



1. The power of a story

Age range: Primary

Theme: We gather together for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community, serving the needs of our unique school contexts. As human beings, we have storytelling in our DNA, and so for this final term of the school year, we offer some stories from across the world that help us to think about **'ourselves, others, beauty and/or beyond'**, and wonder together at the power of a story to help connect us and change us. We intentionally use **language from our Diocesan spirituality offer** throughout these resources and hope that this will help to build schools' understanding of the role of collective worship as part of spiritual flourishing. We start with a very special story – about stories, and the power that they have in communicating ideas, emotions and shared human experience.



How does this link to your school's Christian vision & values?

The class reflection materials for this term follow the same pattern as previous terms – think, talk and do – but also (where possible) relate to questions about **ourselves, others, beauty and beyond**. Also use this section to reference stories that are especially important to your school community – from your curriculum, from class libraries, and from families that are a part of your school context.

Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation.
- Today's materials include a **reflective story** about stories, with some props that you will need to find, listed within the script on p.4. You will need to make up the storytellers 'book' which is printed onto p. Fold and cut it (along the black line) according to the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqsSKJzKC00> You can enlarge it to A3 if it helps. All images used are copyright free; interestingly, the image of Shakespeare used in the booklet is the only portrait that is believed to have been painted in his lifetime, and hangs at [Hatchlands Park](#), here in Surrey! You will also need to make a small chain of paper people for the reflective story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZo68K6vWZ4>
- There is an extra, second story (p8) that you might want to use in class during the week, based on the parable from Matthew 13 that was briefly referenced during the script, called **'Something old, something new'**. It needs no equipment, and would be a good stilling exercise in itself.

Gathering:

Slide 1: Sparkling story stilling exercise

Use the stilling slide if desired: the suggested words should be spoken slowly, leaving pauses inbetween to create a sense of stillness.

As you sit quietly, watch the confetti....[PAUSE]

Now practise slower breathing.....in.....and out.....in.....and out.....keep this going as you continue to watch....[PAUSE]

You maybe notice that you are feeling calmer and more relaxed....[PAUSE]

As you breathe, think about yourself and what you bring into this time today..... [PAUSE]

We come into this special / sacred space and time to be still....to think deeply.....to be together as a school community.....

In our time together today, we will **talk about stories, share a story – about stories!....and then think about stories together.**

But first, let's welcome one another as we begin....

- **Slide 2:** Use our new gathering words for this term, or your usual greeting if you prefer. These greetings may change slightly each week to reflect the **spiritual elements** that we will be exploring in each week's materials.

Leader: As we gather to share our story today....

All: **May we grow in our understanding.**

Here are BSL actions for some of the words:

Leader's words:

Gather: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/gather> (1st video); Story: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/story> (1st video)

Response words:

Grow: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/grow> (2nd video);

Engaging:

- **Slide 3: Our favourite stories** Today we start a brand new series that will shape our times together, about stories. Before we begin, spend a few moments thinking about your favourites.... *[you might want*



to use Think-Pair-Share to ensure all children have a chance to engage]

- **Slide 4: “I will speak using stories; I will tell things that have been secret since the world was made.”** Look at the words (from Matthew 13, quoting a much older verse from Psalm 78); don’t say where it comes from or who spoke the words, yet. Reflect on what ‘secrets’ they think a story might have to share – and whether children think stories are a good way to communicate ideas. You might need to help them with a familiar example from your library.
- **Slide 5:** Throughout this term, we will be exploring stories from across time and across the world – all of them with the power to help us to grow. And so today, as we begin this journey together, we are going to share a story...about stories – and about ourselves as human beings – with lots of space for us to wonder and think together..... *[use script on p.3-4]*
- As we shared this story together, I wonder which stories you thought about, which might be the stories that you treasure in your heart?....or stories that have helped you to understand something important? *[you might want to allow some talking time here, for children to begin to express their thoughts and ideas]*
- **Slide 6:** We heard in our story about one great storyteller from human history – Jesus, who Christians believe is God’s Son and came to earth to be the Great Rescuer. He spoke the words we looked at earlier: **“I will speak using stories; I will tell things that have been secret since the world was made.”**
People often asked Jesus big questions about God and what God’s kingdom is like, and he often replied to the question (as he did with many other questions!) by telling them a story – a parable, in fact, which is a story with a hidden meaning, like hidden treasure or a secret to find. During this first half of the term, we are going to be exploring together some of Jesus’ parables. They all mostly come from just one chapter of the gospel of Matthew chapter 13, and like all stories, there are things that will help us to think about **ourselves, about others, about our world – and about things that lie beyond our world....**
- **Slide 7: Old treasure, new treasure**
One of the parables that Jesus told was about new and old treasure – about a wise man who gathered valuable things that were both old and new. In this parable, Jesus was helping his listeners to think about the stories and ideas that they collect, like treasure, in their memories and their hearts – and asking them to allow new ideas to be gathered alongside the old. It’s maybe a good idea for us to think about as we begin this new term. So, let’s wonder together now.....

Slide 8: Responding (and words for worship)

Let’s be still and quiet together now...

...in the stillness, think about the things that you’ve heard today....

....we’ve reflected on the power of stories today....

...I wonder which stories have come into your thoughts as we’ve been talking today?.....

....maybe your favourite, familiar stories which you hold in your heart like treasure.....

....We heard some words of Jesus about stories that hold secrets for us to find....

....I wonder how we might feel about discovering these.....and maybe some new ideas and new thinking?.....

I’m going to turn my thoughts into a prayer now, as I ask God to help us to put some of these ideas into practice. Make the prayer your own if you’d like to...or if you’d prefer not to pray, then just sit quietly with your own thoughts.

Slide 9: There are some words that you can join in with if you’d like to *[explain these before using them]*. After I say the words ‘In the stories that we share.....’ I invite you to respond with: **‘May we find treasure, old and new.’**

Dear God

Thank you for the power of stories in our lives.

In the stories that we share..... **May we find treasure, old and new.**

Slide 10: As we explore the parables of Jesus this term;

In the stories that we share..... **May we find treasure, old and new.**

Slide 11: As we encounter tales from different times and different places;

In the stories that we share..... **May we find treasure, old and new.**

Slide 12: In our lives together in our school;

In the stories that we share..... **May we find treasure, old and new.**

Slide 13: Amen



Sending: Slide 14

We're going to use again the words that we have just shared in prayer 'May we find treasure, old and new.'



Leader: As we leave this place and time and go into the day ahead...

All: May we find treasure, old and new!

To sing / listen to:

[We will grow](#) (BBC) or [Together / Shine](#) (NBD)



Slide 15: Reflective areas

In your classroom this week, gather stories that have had an impact.....on individuals, on you as a class, on families at home....or in life.

Do: Bring in a treasured story, or gather them from your class library.

Think: As you look at our shared stories, which ones do you know? Which are new?

Talk: What 'hidden treasure' might they share with us? How do stories help us to understand each other, or how to treat others? Share some examples.

Ideas to build spirituality:

- **Treasure! #1:** In your reflective area, place a box of treasure (plastic gemstones / coins etc.) Hold a piece of treasure from the bowl in your hand as you think: what new 'treasure' might you find this week and the weeks to come as you live and learn together? What 'old' treasures might you rediscover? As you place the treasure back in the bowl, you might like to give this week to God and ask him to help you as you learn.
- **Treasure! #2:** cut gold coin shapes out of yellow card. Children write or draw on them a story that they regard as a 'treasure', new or old! Place these into the treasure box with the gemstones.
- **Treasure! #3:** use the same gold coin shapes and ask children to write on them a wise saying that they would like to share with the rest of the class. This could be 'old' – e.g. wisdom from a parent or grandparent or 'new', something they invent themselves. You could also **ask your school community to send in 'treasure':** 'wisdom' from their perspective; especially interesting if you have families from different cultures.



Story 1: The story of stories

You will need to gather:

A long cloth, which you need to roll up	A treasure chest, or some gemstones	A small fire e.g. Playmobil, or made from small sticks & tissue paper. <i>[If you 'build' it over a battery tealight, then it can be lit and flicker like a real fire!]</i>
Some people figures	A small world globe	The little book of great storytellers <i>[see notes on how to make]</i>
Heart confetti	Glass tear drops	A small chain of paper people <i>[see notes on how to make]</i>
A large question mark	A really beautiful object e.g. a small intricate flower	

This is a story about stories.....*[unroll cloth, like a red carpet!]*
 I wonder what you love about a good story? I wonder which stories live in your imagination or in your heart?....

We all have our favourites, every one of them a precious treasure
[place gemstones/treasure box]

From earliest times, around fires *[place fire]* and anywhere people gathered, stories have been a way to capture our experiences or ignite our imagination....

Stories can help us to make sense of ourselves, *[place person]* other people *[place more people]* or our place in the beautiful world that is our shared home. *[place globe]*

Across time and history, there have been some truly great storytellers *[open little book, turn one page at a time]*..... **Aesop**, who wrote moral tales about animals.....**Jesus**, who turned storytelling into a way to help people understand the big ideas in God's Kingdom.....**William Shakespeare** who wrote some of the most famous stories of all time....**AA Milne** whose tales about a honey-loving bear have been a part of so many of our childhoods... and more recently, perhaps,

authors like **Julia Donaldson**, whose words about a Gruffalo we all know.....we love them all! And maybe in this room, there are **more great storytellers**, waiting to bring new tales into the world....

But the power of stories doesn't just lie in the talent of the storyteller..... for thousands of years, stories have had a life of their own in how they have shaped us, our thinking....and our behaviour.

Because the best stories speak of things that are bigger than our hearts or our imaginations.... love [*scatter heart confetti*]grief [*place teardrops*]friendship [*open out people chain*]eternity.....God..... the big questions that lie deep in our hearts [*lay big question mark*]....or things that are so beautiful that they make our very souls skip, gasp and wonder.....[*a really beautiful object e.g. a small intricate flower*]

Stories are our treasure and have hidden truths to share with us
.....so let's treasure them!





The Greatest
Storytellers of
All Time?



William Shakespeare



A.A. Milne



Julia Donaldson





Hidden treasure



Bring in a treasured story, or gather them from your class library.



As you look at our shared stories, which ones do you know? Which are new?

What 'hidden treasure' might they share with us?



How do stories help us to understand each other, or how to treat others?

Share some examples.



Story 2 (to use later): Something old, something new

I wonder where you keep your most valuable, precious things?.....

....Go to that place inside your head.....

...I wonder what you'll find there that's old?.....

.....picture those things now.....

...I wonder what you'll find there that's new?....

.....picture *those* things now.....

....New....and old.....but both valuable, and precious....

Jesus told his disciples that someone who belongs to the kingdom of heaven is like a person who did just what you have done: went to their secret place and took out both old and new treasures.

.....Treasure takes many different forms.....

...stories....objects.....feelings.....experiences.....memories.....ideas.....

This term, I wonder what treasure you might find in the parables of Jesus?.....new, or old.....

...you might find that you see something about the kingdom of God for the very first time.....or be reminded of something familiar....

.....

...these stories are the treasure of the followers of Jesus....

....but like all good stories, there is also treasure there for anyone to find....

