

Virtues Enquiry – Humility (Gentleness)

Learning Activities and Resources

Overview

To think about when humility is needed in life and shown by others. When it's hard to express this virtue or personal quality what is involved in being humble?; identifying strategies to develop humility and service as personal qualities; recognising humility as different from other forms of serving people– how Jesus's examples of humility challenged people's attitudes and affirmed people; helping others show humility. Jesus as a divine and human embodiment of 'love' itself, modelling total acceptance, treating everyone as equals, self-sacrifice, honouring others.

Linked virtues and qualities: Service, empathy, self-sacrifice, respect, acceptance, kindness, caring.

Read more...www.christianvirtues4schools.org for background theology and examples

Aims of Virtues Enquiry Through Drama Learning Activities

- To explore and explain the concept of humility as a virtue/personal quality
- To investigate a Christian perspective using the biblical example
- To identify strategies for showing humility and encouraging others to do the same
- To understand what difference belief in God makes to virtues learning and character development

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

Differentiated learning

Primary KS1 and KS2 – learning to be humble, serving others, humility in relationship with God and others

Secondary KS3 – recognising humility and situations when it is important to show humility, strategies for developing a humble attitude

Content of the Learning activities in this pack

Session 1– INSPIRE Concept Cracking

Session 2 – EXPLORE Humility in Daily Life

Session 3 – ENQUIRE Biblical Text and Interpretation

Session 4– RESPOND Biblical Drama Workshop

Session 5 – REFLECT Together

Session 6 – ASSEMBLY Outline

Source material needed for this unit

- **'Biblical Text** Jesus washes the disciples feet [John 13:1-15](#)

- [Film clips](#) of scenes to illustrate selected Christian virtues/fruits of the spirit, for example the moment when Jesus demonstrates humility and service through washing his disciples' feet.
- [Clips of actors](#) who play some of the different characters in these scenes, reflect on these virtues and values offering different viewpoints and explaining the impact of the bible story or Jesus teaching and example on their own lives.
- Virtues **Learning Activities**- Inspire, Explore, Enquire, Respond, Reflect, Assembly
- Historical [background and Theology](#)
- Bible Drama workshop material PDF [Bible drama workshop - humility](#)
- [Story and Drama Toolkit](#)
- Reference to [The Jubilee Centre](#) - Framework for Character Education for schools

Biblical text:

Jesus washes the disciple's feet [John 13:1-15](#)

Historical background to Biblical text

The scene is set in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem, the evening before Jesus was put to death. During the Last Supper he behaved in what to his disciples seemed to be a most bizarre way; he stooped to wash their feet. If you employed a slave, this was a task he performed. Hence the disciples were surprised when Jesus, their teacher, did this. No wonder Peter objected, not realising the significance of what Jesus was doing

Jesus performed these simple, dramatic and memorial actions to demonstrate the chief characteristic of his ministry, humbly serving others. It was also a vivid reminder to his disciples that they should serve one another and by implication this should be so of their relationships with other people.

Please note: Introducing pupils to the theological basis and historical background to the story, as well as comparing versions of the story using different translations of the Christian Bible, grows confidence in exploring Christian teaching, beliefs and practices as well as deepens understanding.

Theology

Jesus as the ultimate role model for Christians and others. Jesus showed all these qualities in his life on earth, as part of God's greatest act of love - God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, as a sacrifice for the sins of all humankind, that all might be saved and have eternal life, through faith in Christ as a personal saviour, and the work of the Holy Spirit be enabled to show the same love to others. Jesus was known by his disciples and others that met him while he was on earth, for consistently showing unconditional love

Jesus lived a life of unconditional love towards people— giving every day during his life on earth to teaching people how to love one another, by setting an example for people to follow.

ENQUIRY LEARNING ACTIVITIES - 'HUMILITY'

Session 1 INSPIRE Concept cracking

Learning Objectives

- To identify previous knowledge about virtues and values
- To be able to explain the concept of the virtue
- To recognise different sources for virtues learning including from the Biblical text
- To understand the significance of key questions in enquiry learning
- To identify further key questions to start an effective virtues enquiry.
- To creatively reflect on learning about the concept of humility using Wordles

Learning activity 1 *What are virtues and where do they come from?*

Teaching Point

Explain that it is important to identify what we already know about virtues and values in order to identify further key questions inspired by the topic to start an enquiry task.

Ask pupils to think of questions to ask about virtues and consider why they are important.

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.

Use their questions or some of the following as an entry point:

What kind of person do you want to become? For example – Do you want to live by a set of virtues that: help others? help us make lots of money? help ourselves?...

Can we group virtues into categories to help us understand them better?

Can we identify specific virtues that we aspire to develop? (see Appendix 2 for more information)

- ***Intellectual virtues*** e.g. autonomy; critical thinking; curiosity; judgement; reasoning; reflection; resourcefulness
- ***Moral Virtues*** e.g. compassion; courage; gratitude; honesty; humility; integrity; justice; respect
- ***Civil virtues*** e.g. citizenship; civility; community awareness; neighbourliness; service; volunteering
- ***Performance virtues*** e.g. confidence; determination; motivation; perseverance; resilience; teamwork.
- ***'Fruit of the spirit' virtues*** e.g. love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control – Galatians 5

Where do we get our virtues from? Who teaches us about virtues and virtues?

How do we develop a moral compass and individual virtues? Why is it important?

Who are our role models? (family, friends, celebrities, sports coaches, religious leaders, characters).

N.B Select introductory questions to suit class pre-knowledge and understanding.

Introduce pupils to the fact that different cultures and communities adhere to an agreed set of core virtues, some of which are universal virtues or come from a philosophy, Sacred text and religious teaching or are part of a political framework – for example British Virtues. Many virtues are common across different sources but the interpretation and significance of these will be distinct.

Extension: Look in more detail at [The Jubilee Centre](#) categorisation of virtues as a stimulus for further discussion.

A Christian viewpoint on Virtues. In Christianity the ‘fruit of the spirit’ are biblically inspired virtues (personal qualities) that Jesus taught about and modelled to his followers, that believers seek to acquire as part of their faith-based 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 the distinctions and overlaps between universal moral and biblically inspired virtues. The design and content of the learning activities focussed on the study of moral and biblical virtues will require them to exercise intellectual virtues as well as reflect upon them. The Bible drama workshop will deepen awareness of performance related virtues.

Learning activity 2 Be a Virtues Detective!

Show pupils the clip of ‘Jesus washing his disciple’s feet’ from Wintershall’s The Life of Christ.

With no input, ask them if they notice any particularly **moral virtues** that Jesus or his disciples are showing. Invite them to comment on what impacted them, or what they noticed.

Show the Wintershall ‘Actor Viewpoint Clip’ Humility to hear a volunteer actor describing how the experience of acting in the biblical drama impacted them and their understanding of biblically inspired moral virtues. Discuss pupil responses.

Invite pupils to suggest further related questions about Virtues – record on post its. Decide together how to display these questions for reflection, perhaps as a giant ‘class thought shower’ that can be added to throughout the enquiry learning journey to promote questioning.

Virtues Journals – Record responses and questions re what is a virtue and Be a Virtues Detective activity

Learning activity 3 Creating a Virtues ‘Wordle’ - *What does humility mean to me?*

Ask pupils to work in pairs, (with no teacher input) and write down a sentence or two about humility beginning the sentence with ‘Humility is...’

Explain how ‘Wordle’ Clouds work. See [examples of Wordles](#). Demonstrate how repeated words are largest etc. Create a ‘Wordle’ reflection using all the outcomes starting with ‘Humility is... either

- using the online website with teacher support using all the outcomes starting with ‘Humility is...’
- or work in pairs to create a hand drawn ‘Wordle on A3 paper.

Suggestion for follow-up assembly preparation

This 'Wordle' can be put into a PowerPoint and used as part of the introduction when pupils explain what the assembly is about and how they have explored humility or photos taken of hand drawn 'Wordle' reflection and input into PowerPoint.

Learning activity 4 Identifying Big Questions to help our virtues enquiry?

Teaching Point

What deeper key questions do we need to support our virtues Enquiry about Humility?

Pupils in groups of three to thought shower key questions to help them investigate humility – e.g. to do with what the Virtue is (concept) how we show it, the impact and what the Bible can teach us.

For example:

- *What are virtues and how do we experience them in different aspects of everyday life? (intellectual, moral, civic, performance, spiritual)*
- *What is humility?*
- *When do you show humility in different situations?*
- *What qualities do you need to be humble towards yourself, towards others and in situations?*
- *What is difficult about being humble?*
- *Why is it better to be humble rather than proud?*
- *What difference could faith in God make to showing humility?*
- *What helps you learn to be humble?*

Pupils contribute a list of their key questions to a class list and through discussion agree a shortlist for the Virtues Enquiry that can support an investigation.

Session 2 EXPLORE humility in daily life

Learning Objectives

- To recognise what qualities are needed to be humble
- To be able to identify everyday situations when we might show humility
- To be able to role play real life scenarios to explain humility
- To be able to explain the challenges involved in showing humility

Learning Activity 1 *When and how do we need to show humility? Role-play*

Teaching Point

What qualities do you need to be humble? When do you show humility in different situations?

What is difficult about learning to show humility? What does it mean to be proud or boastful?

Discuss situations in life when humility is needed. Introduce the idea that role-play can help us identify and explore real - life situations, think through and communicate about these. Examples of real-life situations might relate to:

- oneself
- your family -
- 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.
- neighbours
- humility role models e.g celebrities, interest group leaders (scouts, brownies, sports or dance coaches)

Role-play real life situations - Humility

Set up a safe space for pupils to share ideas and improvise. Seat pupils in a horseshoe with the open end as a stage. Ask pupils to work in fours to improvise a real life 'virtues' situation through role– play in different areas of the room. You can give a different scenario to each group or ask them to choose as a way of discerning their experience and viewpoints.

Return to the horseshoe to share outcomes with the whole class. Pupils in groups record the role-play examples of humility from their everyday lives and role models and write each idea on post-it notes/

Virtues Journal: Consider what new knowledge and understanding has been gained from each example.

Teaching Point

How can we learn to be humble ourselves and show humility to others?

Ask the question: *What qualities do you need to develop in our characters to show humility?*

Introduce the idea of needing to develop other qualities or aspects of our characters to help develop virtues for example: trust respect, self-sacrifice, faith, patience

Learning activity 2 The Ideal Humble Person

Give pupils in groups of three or four a list of qualities which include those needed for being humble. Encourage discussion about which qualities are needed and why. Draw round a child on a large piece of paper and fill the middle with pupils' ideas about qualities needed on post-its or written in felt-tip pen (inside the outline)

Encourage pupils to think about importance of each part of the body – mouth use of words, eyes and ears to sense or notice, hands to help, feet to choose to act.

Learning activity 3 Humility acrostic

Reflection: Write an acrostic using the word 'Humility'. The starting letter for each line to link with a quality image of acrostic poem outcomes can be included in humility PowerPoint or read acrostic in assembly

Teaching Point

What can be difficult about showing humility?

Learning activity 4 Humility role-play

Ask the question: *What is difficult about showing humility?* Consider opposites: *What does it mean to be proud or arrogant?*

Seat pupils in a horseshoe with an open end as a stage and break out space for small group drama around the room. Support pupils in identifying the challenges involved in showing humility. For example: encouraging and serving others, being unboastful about your own gifts and talents.

N.B. The key questions in the first two activities 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 humility and the challenges. Pupils in pairs identify the challenges involved in showing humility to others, ourselves and in situations and report to whole group, using conscience alley exercise.

Learning activity 5 Make a ‘

Aim: identifying how humble we are being everyday

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.

Session 3 ENQUIRE Exploring Biblical Text and Interpretation

Learning Objectives

- To explore and identify what the Christian Bible and faith teach us about the virtue of humility?
- To consider how other people interpreted Gospel text about humility for e.g. Jesus washes the disciples' feet

Learning activity 1 Story Consequences

Teaching Point

What can the Christian Bible and faith teach us about virtue of humility?

Introduce the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet and explain the historical and theological background.

Read scripture text: [Jesus washes his disciples' feet. John 13:1-15](#)

Seat pupils in a horseshoe and ask pupils to verbally recount the event, taking turns around the room. All remember certain elements and affirm individual contributions. Consider what was forgotten and what was remembered?

The Bible stories are not just one big story but represent lots of different viewpoints.

Ask the question again: *How did Jesus show humility in washing the disciples' feet?*

What were some of his disciples' responses? Can you identify evidence for other virtues being shown in the text?

Consider...

- what virtues Jesus showed in washing the disciples' feet
- *What challenges might Jesus have faced in showing humility in this situation?*
- *How would you feel washing someone's dirty feet?*
- *How were the disciples and servants rewarded by Jesus showing humility?*
- *How do you think the disciples and servants felt when Jesus insisted on washing the disciples' feet?*
- *How would you feel if someone washed your dirty feet?*

Learning Activity 2 Interpreting text through drama

Resources

- [Wintershall promotional video](#)
- [Sound bites](#): James Burke-Dunsmore on effects of biblical drama, The Life of Christ
- ['Jesus washes the disciple's feet – film clip from 'The Life of Christ', Wintershall](#)
- Refer to the useful background information section of this resource
- [Scripture: John 13:1-15](#)
- Character list for the scene
- Links to additional information – history and theology
- 'Story and Drama toolkit' excerpts (Margaret Cooling) and other drama ideas (Bible Society)

Teaching Point

How have people interpreted the Gospel text through drama?

- Look at the [Wintershall promotional video](#)

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 until he wrote 'The Nativity'. This production has been performed at The Barn Theatre at Wintershall every December since 1989

- [Listen to 'Sound bites'](#): James Burke-Dunsmore describing the effects of biblical drama as well as his experience as an actor performing in 'The Life of Christ' and other Biblical drama
- [Watch the Wintershall clip: 'Jesus washes the disciples' feet](#) Act 111 scene 9 from 'The Life of Christ' and compare this with the Biblical text for this event.
- **Explore examples of other art forms used to interpret scripture for example music, visual art, opera, ballet**

How do you interpret the Bible text?

Look at the video clip of Jesus washing the disciples feet [Wintershall clip: 'Jesus washes the disciples' feet](#)
What comments or insights do you have on Jesus's example in his attitude and actions towards the disciples?

Consider:

- *what qualities did Jesus show in washing his disciple's feet?*
- *what challenges the disciples face with Jesus insisting that he took the role of a servant and washed their feet?*
- *how might Jesus have felt when some of the disciples were reluctant to have their feet washed by him?*
- *how do you think Peter and the other disciples felt after they had their feet washed by Jesus?*

N.B It is recommended that pupils start with an investigation of the Bible text before they look at creative interpretations of the stories to secure their understanding of this story.

Learning Activity 3 Group reflection – our learning journey so far

Teaching Point

What have you learnt so far about unconditional love from the Virtues Enquiry learning journey?

Invite pupils to think about what they have learnt in the Virtues Enquiry learning journey so far about unconditional love from previous activities: concept cracking, unconditional love every day role-play, interpreting Bible Text.

Encourage pupils to look through their Virtues Enquiry Reflection Journals to choose insights to share.

How has exploring Biblical accounts and examples of Biblical drama deepened your understanding of the virtue and its impact on daily life?

What experiences and insights gained from the learning journey could you contribute to your group Bible drama using the same text as inspiration?

Optional creative reflection (This activity can be used to assess learning alongside the group reflection)

Pupils write an acrostic poem or reflection either from their own viewpoint, that of disciples, Jesus or a servant. The poem needs to reflect learning from different stages of the Virtues Enquiry.

Session 4 RESPOND Bible Drama Workshop

[Download Bible Drama Workshop –PDF](#)

Aims

- To be able to dramatise the Bible story through a series of drama exercises and script writing
- To use scripture as a starting point and previous learning related to the linked virtue to dramatise scripture and reflect on the virtue
- To use creative process to deepen their enquiry and personal reflection
- To use drama to communicate learning to others about what Jesus and his followers can teach about the virtue of humility (gentleness)

Resources needed:

- [Download Bible Drama Workshop - Activity 3](#)
- [Print out of the Bible text:](#) Jesus washes his disciple's feet (John 13:1-15) (enough copies for pupils to work in pairs)
- [Script excerpt from The Life of Christ Act 111 scene 9](#)
- [Video clip from The Life of Christ – Jesus washes his disciple's feet](#)
- [Character list for the scene](#)
- Links to additional information – [history and theology](#)
- [‘Story and Drama toolkit’](#) excerpts (Margaret Cooling) and other drama ideas (Bible Society)

Suggested location: school or church hall or outdoors if weather is favourable

REFLECT

Values Journal – reflection time post Bible Drama Workshop or Pause Day

Session 5 REFLECT Together

This session ideally follows the Bible Drama Workshop

Learning objective

- To reflect on what shapes character development
- To consider how people's virtues and actions are influenced by Jesus's example
- To identify ways that we can use our learning about virtues to make choices in our everyday lives
- To identify ways that we can use our virtues learning to make a difference in our friendships, families and communities
- To identify ways that our creative learning can be shared with our school community to enrich our ethos (see Assembly outline) for suggestions

Learning activity 1 Drama Impacting Virtues

Look at the actor viewpoint clips (accessible on www.wintershall-education.com) for actors' reflections on unconditional love and inclusion and how being part of 'The Life of Christ' productions has impacted them.

How has the actor's experience of being in a Bible drama, impacted their understanding of these virtues? (the Fruit of the Spirit)

Ask the question: *How has dramatising Biblical texts helped you understand virtues and their impact more deeply?*

Consider the questions:

- *What new ideas have you learnt about humility?*
- *How can gestures for example hands and facial expressions be used to express gentleness/humility?*
- *What kind of vocabulary or phrases might a humble person use? E.g. I don't need that, you have it; How can I help you with that?*
- *What does it mean to be a servant to others?*
- *Are there people today who may feel dominated or oppressed? Why is this so?*
- *How can this sense of domination be overcome by humility?*
- *In which ways can our school serve other people in the community?*
- *What other questions could be asked to encourage people to use Biblical accounts to look at how the example of Jesus can help them think more deeply about humility as a personal virtue/quality to develop*

Learning activity 2 Virtues in Action - making virtuous choices

How does it feel to be blessed by others?

How would you feel if you were Jesus?

Can you list three actions which show humility?

How can you replicate Jesus' actions in school?

How can you feel better if you have made the wrong choice?

Do you or have you experienced a divine moment that helped you change your attitude?

Why is it important to be humble?

Why is it difficult to be a follower?

Session 6 ASSEMBLY Outline Humility

Aims

- To use the Bible Drama workshop as a main focus of the class-led school assembly with reflection on the virtues enquiry learning journey, use and impact of biblical drama in exploring
- To share learning from the Virtues Enquiry through drama with the school community to enrich ethos

SEND

Choosing Songs for the follow up Virtues Enquiry Assembly

Song – choose songs that illustrate the virtue theme or qualities needed e.g humility, serving others for example ‘ *Make me a channel of your Peace*’

Pupils learn or write songs to share in Assembly

In Literacy – write new version of a favourite song on the virtues theme inspired by the story using familiar melody

Prayer

Look at the prayers 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.

Pupils write prayers on the virtues theme inspired by the story and its message – following structure might be useful:

Thank you, sorry, please

Lord Jesus, thank you for the example you showed us of humility and service through washing your disciples’ feet

which meant putting yourself in the place of a servant

We are so grateful to because you went so much further than this by laying down your whole life for every person

through your death on the cross, paying the price of sin for all people.

When we put our faith and trust in you as our Saviour you offer us the Holy Spirit to help us follow Jesus’s example in being humble and serving others.

Amen