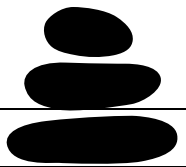




10. The Praise Mountain



Age range: Primary

Theme: *We gather as a community 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. We begin this academic year with a reminder that it's good to be grateful. Research reveals the importance of gratitude even in the midst of adversity: that being aware of each day's 'blessings' can counteract anxiety, and so this term, we want to encourage schools to continue to do this through their collective worship. We provide a script with reflective ideas for classroom use and PowerPoint; both have additional content that you may wish to spread across the week and use in classrooms to ensure that you are meeting the requirement for daily collective worship and to support the spiritual flourishing of your whole school community.*

*You may need to tailor this script to suit the needs, age range & levels of concerns of your school community, which of course includes adults as well as children. **This collective worship gathers together our thoughts about blessings over the last few weeks, and reflects on an ancient story about how the Israelites chose to remember how God had been with them on their journey through the desert.***



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

Use this section to reference how your school's vision & values help you to focus on being grateful, giving thanks for all that we might consider our 'blessings', as we draw close to the end of this series and move into Advent.

How might this link with the Guildford Diocese spirituality offer?

This icons in this section show how the collective worship theme links with the elements of **self, others, beauty** and/or **beyond**

-  **That remembering can often help us to be grateful, which helps with our mental health**
-  **Remembering as a community can also be a positive experience, creating bonds between community members, and an environment where gratitude is like a well for each member of the community to draw from**
-  **The importance of remembering as a spiritual practice; in the story of God's people, it was an act of obedience to help future generations to remember as well**

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. To help any children with visual timetabling, we include an icon for each different part of this collective worship in the top right corner of each slide.
- **You will need a bag of washed pebbles for your classroom reflection area. These can be readily purchased from your local garden centre. You will also need felt pens (Sharpies are best, but permanent markers, so you may wish to stick to washable!)**
- **For your class reflection areas:** you will need stones for each classroom reflection area as well.

Gathering:

Slide 1: Welcome stilling exercise – Stones

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 here, watch the water rippling on the pebbles.....[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..... **think about a question together.....share a story....and then think together.** But first, let's welcome one another as we begin....

- **Slides 2/3:** Use the greeting to your school community – there are two slightly different versions from the point of view of the leader; choose which best fits your school's context. One uses words adapted from [Psalm 118:24](https://www.signbsl.com/sign/rejoice)
 - **Leader: This is a day that God has made!**
 - **ALL: We will rejoice* and be glad* in it!**
- OR:
- **Leader: Today is a brand new day.....**
 - **ALL: May we be a blessing to each other!**

*There are different BSL signs for rejoicing and joy/gladness. View them here: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/rejoice>
Blessing: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/blessing> (1st video)



Engaging:



- **Slide 4:** This term, we are thinking about our blessings – all the good things in our lives. I wonder if you can remember any of the blessings we've been grateful for so far this term? *[Children may not be able to remember them all, so the pictures on the next but one slide will demonstrate the point that pictures / objects are sometimes a helpful reminder!]*
- **Slide 5: "What might help us to remember?"** *[gather some responses.]*
- **Slide 6:** On this slide are some pictures that might help us to remember some of the things we've thought about over the last few weeks. *[From L-R, top-bottom: Counting our blessings; blessing of peace (Shalom); our beautiful world; peace in a world at war; Harvest; Autumn time; God's provision - Sukkot]* And here's the science bit.... pictures really DO help us to remember!! Research shows that using simple pictures as well as words can help us all, children AND adults, to recall information much more quickly – and store it in our long-term memory.
- **Slide 7:** Our story for today is one from the Old Testament part of the Bible, so one about the People of God. It is the end of the long, 40-year story that we heard part of when we thought about Sukkot, a few weeks ago – and how 'God did provide!' It's called 'A mountain of praise'. *[use script & slides 8-14]*
- **Slide 15:** Just as Joshua was told that he should remember, it's good for us to remember too. The stones that God's people gathered were supposed to make future generations ask questions and encourage the telling of the stories of how God had been with his people and provided for them. We're going to use these stones to create our own 'mountain of praise' here, in our school. You can do this in your own classroom during the week as well.

Slide 16: Responding (and words for worship)



Ask some wondering questions:

- I wonder what these pebbles might represent for us?
- I wonder what **good things have happened** in your life, or what God has done for you – or what you **might be grateful** for?
- I wonder how these stones might help us to **tell our stories**?

Gather some ideas and model how to write each onto a stone before starting a pile of pebbles in your reflection area.

When you have gathered a small 'cairn', look at it together for a short time of quiet reflection together....

I'm going to invite you to join me in a prayer now if you would like to....

There are some words to join in with....

Slide 17: Prayer

These stones are a reminder....

So, please join in with these words as I pray, if you would like to make the prayer your own....

These stones are a reminder....

Slide 18:of times that we are grateful for.

Slide 19: These stones are a reminder....

Slide 20:of people who we are grateful for.

Slide 21: These stones are a reminder....

Slide 22:of places that we are grateful for.

Slide 23: These stones are a reminder....

Slide 24:of all the good things that we are grateful for.

God, we give you thanks.

Slide 25: Amen

To listen to: [Every Praise](#), by Hezekiah Walker. Watch how some Christians make a praise mountain in song through this joyful (& very catchy!) song. You might not be able to sing along, but the dance moves are quite simple. Enjoy!

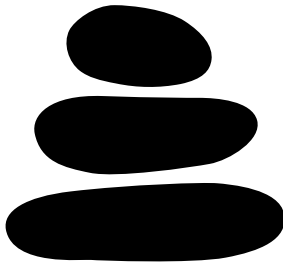
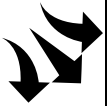


To sing: [Grow](#) (NBD)

Slide 26: Sending

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

All: We will remember with thanks.



Slide 27: Reflection areas

Gather a bowl full of washed pebbles, to build a cairn of gratitude in your classroom reflection area. You will also need felt pens (Sharpies are best, but permanent markers, so you may wish to stick to washable!)

Talk: What good things are you grateful for?

Do: Write or draw your idea on a pebble.

Think: As you place your pebble on the pile, you might want to bring gratitude into your heart or say a prayer of thanks.

Further ideas to build spirituality in your classroom reflection areas:

- **Play 'pass the psalm'!** The Psalms are full of praise for what God has done, as well as prayers that God will send help. This technique is designed to be used like the game consequences where one person writes a line and folds it over then passes it on to the next person who writes the next line etc. Fold your own paper to write your own Psalm, or use the writing frames [here](#).
- **Open your class 'gratitude jar' that you set up in week 2** – use what's been placed in the jar to give you a collective opportunity to reflect on the things that you are grateful for.
- **'Thank you God for...'**: use the words of the familiar song as a frame for writing a 'poem' of gratitude. How about a breakfast version, or an Autumn version, or one based on our wonderful world? The possibilities are almost endless....



The Praise Mountain

Slide 8: God had chosen Joshua to lead the Jewish people on the final part of their long journey from Egypt. The Jordan River was the last big obstacle in their path as they neared the Promised Land. During harvest time, the river was very full, and flowed very fast, and so as Joshua led the people closer, they wondered how they would get to the other side. But Joshua knew that God had already solved this problem!

Slide 9: God had spoken to Joshua and told him that as he had helped Moses cross the Red Sea when they were fleeing from the Egyptians, so he would help them get through the Jordan River. With them, the Jewish people carried their most precious possession – a box that contained God’s special rules, the Ten Commandments, that God had given to Moses. This box was called the Ark of the Covenant of God’s promise and was carried by priests.

Slide 10: God told Joshua: ‘Tell the priests carrying the ark that when they reach the edge of the river, they are to stand in the water.’
And so that’s what happened. When the priests carrying the Ark reached the edge of the Jordan, they put their feet into the river at the edge of the bank.

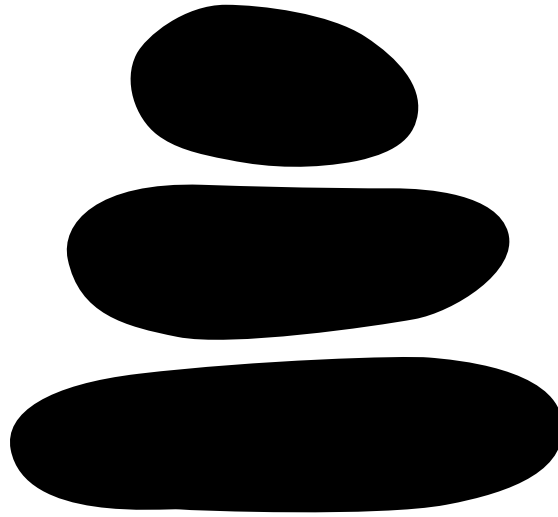
Slide 11: As they did, the waters of the river parted, and the priests walked into the middle on dry land, carrying the ark. Once all the people had crossed on dry land, God spoke once more to Joshua: ‘Choose twelve men from among the people – one from each tribe. Tell them to choose a stone from the middle of the river and make a pile on the river bank, where you are standing. These stones will be a reminder for all time of what has happened here today.’

Slide 12: The twelve men did as God instructed them, and when they had completed their task, the priests carried the Ark of the Covenant of God’s promise out of the river.

Slide 13: As their feet touched the river bank, the waters of the Jordan River covered the river bed once more.

Slide 14: And Joshua told the people that when their children, or grandchildren, or great-grandchildren or great-great-grandchildren asked what the stones were for, that they should be told the story of how God parted the River Jordan so that the Jewish people could walk through on dry land, and always remember what God had done for them.





Joshua told the people 'These stones are a reminder of what God has done.'



What good things are you grateful for?



Write or draw your idea on a pebble.



As you place your pebble on the pile, you might want to bring gratitude into your heart or say a prayer of thanks.

