

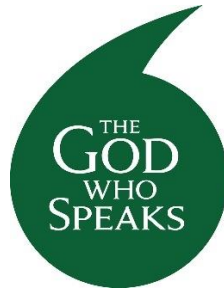


Nottingham Roman Catholic
Diocesan Education Service



'The God Who Speaks: The Year of the Word'

Guidance and suggested activities for primary schools



The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales have designated 2020 as '**The God Who Speaks: A Year of the Word**' to celebrate the 10th anniversary of *Verbum Domini* - Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Exhortation on 'The Word of the Lord', and the 1600th anniversary of the death of St Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin.

Therefore, 2020 will be a year of **celebrating, living and sharing** God's Word through a range of events, activities and resources, available across the dioceses of England and Wales. *We are invited to listen afresh to the Word of God as did Our Blessed Lady at the Annunciation, to encounter anew the presence of that Word, and to proclaim it afresh in the Church and the world.*

'Scripture is at the centre of everything the Church does. The Word of God shapes our prayer and worship. The Bible shows us how to understand the world, how we are called to live and relate to each other'.

In partnership with the Bible Society, 'The God Who Speaks: The Year of the Word' focuses on celebrating, living and sharing God's Word throughout the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

In keeping with the Church's three-year cycle, there will also be a specific focus on St Matthew's Gospel.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales has created a website that is dedicated to 'The God Who Speaks - A Year of the Word.' This can be found using this link; <http://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/the-god-who-speaks/>

The website contains a wide variety of resources that you can use in school, including various posters (see right) and a 'Bible Basics' section in which Fr. Stephen Wang provides a whole host of thought-provoking ideas and Bible-related information.

The primary aim of **The God Who Speaks - A Year of the Word** is:

‘Celebrating, Living and Sharing God’s Word’



Celebrating God’s Word

enriching our worshipping and spiritual community.

In discovering and renewing a genuine love for the word of God, we nurture our relationship with Christ. Through the Bible, we meet Christ who is alive in his word. We can listen to him speaking to us and guiding us in our daily lives.



Living God’s Word

enriching our social action and outreach.

Scripture teaches us how to live in society, to respect the wonder of creation, especially each human being and to work towards the common good. The Scriptures inspire us to put faith into action, living God’s word and doing God’s word.



Sharing God’s Word

enriching our formation, proclamation and evangelisation.

The Bible has inspired, and continues to inspire, learning, culture, art, music and literature. It enables science and faith to build up mutual understanding through dialogue. It challenges technology and social media to open up new ways to encounter and share Christ in the world.

Monday 30 September marked the official launch of *The God Who Speaks – The Year of the Word* with a video Cardinal Vincent Nichols in the National Gallery on the feast of St Jerome.

The Campaign Year will begin on Sunday 1 December 2019, the First Sunday of Advent, the beginning of the Church's Liturgical Year.

Official Prayer for *The Year of the Word 2020* (See attached)



Some proposed activities throughout the Year of the Word 2020

Schools may consider using some of the following suggestions and activities to further promote and enrich the use of scripture with their pupils.



Organise/prepare communal display for the Year of the Word.



Develop the use of the Bible and scripture within the classroom and within the *Come and See* programme. Using the 'Scripture detectives' approach, invite pupils record what the passage is 'saying to them'. Annotate the scripture passage with comments and thoughts relating to Who? What? When? Where? Why? Also encourage the pupils to discover the theme or message within.



Further promote the use of paintings and artists' depictions of scripture passages from the Bible, inviting pupil to record and 'say what they see'- actions, expressions, colours used, environment and the mood within the painting.



Ensure that the 'Let Us Pray' resources are used effectively throughout all classes as a means to reflect upon scripture and consequently inviting pupil response to it, as well as exploring and living out the mission within.

In tandem with the *Year of the Word*, the NRCDES will be working in collaboration with the NDCYS and our Lead Lay Chaplains to further revise and renew this wonderful resource.



World Book Day – consider a Bible character theme.



Create a 'post it note' Bible within each classroom, inviting each pupil, throughout the year to take the Bible home, and with their family place a 'post it note' on the page of the piece of scripture which 'speaks most to them'. The pupils, dependent on age, may then wish to feedback to the whole class on why it is they chose a specific passage.



Parents/pupils to share favourite scripture passages in their first language.



Consider subscribing to the *Wednesday Word*, which provides a rich range of weekly scriptural resources and activities (<http://www.wednesdayword.org/>).

"The materials produced by The Wednesday Word are already used extensively throughout the dioceses in England and Wales - bringing remarkable graces to many."
(Cardinal Vincent Nichols. President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales).



Bible reflections led by pupils who have received the sacrament of First Holy Communion.



'Scripture in our school' review: what is its presence and how could it be improved?



Review the accessibility and use of the Bible in school. Invite the chaplaincy team to read from the Bible to pupils throughout the school. Consider providing a 'child friendly' time line of the Bible for each classroom which helps pupils understand the chronology of the Bible.



Teach younger pupils the alphabet by making connections to biblical stories. *Animals of the Bible from A to Z* by Alice Camille ACTA Publications (www.actapublications.com).

For readers aged 4-8, or can be read by an adult. Includes 'Pages for Grownups' and verse citations so the adult can easily explain the biblical connection to the child.



Revise and develop further ways in which scripture can be 'brought to life' and made more accessible for children through, for example websites such as; *Children's Bible stories – DLTk* (<http://www.dltkbible.com/%5C/cv/index.htm>).



Lectio divina for schools : teach your pupils to pray with scripture

If we want our pupils to develop a deep, vibrant relationship with Christ, then we need to teach them to pray — and not just memorized prayers or spontaneous vocal prayer (as important as those are), but meditation and contemplation. It is in these ways of praying, the saints and mystics tell us, that we learn to listen to God...to hear the whispering of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and to discern the will of the Father. 'In prayer, more is accomplished by listening than by talking', says St Francis de Sales. St Catherine of Siena advises that we must 'exercise together mental and vocal prayer, for, even as the active and contemplative life is one, so are they'.

The ancient prayer practice of lectio divina is a great way to teach pupils Christian meditation, and to lead them to the threshold of contemplative prayer. This prayer practice has the added benefit of introducing pupils to the power and beauty of the scriptures, in which God speaks plainly to our hearts through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

It was Guigo, a Carthusian monk, who first set out the four steps or movements of lectio divina. Here they are, with their Latin names in parenthesis:

- Reading (lectio)
In the first step, you choose a reading, and you read it several times, leaving room for the Holy Spirit to call your attention to a word, phrase, or line that God wants you to hear.
- Meditation (meditatio)
In the meditation step, you think about the word or words that the Holy Spirit has called to your attention, holding them in your mind and considering them from different angles.
- Prayer (oratio)
In the prayer step, you respond to the sacred words in prayer, either silently or out loud or in writing.
- Contemplation (contemplatio)
In the contemplation step, you rest in God's presence, quieting yourself and listening for God's response to your prayer.

As you're introducing this method of prayer to pupils, explain to them that, unlike other types of writings (school textbooks, poetry, legal codes, mystery novels, and so on), the sacred scriptures are 'inspired' by God. Although the Bible was written down by human authors using their own words, the Holy Spirit 'inspired' those authors to write the scriptures in a way that would communicate what God wanted his people to know for their salvation.

