

# **Experiencing the Festivals**

**Connecting  
Schools and Churches**



# Parishes

Parishes will find new ways of exploring the stories of faith with children in their communities.

This leaflet is a resource which hopes to inspire parishes to open their churches up to their local schools with pictures, resources and local consultants to help you in the process.

## What you will need:

- Someone willing to liaise with local schools, to invite them to the event and show them the educational objectives that it meets
- A team of people willing to create the stations
- A team of people willing to welcome, to be at the stations to lead the activity and to assist the teachers
- People willing to loan items such as suitable fabrics, plants, crockery and other props.



## **What people have said:**

"I thought Easter was all about chocolate and bunnies - I didn't realise it was about Jesus"

*Year 6 boy from Stevenage*

"I really enjoyed it when we sat at the table and remembered what Jesus said. The next time I eat bread I will think what Jesus said"

*Ella - Year 5 pupil from Cheshunt*

"I enjoyed all of the activities and learned a lot of things about Jesus' death. I enjoyed the Easter Garden when we put our worries in the Plasticine"

*Eleanor - Year 5 pupil from Cheshunt*

"Thank you for setting up the Easter Workshop - I enjoyed every minute of it. Now I know a lot more about Easter and Jesus and now want to learn more"

*Ben - Year 5 pupil from Cheshunt*



## **Success stories:**

St Helen, Wheathampstead: Christmas and Easter Experiences

St James, Goffs Oak: Harvest Experience

St Mary, Kinsbourne Green: Easter Experience

St Mary the Virgin, Goldington: Easter Story Trail

Stevenage Churches: Easter Journey, facilitated by Bridgebuilders Trust



# Schools Introduction

Several parishes across the country and in St Albans Diocese have reached out to their local schools at key points in the Christian year with a multi-sensory experience which draws children into the story and encourages them in reflection and participation.

Although the initial age guide for this was for KS2, many churches have found that KS1 and adults have found it equally meaningful. Churches have often remained open for an evening session for parents and other adults to visit.

## For Schools

How the 'Experience Festivals' series can assist with National Curriculum targets in R.E.

### **Festival**

Christmas

Easter

Pentecost

Harvest

### **Christian concept**

Incarnation

Salvation/Christian Living

Scripture

God/Creation/Christian Living

Offers the possibilities for teachers to cover both Attainment Targets 1 and 2:

- AT1 : Learning about Christianity and belief
- AT2 : Learning from Christianity and belief

Expectations for each Year Group - on the next two pages you will find examples for each Year Group using different experiences.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Nearly all can: WORKING TOWARDS LEVEL 1</b>	<b>Many can: LEVEL 1</b>	<b>Some have progressed further and can: LEVEL 2</b>
<b>EYFS</b> <b>Christmas</b>	<p>Listen to a religious story</p> <p>Recognise that Christmas is a special time when a special baby called Jesus was born</p>	<p>Listen to and retell the Christmas story</p> <p>Identify the main characters (Mary, Joseph, angels)</p> <p>Say that this story is found in the Bible</p>	<p>Identify all the key characters in the story (Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, inn keeper)</p> <p>Identify the feelings of different characters (surprise, fear, anxiety, joy)</p>
<b>Year One</b> <b>Easter</b>	<p>Listen to the Easter story</p> <p>Identify the cross as a Christian symbol</p>	<p>Talk about the main events of the Easter story (Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Day)</p> <p>Describe the feelings of Jesus' friends</p>	<p>Retell the story of Holy Week and Easter</p> <p>Discuss the feelings and circumstances of sorrow and joy</p>
<b>Year Two</b> <b>Pentecost</b>	<p>Recognise Pentecost as the beginning of the church</p>	<p>Identify the main symbols of Pentecost (wind, fire)</p> <p>Describe the feelings of the crowd</p>	<p>Explain the importance of disciples speaking in different languages</p> <p>Talk about why Christians believe Pentecost is important and how it affects their lives today</p>

<b>Stage</b>	<b>LEVEL 1 / 2</b>	<b>LEVEL 2</b>	<b>LEVEL 2 / 3</b>
<b>Year Three Harvest</b>	Suggest two ways in which Jewish and Christian people express thankfulness for food through the festivals of Sukkot and Harvest	Retell the story of the Exodus  Suggest reasons why we should care for creation and human dependence on the harvest	Identify places of famine and respond with ways in which people can share more equally

	<b>LEVEL 2</b>	<b>LEVEL 2 / 3</b>	<b>LEVEL 3</b>
<b>Year Four Christmas</b>	Sequence the Christmas story from the Annunciation to Epiphany	Understand the importance of journey in the Christmas story (to Bethlehem, shepherds' journey, wise men, flight to Egypt)	Describe how Christian beliefs make a difference at Christmas time

	<b>LEVEL 3</b>	<b>LEVEL 3 / 4</b>	<b>LEVEL 4 / 5</b>
<b>Year Five Easter</b>	Identify the key characters in the story of Holy Week and Easter	Relate the events of Holy Week to the worship of the Christian church	Give reasons why Christians believe in life after death
<b>Year Six Easter</b>	Say why Easter is important to Christians today	Understand the political situation of Jesus' time	Explain the kingship of Jesus as one of service and of sacrifice

# Resources

## Experience series

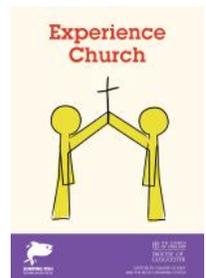
Best resource is the "Experience" series published by Jumping Fish through the Diocese of Gloucester. Each pack contains scripts, detailed instructions with picture guides to create the stations:

[www.gloucester.anglican.org/schools/jumping-fish-publications/#ExperienceFestivals](http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/schools/jumping-fish-publications/#ExperienceFestivals)



© Jumping Fish

Also Experience Church - a creative, hands-on way to share with local primary school children the story of their parish church and the Christian faith of people who worship there.



*"Experience" images © Jumping Fish and used with permission. Further copying or re-use of these images is not permitted.*

## **Recommendations:**

I recommend the Jumping Fish material to all parishes and schools. When used together with "Experiencing the Festivals" and the Diocesan advice on achievement and progress, churches will be able to strengthen links with their local schools and support RE teaching and the spiritual development of pupils."

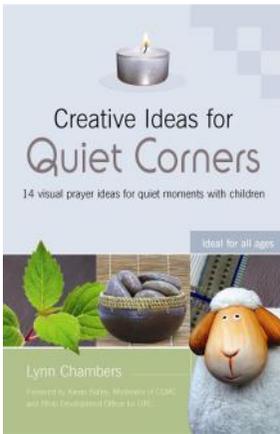
*RE Advisor for St Albans Diocese: Jane Chipperton*

## Creative Ideas for Quiet Corners

14 visual prayer ideas for quiet moments with children, by Lynn Chambers.

Published by Barnabas, this is available as a PDF download from:

[www.brfonline.org.uk/9781841016559Z](http://www.brfonline.org.uk/9781841016559Z)



*The resources mentioned are available to borrow from the Diocesan Resources Centre at Holywell Lodge, St Albans  
Tel: 01727 818158 Email: [resources@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:resources@stalbans.anglican.org)*

**Open the Book** - story/drama presentations by local parishioners using costume and scripts:

[www.openthebook.net/home.php](http://www.openthebook.net/home.php)



*"For teachers and other school professionals, OPEN THE BOOK is a valuable resource, providing a strong, consistent and on-going feature for assembly times. This can also act as a supplement to R.E. activities."*

*The work of OPEN THE BOOK has been favourably received by OFSTED and SIAS and helps primary schools in meeting their statutory Collective Worship obligations under the 1998 Schools Standards & Framework Act."*

Quote taken from the Open the book website

Approach your local churches to see if a group could provide Open the Book assemblies.

## **Consultants:**

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**Ideas to explore - if you'd like  
help in planning your own material  
please get in touch with us**

*We would like to thank  
St Helen's Church, Wheathampstead  
and St James' Church, Goffs Oak  
for allowing us to use photographs from their  
Festival Experience events in this leaflet.*



[www.facebook.com/pages/Childrens-Ministry-St-Albans-Diocese/310836025679105](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Childrens-Ministry-St-Albans-Diocese/310836025679105)

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