



R.E. Ideas

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Meditation and Reflection

Reflection is an integral tool in the RE classroom. It can encourage pupils to sit quietly and think carefully about a topic. Through follow up activities which allow pupils to express and explore their insights and feelings, it can raise self esteem in pupils, and allow trust to develop between teacher and student. For a reflective activity, pupils should be seated comfortably in an atmosphere conducive to reflective thinking, using appropriate lighting and music. It is important to follow up a reflection with the pupils in order for them to fully explore the issues at hand. Within this issue of RE Ideas, I have included a reflection that can be used with pupils, and then a follow up worksheet that incorporates literacy and numeracy strategies. I have used these activities in my classroom on numerous occasions with successful results.

Lesson Objective: To identify and experience another way to pray, and to become familiar with the story of Jesus' baptism.

Activity	Learner Outcome
Starter: Pupils asked to identify the different types of prayer previously studied.	Activating prior knowledge using questioning techniques. Pupils challenged to use key terms.
Introduce reflection and link to previous practice.	Pupils are reminded of the rules of behaviour in the Chapel and what taking part in a reflection means. Pupils are aware of teacher's high expectations.
Link content of reflection with units of study: Baptism, Prayer and Discipleship.	Pupils are aware of the links between the units, and are able to draw together prior knowledge.
Reflection on the baptism of Jesus – see attached sheet.	Pupils engage in learning task to develop their understanding of the baptism of Jesus through visualisation. They can also experience reflection as a form of prayer if they wish to. Self esteem can be raised and pupils can experience a rare moment of calm and peace.
Ask pupils questions to gain feedback on their experience.	Pupils share the knowledge they have gained, and are able to speak about their experience of meeting Jesus if they wish to. They can practise speaking and listening skills. Whole class benefits from collaborative analysis and feedback. Higher ability pupils extended through use of key vocabulary, e.g. Trinity.
Numeracy task: Sequencing of events.	Pupils can use this activity to clarify the events and recap on the baptism of Jesus.

Pupils to put the events of the baptism into the correct order	
Question Sheet.	Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the person of John the Baptist, and to understand his significance in the story.
Self assessment.	Pupils are encouraged to think about their own performance during the lesson and how it could be improved next time.
Word Wall	The key terms identified during the lesson are recorded for future reference. Pupils can review meanings where needed.
Plenary - Picture task	Pupils can use artistic skills to express their experience of the reflection. Lower ability pupils can engage well with this task as an alternative to written work.

A REFLECTION ON THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Close your eyes and relax. Listen to the noises outside – hear them but don't let them disturb you. We will now do some breathing exercise to ensure everyone is fully relaxed. Breathe in for the count of three, hold that breath for the count of three, and then breathe out to the count of three. (Repeat this several times.) Relax different parts of the body.

Clench your hands into fists. Imagine that you are putting anything that is unhappy or upsetting in your life into these fists. When you relax, you are going to throw all of these bad things away, leaving you feeling peaceful and calm. (Give the instruction to relax when pupils have had sufficient time to gather their thoughts.) Continue with deep breaths and just relax for a few minutes. (It would be appropriate to play some quiet relaxing music at this point. The music can be played throughout the reflection.)

You are standing on a green hillside. Lambs play nearby. Birds fly above you; red ones, blue ones, and some tiny little sparrows. You can hear them singing their songs. You can feel the warm sun on your back, and you know this is going to be a good day.

You can hear the sounds of water. You look far below. The blue-green waters of the Jordan River wash against a sandy shore. The valley below you is brown and barren except for a few small trees. You do not want to leave this happy spot high above the valley but you know it is time to make your way down the hill. Walk slowly down the path. Your feet slip and slide on the loose rocks. You hear footsteps not far behind and then a gentle voice calls out, "May I walk with you?" Turning, you see the voice belongs to a man, and immediately you know it is Jesus! Jesus calls your name, smiling warmly. "Come on, let me hold your hand so you don't slip on the path." Take Jesus' hand. It is much larger than yours and his skin is tanned from the desert sun. It feels good to see him again. Hold his hand tightly so that you don't fall. You are nearly at the bottom of the hillside when Jesus points to a large crowd gathered on the shore "All of those people have come to be baptised by my cousin John."

Jesus walks faster now so that you are almost running to keep up with him. Clouds of sand cover your feet as you walk. "There's John. He is standing in the river near the shore," Jesus says excitedly.

You look at John carefully. John is wearing an animal skin. A rope belt is pulled tightly around his waist. His hair is long and uncombed.

People are wading out into the river waters. John is bent over now, his hands cupped, dipping them into the water. A child about your age stands in front of John and he pours the refreshing water over the child's head. You can't hear what John says but the child is happy and smiling.

You wonder what's happening and Jesus, knowing your question, answers, "These people are asking John to baptise them show that they want to lead good lives and that they will be ready for me to come into their life"

Jesus looks at you and says "Walk with me, my child. I want John to baptise me,"

Jesus motions for you to follow. Walk into the water. Feel the rocky shore beneath your feet. Small waves of water splash against your legs. John looks into your eyes, smiles, and calls you by name. He places his strong, rough hand on your shoulder and says "I am baptising in water, but someone is coming who is greater than I am. I am not even worthy of tying his sandals. He will baptise with the Holy Spirit." John dips his hands into the water, then slowly pours the cool water over your head. Feel the water trickle down your face. Lick your lips and taste the water. A warm feeling fills you from head to toe.

Jesus smiles, then takes his place before John. Jesus, standing, bows his head. John looks astonished, "Jesus, you should baptise me!" But Jesus shakes his head "no," then speaks in a whisper to John.

Jesus raises his hands in prayer as John begins to pour the water over his head.

As Jesus stands praying, his clothes heavy with water, the clouds separate. A beautiful dove flies above Jesus' head.

Listen carefully.... In the quiet of the moment you hear the gentle brush of angels' wings signalling the voice of God. A voice from above announces, "This is my Son, my beloved Son. I am very pleased with him." The people around gasp in awe, falling on their knees.

Jesus turns, takes your hand, and leads you to the shore. Walk the short distance around the water's edge with Jesus. He stops near a pile of driftwood and speaks quietly, "God has called you by name. The Holy Spirit of God rests within your heart."

You try to understand what Jesus is saying to you. He says, "You will have the strength and joy to do good things for God in the world." Jesus sits on a rock, warming himself in the last rays of the sun. "But I am still young, what can I do for God?" you ask. Jesus smiles. He says "If you follow me, I will show you the way." Take a moment now to speak to Jesus. Ask him anything and listen to his answer. Tell him about anything that is troubling you.

It is time to leave. Give Jesus a hug and feel his strong arms around you. Jesus touches your face before you turn to go. Tell Jesus goodbye for now, then watch him turn and walk away. He turns back once, waves and smiles at you, then he has gone. When you are ready, open your eyes and return to this room.

(Reflection adapted from 'Guided Meditations for Children' by Sydney Ann Merritt)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1) What was the place like?
- 2) How did you feel when you recognised Jesus walking towards you?
- 3) What did you think about what He said to you?
- 4) How did it feel when you realised how much he loved you?
- 5) Had his visit changed you in any way?
- 6) How do you feel now?
- 7) How does it feel to know that God picked you to work for the kingdom of God?
- 8) How can you follow Jesus this week?

The Baptism of Jesus

In the space below, draw a picture of Jesus' baptism as you imagined it in the reflection.



Put the following events in the correct order:

John was surprised and thought that Jesus should baptise him.	
A voice from heaven was heard saying 'This is my Son, my beloved Son. I am very pleased with him	
Jesus walked into the river.	
John poured water onto Jesus' head.	
John the Baptist was baptising people in the River Jordan.	
A dove came down from heaven.	

Describe John the Baptist.

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Why do you think John the Baptist was surprised when Jesus asked him to baptise him in the river?

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Describe your feelings during the reflection. What did you enjoy? What did you dislike about it?

How do you think it could be improved next time?

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RESOURCES from REMW (Religious Education Movement Wales)

Resources Catalogue, Publications and past copies of 'R.E. Ideas' available
Primary Publications – Pobl Arbennig ; Adegau Arbennig; Iesu;
Y Nadolig – o flwyddyn i flwyddyn; Mannau Arbennig
Cyfres Ymchwilio i Thema: i Codau Byw; i Ddathliadau; i Greddau ac
i Gwestiynau Dyrus.

ENGLISH TITLE Amazing Lives (100 stories of faith- useful for Cwricwlwm Cymreig)
Secondary Publications – What the Welsh Churches say on moral and social issues;
Barn yr Eglwysi ar faterion moesol a chyndeithasol.
General: More than Just RE (CEMW Annual Lectures)

Discounts available to schools in contributing Authorities and all students

Contact: Sali Roberts, REMW, Patshyn, Rhiwgwreiddyn, Ceinws, MACHYNLLETH
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