as a direct response to God's saving action. During Lent the Church traditionally refrains from Alleluia, so its return at Easter has heightened meaning: it is a liturgical marker of rejoicing in the risen Christ.

For Nursery pupils, this can be taught as a joyful prayer-word that the Church sings together.

Cultural symbols can then be interpreted theologically, without over-claiming: a hot cross bun carries a cross sign that can prompt remembrance of Jesus' love, while Easter eggs and garden growth can symbolise new life and celebration.

The key catechetical move is to connect outward festivity (food, family, friends) with worship and gratitude: Christian celebration is not only 'having fun' but giving thanks to God and sharing joy with others.



Desert to Garden

Reception

Week 1

Believe & Celebrate



Listen to and talk about the seasons of Lent and Easter. The Church uses purple and ashes as signs of Lent and being sorry

Know

Lent is the time before Easter when we say sorry to God and try to be kind.

We use purple and ashes to help us remember to say sorry and begin again with Jesus.



Discern

Purple is a quiet colour which reminds us to stop, say sorry to God, and to try to be kind and good.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How can we show love like Jesus?
2. What goes on our forehead on Ash Wednesday?
3. When do you say sorry?



Respond

Look for purple items around the classroom.

Set up the prayer area together. Include purple cloth.

Write or say a 'sorry' prayer to God.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Ash Wednesday	the first day of Lent when we receive ashes on our forehead
Easter	the joyful season when we celebrate Jesus rising from the dead
Lent	a special time when we get ready for Easter

Teacher Notes

Lent is the Church's annual season of preparation for Easter, shaped by conversion: turning back to God and learning to live with greater love. It begins on Ash Wednesday, when Catholics receive ashes in the shape of a cross as a public sign of penance. The ashes express two linked truths: human life is precious yet fragile, and God's mercy invites a new start. The colour purple supports this theme by signalling reflection, self-control, and readiness to change.

Lent lasts for 40 days starting on Ash Wednesday and ending on the Wednesday of Holy Week. The six Sundays which fall in Lent are not included in the 40 days. This is because Sundays of Lent, like all Sundays, are a celebration of the Resurrection. The 40 days reminds us of the 40 days of Jesus in the desert before he began his ministry. During Lent, we are called to strengthen and deepen our faith through prayer, fasting and abstinence and almsgiving. As we practise these, we change and grow closer to Christ.

On Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of Lent, ashes are placed on people's foreheads as a sign of penance. As this is done, the words 'Repent and believe in the Gospel' or 'Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return' are said. The ashes are made from burning the previous year's palm leaves. Ash Wednesday is also a day of fasting (when we limit the amount we eat) and abstinence (from eating meat).

For Reception children, the theological emphasis should remain concrete and hopeful: saying sorry is more than politeness, it is repentance, choosing to repair relationships with God and others.

Lent trains disciples in habits that strengthen love: prayer (turning to God), giving (thinking of others), and small acts of self-denial (learning we do not always need 'more'). These practices help children connect Jesus' teaching with daily choices of kindness.



Desert to Garden

Reception

Week 2

Hear & Live



Trying to help others by what we do in Lent

Know

Lent is a special time when we try to help others and be kind.

When we share, help and use kind words, we show God's love to everyone.



Discern

When we are kind to others, we are following Jesus.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How can we show love to other people?
2. How does someone feel when we share, help, or use kind words with them?
3. When is it hardest to be kind, and what can we do to choose kindness anyway?



Respond

Start a '40 acts of kindness' display. Every time a child shows kindness, add this to the display.

Create a display, showcasing the acts of kindness shown by the children this week. Celebrate acts of kindness with a classroom reward, such as a 'kind badge'.

Textual references

Luke 10:25-28

The Great Commandment

Key vocabulary

charity loving like Jesus by helping others

kindness choosing gentle words and helpful actions

neighbour anyone we meet, especially someone who needs help

Teacher Notes

This week's learning connects Lent with the Church's call to practical love. In Luke 10:25–28, Jesus links 'eternal life' with the command to love God fully and to love one's neighbour as oneself.

Catholic theology understands this love as 'charity': love that takes shape in concrete actions for another person's good. In Lent, the Church invites believers to practise charity deliberately, so faith becomes visible in daily life.

For Reception children, sharing, helping, and kind words are not merely 'good manners'; they are signs that we are learning to live as Jesus teaches.

The discovery questions also introduce moral formation: kindness can be difficult when we are tired, jealous, or frustrated, so pupils need language for self-control and repair. This is a Christian approach to virtue: we keep practising small good choices until they become habits. Celebrating 'acts of kindness' can be framed as recognising God's love at work in the classroom community.



Desert to Garden

Reception

Week 3

Hear & Believe



A simplified version of key events of Holy Week especially Good Friday and Easter Sunday (to enable pupils to recognise key events)

Know

On Good Friday, Jesus dies on the Cross because He loves us.

On Easter Sunday, Jesus comes back to life: He rises from the dead.

Jesus gives us new life so we can love like Him and be close to God.



Discern

Jesus gives us new life at Easter so we can be full of joy and love.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How do you think the people feel watching what happens to Jesus Good Friday / Easter Sunday?
2. Easter is about new life. When we are kind, how do we help our friends feel 'new' and happy again inside?
3. I wonder why Jesus wants us to give us new life?



Respond

Create a simple story map of Holy Week to include Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Textual references

Luke 19: 28-40	Palm Sunday
Luke 23:44-49	Good Friday
Luke 24:1-7	Easter Sunday

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

This week's learning introduces the Church's central narrative of Holy Week in a simplified, chronological form so children can recognise key events and their meaning. On Palm Sunday, Jesus enters Jerusalem and is welcomed, showing that he is the promised king, yet his kingship is expressed through humility and peace. On Good Friday, the Church contemplates the crucifixion as the supreme sign of sacrificial love: Jesus remains faithful to the Father and gives himself for the salvation of others. On Easter Sunday, the resurrection is proclaimed as God's vindication of Jesus and the beginning of new creation.

'New life' is therefore theological, not merely emotional: it describes restored relationship with God and a new way of living shaped by joy, forgiveness, and love.

For Reception children, 'being close to God' can be expressed through prayer, trusting that God is with us, and choosing loving actions that help others feel safe and welcomed. A simple story map supports sequencing and helps pupils connect the events with the Church's celebration.

You may wish to use simple visuals from websites such as '[Catholic Icing](#)'



Desert to Garden

Reception

Week 4

Celebrate



Representations of Holy Week and Easter/ Simple religious symbols in Lent and Easter: palms, the Cross, Easter Gardens & symbols of new life

Know

Palms and the Cross help us remember the special story of Jesus in Holy Week.

Easter Gardens help us remember that Jesus is alive.

The holy water used at Easter reminds us of new life.



Discern

After Jesus died, he came back to life.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Does Jesus stay dead after He dies on the Cross?
2. How do you think Jesus' friends feel when they think he has died, and how do they feel when they hear he is alive?
3. Have you seen a cross, candle or Easter Garden in church?



Respond

Make a class Easter Garden for the prayer focus.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

This week's learning explores how the Church uses signs to proclaim the Easter message and help children remember the Holy Week story.

Palms recall Jesus being welcomed in Jerusalem and point to him as Messiah, while also preparing children for the surprising way he saves: not through power, but through self-giving love. The Cross is the central Christian symbol because it gathers the meaning of Jesus' Passion and reveals God's love that does not abandon humanity.

An Easter garden is a tactile, prayerful representation that supports young pupils to 'see' the movement from death to life, especially through the empty tomb as a sign that Jesus is risen.

Holy water at Easter links to the Church's baptismal life: water signifies cleansing and new beginning, so sprinkling and blessing are embodied reminders that Christians belong to God and are called to live a 'new life' of joy, forgiveness, and love. These symbols act as catechesis for the senses, enabling children to participate in the Church's celebration through sight, touch, and ritual action.

Traditional features of an Easter Garden

- Hill with a Cross or Three Crosses
 - ⇒ Represents the hill of Calvary where Jesus was crucified.
 - ⇒ The centre cross is for Jesus.
- Tomb
 - ⇒ A small cave or mound with an opening, symbolising Jesus' burial place.
 - ⇒ Often made with a small pot or a hollow in the soil.
- Stone
 - ⇒ A round stone placed in front of the tomb, to show the stone that was rolled away on Easter morning.
- Greenery and Flowers
 - ⇒ Represent new life and resurrection.
 - ⇒ Often added on Easter Sunday to show joy and new beginnings.
- Path or Steps
 - ⇒ Leading to the tomb, sometimes made with pebbles.

This week's learning is a great opportunity to link to forest school.



Desert to Garden

Reception
Week 5
Live



Every single person on Earth needs these things: food, water, work, clothes, a home, a school, and a doctor. Some people have what they need, but many people don't. Jesus wants the people who already have what they need to help these others. Jesus wants us to take care of this.

CST: Rights and Responsibilities

Know

Everyone needs food, water, work, clothes, a home, a school and a doctor.

Catholic social teaching teaches us that Jesus wants us to help people who do not have what they need.

We can share what we have, to take care of others.



Discern

God wants us to notice when someone needs help and try our best to care for them.

Suggested discovery questions

1. What do people need every day?
2. How do you feel when someone shares with you?
3. What can we do to help others who don't have what they need?



Respond

Create a display: 'Helping Hands for God's people'

Trace and cut out around children's hands. Ask: What can your hands do to help others?

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Catholic social teaching	what the Church says about living fairly and caring for others
help	to do something that makes it easier for someone
need	something we must have to be safe and well

Teacher Notes

This week's learning introduces a core strand of Catholic social teaching: every person has God-given dignity, so basic human needs matter morally, not just practically. To 'notice' need is an act of justice as well as kindness, because it treats others as neighbours rather than strangers.

Catholic tradition often speaks of both rights and responsibilities: people should have what they need to live well (such as food, water, safety, and care), and those who can help have a duty to act.

For Reception children, this is framed through simple, concrete choices that express love of neighbour: sharing, welcoming, helping, and comforting. Linking actions to 'hands' is developmentally strong because it makes moral agency visible: we can use our hands to build up or to harm, so choosing helpful hands is a way of practising virtue. This week can also connect prayer and action: we ask God to help those in need and then we respond with what we can do together, in school and beyond.



Desert to Garden

Reception
Week 6
Live



Various cultures celebrate Lent and Easter in different ways, for example: pancakes, Hot Cross Buns, Easter Eggs.

People around the world celebrate Lent in different ways.

Know

Kerala, India: The Raasa ('fun') Parade is a special walk with music and lights where we thank God and remember how much Jesus loves us.

Italy: Pretzels are eaten in Lent because the shape looks like folding your arms for a blessing.

England: Pancake Day (Shrove Tuesday) is a day where we eat pancakes and eat lovely food before we start fasting for lent.



Discern

People around the world celebrate Lent and Easter in different ways but they all remember the same events.

Suggested discovery questions

Kerala

1. What would you do if you were in a special Easter Walk?
2. Would you sing, wave a palm or carry a flower?

Italy & England

3. Have you ever eaten special food for a celebration like a birthday, or baptism?
4. Why do you think people have a special meal before something important?



Respond

Draw and label pictures about celebrations across the world.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

Teachers are free to teach Easter celebrations from cultures that are reflected by the cultures present within their classrooms, substituting the stipulated direct knowledge statements on p24 with appropriate equivalents.

[Why Easter?](#) is website to explore various traditions of Easter.

Kerala, India

The Raasa ('fun') Parade is a special walk with music and lights where we thank God and remember how much Jesus loves us.

In Kerala, the Raasa Parade (also called Rasa) is a joyful Catholic celebration held just before Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent. The word Raasa means "fun" or "joy", and this event is a bright, festive moment before the quiet season of Lent.

People walk together through the streets carrying crosses, banners, and statues of Jesus or Mary. Some even carry colourful umbrellas, inspired by Kerala's traditional festivals.

Italy

In Italy, people sometimes eat pretzels during Lent because of their special shape. The twist in the pretzel looks like arms folded in prayer or for a blessing, which reminds people to pray during Lent. Pretzels were also made with simple ingredients, which made them perfect for the fasting season.

England, UK

Pancake Day, or Shrove Tuesday, is the day before Lent begins. It is a time to enjoy foods like pancakes before starting the Lenten season of fasting and abstinence. Traditionally, people would use up rich ingredients like eggs, milk, and sugar, which they would not eat during Lent. The day helps prepare both the body and the mind for Lent, a time of giving things up, prayer, and reflection



Desert to Garden

Year 1

Week 1

Hear, Believe & Live

	U1.4.1 Make simple connections between Jesus' time in the desert and Christians praying and fasting for forty days in Lent
<i>Know</i>	Jesus spends forty days in the desert, praying and trusting God. During Lent, Christians pray, fast, and give to others. Lent is a special time to grow closer to God, just like Jesus did.

 <i>Discern</i>	Lent is a special time for praying, fasting, and helping others as Jesus taught us to do. Suggested discovery questions 1. I wonder why on earth Jesus was not tempted to eat anything by the devil when he must have been so hungry? 2. What could we 'fast' from that is not food, so we have more time and kindness for God and other people? 3. When we help someone in Lent, how are we doing what Jesus teaches us to do?
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 R1.4.1 R1.4.2	Recognise that fasting in Lent is giving something up to help others and Cafod Family Fast Day is a way of doing this Consider what they might give up and choose to do to help others.
<i>Respond</i>	Share a simple, illustrated/photographed story or video from Cafod about someone who benefits from clean water, food, or education because of their campaigns. Invite a Cafod representative into school to learn more about the latest project that they are supporting through the Family Fast Day campaign. How can your school/parish be involved in supporting the campaign? Actively participate.

Textual references	
Luke 4:1-13	Jesus' Temptations

Key vocabulary	
almsgiving	sharing money or help with people who need it
fasting	to choose not to have something for a while so we can focus on God and others
temptation	when we really want to do something that is not the best choice

Teacher Notes

This week's learning links Lent to Jesus' forty days in the desert, when he prays, fasts, and resists temptation. In the Gospels, the desert is a place of testing and meeting God, echoing Israel's journey, so Jesus' faithfulness shows what it looks like to trust the Father when life is hard. Catholic tradition understands fasting as more than 'not eating'. It is a spiritual discipline that trains freedom: choosing God over immediate wants, and learning self-control so we can love better. Temptation is anything that pulls us away from love of God and neighbour. Jesus does not 'win' by strength alone, but by staying rooted in prayer and truth.

Lent also includes almsgiving, giving time, attention, or resources so others can live with dignity. Connecting a small 'give up to give' action to Cafod helps pupils see that personal choices can become solidarity with people who lack clean water, food, or schooling.

Cafod is the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, the official aid and development agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Its work expresses Catholic social teaching by protecting human dignity and promoting the common good, especially through supporting communities experiencing poverty, conflict, or environmental hardship.

The key theological message for Year 1 is coherent and practical: prayer keeps our hearts close to God, fasting helps us practise choosing the good, and giving turns love into action.



Desert to Garden

Year 1

Week 2

Hear, Celebrate & Live

	U1.4.2 Recognise that Jesus shows the importance of giving to others, making simple connections with the story of the widow's mite and the season of Lent
<i>Know</i>	Jesus wants us to give and share with others. The poor widow gives a tiny coin, and Jesus says giving from the heart matters most. During Lent, we can give to others to show love, just like the widow does.

	D1.4.2 Experience and reflect on music or art that shows how Christian communities in another part of the world celebrate Lent	
<i>Discern</i>	Reflecting on art and music from Christian communities around the world helps us recognise different ways of celebrating Lent and make personal connections with our own experience of Lent.	Suggested discovery questions Music 1. What did you hear and how did it make you feel? 2. How does this music help Christians to remember Jesus? 3. Does this remind you of anything Christians do during Lent? What is the same or different? Art 4. How do these pictures make you feel? Why? 5. What do you think the people in the picture are doing to show love to God?

	R1.5.2 Hear the words of the Glory Be and hymns that reference Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and join in prayerfully if they choose to do so
<i>Respond</i>	Draw a large heart and inside it, draw or write things you've learned that would help you to show love to others during Lent. Act out simple Lent-related scenarios (e.g. giving food to someone, helping at home, saying a prayer). After each, reflect on how it made you feel.

Textual references

Luke 21:1-6

The Widow's Offering

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

Play short clips of Lenten or Holy Week music from different countries e.g:

- Spain: Traditional Semana Santa (Holy Week) processional music
- Philippines: Soft Lenten hymns like Pasyon (chanting the Passion story)

Ask:

- What did you hear?
- How do you think Christians feel when they sing or play this music?
- How does this music help them remember Jesus?

Show images of Lent and Holy Week traditions, for example:

- Mexican palm crosses for Palm Sunday
- Ethiopian icons of Jesus carrying the Cross

Ask:

- What do you see?
- What part of Jesus' life is being shown?
- How do these pictures make you feel?

Lenten traditions around the world

1. Goa, India

Catholics have their own version of Carnival with three days of music, dancing and feasting, culminating in a Mass. Notably, Indian Catholics have traditionally been joined by Hindu and Muslim neighbours in the festivities. A similar festival is held in Kerala, where Catholics hold the Raasa parade on the day before Ash Wednesday. The name Raasa is derived from the Sanskrit for "fun," and the festival likewise includes music and dance as well as fireworks; it also ends with a Mass. There is no feast, although there is the Chembeduppu ceremony in which offerings of raw or half-cooked rice are placed in large copper vessels (chembu) at the churches. After the Mass, the copper vessels are carried in a procession, with golden and silver crosses, flags and bands.

2. Mexico

The final Friday of Lent is devoted to Our Lady. Known as Viernes de Dolores, 'Friday of Sorrows,' altars are set up in churches and homes in her honour. On the fourth Friday in Oaxaca, called la Samaritana, aquas frescas, fruit drinks and ice cream are given to passersby in honour of the Samaritan woman who gave Jesus water at the well.

3. Slovakia

On Palm Sunday, called Kvetna, or Flower Sunday, after the morning Mass, children in villages gathered behind a maypole and went through the town singing a song about Christ journeying to Jerusalem.



Desert to Garden

Year 1

Week 3

Believe, Celebrate & Live



U1.4.6

Recognise simple connections between the use of ashes and the Christian belief that Lent is an opportunity for a new start

On Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, Christians receive ashes on their foreheads to show they are sorry and want to begin again with God.

Know

Lent is a time for a new start, when Christians try to follow Jesus more closely.

The Church may say 'Repent and believe in the Gospel' or 'Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return', reminding Christians to turn back to God who made them.



Discern

Saying sorry and trying to do better during Lent helps us to grow closer to Jesus, who loves us and is happy when we make a good choice.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Why do you think Christians receive ashes on their forehead on Ash Wednesday?
2. Can you think of something you would like to change or do better during Lent?
3. How might it make you feel when you make that change? How do you think Jesus will feel?



Respond

Follow the daily challenges on the *Walk With Me* calendar. Can you try to live out some or all these challenges?

Create a class or home 'Lent Kindness Chart'. Each time somebody does something kind, helpful, or forgiving, award a sticker or symbol on the chart.

Receive the ashes or ask someone you know who has received the ashes how they felt.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Ash Wednesday	the first day of Lent when Catholics receive ashes in the shape of a cross
repent	to say sorry to God and try to change

Teacher Notes

This week's learning explains Ash Wednesday as the Church's doorway into Lent and focuses on conversion as a hopeful 'turning back' to God. Receiving ashes is an outward sign of an inward decision: to admit we have not loved perfectly and to ask for God's help to begin again. The ashes are traced as a cross to connect repentance with Jesus' saving love. The words used in the rite communicate two theological truths. 'Repent and believe in the Gospel' frames Lent as trusting the good news and choosing to live differently. 'Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return' stresses creatureliness: our lives are gift, we depend on God, and we should live humbly and wisely.

In Catholic spirituality, Lent is not mainly about 'giving things up' but about becoming freer to love God and neighbour. For Year 1 pupils, the key application is moral and relational: identifying a realistic change (kind speech, sharing, self-control), practising it daily, and noticing how it shapes feelings, friendships, and prayer.

This supports a simple theology of growth: grace helps us form habits that make us more like Jesus.



Desert to Garden

Year 1

Week 4

Hear & Believe

 U1.4.3	Correctly sequence the events of the last week of Jesus' life.
Know	Jesus rides a donkey into Jerusalem, and the people are so excited they wave palm branches to welcome Him. Jesus had a special meal with His friends called the Last Supper, where He celebrated the first Eucharist. Jesus died on the Cross because He loves us.

 D1.4.1	Ask 'I wonder' questions about the story of the last week of Jesus' life			
Discern	Jesus' life is special because it shows how much He loves us, especially in the things He did in His last week.	<table border="1"> <tr> <th data-bbox="884 606 2150 614">Suggested discovery questions</th> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="884 614 2150 828"> 1. I wonder how the people felt when they saw Jesus riding on a donkey into Jerusalem? 2. I wonder what Jesus was thinking when he was teaching in the Temple? 3. I wonder what it felt like to sit and eat with Jesus at the Last Supper? </td> </tr> </table>	Suggested discovery questions	1. I wonder how the people felt when they saw Jesus riding on a donkey into Jerusalem? 2. I wonder what Jesus was thinking when he was teaching in the Temple? 3. I wonder what it felt like to sit and eat with Jesus at the Last Supper?
Suggested discovery questions				
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 R1.4.3	Reflect on what they know about Jesus including the events of the last week of Jesus' life and his resurrection	
Respond	Create 'service coupons' to show your love in action for your family, friends, school and parish community. Set up stations around the room for each key moment in Holy Week. At each station, pupils do a simple activity (e.g. wave palms, light a candle, break bread, look at a cross) and discuss what Jesus did on that day and how it shows His love. Decorate a 'Jesus Gave, So I Can Give' Cross with drawings or pictures of kind things you can do to help others.	

Textual references

Luke 19:28-38	Jesus enters Jerusalem
Luke 22:7-23	The Last Supper
Luke 23:33-46	Jesus' Crucifixion and Death

Key vocabulary

Eucharist	the special 'thanksgiving' meal at Mass where Jesus gives Himself to us under the appearances of bread and wine (a re-enactment of the Last Supper)
Last Supper	the special meal Jesus shares with His friends before He dies

Teacher Notes

This week's learning sequences key events of Jesus' final days and explains why they matter for Christians. Jesus is truly human and truly divine: he experiences ordinary human things (friendship, hunger, fear, sorrow), yet he also reveals God's authority and love through his choices. On Palm Sunday (Luke 19:28–38), Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling the promise of a peaceful king. The palms and praise show that many hope he will save them, though they do not yet understand that his 'victory' will come through self-giving love.

At the Last Supper (Luke 22:7–23), Jesus shares a Passover meal and gives a new meaning to bread and wine. Catholic faith teaches that Jesus institutes the Eucharist here: a sacrament in which he gives himself to the Church and commands, 'Do this in memory of me', so his saving gift is remembered and made present in worship. Jesus also teaches his disciples how to live: love that serves, forgives, and stays faithful.

On Good Friday, Jesus' crucifixion is understood as sacrifice: he freely offers his life for the salvation of humanity. The cross therefore becomes the central sign of love and obedience, showing that God enters suffering and transforms it from within.

For Year 1 pupils, the focus is on meaning rather than detail: Jesus' last week shows love that puts others first and opens the way to hope.



Desert to Garden

Year 1
Week 5
Hear & Believe



U1.4.5

Recognise that the Church teaches that Jesus suffered, died, and rose again

Know

Jesus felt pain and suffered, but He didn't stop loving people.

The Church teaches that Jesus died and then came back to life three days later.



Discern

Jesus shows us how to love others, even when it's not easy. He didn't give up on loving people, and that helps us to know that we should keep being kind and loving too

Suggested discovery questions

1. Which part of Jesus' last week do you think is most special? Why?
2. How does it make Christians feel to know of Jesus' sacrifice for everyone?
3. Do you like hearing about how much Jesus loves us, even when He suffered for us? Why do you think that's important?



Respond

In prayer, give thanks to Jesus for showing his love for everyone.

Use simple everyday situations (e.g. sharing toys, helping someone who is sad, saying sorry etc.) for role play. After each, ask: 'Was that easy or hard to do? How did it feel?'

Draw a time when it was hard to be kind or loving (e.g. when somebody has upset you) and talk about what they could do like Jesus next time.

Textual references

Luke 23:33-46

Jesus' Crucifixion and Death

Key vocabulary

suffer

to feel pain or sadness

trust

believing God is with us and will help us

Teacher Notes

This week's learning focuses on the Church's belief that Jesus truly suffers and dies, and that his love remains steadfast rather than defeated. In Luke 23:33–46, Jesus is crucified and prays even in pain, showing that prayer is not only for easy moments. Christians understand Jesus' suffering as part of the Paschal Mystery: he enters human weakness and injustice, yet responds with mercy and trust in the Father. This reveals a distinctive Christian claim about love: love is not simply a feeling but a faithful choice to seek another's good, even when it costs.

For Year 1 pupils, it is important to hold two truths together without graphic detail. First, Jesus experiences real suffering, so God is close to people who are hurting. Second, Jesus does not stop loving: he forgives, he stays faithful, and he gives his life 'for us'. This is why Christians speak of Jesus' 'sacrifice': not because God enjoys suffering, but because Jesus freely offers himself to heal what sin breaks and to open the way to new life. The 'three days later' language points to the resurrection and helps pupils see that the story moves from sadness to hope. The practical outcome is moral formation: pupils can learn that when kindness is hard, they can pause, pray, and choose love again.



Desert to Garden

Year 1

Week 6

Hear, Believe & Live



U1.4.4

Recognise that angels bring God's message and are a sign that Jesus is the Son of God, truly alive.

Know

Two angels appear to the women and tell them that Jesus is not in the tomb, He is alive.

The angel's message shows that Jesus is God's Son.

The risen Jesus lives forever, and that makes us happy and full of hope.



Discern

Jesus' life story does not end with death: it continues when He comes back to life.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How do you think the women felt when the angels appeared to them?
2. I wonder what the women did next after hearing the angels' message. What would you do if you heard such exciting news?
3. What changes when we know Jesus' story does not end, but continues with new life?



Respond

Create Easter cards to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. Think carefully about the message you will write inside to celebrate His resurrection.

Generate images of the angels announcing Jesus' resurrection to the women. Underneath, write one loving or kind action you will undertake to bring hope to others.

Create a class 'Resurrection Bouquet' made of paper flowers. Each flower has a kind action written or drawn on it.

Textual references

Luke 21:1-8 The angel's message

Key vocabulary

angel God's messenger who brings important news

hope believing God will be with us and bring good, even when things are hard

Teacher Notes

This week's learning centres on the resurrection announcement in Luke 24:1–8, where women come to Jesus' tomb and receive God's message through angels: 'He is not here, but has risen.' In Scripture, angels are messengers, not 'cute' decorations; they signify that God is acting and speaking. Their presence highlights that the resurrection is God's work: the Father raises Jesus and confirms him as the Son who brings salvation. The women's mixture of fear, amazement, and joy is a realistic human response to something holy and unexpected, and it models discipleship: they listen, remember Jesus' words, and then share the news.

Catholic faith teaches that the resurrection is not a return to ordinary life but the beginning of a new, transformed life that cannot be defeated by death. This is why Christians speak of hope: because Jesus lives forever, God's love is stronger than suffering, sin, and death.

For Year 1 pupils, the core meaning can be expressed simply and truthfully: Jesus is alive, God keeps his promises, and this good news changes how we live. In practice, pupils can connect resurrection hope to everyday life by choosing actions that bring light to others: kindness, encouragement, forgiveness, and welcome. This keeps the theological claim ('Jesus is risen') joined to Christian living ('we share his joy and hope').



Desert to Garden

Year 2
Week 1
Hear

	U2.4.1 Recognise what Jesus said on the Cross about forgiveness and make simple connections with the belief that God always forgives us
<i>Know</i>	On the Cross, Jesus prays, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' Jesus forgives the people who hurt him, showing that forgiveness is part of God's love. Christians believe God forgives us when we are sorry, so we try to forgive others too.

	D2.4.1 Look at works of art to recall the story of Holy Week studied in the previous year	
<i>Discern</i>	Looking at artwork about Holy Week helps us remember what happened to Jesus, think about how it makes us feel, and understand how much He loves us.	Suggested discovery questions 1. What do you see and how does it make you feel? 2. How do you think Jesus feels here? 3. What colours or faces stand out to you in this image? What do you think they might mean?

	R2.4.1 Think about what forgiveness means to them R2.4.3 Reflect on how Jesus teaches people to forgive	
<i>Respond</i>	Inspired by the Holy Week pieces of artwork studied, create your own piece to represent what God's forgiveness means to you. Pray the Our Father prayer and reflect upon the words using Lectio Divina. Which words and phrases about forgiveness stand out to you?. Prepare a Celebration of the Word on the theme of forgiveness.	

Textual references

Luke 23:33-46 Jesus' Crucifixion and Death

Key vocabulary

forgiveness	choosing not to get revenge but being ready to make peace
mercy	God's loving kindness that helps and forgives
repent	to be sorry and choose to change by turning back towards God

Teacher Notes

Suggested artworks

- Sieger Koder, [Last Supper](#) and [Washing of the Feet](#)
- Leonardo Da Vinci, [The Last Supper](#)
- Salvador Dali, [Christ of St John of the Cross](#)
- Stations of the Cross: in school, CAFOD or Laura James' [Stations of the Cross series](#)

This week's learning uses Holy Week artwork to revisit the crucifixion and to explore forgiveness as a core Christian belief and practice. Art functions theologically as 'visual proclamation': it helps pupils attend to the emotions, relationships, and meaning within the Gospel story, not only the facts. In Luke 23:33–46, Jesus prays, 'Father, forgive them...', which reveals the character of God. Even while suffering injustice, Jesus refuses hatred and instead intercedes for those who harm him. This is not approving of wrongdoing; it is mercy that seeks conversion and healing rather than revenge.

Catholic teaching holds that God's forgiveness is offered when we repent, because God desires restored friendship with humanity. Forgiveness therefore has two directions: receiving God's mercy (being honest, sorry, and willing to change) and extending mercy to others. For pupils, it is important to distinguish forgiveness from forgetting or pretending something is fine. Forgiveness names the wrong, chooses not to pay back harm with harm, and aims for peace where possible. It may take time and sometimes needs help from trusted adults.

The prayer 'forgive us... as we forgive...' links worship to living: Christians ask God to make their hearts more like Jesus' heart. Using artwork, pupils can notice facial expressions, colour, posture, and symbols (cross, light, darkness) to discuss how love can stay strong in suffering and how forgiveness can break cycles of unkindness. The aim is to form moral imagination: pupils learn that God's love is patient and that Christians are called to practise forgiveness in everyday relationships.



Desert to Garden

Year 2

Week 2

Hear, Believe & Live

	U2.4.2 Recognise that Lent is a time for reconciliation and forgiveness
<i>Know</i>	Lent is a special time to say sorry and make a new start. God always forgives us when we are truly sorry, and we try to forgive others too. Reconciliation means making our relationships right again with God and with others.

	D2.4.2 Consider some examples of reconciliation and peacebuilding in art, e.g., reconciliation outside Coventry Cathedral	
<i>Discern</i>	Looking at artwork about peace and saying sorry helps us think about how people can forgive each other, restore their relationships, and show love like Jesus.	Suggested discovery questions 1. What do you think the artworks teach us about reconciliation, forgiveness, and peacebuilding? 2. Which artwork do you like the most and why? 3. Do you think each artwork is more about saying sorry or forgiving? Why do you think that?

	R2.4.2 Think about how making bad choices can harm themselves and others and why saying sorry matters
<i>Respond</i>	Pray an Examen to reflect upon choices that you have made, then focus on what you would like to say sorry for using 'Sorry stones' in a Celebration of the Word. Create a shared mural with others showing 'people helping and forgiving.' Make a 'Peace Dove' craft and talk about how they could bring peace at home or school.

Textual references

Luke 15: 32 The Lost Son

Key vocabulary

reconciliation	making things right again with God and others
repentance	being truly sorry and choosing to change
symbol	a sign that points to a deeper meaning

Teacher Notes

This week's learning develops the Christian idea that Lent is a season for reconciliation: making broken relationships right again with God and with other people. In Catholic theology, sin is not only 'breaking a rule'; it is damage to love and trust, so reconciliation is about healing what has been hurt. God's forgiveness is offered freely when a person is truly sorry, but it is not 'magic' that ignores harm: Christians are also called to repair relationships and put things right where they can.

The Parable of the Lost Son is included here as a reference point to anchor learning about reconciliation in Jesus' teaching. An in-depth study of the parable is not required.

Using artwork supports pupils to think deeply because images communicate meaning through posture, distance, touch, facial expression, and symbols. For example, the [Coventry Cathedral 'Reconciliation' sculpture](#) shows embrace rather than blame, suggesting that peace begins when people choose to meet again. A dove and olive branch symbolise peace as a gift that must be protected. Community mosaics show that peacebuilding is often slow and shared: people work together, listen, and create something new side by side. Art linked to the Prodigal Son story highlights both repentance (returning, telling the truth, starting again) and mercy (welcome, restoration, joy).

Other examples:

1. Picasso's [Dove of Peace](#)
What it shows: A simple white dove holding an olive branch.
Message: A powerful symbol of peace, often used after wars or in peace talks.
2. [Global Mosaic Project](#)
What it shows: Community-made mosaics in schools, churches, or parks, made by people from different backgrounds.
Message: Working together on art builds connection and unity.
3. He Qi's [The Return of the Prodigal Son](#)
What it shows: a dignified father embracing his returning son in a courtyard, while the older son approaches from the fields and other family details frame the scene. There are culturally specific elements, including the father's seated position of honour, the younger son's torn clothing and penitent posture, and symbols such as a family well and a bowl of rice.
Message: reconciliation is not only the father's forgiveness of the younger son, but the son's full restoration to belonging within the whole family. The well and rice symbolise welcome, sustenance, and reinstatement, suggesting that being forgiven means being received back into relationship, dignity, and 'home'.

For Year 2 pupils, the key distinction is between saying sorry and forgiving. Saying sorry is taking responsibility for wrong choices. Forgiving is choosing not to hold on to anger and to seek peace. Sometimes reconciliation takes time and needs safe support from adults, especially if someone is repeatedly unkind. The Christian goal is not 'pretending' but becoming peacemakers who act like Jesus in daily life.



Desert to Garden

Year 2
Weeks 3 & 4
Celebrate & Live

	U2.4.3 Correctly use religious words and phrases when describing in an age-appropriate way the Sacrament of Reconciliation, making simple connections between the sacrament and a belief in God's forgiveness
<i>Know</i>	Sin is when people choose not to do as God wants. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is how Catholics say sorry to God and ask God to forgive them. In Reconciliation, we confess our sins to a priest, who listens in Jesus' name. We pray an Act of Contrition to show we are truly sorry and want to change. The priest gives us a penance to help us put things right and grow in love. The priest prays the words of absolution, and God always forgives us and restores our friendship with him.

	D2.4.3 Listen to different sung versions of the Kyrie Eleison and talk about what the words mean
<i>Discern</i>	'Kyrie Eleison' means 'Lord have Mercy.' Suggested discovery questions 1. Why do you think the words are repeated? 2. Do you think singing 'Lord, have mercy' is a good way to talk to God? Why or why not? 3. Did one version sound more like a prayer to you than the others? Why do you think that?

	
<i>Respond</i>	Lead pupils through a simple Examination of Conscience. Create a new hymn on the theme of Reconciliation and perform it to others. Create a paper footprint for each step in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Walk the trial and explain what each step means.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

absolution	when the priest says a special prayer and God forgives our sins
act of contrition	a prayer we say to show we are truly sorry and want to change
examination of conscience	quietly thinking about what we have done right and wrong, and what we need to say sorry to God for
forgiveness	when someone lets go of hurt and choose love again; God forgives us when we are sorry
kyrie eleison	a Greek prayer that means 'Lord, have mercy'
penance	something we do after saying sorry, to help put things right and grow in love

Teacher Notes

Some different versions of the Kyrie Eleison which can be sung:

[CJM](#)
[Richard Cootes' Mass of God's Mercy](#)
[Gregorian Chants](#)

In this week's learning, pupils meet two important Church words: 'Kyrie eleison' and 'mercy'. 'Kyrie eleison' is Greek and Christians have used it in worship since the early Church. It means 'Lord, have mercy' and is often sung because repeated prayer helps the heart to listen, remember, and turn back to God.

In the Mass, the Kyrie sits within the Penitential Act, when the Church honestly names that people sometimes choose wrongly and asks God to heal what sin damages. Mercy is not God 'letting us off'; it is God's loving power to forgive, to put things right, and to give a new beginning. This connects with the Sacrament of Reconciliation: God forgives through the ministry Jesus gives to the Church, so that friendship with God can be restored and a person can grow in holiness.

Pupils can be helped to see that Christian repentance has three movements: recognising what went wrong (truth), being sorry and turning back (conversion), and receiving God's restoring love (forgiveness). The Kyrie is a short, beautiful way of praying this in community: we call on Jesus as Lord, trust his compassion, and ask for the grace to live differently.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The rite of Reconciliation is the Church's way of celebrating God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ. It begins with preparation: a person becomes quiet and makes an examination of conscience, thinking truthfully about choices, words, and actions, and how these have affected love of God and love of neighbour. This matters because sin is not only 'breaking a rule'; it harms relationships and weakens our freedom to do the good.

When the person meets the priest, the priest welcomes them and may begin with the Sign of the Cross. The priest represents the Church and listens in Jesus' name. The penitent then confesses sins simply and honestly. Confession is not about embarrassment; it is about bringing what is hidden into the light so it can be healed. The priest may offer brief counsel to help the person understand what went wrong and how to grow.

Next comes contrition. The penitent shows sorrow for sin and a real desire to change, often by praying an Act of Contrition. This prayer names sorrow, asks for God's mercy, and expresses the intention to avoid sin and do better. The priest then gives a penance. Penance is a small, practical response such as a prayer or an act of kindness. It does not 'pay for' forgiveness; it helps repair what has been damaged and strengthens new habits of love.

The heart of the rite is absolution. The priest stretches out his hand and prays the words of absolution. Catholics believe that God acts through this prayer: sins are forgiven and friendship with God is restored. The rite ends with thanksgiving and a call to live in peace, because mercy is meant to change how we live, not just how we feel.



Desert to Garden

Year 2
Weeks 5 & 6
Believe & Celebrate



U2.4.4

The Paschal candle shows that Jesus is the Light of the World

The Paschal candle is a special Easter candle that reminds us Jesus is the Light of the World.

At the Easter Vigil, the Church begins with a new fire outside to show Jesus' light shines in darkness.

The Paschal candle is lit from the new fire and carried into the dark church to show Jesus brings light to everyone.

At the Easter Vigil, the priest blesses water so it becomes holy.

Holy water reminds us of our Baptism, when we become part of God's family.

When the priest sprinkles holy water, it helps us remember that we share in Jesus' risen life and are called to live in His light.

Know



D2.4.4

Talk about links between the symbols of light and water at the Easter Vigil and what the symbols remind them of, for example, the story of Creation, the Sacrament of Baptism or Advent

At Easter, light and water remind us that Jesus is alive and that, in baptism, God gives us new life.

Discern

Suggested discovery questions

1. I wonder why the Church chooses light as a sign of Jesus being alive?
2. What if you walked into church at the Easter Vigil and it stayed completely dark, how would that change how Easter feels?
3. I wonder why water is such a strong sign for new life and belonging?



Respond

Study the symbols on the Paschal Candle at church or in school and find out what they mean.

Create a collage or picture response to one 'I wonder' question

Textual references

Key vocabulary

alpha and omega	first and last letters of the Greek alphabet; they mean Jesus is the beginning and the end of all things
darkness	when there is no light; in the Church it can be a sign of sadness, fear, or sin that Jesus overcomes
incense	sweet-smelling smoke used in worship to show our and prayer rising to God
light	sign that helps us understand Jesus brings new hope and life
Paschal Candle	the special Easter candle lit from the new fire; it shows Jesus is the Light of the World

Teacher Notes

The Easter Vigil is the Church's principal celebration of the Resurrection and the liturgical 'mother' of all vigils. It normally begins after nightfall so that the movement from darkness to light can be experienced, not just explained. The rite opens outside with the lighting of a new fire, signifying God's decisive action in raising Jesus, the true light that darkness cannot overcome. From this fire the Paschal Candle is lit. The candle is marked with a cross, the year, and the Greek letters Alpha and Omega to proclaim that Christ is Lord of time and history. As it is carried into the dark church, the deacon (or priest) sings a proclamation such as 'The light of Christ', and the congregation responds, 'Thanks be to God', showing that Easter faith is received as gift and shared.

The Paschal Candle represents the risen Christ: Christians call Jesus the 'Light of the World' because his resurrection shows that sin and death do not have the final word. The Vigil begins in darkness and a new fire is lit to show that God's saving action is like light breaking into darkness. As the flame is carried into the church, it symbolises Christ leading his people into new life and guiding them to live differently.

The Paschal Candle is marked with key symbols that proclaim who Jesus is:

1. A large cross shows that the risen Christ is the same Jesus who is crucified, and that his love is stronger than death.
2. The Greek letters Alpha and Omega mean 'the beginning' and 'the end', teaching that Jesus is Lord of all time and creation.
3. The numerals of the current year show that Christ is alive and present now.
4. Five grains of incense (often set into the cross) recall Jesus' five wounds and point to his sacrificial love. The candle's flame signifies Christ's risen life, a light that overcomes darkness.

The Exsultet (Easter Proclamation) follows, praising God for salvation and naming the Paschal Candle as a sign of the risen Christ. The Liturgy of the Word then traces God's saving plan through Scripture, typically including creation and God's deliverance of his people, so pupils can see that Easter fulfils what God has been doing all along. The return of the 'Alleluia' and the Gloria mark a shift from penitential restraint to resurrection joy.

The baptismal liturgy is central. Water is blessed, invoking the Holy Spirit, and the Church recalls that baptism unites a person to Christ's death and resurrection. Candidates may be baptised, and the whole assembly renews baptismal promises, rejecting sin and professing faith. Sprinkling with holy water makes this personal: we remember 'I belong to Christ' and I am called to live in his light. Baptism is not only a welcome ceremony: it is a sacrament in which God gives grace, forgives sin, and makes a person part of the Church, God's family. Water is a fitting sign because it cleanses, gives life, and can mark a real change, from one state to another. When holy water is sprinkled, it is also a call to live as Easter people, choosing love, truth, and hope.

The Vigil culminates in the Eucharist, where the Church gives thanks and shares in Christ's risen life sacramentally.



Desert to Garden

Year 3
Week 1
Hear



U3.4.1

Retell in any form the story of the feeding of the five thousand.

Know

Jesus miraculously feeds a crowd of about 5,000 people with only five loaves and two fish

Jesus blesses the food, shares it, and everyone eats until they are full.

There are twelve baskets left over, showing Jesus' power and God's generous love for his people.



Discern

When we share what we have, even if it's little, God can use it to help others in big ways.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Can you remember a time when you did something kind for someone? What happened after you did it? How did it make them feel?
2. How do small acts of kindness have a big impact?
3. Do you think this miracle is about food or something else?



Respond

Reflect upon how the boy in the miracle demonstrated the *Catholic School Pupil Profile* values of 'Generous and Grateful'.

Sit in a circle. Each pupil shares one small thing they could do this week to help others. Ask: 'How could this small act make a big difference, like the boy's lunch did?'

Imagine you are in the crowd of people sitting outside on the hills, listening to Jesus teach. Write a reflection on what you see and hear, and how this makes you feel.

Textual references

Matthew 14:13-21

Feeding of the 5000

Key vocabulary

Eucharist

the special 'thanksgiving' meal at Mass where Jesus gives Himself to us under the appearances of bread and wine (a re-enactment of the Last Supper)

miracle

signs from Jesus showing that the God's Kingdom is at hand

Teacher Notes

In Matthew's Gospel, the feeding of the 5,000 is not only a miracle of food but a sign of who Jesus is and what God's kingdom is like. Jesus sees the crowd and feels compassion, then he heals and feeds them: God's power is shown through mercy, not force. Matthew describes Jesus taking the loaves, blessing them, breaking them, and giving them to the disciples to share. These actions echo the way the Church speaks about the Eucharist, helping pupils see links between Jesus' saving work then and worship now.

Matthew also uses numbers to deepen meaning. The crowd is 'about five thousand men, besides women and children', stressing that God's care is for everyone and that nobody is overlooked. The 'twelve baskets' left over are a sign of abundance: God does not give 'just enough', but generously. Many Christians also connect 'twelve' with God's people (for example, the twelve tribes of Israel, superseded by the twelve apostles), suggesting that Jesus comes to gather and feed God's whole family. The 'five loaves' can be understood as pointing to the faith and life of God's people (some Christians link five with the five books of the Torah/Pentateuch - the first five books of the Old Testament). The two fish are often interpreted as being representative of the Old and New covenants. The small lunch becoming plenty shows that God can multiply what is offered in trust.

The word 'covenant' means a sacred promise that creates a relationship. In the Bible, a covenant is not just a deal or contract: it is God choosing people to belong to him, and giving them a way to live as his family.

The Old Covenant describes God's promises to Israel. God makes a covenant with Abraham, promising a people and blessing, and later with Moses at Sinai, where the Ten Commandments guide the people in how to live in friendship with God and with one another. The law is meant to shape a holy people who worship God and practise justice and mercy. God makes a covenant with Israel because he chooses a particular people to belong to him so that, through them, his blessing, truth, and holiness can be made known in the world. In the Old Testament, Israel is called to worship the one God, live by his commandments, and become a 'light' to the nations by showing what justice, mercy, and faithful love look like in real community life.

The New Covenant is God's renewed and fulfilled promise in Jesus. Christians believe Jesus brings forgiveness of sins and a new life with God, not by replacing God's love for Israel, but by completing God's plan to bless the whole world. At the Last Supper, Jesus speaks of 'the new covenant' in his blood: his death and resurrection open the way for all people to belong to God's family. In the Church, Baptism is the main doorway into this new covenant life. From a Catholic perspective, the New Covenant is not best described as God 'replacing' Israel, as if the first covenant failed and was scrapped. It is better described as God fulfilling and widening his covenant promise in Jesus. Christians believe that the law and the prophets point towards a deeper rescue: not only guidance about right living, but forgiveness of sin and a new heart (a renewed inner life) that enables people to love God and neighbour more fully. Jesus inaugurates this New Covenant through his death and resurrection. The 'newness' is that reconciliation with God is offered as a gift of grace, and the covenant family is opened to all nations, not limited by ethnicity, land, or ritual boundary-markers. The Church understands itself as gathered into this covenant through faith and Baptism, while also affirming that God remains faithful to his promises.

A key theological theme for this week is participation: Jesus involves the disciples in giving and sharing, showing that God often works through ordinary people who offer what they have.

God's Kingdom was a focus of Branch 3, so teachers may wish to draw links between what was learned last half-term and this week's learning.



Desert to Garden

Year 3

Week 2

Hear & Believe



U3.4.2

Recall the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper and make simple links with his words and actions in the miracle of the loaves

Know

At the Last Supper, Jesus blesses bread and wine and gives them to His disciples.

Jesus says, 'This is my body' And 'This is my blood' to show the bread and wine become special gifts of Himself.

The Feeding of the 5,000 and the Last Supper both show Jesus giving thanks, blessing, breaking, and sharing, which helps us understand the Eucharist.



Discern

Jesus shared food in both passages to show His love by giving people what they need.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Which passage do you think shows more about who Jesus is? Why?
2. In both passages, Jesus shares food. Which sharing do you think was more special or important? Why do you think that?
3. Jesus fed people's bodies with loaves and fish, and He fed their heart with the Eucharist. Which kind of feeding do you think people needs more today? Why?



Respond

Dramatise the Last Supper focusing on the key words and actions of Jesus, relating them to what we hear during the Liturgy of the Eucharist at Mass.

Act out how Jesus shares and loves us today.

Hold a time of prayer in thanksgiving for Jesus' love, reflecting on thoughts and feelings about how Jesus shows us love. Explore the mission to share that love with others throughout the week.

Textual references

Matthew 14:13-21

Feeding of the 5000

Matthew 26:26-29

The Last Supper (aka The Institution of the Eucharist)

Key vocabulary

bless	to ask God to make something holy and good
Eucharist	the special 'thanksgiving' meal at Mass where Jesus gives Himself to us under the appearances of bread and wine (a re-enactment of the Last Supper)
thanksgiving	saying 'thank you' to God for His gifts

Teacher Notes

This week's learning helps pupils see that Jesus feeds people in two connected ways: He meets real physical hunger and He also gives Himself as spiritual food. In Matthew's Feeding of the 5000, Jesus takes what is offered, gives thanks, blesses, breaks, and gives the food so that all can eat. These actions are not just a method for sharing, they reveal something about who Jesus is: He acts with God's authority and compassion, and He provides in abundance, not scarcity.

At the Last Supper, Jesus uses the same pattern of actions with bread and wine, but now He explains their deepest meaning. When Jesus says, 'This is my body' and 'This is my blood', Christians understand that He is giving the gift of Himself, and teaching the Church how to remember and receive Him. Catholics call this sacrament the Eucharist, which means 'thanksgiving'. The words and actions at the Last Supper show that Jesus' love is not only kind feelings, but self-giving love: He offers His life for others and invites His followers into that gift.

Holding the two passages together helps pupils grasp a key Catholic claim: Jesus' miracles are signs that point beyond the moment. The Feeding of the 5000 points towards the Eucharist, where Jesus continues to nourish His people and form them into one family who learn to share, serve, and give thanks.



Desert to Garden

Year 3

Week 3

Hear, Celebrate & Live

 U3.4.3	Describe how Jesus showed his love at the Last Supper and how he shares this love when people celebrate their first Eucharist
Know	At the Last Supper, Jesus shows His love by giving us the gift of the Eucharist and asking His friends to remember Him. In the Eucharist, Jesus is really and truly present under the appearance of bread and wine. At their first Eucharist, people are welcomed more deeply into the Church family and begin to receive Jesus in a new way.

 D3.4.2	Explore some different cultural practices associated with Holy Week	
Discern	Around the world, people celebrate in different ways, but all remember this: Jesus gives His love, and we share in it through the Eucharist.	Suggested discovery questions 1. Did you know that some countries have big street parades for Holy Week, while others have quiet church services? Which do you think is better for remembering Jesus and why? 2. Some families don't eat certain things during Holy Week. Why do you think people do that? Would you like to do that too, or not? Why? 3. Reflecting on different practices around the world, and then thinking about what you do to observe Holy Week, what would you keep the same and what would you change? Why?

 R3.4.3	Reflect on what their learning means for their life	
Respond	Prepare a Celebration of the Word reflecting on how the Eucharist is a way Jesus still shares His love. How can you show love just like Jesus does at the Last Supper? What responsibilities does becoming a part of the body of Christ have?	

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

This week's learning helps pupils understand that the Church is one worldwide family that remembers Holy Week together, even though different cultures express that remembrance in different ways. The heart of Holy Week is always the same: Jesus gives His love completely, and the Church receives and shares that love most deeply in the Eucharist.

- In **Spain**, Holy Week parades use slow walking, drums, and solemn music to help people pray with their bodies as well as their words. People wear special robes and carry large statues of Jesus and Mary through the streets. In some places, the Eucharist is carried too, reminding everyone that Holy Week is not only a story from the past, but a living mystery: Jesus is present with His people as they remember His Passion with reverence.
- In **Mexico**, towns hold Passion plays and living tableaux, where people act out the days from Palm Sunday to Easter. This helps the whole community 'enter' the Gospel events and reflect on what Jesus does for our salvation: He freely chooses faithful love, even when it costs Him everything.
- In the **Philippines**, there are street processions and the Easter celebration called 'Salubong', which joyfully shows Jesus and Mary meeting again after the Resurrection. On Holy Thursday, many parishes hold Eucharistic processions to the Altar of Repose. Candles, flowers, and prayers express adoration and gratitude for Jesus' gift of Himself.
- In **Italy**, the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday makes Jesus' teaching visible: greatness in God's Kingdom looks like service. When priests (and the Pope) wash feet, the Church is saying that Eucharistic worship must shape Eucharistic living: love becomes humble action.
- In **Ethiopia**, Palm Sunday is colourful and joyful, with palms and singing, and many people fast during Holy Week by avoiding certain foods. Fasting is not about punishment: it is a way of making space for God, training the heart to seek what matters most.

Together, these practices show unity in faith and diversity in expression: many customs, one Gospel, one Church.

At the Last Supper, Jesus gives the Church the Eucharist and tells His friends to 'do this in memory of me', so that every generation can receive His love in a real and living way. Catholics believe that, at Mass, Jesus is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine: it still looks and tastes like bread and wine, but it becomes the Body and Blood of Christ. A person's first Eucharist is special because it is their first time receiving Holy Communion, which is a deep sign of belonging to Jesus and to the Church family. It is not only a 'symbol' of love, but a gift of Jesus Himself, strengthening us to live as His disciples. Because we receive one Lord, we are also united to one another, so First Communion is both a personal moment and a celebration for the whole parish community.



Desert to Garden

Year 3

Week 4

Believe & Celebrate



U3.4.4

Make links between the story of the Last Supper and the Mass, giving reasons for these links

Know

During the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass, the priest says the same words that Jesus says at the Last Supper.

The Eucharist is central to the Catholic faith and helps Christians grow closer to God, giving us strength to live and love like Jesus.

When Christians receive Holy Communion, they are joined to Jesus and to everyone in God's family, like the disciples are at the Last Supper.



Discern

When Christians receive the Eucharist, it's like sitting at the table with Jesus, sharing in His love just like the disciples did.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Why do you think Jesus asks the disciples to 'Do this in memory of me'? What do you think He wants us to remember?
2. Do you think receiving Holy communion today is like being at the Last Supper? Why or why not?
3. How do you feel when you see or receive the Eucharist at Mass? Why do you think it feels that way?



R3.4.2

Talk about the experience of Mass with Catholics and asking questions about their experiences and feelings

Respond

Q&A with Catholics who have received the Eucharist, this may include children who made their First Holy Communion recently.

Invite your priest, deacon or religious sister/brother to lead a talking Mass to explain the links between the Eucharist and the Last Supper: what part of the Mass do you like the most and why? What does receiving the Eucharist mean to you?

What does attending Mass mean for Catholics? What does it mean to me? Write or draw your responses.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

communion	being joined closely to Jesus and to God's family, the Church
Eucharistic prayer	the main prayer at Mass when the priest says Jesus' words from the Last Supper

Teacher Notes

In this week's learning, pupils make links between the Last Supper and the Mass. At the Last Supper, Jesus gathers His disciples, gives thanks, blesses bread and wine, and tells them to keep doing this 'in memory of me'. Catholics understand this as Jesus giving the Church a way to remember Him that is more than thinking about the past: at Mass, the Church obeys Jesus' command, and His saving love is made present to us now.

The heart of this link is the Eucharistic Prayer. During it, the priest repeats Jesus' words from the Last Supper. Catholics believe that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood, even though they still look like bread and wine. This is why the Eucharist is not only a meal symbol, but a sacrament: a real gift of Jesus to His people.

The Church calls the Eucharist the 'source and summit' of Christian life. 'Source' means it is where Christian life flows from: we receive Jesus' life and grace, and we are strengthened to live with faith, hope, and love. 'Summit' means it is the highest point we are travelling towards: the deepest act of worship and unity with God that the Church offers. This matters because the Eucharist joins us to Jesus and also to one another, making the Church one family in Christ. When Christians receive Holy Communion, they are united with the risen Lord and sent to live as His disciples in daily life.



 R3.4.3	Reflect on what their learning means for their life
<i>Respond</i>	Draw a 'Eucharist help me...' wheel. Label sections: Helps me love; helps me belong; helps me say 'thank you'; helps me grow. In each section write or draw how the Eucharist could help them live like Jesus day-to-day. Hold a 'Eucharist in Action' class challenge. As a class, think of ways to live out how the Eucharist teaches us to live (e.g. share, forgive, help, welcome etc.) Award points for every act that is demonstrated by a pupil this week. Pupils report back with drawings, photos, or stories of how they become united with Jesus' Body, the Church.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

communion	being united with God and His Church
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Teacher Notes

In this week's learning, pupils explore the Eucharist as the Church's meeting place with Jesus. The word 'Eucharist' comes from a Greek word meaning 'thanksgiving'. At Mass, the Church gives thanks to the Father for the gift of Jesus, especially for his saving love shown in his death and resurrection. This helps pupils see that the Eucharist is not only a memory of Jesus, but a living prayer of praise and gratitude.

Catholics believe that in the Eucharist Jesus gives himself to us as spiritual food. Under the appearance of bread and wine, Christ is truly present, so receiving Holy Communion is a real encounter with him. This is why Catholics say the Eucharist shows that God is truly with us: God comes close, strengthens faith, and deepens friendship with him.

The Eucharist also builds the Church. When people receive Holy Communion, they are joined more closely to Christ and, because they share one Communion, they are also joined to one another. This unity is not limited to one parish or country: Catholics around the world celebrate the same Eucharist, so the Church is experienced as one family gathered by God. This week's learning also links Eucharist and discipleship. Being fed by Christ shapes how Catholics live: gratitude becomes generosity, communion becomes care for others, and hope grows because Christ remains with his people.



Desert to Garden

Year 3

Week 6

Believe & Celebrate

 U3.4.6 U3.4.7	Describe, with increasing detail and accuracy, the prayers, religious signs, and actions of the Mass, focusing on the Liturgy of the Eucharist Give reasons for actions and symbols used in the Mass and make links between beliefs and actions
<i>Know</i>	At the Offertory, bread and wine are brought to the altar and the priest offers them to God, thanking him for his gifts. In the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest says Jesus' words from the Last Supper and asks the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. We kneel after the consecration because Jesus is truly present, and we share the sign of peace to show forgiveness and unity before Communion.

	D3.4.1 Wonder about the words of the offertory prayer and the story of Creation.
<i>Discern</i>	God made everything, so we bring bread and wine from his Creation to the altar to say 'thank you' and ask God to bless them. Suggested discovery questions 1. I wonder why we say 'Blessed are you, Lord God of all Creation' when we bring the bread and wine to the altar? 2. I wonder why we bring gifts from the earth to God. What do you think they mean? 3. I wonder why we call God the Creator in the offertory prayer, just like in the story of Genesis when He made the world. What does that tell us about where our gifts come from?

	R3.4.1 Reflect on the Catholic belief that Jesus gives himself in Holy Communion
<i>Respond</i>	At Mass, focus on the words of the prayers, religious signs and actions of the Mass. What do you notice? Draw a person receiving Holy Communion and write or say what Jesus is giving them (e.g. love, strength, peace, courage, forgiveness etc.)

Textual references

Key vocabulary

bread	food made from grain; at Mass it becomes the Body of Christ
oblation	offering a gift to God
wine	drink made from grapes; at Mass it becomes the Blood of Christ

Teacher Notes

Teachers may also refer to the 'All you need to know about Mass' booklet.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Church teaches pupils to notice that worship is always a response to God's gift. The offertory prayer begins, 'Blessed are you, Lord God of all Creation', because it names God as Creator and source: everything that exists depends on God's loving act of making and sustaining the world. This links directly with Genesis, where creation is described as God's good work. So, when bread and wine are brought to the altar, they are not 'extra presents' for God, but signs that all we have is received first. The prayers help pupils grasp gratitude, stewardship, and right relationship: we give thanks for creation and offer back, in a small and symbolic way, what God has already provided.

Oblation is the formal term for the Church's act of 'offering' within the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In the Roman Rite, it is expressed in the preparation prayers and then taken up explicitly in the Eucharistic Prayer, where the Church presents the sacrificial gift to the Father 'through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ'. The oblation is therefore ecclesial: the whole Church offers worship in union with Jesus' once-for-all self-offering. It is also vocational: pupils can grasp that Christians 'offer' their lives to God by joining their intentions, choices, and work to the prayer of the Mass.

Bread and wine are 'gifts of the earth' and also 'work of human hands'. This matters theologically: creation is not ignored or replaced in Christian worship, but taken up and offered. The Church uses ordinary created things to speak about God's grace, showing that God meets us in real life, not only in ideas. Pupils can therefore listen for words like 'creation', 'gift', and 'blessing' and connect them to the belief that God is generous and close.

Bread and wine are chosen because they are everyday food and drink, shared at meals, so they naturally point to nourishment, friendship, and belonging. In the Bible, bread often stands for what people need to live, and Jesus even calls himself the 'Bread of Life', linking ordinary hunger with our deeper need for God. Wine is a sign of celebration and joy, used at feasts, so it fits the Church's belief that Jesus brings a new and joyful life with God.

Bread and wine also carry deep Jewish meaning: at Passover, the people remember God rescuing them, and Jesus chooses a Passover meal at the Last Supper to give the Eucharist its meaning. Because bread is made from many grains and wine from many grapes, they also symbolise the Church: many people become one body in Christ. They are 'gifts of the earth' and 'work of human hands', so they show how God uses creation and human work together to give us his grace.

The Eucharistic Prayer then moves from offering and thanksgiving to God's saving action in Jesus. The priest repeats Jesus' words from the Last Supper and asks the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. This is why the words, signs, and actions matter: they are not decoration, but the Church's faithful way of doing what Jesus commands, and of receiving what God gives. Encourage pupils to notice how the prayers address God, thank God, and ask God to act, because this reveals that Mass is both remembrance and real encounter with Christ.



Desert to Garden

Year 4

Week 1

Hear & Believe

	U4.4.1 Retell, with increasing detail, the Parable of the Lost Son, and make simple connections with Christian beliefs about God's mercy and forgiveness
<i>Know</i>	In the parable, the younger son takes his inheritance early, leaves home, and wastes everything in a faraway country. The younger son comes home and says sorry, and his father forgives him and celebrates, but his brother is cross. Christians believe God forgives when we repent and loves everyone equally, even when it feels unfair.

 <i>Discern</i>	Suggested discovery questions 1. How do you think the older brother felt when his dad forgave his brother? What if you were the older brother... what would you have done? 2. What if the younger son had never come home... what do you think would have happened to him? 3. How does this story help Christians understand how God forgives people?
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	R4.4.3 Consider how their own lives and the future of the communities to which they belong could be transformed by what they have learned about forgiveness
<i>Respond</i>	Discuss your school/classroom rules. How are forgiveness and mercy shown? Explore news stories where forgiveness is shown to others and how communities have changed because of it. How do you demonstrate the <i>Catholic School Pupil Profile</i> values of 'compassionate and loving'?

Textual references

Luke 15:11-32 Parable of the Lost Son (aka 'the Prodigal Son')

Key vocabulary

forgiveness	choosing to let go of anger and not seek payback after someone has done wrong
mercy	love that helps and forgives, even when it is not deserved
repent	to turn back to God, say sorry, and try to change

Teacher Notes

In this week's learning, pupils meet one of Jesus' parables: a story He tells to reveal what God is like and how God wants people to live. In the Parable of the Lost Son, the younger son asks for his inheritance early and leaves home. In Jesus' Jewish culture, that request would sound deeply disrespectful, because it treats family relationships as less important than money and breaks the duty to honour one's father.

When the son 'comes to himself' and returns, the father runs to meet him. This detail matters: a respected older man would normally move with dignity, not run. Jesus uses this surprising image to show the father's mercy, meaning love that moves quickly towards someone who has done wrong. The father does not wait for the son to earn his way back. He restores him to the family through welcome and celebration. Christians read the father as a sign of God, whose forgiveness is not reluctant or stingy, but generous and relational: God wants the lost person back, not simply punished.

The older brother is also important. He represents the temptation to reduce goodness to 'fairness' and reward. His anger exposes a question at the heart of the parable: will we rejoice when mercy is given to someone else, even if we think they do not deserve it? The father's reply teaches that love is not a limited supply.

For Christians, repentance is not only feeling sorry but turning back towards God and choosing a changed way of life. The parable therefore shapes moral formation: forgiven people learn to forgive, and restored people learn to restore others.



Desert to Garden

Year 4

Week 2

Hear & Live

	U4.4.2 Make simple connections with the Parable of the Sheep & the Goats and the Christian belief that helping others is part of loving God
<i>Know</i>	In the parable, Jesus says people will be separated like a shepherd separates sheep from goats, based on how they treat others. The 'sheep' are the people who help those in need, such as feeding the hungry and caring for the sick, and they are rewarded with eternal life. Jesus teaches that when we love and serve other people, we are also loving and serving God.

	D4.4.2 Express a point of view about the difference between the people who are like sheep and the people who are like goats in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats	
<i>Discern</i>	In the parable, the 'sheep' are people who help those in need, and the 'goats' are people who do not.	Suggested discovery questions 1. What do the 'sheep' do for people in need in the parable, and what do the 'goats' fail to do? 2. Do you think it's fair that the 'sheep' are rewarded and the 'goats' are not? Why or why not? 3. Why do you think Jesus said that helping others is the same as helping Him? What do you think this means for people today?

	<i>Respond</i> Roleplay everyday scenarios (e.g. someone being left out; someone needing help; someone sharing etc.) The rest of the class decides whether the person acted more like a 'sheep' or a 'goat' and explains why, including the impact this might have on others. Find out the items needed by Fr Hudson's Caritas or a local food bank. Have a week-long class drive to show solidarity with those experiencing need.
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Textual references

Matthew 25:31-46 Parable of the Sheep & the Goats

Key vocabulary

allegory a story where the people and events stand for a deeper meaning

conscience the 'inner voice' that helps us know right from wrong

Teacher Notes

In this week's learning, pupils study Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25:31–46, often called the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. It is set in a scene of judgement, where Jesus describes the 'Son of Man' coming in glory and separating people as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The key idea is that God takes seriously how people treat others, especially those who are vulnerable.

This passage works as an allegory. An allegory is a story or picture where characters and events stand for deeper meanings. Here, the 'King' or 'Son of Man' stands for Christ as judge; the 'shepherd' stands for God's authority to discern what is true; the 'sheep' represent those who respond to need with practical love; and the 'goats' represent those who ignore need or remain indifferent. The hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned stand for real people who suffer, but they also represent anyone whose dignity is not being protected. Jesus' shocking claim is that service offered to them is received by Him: 'whatever you did for one of the least of these... you did for me'. This is a profound Christian belief about human dignity: every person bears God's image, so love of neighbour is never separate from love of God.

The 'reward' language is not about earning God's love through good deeds. Rather, the passage teaches that faith is meant to become visible in action. It asks pupils to consider conscience, responsibility, and what a life shaped by God's Kingdom looks like: mercy, generosity, and attentiveness to those in need. In Catholic tradition, this links closely to the corporal works of mercy (feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, visiting the sick), which are practical ways of living out discipleship.

Pupils will revisit this parable in Week 5 and establish links with Catholic social teaching and the corporal works of mercy.



Correctly sequence the events of Holy Week, describing some of the different reactions to Jesus during the events of Holy Week and how they speak to Christians today

On Palm Sunday Jesus enters Jerusalem; the crowd welcomes Him with palm branches and 'Hosanna', but not everyone accepts Him.

Jesus shares the Last Supper and washes His disciples' feet, then He is arrested, tried, and crucified, as some reject Him while others stay faithful and grieve.

Jesus rises from the dead three days later; His friends move from fear and sadness to amazement and joy, and Christians believe this Good News gives hope today.



Holy Week helps us understand how much Jesus loves us. Christians today try to love, forgive, and share the Good News just like Jesus does in the Gospels.

1. On Palm Sunday, why do the people welcome Jesus, and what do you think Jesus wants them to understand about the kind of king He is?
2. On Good Friday, Jesus forgives even while He is suffering. Why is forgiveness such a powerful kind of love?
3. On Easter Sunday, what changes when Christians believe Jesus is risen, and why is that 'Good News'?



Pray the Stations of the Cross.

Jesus taught us to serve other people. How can you serve others at home, school or in your parish community?

Create a cross out of cardboard or sticks and decorate it with words or pictures that remind you of Jesus' love and sacrifice.

Luke 19:28-38	Jesus enters Jerusalem
Luke 22:7-23	The Last Supper
Luke 22:47-53	Jesus' arrest
Luke 23:33-46	Jesus' Crucifixion and Death

Key vocabulary

Hosanna a shout of praise meaning 'Save us!' or 'Please save!'

Teacher Notes

N.B. Pupils should have an overview of the events of Holy Week. Detailed knowledge of each event is not required by U4.4.3

Holy Week is the Church's most important week because it gathers the key events through which Christians believe Jesus saves and heals the world. In the Gospels, Jesus enters Jerusalem at Passover, when many Jewish families remember God freeing Israel from slavery. The crowd greets Jesus with palms and cries of 'Hosanna', treating Him like a king. Yet Jesus chooses a humble entrance, showing that His kingship is not about power or violence, but about God's rule of love, mercy, and peace.

In the Gospels, Jesus deliberately goes to Jerusalem for Passover, so Holy Week is rooted in the city where Jewish worship at the Temple and the feast of liberation frame the meaning of His saving death and resurrection.

Jerusalem is also symbolically central because it is the holy city of God's covenant people, the place of sacrifice, prayer, and pilgrimage. Christians understand Jesus' actions in Jerusalem as fulfilling God's promises: He is welcomed as king, offers Himself in love, and opens a new way of life through His resurrection, so the city becomes the setting where God's plan of salvation reaches its climax.

As Holy Week continues, reactions to Jesus become sharply divided. At the Last Supper, Jesus shares a final meal with His disciples, teaching them to remember Him and to live as a community shaped by self-giving love. When He is arrested, some disciples fearfully run away, while others remain close in grief and loyalty. Jesus is put on trial and condemned, revealing how quickly public opinion and unjust systems can turn against what is good and true. Forgiveness is powerful because it refuses to let anger and revenge control what happens next, and it can heal relationships. Jesus shows that real love stays faithful even when it costs something, and it can change hearts by choosing mercy.

On Good Friday, Christians contemplate the Crucifixion: Jesus suffers without returning hatred for hatred. This shows a distinctive Christian claim about love: it can forgive, endure, and seek the good of others, even at great cost. On Easter Sunday, the Resurrection changes everything. The disciples move from confusion and fear to amazement and joy, because they believe death does not have the final word. For Christians today, Holy Week is not only history; it forms conscience and discipleship. It invites pupils to consider how they respond to Jesus: with praise, indifference, rejection, or faithful love, and how they can share the 'Good News' through forgiveness, service, and hope. Christians believe that if Jesus is risen, then death and sin do not have the final word, and God's love is stronger than everything. That is 'Good News' because it gives hope, courage, and a reason to keep living like Jesus, even when life is hard.



Desert to Garden

Year 4

Week 4

Hear



U4.4.5

Retell the story of St Peter during Holy Week

Know

At the Last Supper, Jesus tells Peter he will deny him three times before the cock crows, even though Peter says he will never leave him.

In Gethsemane, Jesus asks Peter to stay awake and pray with him, but Peter falls asleep.

Later that night, Peter is asked three times if he knows Jesus; he denies it each time, then the cock crows and Peter remembers Jesus' words and weeps.



D4.4.1

Consider why St Peter might have turned away from Jesus and how that made him feel making connections with when they have let people down or broken a promise

Discern

St Peter made a mistake when he said he didn't know Jesus, but he felt sorry afterwards. His story shows that everyone makes mistakes, but saying sorry and being forgiven is part of following Jesus.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Why do you think Peter said he didn't know Jesus, even though he loved Him? What might have been going through his mind at the time?
2. Have you ever promised to do something but then didn't? What if you could go back and change what happened, what would you do differently and why?
3. What do you think Jesus thought about Peter after he denied Him?



Respond

Write or draw a short letter to Jesus asking for forgiveness after denying Him, as if you were Peter.

Populate a 'Forgiveness comparison chart' with two columns: Peter's story (Then) & My life (Now). Fill in examples of mistakes, feelings, and forgiveness in both columns.

Textual references

Matthew 26:17-35	The Passover and Peter's denial foretold
Matthew 26:36-46	Jesus prays
Matthew 26:47-56	The betrayal and arrest of Jesus
Matthew 26:69-75	Peter's denials

Key vocabulary

mercy	God's loving kindness that helps us even when we do not necessarily deserve it
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Teacher Notes

St Peter is one of Jesus' closest disciples, yet Holy Week shows that even faithful people can fail under pressure. At the Last Supper (during Passover), Jesus warns Peter that he will turn away and say he does not know Him before the cock crows. This is not Jesus 'catching Peter out'; it shows Jesus' deep knowledge of the human heart, and it prepares us to see that God's love does not depend on our perfection.

In Gethsemane, Jesus asks His friends to stay awake and pray with Him. Peter falling asleep highlights a key theme of discipleship: we need prayer because love can be sincere but still weak when fear, tiredness, or danger arrive. When Peter later denies Jesus three times, his words are a self-protection reflex. The Gospel is honest about this failure so pupils can see that sin often begins with fear and the desire to keep ourselves safe, even at the cost of truth.

The cockcrow becomes a moment of conscience: it triggers Peter's memory of Jesus' words and helps him recognise what he has done. Peter's tears matter theologically because they show repentance, not just regret - the water from Peter's tears recall the water used during Baptism, when Original Sin is absolved, showing God's unconditional forgiveness, even at this moment of ultimate denial. Repentance means turning back to God: owning the truth, feeling sorrow, and choosing a different path. Christians read Peter's story as a message of mercy: Jesus does not stop loving Peter, and Peter is not defined by his worst moment. This is why the Church can hold Peter up as a leader later on: God can restore people and use them again when they return with humility.



Desert to Garden

Year 4

Week 5

Hear, Believe & Live



U4.4.5

Correctly use developing specialist vocabulary to name and describe the corporal works of mercy, making links with the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

Know

The seven corporal works of mercy are:

1. **Feeding the hungry**
2. **Giving drink to the thirsty**
3. **Welcoming the stranger**
4. **Clothing the naked**
5. **Visiting the sick**
6. **Visiting the imprisoned**

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats tells us that when we undertake the corporal works of mercy we are helping God.



Discern

Catholic social teaching says every person has dignity, so Catholics serve people in need through the corporal works of mercy to help build a fairer world.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Why should we help people who are poor, sick, or lonely?
2. Catholics help people through the corporal works of mercy because they believe it's a way of serving God. What might someone with a different worldview say about why we should care for others?
3. How might a Christian explain why they help others, and how might a non-religious person explain it? What is similar and what is different?



R4.4.2

Reflect on what it is they need to change about themselves during Lent to be better people and discuss how focusing on one of the works of mercy could help with this, for example, caring for the most vulnerable in their communities

Respond

Investigate charitable outreach work within school and the parish, which reflects the corporal works of mercy by exploring newsletters and websites.

Write a short reflection on one thing you want to change about yourself during Lent. Make a pledge to link it to a corporal work of mercy (e.g. To be kinder, I will try and visit or talk to someone who feels alone)

Debate whether we should always help people, even if it's hard. Incorporate Catholic teaching.

Textual references

Matthew 25:31-46

Parable of the Sheep & the Goats (a quick revision from Week 2)

Key vocabulary

corporal works of mercy	seven holy ways Catholics help people with real needs
dignity	the special worth every person has because God made them and loves them
preferential option for the poor	the Church's teaching that people experiencing greatest need should come first in our care

Teacher Notes

Catholic social teaching begins with the belief that every person is made in the image of God, so each human life has God-given dignity that cannot be earned or taken away. Because Jesus becomes man in the Incarnation, Christians believe God has shown how precious every person is. This is why the Church teaches a 'preferential option for the poor': when people are hungry, thirsty, sick, imprisoned, homeless, or excluded, Christians are called to notice them first, not last.

The corporal works of mercy are traditional, practical ways of loving with our bodies and our time, not just with kind feelings. They include: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, visiting the imprisoned, and burying the dead. These actions matter because they protect dignity and help people live the life God wants for them. In Catholic thinking, mercy and justice belong together: mercy is compassion in action, and justice is making relationships and society more fair, especially for those who are suffering.

The corporal works of mercy are the Church's traditional way of naming the concrete, bodily ways Christians love their neighbour. Jesus places them at the heart of discipleship in Matthew 25, where He identifies Himself with people who are hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or imprisoned. Serving them is, in a real sense, serving Christ.

The Church teaches that these works are not 'extra' kindnesses for especially good people. They are a normal expression of faith working through love, because human beings are made in God's image and therefore have an unbreakable dignity. The Catechism describes the works of mercy as 'charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbour in his spiritual and bodily necessities'. That means they are meant to become habits: noticing need, responding with generosity, and protecting the dignity of the person helped, not just 'doing a task'.

Pope Francis linked the works of mercy directly to the Church's mission: mercy must become 'a living sign of the Father's love in the world', so Christians are sent from worship into practical compassion. In this way, the corporal works of mercy are both personal and social: they shape the heart to be more like Christ, and they also challenge unfairness by meeting real needs and building a more just community.

Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25 (the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats) helps Christians understand this clearly. The 'sheep' are not praised for saying the right words, but for loving deeds. Jesus identifies himself with people in need, so serving them is treated as serving him. The parable is not just about private kindness. It also challenges Christians to build communities where feeding, welcoming, visiting, and caring are normal, because God's kingdom is a kingdom of love that can already be seen when people live like this.



Desert to Garden

Year 4

Week 6

Celebrate & Live

	U4.4.6 Make simple connections between belonging to the Church and living out the 'Works of Mercy' in support of those in need (for example, giving alms in Lent or praying for someone who is sad)
<i>Know</i>	Catholics belong to Christ's Body, the Church, so we care for others because we are one family. Catholics show love for God by doing kind and helpful actions for people in need, as Jesus teaches us. During Lent Catholics give alms and pray for people who are sad or suffering as ways of living out the works of mercy.

	D4.4.3 Make connections between being a Christian and choosing to live out the 'Works of Mercy'
<i>Discern</i>	The corporal works of mercy don't just show who we are, they help bring God's love to life on earth. Suggested discovery questions 1. How could one corporal work of mercy change a situation from unfair to fair, or from lonely to cared for? 2. Why do you think Jesus cares not just about what we believe, but what we do for people in need? 3. What do you think 'bringing God's love to life on earth' looks like in everyday life?

	R4.4.1 Reflect on how the life and work of a person or organisation (historical or contemporary) lives out the works of mercy and/or the love for those oppressed by poverty and the inspiration they offer for their life
<i>Respond</i>	Create a pen portrait profile for a person or organisation: Who are they? What works of mercy do they show? Who do they help and why? What can we learn from them? How might they inspire me to act? How does this organisation or person inspire you to take action to help others?

Textual references

Key vocabulary

alms	money, food or help we give to people who need it
Body of Christ	a name for the Church, meaning Christians are joined to Jesus and to each other
penance	doing something to help you turn back to God and make better choices

Teacher Notes

Catholics understand 'belonging to the Church' as being joined into a shared life with Christ and with other Christians. This belonging begins in Baptism and is renewed whenever the Church gathers for prayer and worship. Because Christians are joined together in one communion, caring for a neighbour is not an optional extra. It is part of discipleship: living as Jesus teaches.

This week's focus is on how faith becomes action. Catholics believe love for God is shown in concrete choices, especially towards people who are struggling. When someone is hungry, lonely, sick, or frightened, Christian care tries to respond in ways that protect the person's worth and help them flourish. These actions are often called 'works of mercy' because they are shaped by mercy: a love that moves towards need rather than turning away.

Lent provides a special context for this. The Church invites Catholics to practise penance, which means training the heart and habits, so life becomes more Christ-like. Two key Lenten practices named here are giving and praying for others. Giving in Lent is meant to be sacrificial and thoughtful: sharing time, money, or resources so that another person's burden is lighter. Prayer for those who are sad or suffering is an act of intercession: asking God to strengthen, heal, comfort, and guide them. In Catholic faith, intercessory prayer also changes the one who prays, forming compassion and keeping the needs of others at the centre of the Christian life.

Taken together, these practices show that Christians are called to serve with love that is real, steady, and shaped by hope.

Some inspirational lived examples of enacting the Church's preferential option for the poor:

- **St Mother Teresa**
Known for her work with the poor and marginalized in India, particularly through her organisation, the Missionaries of Charity
- **St Elizabeth of Hungary**
A wealthy princess who gave alms to the poor and needy, demonstrating the 'feed the hungry' work of mercy.
- **St Marianne Cope**
A Catholic nursing sister who cared for those abandoned and rejected by society, exemplifying the "visit the sick" work of mercy.
- **St Elizabeth Ann Seton**
A woman who founded a religious order dedicated to serving the poor and establishing schools, demonstrating the "shelter the homeless" and other works of mercy.
- **Oscar Romero**
A Catholic archbishop who defended human rights and served the poor and marginalized in El Salvador, demonstrating the "visit the imprisoned" and other works of mercy
- **St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)**
They are dedicated to helping those in need, often providing assistance with basic needs like food, shelter, and clothing.
- **Sisters of Mercy**
They engage in various ministries worldwide, reflecting the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy in contemporary ways.



Desert to Garden

Year 5

Week 1

Hear, Believe & Celebrate

	U5.4.1 Explain what happens on Ash Wednesday and how Christians mark this day, using religious vocabulary to describe symbols and actions
<i>Know</i>	The 40 days of Lent remind us of Jesus praying and facing temptation in the desert. Ash Wednesday begins Lent, and Catholics receive ashes as a sign that they need God's mercy and forgiveness. A priest or minister makes the Sign of the Cross with ashes on our forehead and says, 'Turn away from sin and believe in the Gospel' or 'Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return'.

	D5.4.2 Think about the temptations Jesus faces in the wilderness, ask 'what if' questions about the times they have faced temptations in their own lives	
<i>Discern</i>	By thinking about Jesus' temptations, we can ask God for help to make good choices when we are tempted too.	Suggested discovery questions 1. What if you knew doing something wrong would make your life easier, like Jesus being asked to turn stones in bread. What might help you to say 'no'? 2. What if Jesus had given in to the devil's temptations. How might that have changed the story we tell at Lent and Easter? 3. What could you do the next time you face temptation, so you can stay strong like Jesus did?

	5.5.1 Reflect on the links between the words chrism and Christian and discuss what it means for Christians to be anointed for Christ today
<i>Respond</i>	Make a promise card stating how you will 'turn away from sin' and make better choices this Lent. What will you change straight away? What will be a personal challenge and harder to change? How could this promise help your family, school, or parish community? Look at <i>Christ in the Desert</i> by Ivan Kramskoi. Consider the likely thoughts and feelings of Jesus at this time and whether the painting matches the scripture. What could we learn from Jesus' choices in the desert that could help our community stay strong when things are hard?

Textual references

Luke 4:1-13

Jesus' Temptations (previously studied in Branch 3, Year 2)

Key vocabulary

devil	a fallen angel who tempts people away from God, but God is stronger, and Jesus helps us choose the good
mercy	God's loving kindness that forgives and helps us start again
repentance	being truly sorry for sin and choosing to change

Teacher Notes

Ash Wednesday begins Lent, a forty-day season of preparation for Easter. The ashes are not a 'badge' to show off, but a religious sign that reminds Catholics of two linked truths: human life is fragile ('dust'), and God invites us to turn back to him in hope. When the minister traces the Sign of the Cross with ashes, the Church pairs an outward action with an inward call to conversion: 'Turn away from sin and believe in the Gospel.' The message is not 'be better by willpower', but 'return to God, who is merciful'.

Jesus' temptations in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13) help explain why Lent is a time of testing and choosing. In Luke's account, Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit into the desert, showing that the wilderness is a place where faith is purified, not abandoned. Scholars often note that the three temptations are not random. They aim at Jesus' identity and mission as the Son of God.

First, the devil urges Jesus to use power to satisfy hunger. Jesus refuses to treat God as a tool for comfort, teaching that human beings need more than bread alone. Second, the devil offers authority and glory. Jesus rejects worshipping anything other than God, showing that his kingdom will not be built through domination. Third, the devil quotes Scripture to tempt Jesus to test God. Jesus refuses to force God's hand, showing trust rather than performance.

A key scholarly insight is that Jesus answers each temptation with words from Deuteronomy. This links Jesus to Israel's story of forty years in the desert: where Israel often failed, Jesus remains faithful. Lent therefore becomes a school of discipleship. Catholics practise saying 'no' to sin, not because God is harsh, but because real freedom grows when we choose what is true and good, even when temptation promises an easier path.



U5.4.2

Make links between the Ash Wednesday readings and Lent as a time when Christians reflect on their sins and listen to God's call to return to Him. Describe some ways Christians act to answer that call in Lent, including the importance of prayer.

In the Book of Joel, God says, 'Return to me with all your heart,' so Christians use Lent to repent and turn away from sin and turn back to God.

The Ash Wednesday readings remind us that Lent is a time to say sorry for our sins.

Know

Choose any two of the following Scripture passages:

- Psalm 50 reminds Christians to ask God for a clean heart and to trust in His mercy.
- In Corinthians, St Paul tells Christians to be friends with God again, so they try to forgive others and make peace during Lent.
- In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus teaches people to secretly pray, fast, and give to those experiencing need. Christians do these things during Lent.



Discern

In Lent, Christians turn back to God, but each person lives this out differently because each person needs to change different things

Suggested discovery questions

1. Why might some people believe that you don't need to show you are sorry by doing something special during Lent?
2. Matthew writes that Jesus says to pray in secret. Why do you think some people still like to pray together in church or in groups?
3. Why do you think it can be difficult for people to forgive others, even though St Paul says we should be friends with God and each other?



Respond

Create a 'Lent Action Plan' chart with three columns: What scripture says; what I could do; how it could help others

Write your own short psalm, based on Psalm 50, asking God for a clean heart and how this will help you, your family and friends, or school.

Choose one or more of the scripture passages that have been studied. Create artwork to show how this can help themselves and others during Lent. Explain why you have chosen the one(s) you have created artwork for.

Textual references

Joel 2:12-18 Psalm 50:3-6, 12-14, 17 2 Corinthians 5:20-26 Matthew 6:1-18	A selection of Ash Wednesday readings
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Key vocabulary

conversion	a real change of heart that turns a person back towards God
covenant	a special promise-relationship between God and His people

Teacher Notes

The Ash Wednesday liturgy frames Lent as a covenant call: God does not simply tell people to 'try harder', but invites them back into friendship and right relationship. In Joel, the repeated command to 'return' is about the whole person, not just outward behaviour. In the Bible, the 'heart' means the centre of our thinking, choosing, and loving. Joel's message is therefore about conversion: letting God reshape what we want, not only what we do.

The penitential psalm (Psalm 50) teaches that repentance is truthful prayer. It is not self-hatred or panic. It is honesty before God: naming sin, trusting mercy, and asking for a 'clean heart', which means a renewed inner life that can choose the good. This helps pupils grasp that Christian repentance is about restoration, not simply punishment.

In 2 Corinthians, St Paul describes the Church as God's messenger of peace: Christians are called 'ambassadors' who help others come back to God. This passage makes reconciliation practical: if God is making peace with us, we practise peace with one another, including forgiveness, repairing harm, and rebuilding trust. Lent is therefore not private self-improvement; it is learning to live as people who belong to Christ.

In Matthew 6, Jesus warns against turning prayer, fasting, and giving into a performance. He is not condemning public worship; he is exposing hypocrisy. 'Pray in secret' teaches that God cares about intention and integrity. Pupils can explore the difference between doing good 'to be seen' and doing good because we love God and neighbour. Communal prayer still matters because the Church prays as one Body, but each person must also mean what they pray.

Some Christians stress that God already knows the heart, so 'being sorry' is first an inner change, not a public display. They may worry that visible practices can become 'showing off' (like Jesus warns in Matthew 6). Catholic teaching agrees that repentance must be genuine, but it also teaches that love is shown through actions: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving can train our desires and help repair harm. The key distinction is purpose: practices are not to impress others, but to help us return to God.

'Pray in secret' is about intention, not banning shared prayer. Jesus challenges performative religion: praying to be admired, not to love God. Christians still pray together because the Church is a community, the Body of Christ, and worship is something we do 'as one'. Praying together teaches unity, gives words when we struggle, and reminds us we belong to something bigger than ourselves. Shared prayer and private prayer should support each other: community prayer shapes us, and personal prayer makes it sincere.

Forgiveness is hard because hurt feels unfair: people want justice, safety, and trust rebuilt, and those things can take time. St Paul's call to reconciliation does not ignore harm; it invites Christians to live as people who have received God's mercy, so they choose mercy too. Forgiveness is not 'pretending it didn't happen'. It is a decision to stop revenge and seek peace, sometimes with boundaries. Lent helps because prayer and repentance soften pride, and almsgiving trains compassion.



	U5.4.3 Describe how Catholics define sin, making links with the Ten Commandments and Jesus' greatest commandment as guides for a good life
<i>Know</i>	Sin is freely choosing to do something against God's law and love. The Ten Commandments and Jesus' greatest commandment guide Catholics to live good and loving lives: loving God and loving our neighbour. Catholics follow the Ten Commandments and Jesus' teaching to avoid sin and grow closer to God.

 <i>Discern</i>	Catholics believe sin breaks God's law of love, so they use the Ten Commandments and Jesus' teaching to help them choose what is right, while respecting different beliefs. <table border="1" data-bbox="884 598 2148 877"> <tr> <th data-bbox="884 598 1232 630">Suggested discovery questions</th> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1232 598 2148 877"> 1. Why do Catholics think the Ten Commandments and Jesus' teaching still matter for making choices today? 2. What other guides do people use to decide right and wrong and how is that similar or different to the Catholic view? 3. If someone said, 'Small sins do not matter', what would you say, and why? </td> </tr> </table>	Suggested discovery questions	1. Why do Catholics think the Ten Commandments and Jesus' teaching still matter for making choices today? 2. What other guides do people use to decide right and wrong and how is that similar or different to the Catholic view? 3. If someone said, 'Small sins do not matter', what would you say, and why?
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 <i>Respond</i>	Take part in a simple examen. Use 'An Act of Contrition' from the <i>Common Prayers to be Known</i> document, or write your own. Design a campaign for the school based on 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. The aim of the campaign should try to: spread kindness in school; include others at playtime; show love through actions and words; celebrate uniqueness.
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Textual references

Exodus 20:1-17	The Ten Commandments
Luke 10:25-28	The Greatest Commandment

Key vocabulary

Act of Contrition	a prayer where someone tells God they are truly sorry for their sins and asks for help to change
Greatest Commandment	Jesus' teaching that the most important thing is to love God with your whole life, and to love your neighbour as yourself
Ten Commandments	the ten key laws God gives to Moses in the Old Testament to guide people to live justly and lovingly

Teacher Notes

The Ten Commandments and how sin relates:

1. 'You shall have no other gods before Me.'
Sin: Choosing to care more about things like money, fame, or games than about God.
2. 'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.'
Sin: Using God's name as a joke or in anger instead of showing respect.
3. 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.'
Sin: Choosing not to pray or go to Mass when you can and not making time for God.
4. 'Honor your father and your mother.'
Sin: Deliberately disobeying or being disrespectful to parents or carers.
5. 'You shall not kill.'
Sin: Hurting someone on purpose with words, actions, or by bullying.
6. 'You shall not commit adultery.'
Sin: Being unfaithful or not showing love and respect in family relationships (age-appropriate example: not treating others with dignity or kindness).
7. 'You shall not steal.'
Sin: Taking something that doesn't belong to you on purpose.
8. 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.'
Sin: Lying about someone, spreading rumours, or blaming others unfairly.
9. 'You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.'
Sin: Being jealous of other people's relationships or not being thankful for your own family.
10. 'You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.'
Sin: Wanting what others have so much that you become unhappy with what you have or greedy.

Acts of Contrition

An Act of Contrition is a short prayer that puts repentance into words. It is not 'magic' wording, as such, but a clear expression of the person's heart and intention.

What it should 'look like':

- Direct address to God (often to Jesus): 'O my God...'
- Clear sorrow for sin (not just fear of being caught or punished).
- Naming the reason: sin harms love, relationships, and friendship with God.
- Asking for mercy/forgiveness (trusting God's compassion).
- Firm purpose of amendment: a real intention to change and a practical resolution: a concrete step (or promise) to avoid sin and do good.
- Confidence in God's help: 'With your grace...'

Composition guidance: teach it as a six-part sentence frame:

1. 'God, you are...' (good, loving, merciful)
2. 'I am sorry for...' (wrong choices)
3. 'Because...' (it hurts love/others/me/You)
4. 'Please forgive me...'
5. 'I will...' (one change)
6. 'Help me...' (grace)



 U5.4.4 U5.4.5	Use specialist vocabulary to describe the term 'conscience' Describe simply Catholic beliefs in the last things: death, judgement, heaven, and hell.*
<i>Know</i>	Catholics believe our conscience is a gift from God, the 'inner voice' that helps us recognise right from wrong and choose what is good. Catholics believe that after we die, God judges each person by how they have lived and the choices they have made. Catholics believe that heaven is being with God forever, but turning away from God means being separated from His love.

 D5.4.1	Discuss whether all points of view are equally valid when thinking about conscience. For example, is it ever okay to be cruel or unkind to another person?	
<i>Discern</i>	The voice of conscience can guide people towards what Jesus would do. When people do not follow conscience, others can be hurt.	Suggested discovery questions 1. Some people might say it's okay to hurt someone if it gets them what they want. Why do Catholics believe this is never right? 2. If someone say it is fine to be cruel if nobody finds out, what would you say to show why that might not be a good point of view? 3. Why do Catholics think that conscience should guide people to be kind, even when other people disagree?

 R5.4.1	Consider how examining their conscience could help them recognise when they have acted to hurt themselves or others and how they could change	
<i>Respond</i>	Use scenarios to discuss / act out choices of the conscience. Use the examination of conscience based on the Our Father	

Textual references

Key vocabulary

conscience	the 'inner voice' that helps a person recognise right from wrong and choose what is good
heaven	being with God forever, in perfect love and joy
hell	choosing to turn away from God forever, so a person is separated from His love

Teacher Notes

Y5 week 4 Conversations about death always come with a 'trigger warning'. Teachers know their class and the circumstances of the pupils in a class. If conversations about the last things will cause distress because of personal circumstances, teachers should use their professional judgement about what to cover or leave out, if more appropriate

Guidance for scenario task:

For each scenario include:

1. What might you want to do?
2. What does your conscience say?
3. What would Jesus do?

Scenarios:

- Someone in the class is mean to you, and you feel like getting revenge.
- A group of children make fun of another child behind their back
- Someone breaks your favourite toy by accident. You feel angry.
- You accidentally break something at home, but nobody saw.
- There is somebody new to school, but they don't speak any English.

Examination of Conscience based on the Our Father

<i>Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.</i>	How often do I think about God? How often do I say my prayers? Do I pay attention and participate at Mass?
<i>Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.</i>	Am I kind to others? Do I do what Jesus wants me to do? Do I share with others? Am I helpful to my family and neighbours? Do I show respect to my teachers and classmates?
<i>Give us this day our daily bread.</i>	Do I remember to say thank you? Am I sometimes greedy? Do I appreciate the good things I have in my life? Do I think of ways to help those who have no food, clothes, shelter or money? Do I take things that don't belong to me?
<i>Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.</i>	Do I say I'm sorry when I have been wrong? Do I forgive and forget when someone does something bad to me? Do I help solve problems between my friends or do I cause more trouble? Do I say bad things about people who have hurt me?
<i>Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.</i>	Do I play fairly in sports and games? Do I cheat in school? Do I tell the truth? Do I let other children tempt me to do things I know I shouldn't do? Do I tempt others? Do I ask God to help me when I am tempted to do something that is wrong?

Catholic teaching distinguishes between the wrongness of an action and a person's responsibility for it. Some actions are seriously wrong in themselves (the Church calls this 'grave matter'), but a person's guilt can be greater or smaller depending on what they understood and how freely they chose. This matters because conscience is not just a 'feeling'; it is our God-given ability to recognise the good and choose it, and it needs forming by truth and love.

The Church teaches that mortal sin (sin that destroys charity in the heart) requires three conditions together: grave matter (the act is seriously wrong); full knowledge (the person knows it is seriously wrong), and full consent (the person freely chooses it). If one of these is missing, the sin is not mortal. Venial sin wounds love but does not break our relationship with God in the same way.



 <i>Discern</i>	Christians believe Jesus rose again, so they have hope of new life with God and share that hope with others.	Suggested discovery questions 1. What does 'new life with God' mean for Christians, and how is it connected to Jesus' Resurrection? 2. What if Jesus had not risen from the dead. How might that change what Christians believe about heaven? 3. What if someone says they do not believe in life after death. How could Christians explain their hope using St Paul's words?
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 R5.4.2	Reflect on the meaning of what they have learned for their own lives
	Pupils work in groups to creatively respond to the questions in the teacher notes.
<i>Respond</i>	Write or draw what 'hope' means to you.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 20-25, 54-57 Life after death

first fruits	the first part of a harvest; St Paul uses it to mean Jesus rises first, so others can follow
hope	trusting God's promise of life with Him, even when we cannot see it yet
salvation	God saving people from sin and death so they can live with Him

Teacher Notes

Questions for first 'respond' activity:

Pupils work in groups to creatively respond to the following:

1. How can I live with hope today because of the Resurrection?
2. What does following Jesus' path to heaven look like in my life?
3. How could our class, school and our own families show more love, hope or courage?
4. If we all tried to live with hope, how could our families, schools, or communities become better places in the future?

Pupils should include:

- The words of St. Paul 'Christ has risen, victory over death, we will be made alive'
- Symbols of the cross, light, a heart, empty tomb.

In this week's learning, pupils explore why St Paul says the Resurrection of Jesus is the centre of Christian faith. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul answers a real problem in the early Church: some people doubt that there is life after death. He teaches that Christian hope is not wishful thinking, but is grounded in what God does in Jesus: Jesus truly dies and truly rises, so death does not have the final word.

Paul uses the image of 'first fruits'. In the Bible, first fruits are the first part of the harvest offered to God, and they are a sign that the rest of the harvest will follow. When Paul calls Jesus the 'first fruits', he means Jesus rises first, and his risen life is a promise of what God intends for all who belong to him. For Christians, 'new life with God' is therefore more than 'going to a nice place'. It is sharing in God's own life: being raised and transformed so that we can live in full friendship with God forever.

Paul also links hope to the future fulfilment of God's plan. He speaks about Jesus 'returning' and God bringing the story of salvation to completion. This teaching helps pupils see two key ideas at once: (1) hope is personal, because it is about each person being raised to life with God; and (2) hope is communal, because God gathers a people, not just separate individuals.

This week's learning can also clarify a common misunderstanding: Christians do not believe the body is unimportant. Paul insists that God redeems the whole person. The Resurrection points to God's faithfulness to creation and to his power to make all things new. This is why Christian hope shapes how Christians live now: because the future God promises gives meaning to loving, courageous choices in the present.

In Catholic theology, hope is one of the three theological virtues (faith, hope, love). It is called 'theological' because it is a gift of God's grace, not just a human attitude. Christian hope is not the same as 'I hope it doesn't rain' or 'I hope I win'. It is a steady trust that God keeps his promises and will bring his saving plan to fulfilment.

St Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15 grounds hope in an event: Jesus truly dies and truly rises. That matters because Christian hope is not built on wishful thinking about life after death, but on what God does in Christ. If Jesus rises, then death is not the final enemy, and God's love is stronger than sin and the grave.

Hope is also 'at hand' in the sense that it shapes the present. Paul's point is not only 'what happens later', but 'how we live now'. Because Christians trust that God raises to new life, they are called to persevere in goodness, to resist despair, and to live with courage and purpose, even in suffering. Hope strengthens people to keep loving, forgiving, and serving, because their lives are held within God's future.

Finally, Christian hope is personal and communal. It is personal because each person is invited into everlasting life with God. It is communal because God gathers His people into the Body of Christ, so hope is shared: Christians encourage one another and live as witnesses to the 'Good News' that new life with God is real and promised.



U5.4.7

Know that the Rosary is a prayerful reflection on the life of Christ and explain what the sorrowful mysteries remember

The Rosary is a powerful reflection on the lives of Jesus and Mary.

The sorrowful mysteries are prayed on Tuesday and Fridays, and during Lent. They help Catholics remember Jesus' suffering and death to save people from sin.

Know

The five Sorrowful Mysteries are:

1. The Agony in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. Jesus' Crucifixion and Death



Discern

The Sorrowful Mysteries help Catholics understand Jesus' suffering and try to live bravely and lovingly like him.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Look at a painting or statue of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. What do you see in His face or body that shows how He feels? What does it mean to you?
2. Listen to a piece of music about Jesus' Passion. What does it make you think or feel about the Sorrowful Mysteries?
3. Why do you think Catholics pray the Sorrowful Mysteries instead of just reading the Bible passages? What might this prayer help people feel or understand?



Respond

Set up a prayer station for each of the Sorrowful Mysteries. At each, show a picture and teach a matching prayer poster. At each prayer station, pupils to practise the posture and reflect on how the mystery might help them to show love or courage in their own lives.

Pray the Sorrowful Mysteries.

Matthew 26:36-46	The Agony in the Garden
John 19:1	The Scourging at the Pillar
Matthew 27:27-31	The Crowning with Thorns
Luke 23:26-32	The Carrying of the Cross
Luke 23:33-46	Jesus' Crucifixion and Death

Key vocabulary

agony	very strong pain, fear, or sadness
mystery	a saving event that Christians think about to understand God more deeply
scourging	being whipped as a punishment

Teacher Notes

The Rosary is a form of Christian meditation: Catholics repeat simple prayers while thinking deeply about key moments in Jesus' life. These moments are called 'mysteries' because they are not just facts to remember, but saving events that reveal God's love and invite a response of faith. In Year 5, pupils focus on the Sorrowful Mysteries, which lead them through Jesus' Passion, from Gethsemane to the Cross.

In the Agony in the Garden, Jesus freely chooses obedience to the Father even when he feels fear and distress. This matters theologically because it shows Jesus' full humanity and his complete trust. Christians believe Jesus carries human suffering into his prayer and turns it into loving obedience.

The Scourging at the Pillar and the Crowning with Thorns show humiliation and injustice. These scenes help pupils grasp that sin damages human dignity and that Jesus endures violence without becoming violent. This is one reason Catholics connect the Passion to moral choices today: discipleship means resisting cruelty and practising mercy.

The Carrying of the Cross shows perseverance. Catholics often link this to 'taking up our cross', meaning staying faithful to what is right when it is costly. The Crucifixion and Death are at the centre of Christian belief about salvation: Jesus offers himself in love, forgiving enemies and trusting the Father to the end. The Resurrection does not cancel the Cross, it confirms that love is stronger than death.

Using art, music, and scripture can support pupils to notice human emotions and meaning in these mysteries. The aim is not to make suffering 'nice', but to help pupils see how Catholics pray with Jesus' Passion so they can grow in courage, compassion, and hope.



Desert to Garden

Year 6
Weeks 1 & 2
Hear & Believe



U6.4.1

Show an understanding of the account of Holy Week in the Gospel of John.

In John's Gospel, Mary anoints Jesus' feet with expensive perfume at Bethany to show her love and prepare Him for his burial.

Jesus washes His disciples' feet to teach them to serve others with love and humility.

At the Last Supper, Jesus tells His disciples He will go away soon. Peter promises to follow Him but is told he will deny Jesus three times.

Jesus is arrested in the garden after praying and bravely offers Himself to the cohort.

Jesus stands before Pilate, who questions Him but finds no crime in Him. Yet, the crowd still call for Him to be crucified.

On the Cross, Jesus gives His mother Mary to the Beloved Disciple to care for, and then He dies to save everyone from sin.

Know



Discern

Jesus chose to suffer and die out of love, showing courage, service, and forgiveness.

Suggested discovery questions

1. If Jesus knew He was going to suffer and die, why did He still choose to go through with it?
2. What do these scriptures show us about the kind of person Jesus was? How did Jesus show love in each part of the scripture?
3. What can we learn from the way Jesus treated others?



Respond

Choose one of the scriptures studied. Show or create an artistic representation of this scripture and spend some time in meditation.

Textual references

John 12:1-11	The anointing at Bethany
John 13:1-17	Jesus washes His disciples' feet
John 13:33-38	First farewell discourse
John 18:1-11	Jesus' arrest
John 18:28-25, 19:4-6	Jesus before Pilate
John 19:17-22	The Crucifixion
John 19:25-27	Jesus and His mother
John 19:28-37	Jesus' death

Key vocabulary

cohort	a group of 500 Roman soldiers
glory	(in the Fourth Gospel) God's goodness and love being shown clearly
Passover	the Jewish feast remembering God saving His people from slavery in Egypt
Pilate	the Roman governor who questions Jesus and allows his crucifixion

Teacher Notes

In the Fourth Gospel, Holy Week is presented as Jesus' 'hour' when he reveals God's love most fully. John is not mainly trying to give extra dramatic detail. He writes to help readers understand who Jesus is and what his death means. John often calls this the moment of Jesus' 'glory', because the Cross is where Jesus shows perfect love, faithfulness, and truth.

John begins with Mary anointing Jesus' feet at Bethany (John 12). This looks like a generous act of love, but it also points towards burial. In John's theology, love is never just a feeling: it becomes an action that costs something. Mary's gift prepares pupils to notice that Jesus will soon give himself completely.

At the Last Supper in John 13, there is no separate 'institution' story ('This is my body...') in the way pupils may know from the other Gospels. Instead, John places the foot-washing at the centre. This is deliberate: Jesus shows that real authority in God's Kingdom is service. He teaches that discipleship is not only about admiration, but imitation: if Jesus serves, his followers must serve too.

In the garden (John 18), Jesus is not shown as powerless. He steps forward and speaks with authority. John highlights that Jesus chooses the path of sacrifice freely. This helps pupils grasp a key Catholic belief: Jesus is not trapped by events, but offers himself in love.

Before Pilate (John 18–19), the questioning focuses on kingship and truth. John contrasts political power with Jesus' kind of kingship: not domination, but witness to truth and self-giving love. Pilate's repeated finding of 'no case' against Jesus underlines Jesus' innocence, while the crowd's demands expose how fear, pressure, and anger can distort judgement.

In John 19, Jesus continues to love. He entrusts Mary to the Beloved Disciple, creating a new family of faith at the foot of the Cross. John also carefully ties Jesus' death to Passover themes: Jesus is the Lamb who gives his life so others may live. When Jesus says, 'It is finished', John shows completion, not defeat: Jesus completes the mission the Father gives him.

In the Fourth Gospel, the 'Beloved Disciple' is the unnamed follower who leans close to Jesus at the supper (John 13:23), stands by the Cross (John 19:26–27), and is linked to the testimony behind the Gospel (John 21:24). Some scholars identify him with John son of Zebedee (traditional Church view). Others argue he is an idealised witness, deliberately unnamed so any disciple can 'step into' his role. Another proposal is a Jerusalem-based disciple (not one of the Twelve), which could explain his access to the high priest's courtyard (John 18:15–16). The Beloved Disciple also functions as a symbol of faithful discipleship and, by extension, the Church. He stays close to Jesus ('reclines' near Him), remains at the Cross when others flee, and receives Mary as 'mother' at the foot of the Cross (John 19:26–27). In this symbolic reading, Mary represents the family of believers and the Beloved Disciple represents the community that lives by Jesus' love and keeps His word. John 21 also presents him as the trustworthy witness whose testimony nourishes the Church's faith ('This is the disciple who testifies...', John 21:24). The point is that he embodies what the Church is called to be: a community that abides, remembers, and bears witness.

John's account supports the discernment focus: Jesus' love is courageous, practical, and forgiving, and it shapes how Christians live.

Suggested meditation prompts for the 'Respond' activity:

- What do I notice in this image without speaking?
- What feeling does this image bring to my heart?
- Who is in the image, and what might they be feeling?
- What might God be saying to me through this picture?
- Is there something in this image that reminds me of love, hope, or peace?
- How does this image help me think about Jesus or God?
- What does this image help me understand about faith?
- What can I remember from this image to carry with me into the rest of my day?



Desert to Garden

Year 6

Week 3

Hear, Believe, Celebrate & Live

	U6.4.2 Show knowledge and understanding of how some of the texts reveal deeper meanings about Jesus as Messiah and describe the beliefs revealed
<i>Know</i>	In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus shows he is the Messiah by leading through service, such as washing his disciples' feet. Jesus freely accepts his arrest and death, showing he is the promised Messiah who gives his life for others. When Jesus speaks to Pilate and cares for his followers from the Cross, he reveals that his kingdom comes from God and that his kingship is messianic.

	D6.4.1 Consider the statement 'Jesus had a fair trial', comparing and contrasting different points of view about this statement drawing on John's gospel as a source of evidence	
<i>Discern</i>	A fair trial means listening to the truth and making a just decision, but in Jesus' trial, even though He was found innocent, He was still punished.	Suggested discovery questions <i>See teacher notes for prompts to both sides of the debate: 'Jesus had a fair trial'</i>

 <i>Respond</i>	Review some 'fair trial scenarios' (see teacher notes); pupils to discuss their personal opinions on the scenarios and explain why some people will disagree with their perspective.
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Textual references

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

Debate: Jesus had a fair trial (*Discern task*)

Question prompts to prepare 'For' the debate statement (i.e. Jesus had a fair trial)

- What does Pilate do when Jesus is brought to him?
- Does Jesus get a chance to speak for Himself? What does He say?
- How many times does Pilate say Jesus is innocent?
- Does Pilate offer the crowd a choice? What does this show?

Question prompts to prepare 'Against' the debate statement (i.e. Jesus did not have a fair trial)

- What do the Jewish leaders do when they bring Jesus to Pilate? Do they give reasons for His arrest?
- What kind of person is Barabbas, and why do the people choose him instead of Jesus?
- Even though Pilate says Jesus is innocent, what happens next?
- Why might it seem unfair that Jesus is punished after being declared not guilty?

	Argument
Jesus had a fair trial	Jesus was taken to the Roman governor, Pilate, who asked Him questions. Pilate said he didn't find Jesus guilty of any crime. Pilate told the crowd again that Jesus had done nothing wrong.
Jesus did not have a fair trial	The Jewish leaders wouldn't go inside Pilate's palace, showing they didn't work together. Pilate wanted to let Jesus go, but the crowd picked Barabbas instead. Pilate said Jesus was innocent but still had Him beaten and punished. Pilate didn't stand firm and gave in to the angry crowd.

Evidence from the Fourth Gospel (John 18:28–40; 19:4–6)

John 18:33–37 – Pilate talks to Jesus and lets Him explain who He is.

John 18:38 – Pilate says, "I find no case against Him."

John 19:4 – Pilate repeats, "I find no case against Him."

John 18:28 – They stayed outside to stay clean for Passover.

John 18:39–40 – The crowd asked for Barabbas, a criminal, not Jesus.

John 19:1 and 19:6 – Jesus was flogged, and the crowd shouted, "Crucify Him!"

John 19:6 – He said Jesus was innocent, but didn't stop them from hurting Him.

Fair trial scenarios for suggested 'Respond' activity

At school, a football hits a classroom window and cracks it. The headteacher sees two children near the ball and assumes they did it, without asking anyone else what happened.

⇒ *Is that fair? What could the headteacher do to make it a fair situation?*

A pupil gets blamed for wearing the wrong PE kit, but they had actually lent theirs to someone else. No one asks for their side of the story.

⇒ *What should the teacher do before deciding who was in the wrong?*

A young person is accused of a crime. In a fair trial, the police gather evidence, both sides tell their story in court, and a judge or jury decides what is true.

Why is it important for everyone to have a chance to speak and be treated fairly in court?



	U6.4.3 Make links between the account of Jesus' washing his disciples' feet, what happens at Mass on Holy Thursday, and Christian beliefs about Jesus' actions
<i>Know</i>	On Holy Thursday, the priest washes people's feet at Mass to help us remember what Jesus does at the Last Supper. Jesus washed His disciples' feet to show that His followers should serve others with love and humility. Christians believe this action shows that humble service is central to faith, so they are called to serve others in daily life as Jesus does.

	D6.4.2 Explore how they and others interpret their own and the maker's meaning, in response to a variety of creative and artistic expressions and linking these with a scriptural passage studied	
<i>Discern</i>	Jesus shows His love through serving others, and Christians believe they are called to show the same kind of love by serving people in their lives today.	Suggested discovery questions Use Sieger Koder's 'The washing of feet' as a stimulus for discussion. Support pupils to compare their responses to others within the class: 1. Whose face do you see in the bowl of water? Why do you think Koder painted this? 2. Look at the hands and feet in the painting. How do they make you feel? what are they doing? 3. What does this painting show us about who Jesus really is?

	
<i>Respond</i>	Using Sieger Koder as inspiration, pupils to create their own artwork. Review each other's creations. Use Dr Clare Campbell's guided meditation on the Last Supper (<i>advance ordering required</i>) Use Jesus washes his disciples' feet (John 13:1-17) to hold a Celebration of the Word. Recreate the washing of the feet. Ask pupils to respond by considering ways in which they can serve others this week.

Textual references

John 13:1-17

The Washing of Feet

Key vocabulary

humility	choosing not to act proud, but to serve others with love
mandatum	the Church's name for Holy Thursday's 'command' to love and serve as Jesus does
Triduum	the three most important days in Holy Week: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, culminating in the Easter Vigil (it concludes with Evening Prayer of Easter Sunday)

Teacher Notes

In John's Gospel, the washing of feet (John 13:1–17) is not just an extra detail at the Last Supper. It is John's key 'sign' for explaining what Jesus' love looks like. John begins by saying Jesus 'loves his own ... to the end'. This does not only mean 'to the last moment', but 'to the fullest'. The shock is that Jesus takes the place of a household servant. In the ancient world, washing feet is low-status work because roads are dusty and people wear open sandals. Jesus chooses the lowest place on purpose, to show that God's power is revealed through self-giving love, not domination.

The action also teaches something about belonging to Jesus. Jesus tells Peter that being 'washed' matters for having a 'share' with Him. The Church often reads this on two levels. First, it is about accepting Jesus' love rather than refusing it out of pride. Secondly, it can echo baptism: Christians are cleansed and welcomed into a new way of life, then called to keep living as people who have been 'made clean' by Christ. This helps pupils see why the story is more than a moral lesson about manners: it is about conversion, identity, and grace.

Maundy Thursday's Mass of the Lord's Supper remembers this scene in a living way. The priest may wash feet as a liturgical sign that the Church's leadership is meant to copy Jesus' pattern of service. The point is not that footwashing replaces worship, but that true worship forms people into servants. On Maundy Thursday, the Church may celebrate the washing of feet, called the 'Mandatum' because it expresses Jesus' 'new commandment' to love through humble service. The Roman Missal presents it as a sign of Christ's charity and a pattern for discipleship: leadership in the Church is meant to look like self-giving love, not status. That is why the curriculum links the action to daily life: if Jesus' followers receive His love, they must let it shape how they treat people at home, at school, and in the parish.

The 'Triduum' is one single liturgical celebration unfolding across three days: from the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, through Good Friday and the Easter Vigil, to Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday.

Sieger Koder's 'The washing of feet' is useful because it makes the theology visible. The reflection in the bowl invites the viewer to ask, 'Where is Jesus in this scene?' Koder nudges us to see that Christ is revealed in humble acts, and that the person who serves is being changed as well as the person served. The close-up hands and feet make the viewer notice vulnerability, touch, and trust: someone must allow themselves to be helped. This supports careful classroom talk about meaning: art can slow us down so we notice what the Gospel is saying about who Jesus is, and who Christians are called to become.



	U6.4.4 Describe ways Jesus shows his love for all people by his actions on Holy Thursday and Good Friday
<i>Know</i>	On Maundy Thursday, Jesus washes his disciples' feet to show that real love means serving everyone, no matter who they are. Jesus accepts arrest without violence, showing peaceful, self-sacrificial love as he follows God's plan to save people. On Good Friday, Jesus dies on the Cross so all people can be forgiven and be close to God, showing that his love is stronger than sin and hatred.

	<i>Discern</i> Jesus shows true love by serving others and giving his life for everyone. Suggested discovery questions 1. How do the foot-washing on Maundy Thursday and the Cross on Good Friday show the same kind of love, and why do Christians believe this love is for all people? 2. What difference should remembering Maundy Thursday and Good Friday make to how Christians live now, especially in how they treat their neighbours and people who are hurting or excluded? 3. If the Cross looks like weakness to some people, why do Christians see it as hope and strength, and how should that shape the choices we make when loving others is difficult?
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	R6.4.2 R6.4.1 Consider how love of neighbour could transform their life and the lives of the communities they are part of, describing the actions they could take to begin this transformation Prayerfully reflect on what Jesus teaches about true discipleship. Reflect on Lent as a time to begin this transformation
<i>Respond</i>	Design an imaginary 'Neighbourhood of love' on a large sheet of paper or digital tool. Include features that show love of neighbour in action (e.g. a kindness café, a friendship bench etc.) & explain why each feature helps transform a place and show Jesus' love. Prepare a celebration of the word with the pupils on what Jesus teaches us about discipleship. Use one of the scripture sources previously studied to reflect on the themes of Lent – pray, fast and give Discuss: How does remembering Holy Thursday and Good Friday help Christians live differently today?

Key vocabulary

agape	the kind of love that chooses what is best for someone, even when it costs you
atonement	how Jesus makes peace between God and people by His loving sacrifice
kenosis	a Bible word meaning 'self-emptying': Jesus chooses humility instead of status

Teacher Notes

Maundy Thursday and Good Friday show one continuous story of Jesus' love. In the Gospels, Jesus chooses a kind of leadership that looks 'upside down': instead of taking power, he lowers himself. The foot-washing is not a polite gesture. In the ancient world it is a task for servants. Jesus uses it to teach that real greatness is shown through humble service, especially towards people who cannot repay you. This helps pupils see that Christian love is not mainly a feeling, but a decision to act for another person's good.

The Passion narratives (the account of Jesus' suffering and death) also stress that Jesus' love is not limited to friends. He washes the feet of disciples who will fail him, and he continues on the path of love even when he is misunderstood or rejected. When Jesus accepts arrest without violence, he reveals a distinctive Christian view of strength: refusing revenge and choosing peace does not mean being weak. It means trusting God's way of overcoming evil without copying it.

On Good Friday, the Cross can look like defeat. Christians, however, see it as the clearest sign of God's self-giving love. Jesus' death is understood as a saving sacrifice: he offers his whole life back to the Father, and this restores the broken relationship between God and humanity. In Catholic teaching, this saving work is 'for all': Jesus' love is universal, offered to every person, and it shows that no one is beyond God's mercy.

Agape, kenosis and atonement help teachers name what Maundy Thursday and Good Friday reveal about Jesus:

- 'Agape' is the Greek word for 'selfless love': love shown in action for another's good. In this week's learning it explains why Jesus washes feet and why Christians see the Cross as love, not just suffering.
- 'Kenosis' means 'self-emptying'. Jesus chooses humility rather than status: he takes the role of a servant, accepts misunderstanding, and refuses violence. This helps pupils grasp that Christian greatness looks like service.
- 'Atonement' names what the Cross achieves: Jesus offers his life to the Father in loving obedience, repairing the broken relationship caused by sin and opening forgiveness for all (*think: at-one-ment ...through Jesus' loving sacrifice, He brings us back to being at one with God the Father.*)

Together, these concepts link the foot-washing and the Cross as one story: humble love that saves and becomes the pattern for discipleship today.

This has practical implications for discipleship. Remembering Maundy Thursday and Good Friday shapes how Christians treat neighbours, including people who are ignored, excluded, or hurting. If Jesus serves and forgives at the hardest moment, Christians believe they are called to practise a costly love: choosing truth, patience, and mercy when it would be easier to walk away, mock, or retaliate. The Cross becomes both a promise of hope and a pattern for living.



Desert to Garden

Year 6

Week 6

Celebrate & Live

 U6.4.6	Make links between the Christian belief in the Crucifixion and the Stations of the Cross as a prayerful reflection on Christ's journey to the Cross
<i>Know</i>	Christians believe Jesus shows his love by dying on the Cross to save people from sin and bring them back to God. The Stations of the Cross help Christians remember and pray through Jesus' journey to the Cross. Praying the Stations of the Cross helps Christians grow closer to Jesus by thinking about how He gave His life for others.

 <i>Discern</i>	Christians believe Jesus died on the Cross as a sacrifice to save people from sin, and his Resurrection gives us hope of new life. Suggested discovery questions 1. How do you think Christians feel when they walk and pray the Stations of the Cross? 2. Why do some people say it is better to focus on Jesus' resurrection than His suffering? 3. If someone says remembering suffering is pointless because it is painful, what reason would Christians give for disagreeing?
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 R6.4.3	Consider how love of neighbour could transform their life and the lives of the communities they are part of, describing the actions they could take to begin this transformation
<i>Respond</i>	Explore different representations of the Stations of the Cross or prayers of the Stations from different places in the world. Search through local news media to find news reports about things that have happened because people chose to love their neighbour. Establish links to a Station of the Cross Create pledges to your future self, inspired by the Stations of the Cross.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

devotion	a special prayer practice that helps people grow closer to God
Stations of the Cross	14 prayer 'stops' that help Christians remember and pray through Jesus' physical journey to the Cross

Teacher Notes

The Stations of the Cross (also called the 'Way of the Cross' / 'Via Crucis') is a Catholic devotion that helps Christians pray with the events of Jesus' Passion, from his condemnation to his burial. Unlike reading a Gospel passage once, the Stations slow the story down into 'steps', so people can enter it with their imagination, feelings, and choices. This is not about enjoying suffering. It is about facing the truth that love can be costly, and that Jesus freely chooses faithful love all the way to the end.

The Stations develop especially as a way for Christians to share in the prayer of pilgrimage to Jerusalem when they cannot travel there. Walking from Station to Station uses the body as well as the mind: movement, silence, and repeated prayer help many people concentrate. This is why some places build 'High Stations', such as those on a steep hillside in Lourdes. The climb makes worshippers feel, in a small way, how demanding Jesus' journey to Calvary is. Life-size (or larger) statues make the scenes harder to keep 'at a distance'. They can prompt moral seriousness, compassion, and repentance because the suffering looks real and personal.

Theologically, the Stations sit inside the 'Paschal Mystery': Jesus' suffering and death are not separate from his Resurrection, but part of one saving act of love. Christians believe the Cross is not failure but self-giving love that defeats sin and re-opens friendship with God. So, praying the Stations often leads to two questions: 'Where do I see suffering today?' and 'How can I respond with Christ-like love?'

This is why the Stations naturally connect to loving your neighbour. For example, Jesus meeting the women of Jerusalem can inspire action that listens to people who are struggling and makes space for their voices, such as local mental health support. The Stations also lend themselves to 'pledges' because each Station shows a different kind of love: courage, patience, forgiveness, practical help, and staying close when it is hard. Catholics do not pray the Stations to stay sad, but to learn how to live.