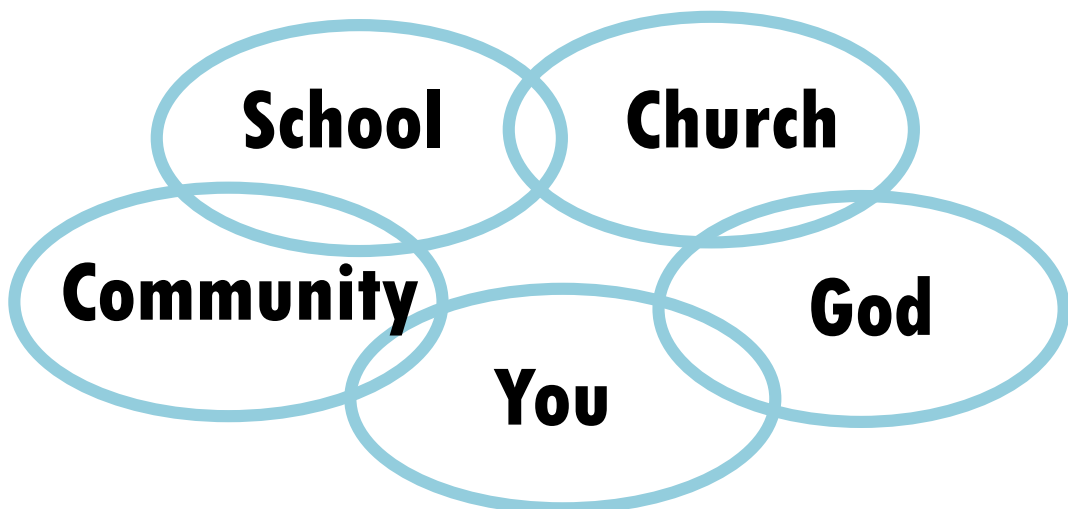


The Link Easter Prayer Space



**Hosted by
Acle Methodist Church for
Acle St Edmund Primary School
22nd and 23rd March 2018**



“It made me happy and calm and it made me think about Jesus and God” said a Year 2 pupil after experiencing The Link Easter Prayer Space at Acle Methodist Church. “The LOVE is so evident and the children have gained so much from being here” commented a teacher.

The Link - linking the school, church, community, God and the individual together - had been created especially for the children of Acle Primary School by volunteers from the Church. Over two days around 185 children and several school staff visited the Church to take part in the activities.

The Church was transformed with: a prayer dome, the road to Jerusalem, a table set for the last supper, the garden of Gethsemane, a wooden cross and an empty tomb. The scent of fresh flowers and perfumes filled the air, calming music played, gentle nature videos played on the screen and colourful fairy lights added to the atmosphere.

Each activity was led by a Prayer Guide from the Church who outlined an aspect of the Easter story and encouraged the children to respond in multi-sensory ways. In the garden of Gethsemane children wrote their worries on a lollipop stick and planted them in a tray, along with a sunflower seed. They took these away in the hope that as the flower grew, their worries would recede. At the Blessings station children heard about the anointing of Jesus and blessed each other with scented oil. A costumed guide explained her reaction when she discovered the empty tomb on Easter morning and encouraged the children to write their hopes and dreams on flowers; the petals were folded in, floated on water and the children watched as the flowers unfolded and ‘blossomed’.

The activities ensured a range of values were explored, including heroes, friends, help, saying sorry and hopes and dreams, as well as the two school assembly themes of the term, thankfulness and compassion.

Sara Edwards, who led the Prayer Space on behalf of the Church said it had been a wonderful experience, for the Prayer Guides as well as the children and staff. “At one of the prayer stations we discussed with the children how a blessing was something both given and received. We have been blessed to see the children engage so thoughtfully in the activities, write their own spontaneous prayers and discuss their views and responses so widely and deeply.”

The Prayer Space concluded on Palm Sunday, when the Church congregation were invited to view the prayer stations and make their own responses as part of their worship.

The Prayer Activities

Heroes

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, everyone greeted him as if he was their hero. Who is your hero and why? Draw a picture of or write the name of your hero on a palm leaf and lay it on the road.



"My friend because I was crying and she cheered me up"

"The nurse who fixed my face"



"My dad because he went into the army for 9 years and I didn't get to see him much"

"Policemen and women because they keep us safe"

"My mum because if I am hurt or upset she'll help me"



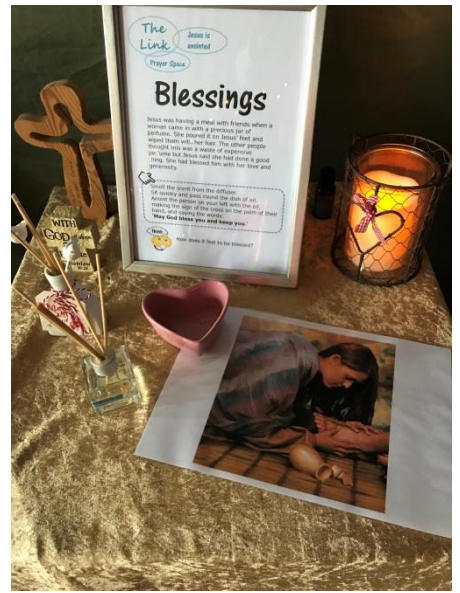
"Volunteers doing clubs like guides, rainbows and brownies"

"My family because they feed me and they give up their time to look after me"



Blessings

Mary blessed Jesus by pouring precious perfume on him. Pass round the dish of scented oil and anoint the person on your left on the palm of their hand with the sign of the cross and saying “May God Bless you and keep you.”



“I liked the blessings because we smelt different perfume”

“I found it calming and relaxing”

“I liked blessings! The oil felt nice!”

Friends

Jesus shared a special meal with his friends. Who are your best friends? What makes a good friend? Who would you most like to share a meal with? Younger children: draw a picture of your friend(s) on a paper plate. Older children: make a model of your friend from pipe cleaners. As you do, think about why they are a good friend.





“I enjoyed making a friend out of pipecleaners!”

“I enjoyed making the men. Mine was dancing.”

Help

Jesus was in a garden. He was worried about what was going to happen to him so he prayed to God asking for his help. Write your worries or what you need help with on a lollipop stick and plant it in a tray. Plant a seed too. Your teacher will take the tray back to school - see if your worries get better as the seed grows.





“I liked when we went into the garden area because we buried our own messages and it was fun”

“I liked planting seeds to help our worries.”



Sorry

Jesus was put to death on a cross even though he was innocent. Christians believe that because Jesus died they can ask God for forgiveness - they can say sorry and know they are forgiven. Pick up a stone. As you hold it, think about the wrong things you have said or done. If you want to, carry the stone to the cross and leave it there as a sign that you have said sorry and been forgiven.



“I enjoyed putting the stone under the cross in the sorry corner and telling Linda what we were sorry for and thinking about what we should have done”

“I liked being in the corner where we learned about sorry”

Thankfulness (Younger children)

Hope Blossoms (Older children)

After Jesus died his body was put in a tomb. Jesus' friends were afraid and confused; it was a dark time. But three days later the tomb was empty and Jesus was alive! His friends were so happy and thankful and it felt like all their hopes and dreams had come true.

Younger children - Make a model of something you are thankful out of playdough.

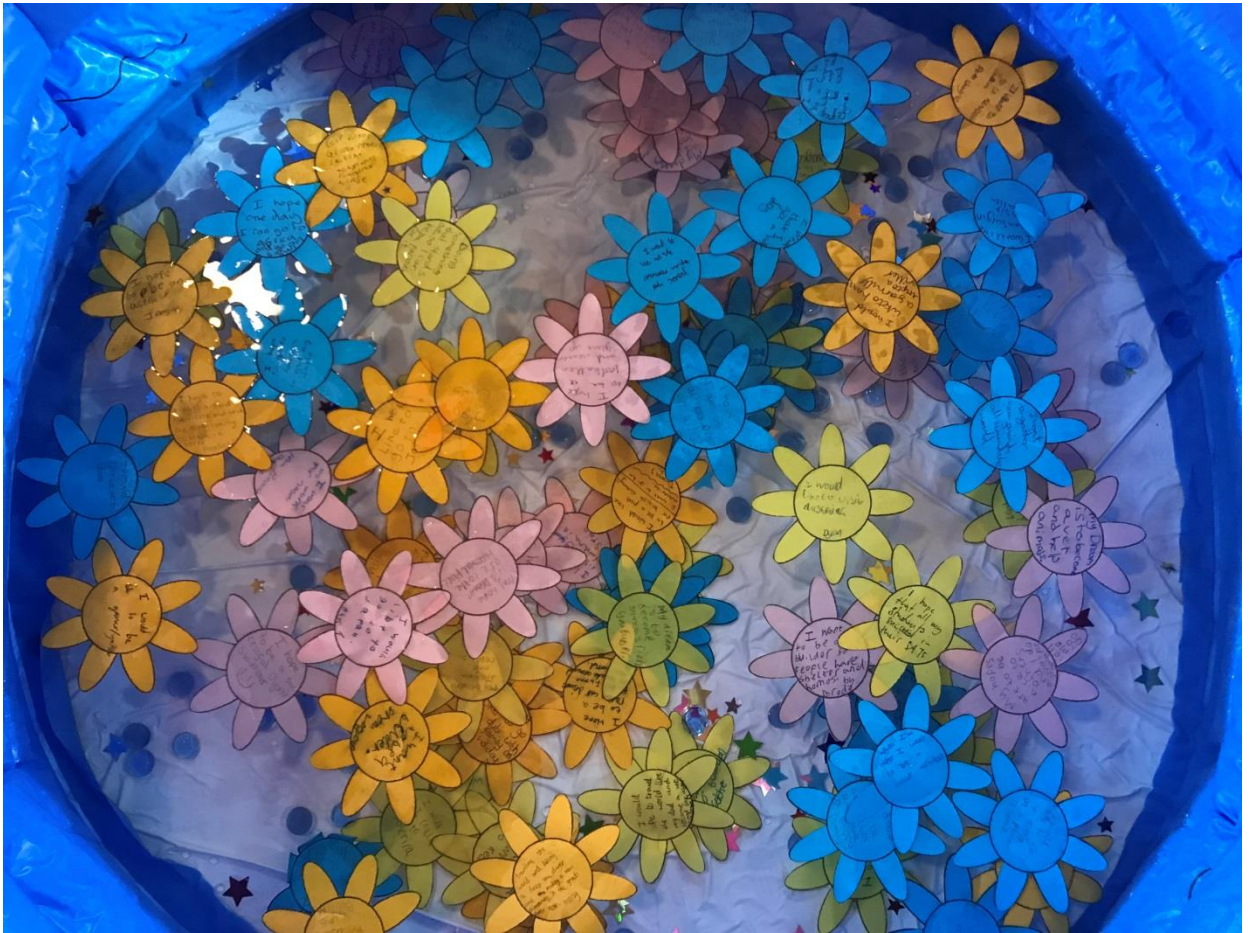
Older children - write your hope or dream in the centre of a flower. Fold each petal inwards and float it on the water. Watch your hope unfold and 'blossom.'



"I hope to be a racing car driver and I want to travel around the world"

"I would like to become a zookeeper"

"I want to be a singer"

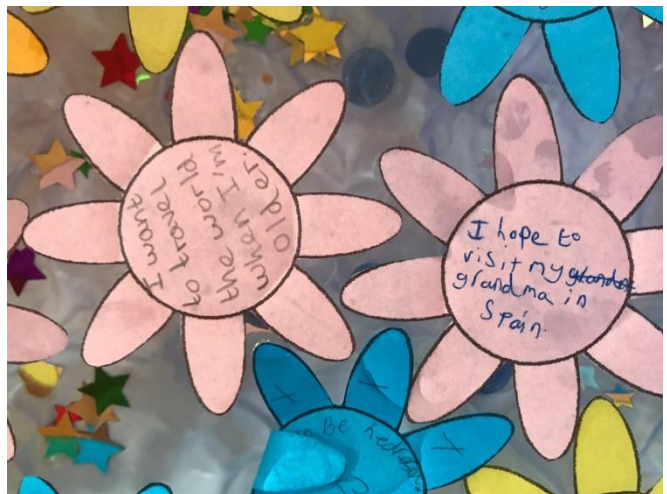


"Visit Ireland to see my grandad and grandma"

"I want to gather new friends all around the world"

"For more people to believe in Jesus"

"I really enjoyed coming and my favourite part was seeing the flowers open as it showed that our dreams can come true even if it takes a long time"



Compassion

After Jesus had come back to life, he told his friends to share his message, to heal the sick, feed the hungry and care for the poor. Jesus encouraged them to make the world a better place. What could you do to make the world a better place? Write your ideas on hand shape and peg them to the tree or place on the map.



“I could start treating people how I want to be treated”

“Pick up litter”

“Give money to charity”

“Be thankful for what you have”

“To recycle and be kind to the environment”

“Help people when they’ve got no-one to play with”

“Don’t be selfish and let other people have a go”



General Comments

Pupils

“I’ve enjoyed learning about Jesus.”

“We learned about compassion, thankfulness, forgiveness, friendship and family. It looked beautiful and calming.”

“I loved all the activities and how kind all the leaders were.”

“It was calming and I loved it all. Thank you.”

Staff

“A wonderful experience for both children and adults - moments of peace in a hectic day. The LOVE is so evident and the children have gained so much from being here.”

“Lovely activities, very engaging and very easy for children to understand and they all enjoyed it a lot.”

“We are so grateful for the wider church communities in Acle and for the efforts put in here, helping children reflect on the events of Easter”
- *Headteacher*

“So many children said to me how much they loved the activities and teachers said they enjoyed it so much they didn’t want to go back to school!”
- *Teacher, by email*





**Thank You
to everyone who made
the Prayer Space possible**

Christopher, Colleen, Fiona, Frances, Isobel, Kelda, Linda, Lisa,
Pam, Pat, Ray, Sara, Steve, Vernon

Revd Martin Greenland and the Church of England Education Fund

Mr Paul Henery, Headteacher, and staff of Acle Primary School