

## **ORGANISING THE HALF-DAY OF WORKSHOPS**

### **Briefing notes for churches**

The half-day starts with an introductory session for all the children where the workshops are introduced. In groups of five, the children then take part in three workshops which help them to explore parts of the Easter story. Finally the children gather together again for a presentation session where the whole of the Easter story is told.

Six workshops are suggested, two involve drama exercises, two are craft-based and two use artefacts to tell part of the Easter story.

- **Palm Sunday – craft**  
Pupils hear how Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and make palm leaves out of newspaper and green paper.
- **The Last Supper – artefacts**  
Pupils hear how Jesus did something new at the Passover supper and they eat bread and drink grape juice. They then learn about how communion is celebrated by Christians.
- **Gethsemane and Peter – drama**  
Pupils pose to form 'photos', or tableaux, to represent times when they have been let down by friends. They hear how Jesus was let down by his friends in the garden of Gethsemane, by Judas who betrayed him and by Peter who denied him.
- **The Trial – drama**  
Pupils take part in a drama exercise about false accusation. They learn why Jesus stayed silent during his trial even though he was falsely accused.
- **The Crucifixion – artefacts**  
Pupils hear the story of the crucifixion, handling a robe, crown of thorns and some nails to make the story come alive.
- **Resurrection – craft**  
Pupils consider the life cycle of a flower. They learn how Jesus appeared to his disciples after he rose from the dead until they had no doubt that Jesus was alive again.

### **Finding helpers**

You will need four to six people to help run this event for schools – four if you use helpers from schools in the craft sessions. These are the tasks that you need to allocate to people:

- One person needs to do the opening and closing sessions when pupils are all together, but this person can also lead one of the workshops. This person needs to be confident talking to a class group of thirty children at a time.
- Two people to run the craft workshops. They will need to do some story telling, but the main part of these workshops involves cutting and sticking. If you are using helpers from schools, these craft workshops are the ones that are easiest to lead.
- Two people to run the drama workshops. They need to do some story telling and it will help if they have some experience of doing drama with children.

- Two people to run the artefacts workshop. These people need to be experienced in telling stories and encouraging children to talk and ask questions.

If schools bring two classes at a time, the number of helpers will need to be doubled. All helpers that the church provides should have a CRB check in line with Diocesan policy for volunteers working with children. For more information, please contact Sam Donoghue, the Children's Ministry Adviser for the Diocese of London (020 7932 1255 or samuel.donoghue@london.anglican.org).

You must meet as a group in advance of the day to go through the workshop material in detail, to decide who is going to gather the materials, to organise where the workshops and plenary sessions will be held, and to decide how to set up each workshop. Ensure workshop leaders rehearse the story-telling element of their workshop until they feel confident telling the story in their own words. Putting on high-quality workshops sends a strong message to schools about the value you place on the pupils and on the schools themselves; it's not good enough to just muddle through.

It will also be very helpful to have an adult attached to each group as they rotate round the workshops. When you discuss the workshop arrangements with the school, find out how many adults they will be bringing. They may well need to enlist the help of parents to get children to the church. These parents and the teachers could then accompany and support the children as they rotate round the workshops.

### **Timings and numbers**

It's best to arrange for one class of pupils at a time to visit the church for two hours. You will have around thirty pupils, five in each workshop. You could run the workshops twice – once in the morning and once in the afternoon – to cater for more children, or even run the workshops over the course of several days to cater for a whole school.

Ask the school to put the children into six groups for the workshops before they arrive at the church. If each group has a number – Group one, Group two, etc. – and the pupils know which group they are in, it will make organisation at the church much easier.

Each small group of children will rotate round three of the workshops, and each will experience one craft workshop, one drama and one with artefacts. Three groups will take it in turns to do Palm Sunday, the Last Supper and Gethsemane. The other three groups will take it in turns to do the Trial, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. Pupils will only cover half the story during the workshops but will hear the whole Easter story during the presentation session at the end.

Choose which groups will do which workshops and arrange the workshops in the church or church hall so that it's easy for groups to find their way to their next workshop. If you follow the format we have suggested, three groups will do each workshop during the two hours. We suggest that the third group to do each workshop participates in that section of the presentation session at the end, as that

part of the story will still be fresh in their minds. The exception is when you talk about Gethsemane and the trial, when all three groups will need to be involved.

So for example, the organisation might look like this:

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> workshop</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> workshop</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> workshop</b>
Group one	Palm Sunday	Last Supper	Gethsemane
Group two	Gethsemane	Palm Sunday	Last Supper
Group three	Last Supper	Gethsemane	Palm Sunday
Group four	Trial	Crucifixion	Resurrection
Group five	Resurrection	Trial	Crucifixion
Group six	Crucifixion	Resurrection	Trial

The details of how to involve each group in the presentation session are given on pages 29-31, but in brief:

- when you talk about Palm Sunday, invite **group three** to wave their branches.
- when you talk about the Last Supper, ask **group two** to feedback on what they learned.
- when you talk about Gethsemane and Peter, ask **groups one, two and three** to recreate their 'photo', or project these photos onto a screen.
- when you talk about the Trial, get **group six** to act out their sketch.
- when you talk about the Crucifixion, ask **group five** about the artefacts.
- when you talk about the Resurrection, ask **group four** to show their pictures.

Drinking water will need to be provided for the children. Check with the school first if you want to provide a snack and take their advice, because of the prevalence of food allergies. Inform schools of the toilet facilities that are available at the church.

The workshops have been planned for KS2 pupils (aged 7 to 11), but can be adapted for KS1 pupils (aged 5 to 7). Ask advice for how the workshops should be altered for younger children from a KS1 teacher in your church, or a parent with children of that age.

### **Structure of the two hours – a suggestion**

- 0:00 Pupils arrive and take off coats. Make sure accompanying staff and helpers know where the toilets are.
- 0:10 Pupils gather for opening session. Get children to sit in their groups right from the start. Give an explanation of who Jesus is, and explain the theme and structure of the workshops. Make sure the adult helpers know which workshop their group should attend and in which order.
- 0:25 Pupils go to first workshop.

- 0:30 Pupils start first workshop.
- 0:45 Give a quiet verbal warning that the first workshop should be coming to an end and pupils should move on.
- 0:50 Pupils start second workshop.
- 1:05 Give a quiet verbal warning that the second workshop should be coming to an end and pupils should move on.
- 1:10 Pupils start third workshop.
- 1:25 Give a warning that the third workshop should be coming to an end and pupils should gather back together for the final session. They will need to collect their craft items on the way. Make sure that each group knows which part of the presentation they will be contributing to.
- 1:35 Begin presentation session, telling the whole Easter story with feedback from the children.
- 1:55 End presentation session. Thank children and staff for participating and hand back to the teacher in charge to organise them getting ready to go back to school.