



### 3. Aesop's Ants



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. This term, we begin a series of themes based on wise words – all of them from the Bible, all of them ancient advice about how to live, but in our modern world, they often sound surprisingly up to date! We link this ancient wisdom to stories from across the world and across cultures in the first half of the term, and continue today with some words about learning from some of the tiniest creatures about working hard.



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

Throughout this term, we encourage you to link each week's collective worship to your school vision – and the way that you live this out through your values. Most of the themes should easily allow for this.

**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. There are slides to go with today's script, but you could quite easily use this collective worship without the PowerPoint if you preferred.
- **Today's resources contain some facts about ants, as we learn from their community-minded behaviour, but we start with an insect identification game. There are 2 versions of the 'Aesop's Ants' story. The longer version can be found on p. 3**
- **Reflective prayer activity:** make the facts (p4) into reflection cards to help you to think about lessons ants could teach us, or choose a video to watch together of ants at work.

**Gathering:**

**Slide 1:** Use our new gathering words, which will be the same each week. Why not invent your own actions to accompany them?



- **Leader: We are here together**
- **Children: With ears ready to hear and hands ready to serve.**
- **All: May we be wise in all our actions today.**

**Engaging:**

- **Slide 2:** As you'll remember from last week, our new theme for this term is Wise Words, and in a while, we will be hearing and thinking about some more of wise King Solomon's words.
- **Slide 3:** We're going to start today with a game about insects! You'll understand why shortly.... I'll show you a photo – all you need to do is identify the bug from its photo. Watch out for the trick question...  
This insect is..... A stick insect (because that's exactly what it looks like!)
- **Slide 4: Butterfly (it's a Peacock Butterfly, to be precise!)**
- **Slide 5: A fly (bluebottle)**
- **Slide 6: Ladybird (or ladybug, if you're in America!)**
- **Slide 7: Grasshopper**
- **Slide 8: Wasp..... Not to be confused with....**
- **Slide 9: .... The Bumblebee**
- **Slide 10: Greenfly (or aphids, which is their proper name)**
- **Slide 11: Spider, my trick question, because it's actually NOT an insect, as it has..... 8 legs, not 6!**
- **Slide 12: Ants** Great job everyone!!
- **Slide 13:** As you might remember, this term we are thinking about wise words from King Solomon's book, called 'Proverbs'. Believe it or not, there are some wise words in his book about.....
- **Slide 14: Ants!** This is perhaps a bit unexpected, but let's read them together before we share a very short story to help us think more.. **'Go and watch the ants..... Watch what they do and be wise.'** So, now we will do exactly what King Solomon advised: watch the ants, and learn from them.
- **Slide 15:** Just a few hundred years after King Solomon's reign, a very famous Greek storyteller, a man named Aesop, wrote a very famous story about some ants. His stories are known as fables – they were often very short, but always included a lesson for his listeners to learn. His stories are still loved and told



by people all over the world! As you hear his story think what lesson Aesop wanted his listeners to learn from the ants. *[There is a link to a BBC retelling from the picture if you want to use a longer version]*

- **Slide 16:** One fine summer's day, Grasshopper sat on a blade of grass in the sunshine. From this vantage point, he could see a **colony of ants** busy at work down below him.

'How ridiculous you all are!' he exclaimed. 'Stop work and enjoy this beautiful sunshine! There's plenty of time for work later.'

But the ants refused, saying that winter would soon be here, and they were collecting food so they wouldn't starve through the long months.

Summer passed, and Grasshopper was still lazing around, soaking up the last few days of Autumn sunshine.

The ants were still busily collecting food, working together to bring it safely into their nest.

And then one day, it wasn't Autumn any more. The ground was bare and Grasshopper was cold and hungry.

I wonder what you think the message of this story is?

### **Slide 17: Responding and words for worship**

**Click on the picture and it will show a video!**

Let's do exactly what Solomon advised and watch some ants together now. Then we'll ask some wondering questions....

....I wonder what these ants might teach us?....

....I wonder how we might become wise by watching the ants?....

...I wonder what you might need to work hard at today?....

**Slide 18:** I'm going to pray now, asking God to help us to give the best that we can in our work, our friendships – and in all that comes our way today, just like the Aesop's ants did. If this is something that you feel comfortable doing, then join in with '**We will give our best.**'

**Slide 19:** At the start of this day, we think of all that we will do today. [Pause]

In our work – **we will give our best.**

**Slide 20:** In our friendships – **we will give our best**

**Slide 21:** In our actions – **we will give our best**

**Slide 22:** In all that this day brings – **we will do our best**

**Slide 23:** Amen

**Sending:** Slide 24

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

**All:** May today's words help us to make wise choices.



**To listen to / sing:**

[Got a bit better](#) (AAOS)



### **Slide 25: Reflective areas**

Watch the ants [here](#) or [here](#), or go out and watch some of your own in your school grounds! There are also a wide range of video clips on Pixabay so you could choose a different video each day (check them first, as some are more suitable than others!): [Ants Videos: Download 444+ Free 4K & HD Stock Footage Clips - Pixabay](#)

## **Aesop's Ants (longer version)**

The ants were always busy. It didn't matter what the weather was like – rain or sunshine, snow or hail, they were always rushing around doing something. Most of their time was spent collecting food or building their fantastic home – wherever you looked near the ant hill, there were ants scurrying about with bits of leaf or twigs.

Grasshopper couldn't have been more different. He just couldn't be bothered to be busy – it was definitely too much like hard work as far as he was concerned. He used to enjoy watching the ants at work though! One very hot sunny day in summertime, he was lying around in the long grass at the edge of the wood where they all lived, enjoying the heat of the day and thinking how wonderful it was that he didn't have to work like the ants did. 'What's the point of doing all that work?' he thought. 'Their home never looks any bigger and they couldn't possibly eat all that food that they collect. Day by day, I get along very well living under fallen leaves and nibbling away at whatever I find to eat. I can't be bothered to work as hard as they do. Life is so very easy this way.'

The summer continued to be long and hot, day after day, and even on the very hottest of days, the ants still continued to work. 'Why do they still work so hard?' Grasshopper thought to himself. 'Surely they should be resting in the heat of this long hot summer!' So he decided to find out from the ants why they were always so very busy.

'Excuse me!' he called to a passing ant, who was carrying a particularly heavy piece of leaf. 'Why do you work so hard?'

'Well' the little ant replied 'The winter is coming and we need to be ready for it. You ought to be busy collecting as well – winter will soon be here. Can't stop to chat!' - and off he scurried.

As time went by and summer changed to autumn, Grasshopper continued to watch the busy ants, and wondered what the little ant meant. Then one day, it wasn't autumn any more. The air was still and cold and the ground was frozen. He watched the ants as they scurried into their home for their long winter sleep, deep underground where it was warmer. Grasshopper began to wish that he had somewhere warmer to go to as well – a home under a leaf would not be very cosy now that winter was here. And as he hunted around for something to nibble, he at last understood why the ants had been collecting food all through the summer. 'Next summer will be different' he thought to himself. 'Next summer, I will work hard like the ants, then I will have a warm house for myself and plenty to eat when winter comes'.



## **Facts about ants: what can we learn from them?**

**Ants have different jobs to do. Some protect the colony, some look for food to share and others look after the young. But they can also learn how to do a new job!**

**There is one Queen ant who is in charge of the colony.**

**Ants are clean and tidy insects. Some worker ants are given the job of taking the rubbish from the nest and putting it outside in a special rubbish dump!**

**Ants are very clever. They can grow underground gardens, devise amazing networks of tunnels (the ends always meet up!) and build water traps to keep water out of the tunnels.**

**Ants work together in teams to solve problems.**

**If a worker ant finds food, it leaves a trail so that other ants can find it.**



***“Go and watch the ants..... Watch what they do and be wise.”***



**What have you learned by watching the ants at work?**



**Talk together about the places in your life, or your classroom, where we could show we are working hard.**



**Put into practice the lessons that you've learned from the ants.**

