



A LIFE OF SERVICE: QUEEN ESTHER

Collective Worship
Spring Term 2021

These teacher notes and the accompanying presentation are designed to support you in exploring the concept of Christian service with pupils. This act of collective worship focuses on the story of Queen Esther in the Old Testament. This act of collective worship could be done live, with each teacher delivering from their own classroom, or it could be recorded by the head teacher or senior leader and shared with each class or bubble remotely.

Collective worship in school should be **inspiring, inclusive and invitational**. Adults leading worship should feel free to adapt these materials so that they are comfortable and they are well-matched to your own context. For guidance on collective worship see:

http://www.dioceseofcoventry.org/images/document_library/UDR02852.pdf

Pre-Collective Worship Task:

What does it feel like to be chosen for something? Talk about times pupils have been asked to do a special job.

Worship Table: You will need a green cloth on your altar table to show we are once again in 'ordinary time' in the liturgical calendar: green for growing!

You will also need 3 candles to light to represent the 3 persons of the Trinity.

Preparation and Resources: You will need the 3 candles and the PowerPoint presentation.

The Main Content:

Welcome

Show slide 2. Light each of the 3 candles as you say the welcome.

We gather together in the name of:

- *God the Father, who protected His people, the Jews through one young woman*
- *Jesus the Son, who was called to do a task for His Father*
- *The Holy Spirit, who gives Christians courage when they need it*

Alternatively, you may want to start with a Christian blessing from the Church of England such as:

*May God give to you and to all those you love
his comfort and his peace,
his light and his joy,
in this world and the next
Amen*

or

*The Lord bless you and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace.
Amen*

You can also use something simple such as:

*We gather together to meet as our school family
We all come together as important parts of our school community
We gather to meet together with God*

Today we are continuing our focus on serving others. We will learn about a young Jewish woman who became a queen and used her influence to serve her people and keep them safe from harm.

Learning

Show slide 3. Esther was given the chance to use her influence to serve her people. She used her voice to speak to the king so that she could protect other people. Sometimes courageous advocacy is like that; it is about using our voice and speaking up for other people who are struggling or being treated unfairly. Queen Esther has often been a role model for those who are fighting for the rights of others, such as organisations and charities that are working to end racism, help refugees or support the homeless.

Watch [this film](#) telling the story of Queen Esther, or read the story in a Bible of your choice. If you have a bit of extra time and you want to tell the story as a mini-play, there is a playscript of the story [here](#).

Reflecting

Show slide 4. This is a quote from the Book of Esther 4:14 and it is what Mordecai said to his niece, Esther, to encourage her to use her influence with the king to ensure the safety of the Jewish people. It is a well-known Bible verse because it makes people think about why they are here and what being themselves can mean for the good of others. Esther was very brave! She did not know if standing up for the Jewish people would make King Ahasuerus angry and her own life to be threatened, but she decided she needed to do it anyway.

Spend a few moments reflecting on this verse. What might you be able to do to help others just by being you? Think about those who need help in our times- the victims of prejudice and racism, the homeless, the refugees, the animals. What can you do to help them?

Responding

Show slide 5. Read the quote from Desmond Tutu: *Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the whole world.*

It is actually quite rare for one person to be able to accomplish something that affects a significant number of people. Recently, footballer Marcus Rashford managed to convince the government to make sure every child would be able to eat a proper meal every day, even in the school holidays. He was a bit like Esther- he used his fame and his influence to help others. But we can do smaller things and know that our small actions can all add up with the actions of others to make something big happen!

Courageous advocacy means we take the risk of doing something small but worthwhile, in the hope that this contributes to something significant!

Look at all the charities and organisations represented on this slide. What could you do to support these charities so that they can help keep lots of people safe, sheltered, well and fed?

Finish the collective worship session with this prayer:

Dear God,

Queen Esther prayed these words:

*O God, whose might is over all,
hear the voice of the despairing,
and save us from the hand of evildoers.
And save me from my fear!*

She asked you for courage so that she could help others. Please make us courageous and help us to be advocates- those who speak up on behalf of others who need our help.

Amen.

Pupils may wish to make the prayer their own by saying Amen or they may just want to listen and reflect.

Alternatively, you may wish to end with an Anglican liturgical prayer:

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. In the name of Christ. Amen.

*Go in the peace of Christ. **Thanks be to God.***

We go into the world to walk in God's light, to rejoice in God's love and to reflect God's glory. Amen

Post-Collective Worship Task:

Spend some time finding out about the work of charities and organisations pupils could support through fundraising or campaigning as part of their 'courageous advocacy'. These might be local, national or international. There may be specific charities your local church already supports or you may have connections through parents or governors. Spend some time linking the work of the charities you look at to your vision, so that pupils can understand their courageous advocacy within the context of your school and what you stand for.

Send home some talk homework for families: *Today we have been thinking about the story of Queen Esther and how she used her voice and her influence with the king to save the Jewish people. Are there charities or organisations we can support as a family?*