

# Unit 3C What do we know about Jesus?

## ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit investigates what is known about Jesus through history, the Gospels and people's own interpretations of Jesus in art. Children look at how Jesus is represented in art in different periods and places and think about what this shows. They investigate what people in the Gospels say about Jesus, as well as what Jesus claims about himself. Finally, the children will evaluate work on their own impression of Jesus.

## WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on previous units that cover some aspects of the life of Jesus; including Christmas in year 1 (unit 1C), and his significance for Christians (unit 1B), which is developed further in unit 1F by visiting a church. This unit prepares children for further study at key stage 2 of the life and teachings of Jesus and their influence.

## PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- learnt that Jesus was the founder of Christianity
- some experience of what Jesus was like through the stories he told and his actions

## VOCABULARY

In this unit children will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:

- religion, *eg God, belief*
- Christianity, *eg Jesus, crucifixion, disciples*

## RESOURCES

- a selection of pictures of Jesus' crucifixion from a variety of historical and cultural settings
- resources to do with the Turin Shroud, including a variety of pictures
- a selection of images of Jesus from a variety of sources and historical periods
- cards with selected Bible stories on them, or simple versions of the Bible stories for year 3 children to discuss

## EXPECTATIONS

### At the end of this unit

*most children will:*

know that evidence for what is known historically about Jesus comes mainly from the New Testament; understand that the people who knew Jesus had different views of him, and explain the reasons why; know that Jesus used symbolic language to describe himself, and give simple explanations of what he meant; understand that Jesus has been represented in different ways

*some children will not have made so much progress and will:*

understand that what is known about Jesus comes mainly from the Bible; understand that people who knew Jesus had different views of him; describe different images of Jesus

*some children will have progressed further and will:*

understand that people's perceptions of Jesus varied according to their background and experience; understand that artists, writers and other thinkers continue to interpret Jesus in different ways

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

## POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

### WHAT WAS JESUS LIKE?

- that Jesus was a historical figure
  - that there is no authentic visual image of Jesus
  - that expressions of Jesus' appearance reflect a variety of contextual characteristics
- Ask children to describe a class friend in words and pictures, referring to personal qualities as well as appearance. Ask some of the children to show or read their descriptions to the rest of the class, and let the others guess who it is.
  - Discuss with the children how we know what someone is 'like'. Give groups of children a set each of images of Jesus, reflecting a variety of historical and cultural contexts but avoiding the crucifixion. Invite them to talk about who it is and why there is variety in the images. Explore the children's own experiences of knowing how someone looks.
  - Talk about what is known historically about Jesus. Explain that very little is known about Jesus' appearance; there is no written description of him and paintings were not done until at least 150 years after his death. All images of Jesus are influenced by the experiences of the people who provide them. Talk about the importance to believers of identifying with Jesus, explaining that in visual representations his features often mirror those of the people themselves. Ask children to write about an image they like – explaining why and what the painter is trying to portray about Jesus.

- recognise that when we talk about what someone is 'like' we mean more than their physical appearance, and include character and personality
- recognise visual images of Jesus as expressions of faith which reflect believers' own characteristics
- make links between expressions of faith and the historical Jesus
- differentiate between images of faith and accurate representations of people

- To be successful, this activity needs a great variety of resources.
- The pictures can be displayed around a board in the classroom, as a record of the unit.
- There are packs of pictures available of Jesus in art from RE publishers.
- There are many cross-curricular links to art and design, as the children investigate pictures.

### THE FACE OF JESUS

- that pictures of Jesus tell us about people's personal beliefs about him
  - about the importance for many believers of a personal image of Jesus
  - to reflect on their own ideas of how Jesus may have looked
- Look at some familiar images of Jesus, perhaps illustrations from children's story books, and discuss the characteristics portrayed. Stress the lack of authenticity possible. Invite a believer to talk about their personal picture of Jesus, or set the children a task of asking a believer on the internet about their personal picture of Jesus.
  - Invite children, if appropriate, to draw their own pictures of Jesus' face as they imagine it and to talk to each other about their drawings. Alternatively, ask children to write about what they understand about what is important to Christians about Jesus from pictures they have looked at.

- identify people's personal beliefs about Jesus from the pictures they have created of him

- An additional activity could focus on the Turin Shroud and its significance for some Christians.
- There are a number of videos available on the Turin Shroud which would help to illustrate the importance of the face of Jesus to some Christians.

### WHAT SORT OF PERSON WAS JESUS?

- to research a textual extract
  - to understand what the Gospels tell us about what Jesus was like
  - to present findings to the class
  - to summarise from the evidence what sort of person Jesus was
- Tell the children that they are going to find out what Jesus was like by calling witnesses from his own time. Give groups of children, according to ability or in mixed groups one of the following characters and stories to research:
    - a) one of the disciples, Luke 18<sup>15-16</sup>
    - b) Zacchaeus, Luke 19<sup>1-8</sup>
    - c) the widow, Luke 21<sup>1-4</sup>
    - d) Matthew, Matthew 9<sup>9-13</sup>
    - e) one of the crowd, Matthew 21<sup>1-11</sup>
    - f) governor of the temple, Matthew 21<sup>12-13</sup>
    - g) Simon the leper, Matthew 26<sup>6-13</sup>
    - h) a disciple, Mark 9<sup>33-37</sup>
    - i) Simon, Peter, Matthew 4<sup>18-22</sup>
    - j) a disciple, John 2<sup>12-16</sup>
    - k) Simon Peter, John 13<sup>1-9</sup>
    - l) a widow, Luke 7<sup>11-15</sup>
    - m) disciples/followers, Matthew 5<sup>43-44</sup>, Matthew 7<sup>1-2</sup>
 Ask each group to write or present their findings beginning with 'Jesus was ...', 'I know this because ...'.
  - Ask the groups to present their research to the class, and keep a central record of points the children make about Jesus' character. Ask children to fill in a worksheet to summarise so far what sort of a person Jesus was.

- identify from a given Bible passage what it teaches about Jesus' character
- summarise what sort of a person Jesus was

- If necessary, write out these stories in simpler language. You could mount each story on a card or load them into a set of computers (if available).
- Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Tax collectors were disliked by most people in the first century. Jesus' attitude to him and the leper was remarkable at that time, and definitely would not have been approved of by many religious people.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

## POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

### WHAT DID JESUS' ENEMIES THINK OF HIM?

- to select information to complete sentences on why people did not trust Jesus
  - to present other people's views on Jesus
  - to reflect on their own image of Jesus' character based on the evidence they have studied
- Tell the children the following stories in your own words. Display cards showing key words/phrases. After telling each story, ask the children to select the card that completes the sentence, 'I do not trust Jesus because ...'
    - Matthew 13<sup>53-57</sup>: 'big headed'
    - Mark 11<sup>15-19</sup>: 'popular with the people'
    - Luke 23<sup>1-2</sup>: 'he is turning the people against the government'
    - Luke 23<sup>3-4</sup>: 'he says he is a king'
    - Luke 19<sup>7</sup>: 'mixed with the wrong people'
    - Luke 20<sup>20-26</sup>: 'too clever by half'
    - Matthew 12<sup>1-14</sup>: 'works when it isn't right to'
  - Show the children an extract from a film or videotape on Jesus which brings to life some examples of these extracts and some from the last lesson.
  - Ask the children to write about reactions to Jesus using a given writing frame with a word bank. Then, imagine that they were in the first century and ask them to write a postcard to their parents/friend about this man Jesus they have met, explaining what they believe him to be like and why.

- select correct answers to incomplete sentences
- give people's views on Jesus from the Bible
- identify their own impression of Jesus so far

- In order to understand why the Gospel writers present some Jewish people giving these responses to Jesus, some background research may need to be done.
- There are many films on the life of Jesus. 'Jesus of Nazareth' and 'Jesus' are excellent. Your local RE centre will have a range of films that you could borrow.

### HOW DID JESUS DESCRIBE HIMSELF?

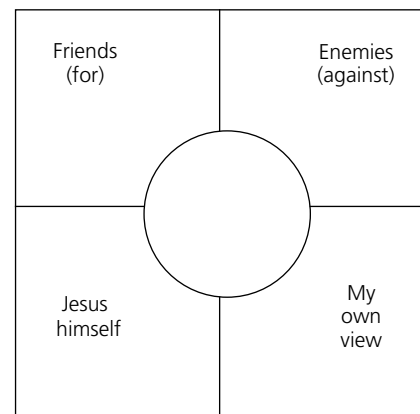
- to understand the symbolic language used about Jesus
  - to think about the meaning of statements Jesus made about himself
  - to understand the Christian interpretation of the passages
  - to understand what Jesus was saying about himself
- Place three objects around the room that the children can sit around in groups: (a) a loaf of bread (b) a candle (c) a picture of a shepherd and some sheep.
  - Ask the children to divide into three groups, having one member as their scribe, and discuss in a circle what the object is. *What does it/he/she do? How can it/he/she be used? What is its/his/her purpose?*
  - Come back together and ask the scribes to share the group's discussion, and add any more ideas that the others see as important. Then give the children these three extracts about how Jesus describes himself and ask them in pairs to read them.
    - 'I am the bread of life': John 6<sup>35</sup>
    - 'I am the light of the world': John 9<sup>5</sup>
    - 'I am the good shepherd': John 10<sup>14</sup>
  - Discuss what they think Jesus was saying about himself in these passages. Ask the children to write about the three passages on a prepared sheet answering what the passages mean to Christians, and what the children understand from them about who Jesus was saying he is.

- identify and explore three examples of symbolic language used to describe Jesus
- write about Christian understanding of these three images
- evaluate what they understand about how Jesus described himself

- These three 'I am' sayings are part of a wider series that appear in John's Gospel. The others are found in John 11<sup>25</sup>, John 14<sup>6</sup>, John 15<sup>5</sup> and John 10<sup>7</sup>.
- Christian understanding of these images is complex, but central ideas are:
  - bread of life: Jesus sustaining his followers, filling them up, providing for them
  - light: showing his followers what God wants for them, showing the way to meet God personally for themselves, goodness in the world
  - shepherd: providing protection, knowing people as individuals, providing direction and food

### SO WHAT WAS JESUS LIKE?

- to recall points from the unit which help to answer the question, 'What do we know about Jesus?'
  - to reflect on their own response
- Return to the original question and begin to put together the evidence from the different sources.
  - Ask the children to use a writing frame to present the evidence:



- recall and select main points to complete the question, 'What do we know about Jesus?'
- evaluate the evidence studied and write about their own view

- Colour photocopies or printouts could be used for the centrepiece pictures.
- Include the full range of artists' representations in the display so that different interpretations from a range of cultures are displayed.

- Ask children to choose one of the artist's representations from the first lesson or their own picture as a centrepiece for their writing.
- Display this work with captions written by the children explaining the process.

## **FUTURE LEARNING**

Children could go on to:

- investigate other non-Christian sources about Jesus from his time, *eg Josephus*
- interview their family and neighbours about who they think Jesus was
- do a survey to find out how much adults really know about Jesus
- study more images of how Jesus has been portrayed

## **OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING**

Children could:

- visit websites or museums to look at other pictures portraying Jesus
- read a children's Bible story about who Jesus was
- ask Christians who they believe Jesus is and why