



A journey of learning in the light of God's love

"What shall we say the Kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade."

The parable of the Mustard seed - Mark 4:30-32

Townlands Faith Newsletter

We are delighted to bring you another issue of our Faith Newsletter filled with exciting updates and meaningful moments from our school community. This time, we're reflecting on the work of our ambassadors and sharing insights into what your child has been exploring during collective worship and Religious Education (RE) lessons. In addition, we have the latest update from St. Simon and St. Jude Church to keep you connected with all that's happening.

We hope you enjoy this edition and find it as enriching as the last.

Faith Ambassadors

Since the spring term, our dedicated Faith Ambassadors have been working collaboratively during their lunchtime club to plan meaningful collective worship sessions. Their commitment and creativity have truly shone as they've taken the lead in delivering these sessions to their class.

Most recently, they thoughtfully prepared a worship centred on the Bible story of *Jesus Calming the Storm*. They considered how best to share the story in an engaging and reflective way. As part of the reflection time, the ambassadors introduced a calming activity, inviting their peers to colour in a picture inspired by the story. This thoughtful gesture provided a peaceful moment for personal reflection and connection with the message.

A huge well done to all our Faith Ambassadors for their inspiring leadership and for creating such a thoughtful and serene worship experience for their class.

Community Links

- The choir visited Bethel & Bethesta Retirement Home to sing to the residents who also enjoyed joining in. The choir performed traditional and contemporary Easter hymns and songs.
- As part of the Big Walk and Wheel event our Families have embraced sustainable travel by walking, cycling, or scooting to school. This has helped to promote a healthier lifestyle and a greener planet.

Courageous advocacy

Our school council has proudly partnered with the Teddy Trust, a remarkable charity that collects cherished teddy bears to bring comfort and hope to children living in poverty worldwide. Together, our school community came together and donated 26 teddy bears, each carrying warmth and love for a child in need. These special gifts have now been sent to the trust, where they will find their way into the arms of children who deserve kindness and care. Inspired by this success, we look forward to supporting even more charitable initiatives in the future, continuing to make a meaningful impact.



Suggestions for Home Activities- Create a Family Prayer Jar

A family prayer jar is a wonderful way to bring faith and togetherness into your home. Simply take an empty jar or a decorated box or a container, and make it your own—decorate it with ribbons, stickers, or meaningful quotes. Each evening, as you gather for dinner, invite a family member to write down a prayer and add it to the jar. Then, take a moment to read and share each new prayer.

RE learning this term across the school

EYFS

In our R.E. lessons the children have been thinking about which places are special to us and why. Some places are special to us because it's a place where we have fun, and others are special because they make us feel safe.

With this in mind the children looked at places of worship which are special to different groups of people. Here are some of our stained glass windows the children drew after discussing how churches are a special place for Christians.



Year One and Two

The children have been exploring the theme of belonging and what it means to be part of a community. They began by reflecting on the importance of feeling accepted and valued by others. They then looked at how belonging is expressed in different religions. In Christianity, they learned how Christians worship together, follow Jesus' teachings, and celebrate events like Christmas and Easter. In Islam, they explored the Five Pillars, daily prayers, and the strong sense of unity within the Muslim community. In Judaism, they discovered the significance of festivals such as Passover and Hanukkah, and the role of the synagogue in bringing people together. Through these lessons, the children have come to understand that belonging offers a sense of identity, purpose, and connection—key elements in building inclusive communities.



Year Three

During the summer term, Year 3 are learning about Hinduism - one of the world's oldest religions. They have been starting to understand the basic beliefs of Hindus, including similarities and differences between Hinduism and Christianity. To deepen the children's learning, they went on a trip to the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Leicester.



Year Four

As part of their religious education, the children began their journey into Islam by exploring the Five Pillars and the significance of the Qur'an. They examined English translations of Islamic prayers and discussed the importance of treating the Qur'an with respect. They also explored the rituals of prayer, identified key features of a mosque, and enjoyed thoughtful discussions about the role of prayer in Muslim life. The children also learned about the importance of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr, and how these festivals are celebrated by Muslims around the world.



Year Five

This term, Year 5 delved into the question: "Why do Hindus try to be good?" Through this inquiry, the children explored key Hindu beliefs and reflected on the story of The Man in the Well, discovering how it connects to the values and teachings of the faith. They also engaged in a creative exploration of the lotus flower, a powerful symbol in Hinduism. They crafted intricate origami lotus flowers and collaborated on a vibrant collage to represent its significance. Finally, they explored how Hindu beliefs guide each stage of life.



Year Six

This half-term, Year 6 have considered the question, 'Creation and science: conflicting or complementary?' After studying the scientific theory of the Big Bang and evolution, alongside the Christian belief in the Creation, as told in Genesis 1, they raised 'big' questions about both viewpoints, showing deep and critical thinking. They explored the similarities and differences between them, and whether they complement or conflict each other. Year 6 concluded their learning by reflecting upon their own views and beliefs, and shared these through words and pictures.



Faith Visit

Year 3 visited the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Leicester to explore what the Hindu holy building is like and to bring their learning to life. At the temple, the children were taken on a guided tour to look at both shrines. The first shrine is dedicated to Nilkanth Varni which contained a beautiful image within a white room to represent the snow in the Himalayas with a stepped tile ceiling to show the 7 year long pilgrimage. The larger shrine shows images of Gods such as Vishnu, Krishna, Hanuman and Ganesh as well as images of other Gurus important to the Hindu religion. The children learned how Hindu people may pray in various ways within the Mandir, including sitting or standing, as well as how some Hindus choose to walk around the shrine to represent making a pilgrimage and taking God's blessing.

Year 3 demonstrated exceptional curiosity and engagement during the trip, asking insightful questions and thoughtfully applying their classroom learning to real-world experiences. Their enthusiasm was evident as they expressed how much they enjoyed the visit, while their respect and understanding truly reflected the values of our school.



Child-Led Worship

Over the past few months, children in Years 2, 3, 4, and 5 have taken the lead in planning and delivering collective worship. Child-led worship plays a vital role in deepening children's understanding of faith by allowing them to engage with spiritual themes in a personal and meaningful way. When children take ownership of worship, it becomes more relatable and impactful—not only for them but for the entire school community.

This approach nurtures a sense of belonging and encourages children to reflect on their beliefs, ask questions, and express their spirituality with confidence. It also helps develop essential life skills such as leadership, teamwork, and public speaking.

Recently, Year 3 led a thoughtful and inspiring collective worship for the whole school, focusing on the Bible story of *The Good Samaritan*. After reading and reflecting on the story together, the children decided they wanted to highlight the important messages of showing mercy and loving your neighbour. To bring the story to life, they chose to retell it through drama. The children worked collaboratively to choose their roles and develop key questions to encourage the school to think deeply about the story's meaning. Year 3 delivered their performance with confidence and maturity. What made it even more impressive was that they planned and presented the entire worship independently, without adult direction.

Our final child led worship was delivered by Year 4, who thoughtfully planned and delivered an inspiring child-led worship based on the Bible story, *The Prodigal Son*. Through engaging drama, they brought the story to life, demonstrating remarkable confidence in their presentation. Their heartfelt reflections highlighted how our school's Christian values connect with the powerful message of the story. They recognized *forgiveness, hope, and faith* as key themes, emphasising the importance of showing grace, believing in renewal, and trusting in God's love. Their dedication and insight made this worship a truly meaningful and memorable experience for everyone.



St Simon and St Jude Church, Earl Shilton - Faith Newsletter

I can't believe how quickly a school year goes by! The summer holidays are fast approaching and those in Year 6 will be making the big step to secondary school. I remember leaving primary school myself with a mixture of excitement and sadness.

I am looking forward to welcoming the school to the End of Year Service at St Simon and St Jude's Church on Tuesday 1st July at 10am. We will be praying especially for the Year 6 pupils and asking for God's blessing to be upon them as they leave the school. I hope you can join us.

Everyone, young and old, is welcome to our church services which are held every Sunday at 10.45am. On the first Sunday of the month, we have an 'all-age' worship service which children and families particularly enjoy.

If you would like to get in touch with me to find out more, or if you want to have a chat, then feel free to contact me on 07759 002660.

You can also find out more on the church website:

www.achurchnearyou.com/St-Simon-St-Jude-Earl-Shilton

I hope you have a good summer.

God bless,

Martin