

Wintershall The Life of Christ - cross-curricular virtues learning through drama and assembly preparation

This Virtues Learning programme offers a series of creative virtues-themed enquiry activities and assembly outlines inspired by biblical scenes and characters from The Life of Christ production at Wintershall. Clips of dramatised scenes from the life of Jesus and actor viewpoints, plus a gallery of stills from each scene provide a rich creative stimulus to engage pupils across key stages in deeper exploration of virtues. Learning activities can be delivered as a series of discreet virtues enquiry lessons, integrated into PSHCE, RE or SMSC or as a Virtues Enquiry Day.

Why Virtues Learning using Wintershall's The Life of Christ?

The Life of Christ production

'The Life of Christ' brings the Gospels alive. Set in the grounds of Wintershall Estate in Surrey, it's an annual open-air community drama presenting the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. www.wintershall-estate.com Pilgrimage through the day long performance in the grounds of Wintershall estate, bombarding your senses with the richness of the costumes and beautifully made props, as well as the stunning natural landscape as the stage set. It's almost as though you are back in time over two thousand years ago witnessing in real time Jesus and the people that encountered him in their daily lives during his life and ministry on earth, are there in front of you inviting you to share their story. This is theatre at its best as well as communicating a story about a person that changed history and lives.

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Cast and crew – shared virtues

The people, from all walks of life, who participate in Wintershall's dramas such as The Life of Christ give their time for nothing, drawn for a whole variety of reasons, some out of curiosity about Jesus and his story, others for their Christian beliefs or because someone suggested it was a fun thing to be part of! Participating in the cast of crew, people become part of a community where they discover shared virtues centred on and arising from the story and the process of dramatising it through rehearsals and performances. Read more...

For many cast and crew members inspired by the patience and example of Jesus that they have been exploring and experiencing, they want above all to make this God given patience known to everyone and so take part in these outdoor plays retelling as accurately as possible The Life of Christ on earth with his teaching, healing and miracles. Showing incredible patience and perseverance through hours of rehearsals, they want to help the audience to imagine what it was like to have known and followed Jesus when he was living as a man on earth.

Virtues theme

Patience and Perseverance **Linked virtues:** hope, faith, trust

Coverage: To think about when patience is needed in life, when it's hard to be patient, identifying strategies to grow patience and perseverance, recognising patience in adversity. To consider what difference faith in God can make to being patient, for example

how Simeon and Anna's examples of extraordinary patience are rewarded, being patient with others and helping others to grow patience.

Suitable for Primary and Secondary and can be adapted for use as a series of lessons culminating in a whole school assembly and class reflections or as a Virtues Enquiry Pause day.

Biblical themes

Waiting patiently – Simeon and Anna – patience and perseverance

St Luke 2:22-40 <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A22-40&version=NIV>

Historical Background

Building pupil's understanding of the historical background to the story is an important part of developing religious and spiritual literacy. Please see Historical background to the Bible Story available as a download

This scene based on the Bible story is set in the Temple in Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph are shown to be practicing Jews, observing two ancient religious customs. Child-birth was regarded as making a woman unclean for forty days after the birth of a baby boy and Mary is there to be purified through ritual washing. Jesus, being the first-born male, is presented to the Lord.

Two elderly people, Simeon and Anna, appear, greet the Holy Family and recognise the infant Jesus as God's Messiah, the Christ. It was a popular idea that the Messiah would come and liberate the people from Roman rule and re-establish the glories of King David's reign. But there were others, like Simeon and Anna, known as *the quiet of the land*, who believed the Messiah would be a man of peace. Quietly, prayerfully and patiently they await his coming. Their patience has been rewarded.

Theology Introducing pupils to the theological basis to the story as well as comparing different versions of the story using different translations of the Christian Bible grows confidence in exploring Christian teaching, beliefs and practices deepens understanding. Please click on the scripture reference under Patience on the menu bar.

Theology background to 'The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple'

This is Luke's epiphany story (Epiphany meaning God's manifestation). Matthew tells us about the wise men, Gentiles, strangers coming from another country and acknowledging the divinity of Jesus. Simeon recognises Jesus as the Messiah, bringing light to the world.

This has been called a bitter-sweet occasion. Mary and Joseph are the happy parents of a baby and thankful for his safe arrival. But Simeon turns to Mary and refers to a sword piercing her heart, anticipating her sharing the sufferings of Jesus at the end of his life.

**The background
to the people
that were there:**

- **Mary** – A Galilean girl who responded to the call of God to be the mother of Jesus. Patiently in the background throughout Christ's working life and ministry, she must have wondered where it was all leading too. Her patience was finally rewarded when she was part of the Easter community of the church.
- **Joseph** – He is quietly in the background in the Gospels, trusting God.
- **Anna** – An elderly woman waiting with prayer and fasting for God's decisive action which she identified with the coming of Jesus.
- **Simeon** –An old man waiting trustfully that he would live to see the coming of the Christ. His hopes are fulfilled when he takes the infant Jesus in his arms.

Virtues Enquiry Patience – Learning Activities

Introduction to the Virtues Enquiry

The following material has been presented in a framework for class-based virtues teaching and learning, which also follows the structure for class assembly preparation (Greeting, Inspire, Reflect, Respond, Send) making it easy to translate the creative learning journey into a quality virtues assembly. The different aspects can be explored over a series of virtues learning lessons or as a Virtues or RE Pause Day with each learning focus and activity having a reflective outcome that can contribute to the final assembly presentation.

Aims and Virtues Learning Objectives

- To explore and explain the concept of patience
- To investigate a Christian perspective using the biblical example of Simeon and Anna – The presentation of Christ in the Temple
- To identify strategies for being patient and encouraging others to wait successfully
- To understand what difference belief in God makes to virtues learning and character development

Source material

- Scripture – Luke 2:22-40
- ‘Virtues Clip of ‘Simeon and Anna - Jesus is presented in the temple’ from The Life of Christ’, Wintershall
- Actor viewpoint clips reflecting on Patience
- Reflective questions to draw out themes
- Wintershall’s The Life of Christ Script excerpt Act 1 scene 3
- Dramatising Bible stories workshop ideas for teacher and pupil use in explaining the biblical examples of the virtues in action and their impact on people’s lives
- Story and drama toolkit - Margaret Cooling (creative ideas for using the Bible in the classroom)
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%205&version=NIV>
- Virtues assembly Powerpoint template with links to scripture, script excerpts, images and key questions

Curriculum links PSHCE, RE, SMSC, P4C,Literacy, History

Differentiated learning

Primary KS1 and KS2: learning to be patient, not giving up, waiting for good things, Christian faith perspective, strategies for waiting overcoming challenges

Secondary: patience in adversity, strategies for waiting and hoping, Christian faith perspective, waiting for things to change, staying hopeful

EXPLORE Session 1

Investigating concepts

Concept cracking: What are values and virtues and where do they come from?

Teaching points

Ask the question: *What kind of person do you want to become?* For example – Do you want to live by a set of values that: help others?, help us make lots of money? Help ourselves?...

Where do we get our values from? How do we develop virtues? Who teaches us about values and virtues? How do we develop a moral compass and why is it important? Who are our role models? (family, friends, celebrities, sports coaches, religious leaders, characters). Select introductory questions to suit class pre-knowledge and understanding. Explain that these are the kinds of questions that we can explore together in this enquiry.

Introduce pupils to the fact that different cultures and communities adhere to an agreed set of core values, some of which are universal values or come from a philosophy, scripture and religious teaching or are part of a political framework – for example British Values. Many values are common across different sources but the interpretation and significance of these will be distinct. For example, in Christianity the ‘fruits of the spirit’ are virtues that Jesus taught about and modelled to his followers, that believers seek to acquire as part of their character development. They believe that this process is an outworking of their relationship with God, believing in God as their saviour and the Holy Spirit as the teacher and enabler. This unit will help pupils explore some of these distinctions about virtues and values.

Learning activity 1 - Invite pupils to suggest further related questions – record on post it and decide together how to display these questions for reflection, perhaps as a giant class thought shower that can be added to throughout the enquiry to promote questioning.

Learning Activity 2 Recognising virtues and their importance

Objective: I can explain what a virtue is, how people show virtues and why they are important

Activity

In groups of four sort the set of concept cards into virtues and emotions. Consider what the difference is between a virtue and an emotion e.g. Patience and anger

Thought shower in pairs then share:

1. How do people show virtues?
2. Why are virtues important?
3. Are there positive and negative virtues?
4. What or who can help you develop virtues?

Learning Activity 2 - Virtues detectives (identifying when patience is being shown by others)

Objective: I can recognise aspects of the virtue of patience when it is being used by others

Activity

Look at the video clip of 'Simeon and Anne – The presentation of Jesus in the temple' and discuss in pairs what virtues you notice that people are showing towards others.

Consider what other virtues or emotions are being shown by other people in the scene. What impacts you? What do you notice about the way people act and react towards each other?

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Teaching points

Ask the question: *What is patience?*

Ask pupils to work in pairs, (with no teacher input) and write down a sentence or two about patience beginning with 'patience is...'

Explain how Wordle's work (e.g. repeated words are largest etc). Create a 'Wordle' reflection using all the outcomes starting with 'Patience is...'

Learning activity 1

Pupils work in pairs to and write down a sentence or two about patience beginning with 'patience is...'

Either: whole class together with teacher support create a 'Wordle' reflection using all the outcomes starting with 'Patience is...' or work in pairs to create hand drawn Wordle

Virtues Learning/Assembly preparation This Wordle can be put into a Powerpoint and used as part of the introduction or photos taken of hand drawn 'Wordle' reflection and input into Powerpoint on Laptops. Examples of wordles <http://www.wordle.net/create>

Identifying and using enquiry questions:

Teaching points

Ask the question: What enquiry questions could be used for exploring patience?

What enquiry questions do we need to ask to help us investigate patience – then group questions into a main question to create a shortlist for the virtues learning enquiry

For example: *What is patience? When do you show patience in different situations? What qualities do you need be patient with others, yourself and situations? What is difficult about being patient? Why is it better to be patient rather than impatient?*

What difference does faith in God make to being patient? How can the example of Simeon and Anna help you learn to be more patient? What helps you learn to be more patient? Why might older people be better at being patient than younger people?

Learning activity 2

Pupils in groups of three thought-shower key questions to help them investigate patience – for example to do with what the concept is, how we show it, and what the Bible can teach us. Recall an influential leader who has advocated peaceful change.

Pupils contribute a list of their key questions to a class list and through discussion agree a shortlist for the virtues learning enquiry that support an enquiry – see sample questions which are used as a framework for the remaining virtues learning activities and also for the virtues assembly

EXPLORE Session 2

When do you show patience in different situations? What qualities do you need to be patient? What is difficult about learning to be patient? What does it mean to lose patience or be impatient?

Teaching point: When do we need to be patient?

Pose the question: *When do you show patience in different situations?*

Discuss different situations in life when patience is needed. Ask pupils to work in pairs to ‘thought shower’ their own examples, to record on post-it notes. Give pupils the structure of:

1. **Pre-planned events** trusting other people regarding marked out events – For example waiting for your birthday, holidays, visiting relations, friends, a new toy, someone to get better, exams, not giving up
2. **Stages of personal growth-** Waiting for practise to bear fruit. For example learning an instrument or sport
3. **Developing Friendships** – how we treat each others
4. **Things that you can see and can't control - Natural processes.** For example patience needed to grow, recover from an accident or illness

Learning activity 1

Objective: I can role-play examples of showing patience in different situations

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Activity

Discuss different situations in life when patience is needed. Introduce idea that role-play can help us identify real-life situations, think through and communicate about these. Set up a safe space for pupils to share ideas and improvise. Seat in a horseshoe with open end as a stage. Ask pupils to work in fours to improvise real life situations through role – play in different areas of the room.

You can give a different context to each group or ask them to choose as a way of discerning their experience and viewpoints.

- about oneself
- to your family -
- to your friends - e.g. not excluding others from games, conversations, spending time, including others in activities, going without, caring and helping others not wanting something in return, think of others before yourself.
- to others
- patience role models

Return to the horseshoe to share outcomes. Consider what new knowledge and understanding has been gained from each example.

Assembly preparation suggestions: Children can choose which role-plays could be shown in the assembly

Teaching Point: How can we be patient with ourselves, others and situations?

Pose the question: *What qualities do you need to be patient?*

Introduce the idea of needing to develop other qualities or aspects of our characters to help develop virtues for example: acceptance, humility, trust, faith.

Show an image of an actor playing the disciple Peter from The Life of Christ (Patience Powerpoint)

Learning activity 2

Give pupils, in groups of three or four, a list of qualities which include those needed for patience to choose from. Encourage discussion about which qualities are needed and why. Create a shortlist of the ideal qualities for a perfectly patient person!

Pupils think through real life situations requiring patience: patience with others, oneself and circumstances. They identify qualities that are needed to help you be good at being patient.

Reflection: Write an acrostic poem using the word ‘patience’ with the starting letter for each line to link with a quality for example trust
image of acrostic poem outcomes can included in Patience Powerpoint or read acrostic in assembly
The disciple Peter was known for being impulsive and impatient.

Teaching point: What can be difficult about being patient?

Pose the question: *What is difficult about learning to be patient? What does it mean to lose patience or be impatient?*

Learning activity 3: Support pupils in identifying the challenges involved in waiting patiently for something. For example: impatience, selfishness, frustration, doubt, taking charge which are opposite of the qualities that help us grow patience

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Plenary activity

The enquiry questions in activity 5 and 6 and pupil responses can be used as a starting point to creating improvised drama scenarios of everyday situations to illustrate their ideas – for example to contrast examples of qualities in showing patience and the challenges.

Pupils in pairs identify the challenges involved in being patient with others, ourselves and situations, e.g patiently for something.

Make a ‘Virtuesometer’

Aim: for helping identify how patient we are being

1. Draw two large circles inside one another on an A4 piece of card, leaving a gap of 3cm in between each one.
2. Draw a line across the middle of the two circles out the edges of the card.
3. Write the virtue around the centre of the inner circle large circle in the semicircle.

4. On the outer drawn circle write qualities and challenges related to the virtue in two separate colours on one half of the semi-circle and the other.
5. Create a pointer or arrow and attach with a split pin.
6. The finished Virtuesometer could be used in circle time or intervention groups to reflect on pupil engagement with virtues.

ENQUIRE Session 3

What is patience and what difference can faith in God make to being patient?

How can dramatized examples of the Bible story help us understand more about patience and the difference that faith makes?

Teaching point: *What difference can faith in God make to being patient?*

I

ntroduce the story of Simeon and Anna – explain the background.

Read scripture example Simeon and Anna or use Bible gateway for audio version. Scripture scrutiny can be undertaken – see links under scripture scrutiny on the website

Pupils verbally recount the story – all remember certain elements – affirm individual contribution

Ask the question: *How did Simeon and Anna show remarkable patience?*

Consider...

- *what qualities Simeon and Anna have shown related to patience in waiting successfully*
- *what challenges might Simeon and Anna have faced in having to wait so long?*
- *How were they rewarded for being patient?*

Learning activity 1

Pupils are invited to read the Bible story and recount the story as consequences – taking it in turn to contribute

Consider:

- what was forgotten? what was remembered?
- Not just one big story – lots of different viewpoints

Resources: Wintershall promotional video, Sound bites: James B D on effects of biblical drama, The Life of Christ' Simeon and Anna –

The presentation of Christ in the temple -

Refer to the useful Historical and theological background information section under patience on the website

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Learning activity 2

How can dramatized examples of the story help us understand more about patience and the difference that faith makes? What do others say about patience? Resources – LOC scene clip and actor viewpoints Patience

Introduce Wintershall's productions, for example The Life of Christ as an example of creative communication of the Gospel and drama bringing Christian virtues to life. Explain that it is drama, so not exactly the same as the Bible story (artistic licence) Access the Wintershall education website and click on virtues clip: 'Simeon and Anna – 'The Presentation of Jesus in the temple' This shows Simeon and Anna, receiving Jesus as a new born baby in the temple, and recognising that their life long journey of waiting patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled has been rewarded.

Teaching point: In what ways does the dramatized version help explain the story, message and how Simeon and Anna show patience?

Learning activity 3

Pupils write a reflection from the viewpoint of Simeon or Anna about patience – what they were waiting for and how well they waited.

Plenary

Teaching point

Show selected clips of actors talking about patience and how being part of The Life of Christ has impacted them.

Ask the question: what new ideas have you learnt about patience from the actors?

Learning activity 4

Pupils find out about Wintershall's 'The Life of Christ' as an example of creative communication of the Gospel using drama to bring the story and Christian virtues to life.

Pupils watch the clip again and consider how far the drama helps them make sense of the story.

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Teaching point: Explain to pupils that the scenes from the Life of Christ were part of a community drama, written by Peter Hutley, who had never written a script before The Nativity.

Show pupils the extract from The Life of Christ Act 1 scene 4 from Joseph: *Simeon, great one. I am Joseph and this is Mary. We have come to present our first born son to God*".

Learning activity 5

Choose some pupils to act out a few lines to help them understand how what the characters say and do help the audience understand the story and its message

The script for the assembly drama is best written after this lesson to avoid limiting creative exploration of ideas.

Pupils read and act out the script lines from the extract and consider what the script writer has needed to add to the Bible story to dramatise it effectively.

Virtues reflection - Pupils identify qualities linked to showing patience and what evidence they found while watching the clip that could be useful in their drama

EXPRESS Session 4

(See DRAMA WORKSHOP section on the website for suggested ideas to dramatise scripture)

Dramatising Bible stories and writing scripts (preparation for virtues assembly)

Virtues Learning through drama – Exploring the Simeon and Anna story and patience through drama

Pupils recreate their own dramatized version of the story drawing from research in previous virtues learning activities

The drama forms the main part of the virtues assembly

Resources

- James Burke Dunsmore, the professional actor who plays Jesus offers his insights into his experience of biblical drama.
These sound bites are available under the 'Listen' on the menu bar.

Excerpts from Margaret Cooling's Story and drama Toolkit for use at this point to help prepare a script and drama for a virtues assembly.

SEND Songs and Prayers

Songs: Choosing or writing Collective worship songs about patience

Suggestions

Music: Choose or write songs that illustrate the patience theme or qualities needed to learn to be patient for example trust, faith, acceptance, peace

Pupils learn songs to share in Assembly

Literacy: write new version of a favourite song on the patience theme inspired by the story using an familiar melody music score, background or live accompaniment

Prayer

Suggestions: look at the prayers below that have been suggested as guidelines only on the patience theme.

Pupils individually or in pairs write their own prayers and choose one to use in the assembly. The following structure might be useful: thank you, sorry, please

*Living God,
you waited a long while before coming to us in Jesus.
Give us patience
when we look forward to good things happening to us. Amen.*

*Creator God,
as we see tall oak trees that many years ago were tiny acorns,
help us be patient. Amen*