

How can people today be part of the BIG Story of the Bible?

Year Group: Y1 & Y2

A Suggested “Christianity School Development” Unit for Cambridgeshire



Materials to Support The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Cambridgeshire

For the Teacher - The Christian beliefs and teaching in this Unit

This is a lengthy unit of work which will take a **full term**, as it deals with the outline story of the Bible, a Christian rite of passage and the key act of Christian worship – the Eucharist. You may, of course, decide that you wish to tackle these three sections separately, but they have been put together for a reason, so please read on to find out the rationale for this before you make your decision

Often when schools make a selection of which Bible stories they are going to teach in RE decisions are made on the basis of the interesting elements or exciting nature of the narrative, or perhaps of particular values they wish to promote and discuss. This unit is different because it actually starts with the important question “What is the core message of the Bible?” and answers this with the key concepts “**Salvation**” and “**Love**”. You may prefer to ask the question “What is the Bible about?” for this unit.

Although you will probably not speak with the children in these terms, what this unit is trying to do is to outline this salvation narrative as follows:

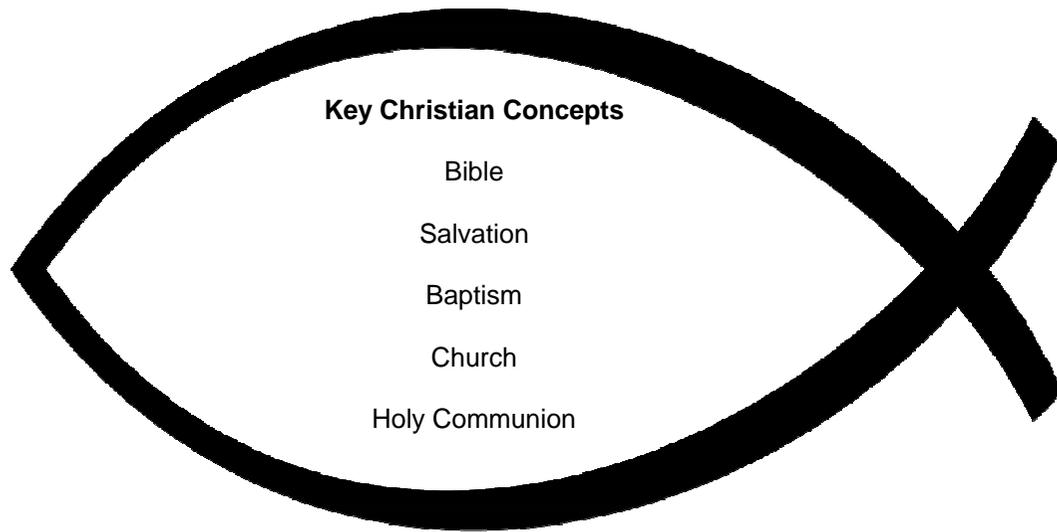
- The story of the Fall in Genesis chapter 3 shows that God originally intended that mankind should be in an open and loving relationship with Himself and people were created from the beginning with this capability. Mankind, however, also has free will, and uses this freedom of choice to damage the relationship. The Bible narrative then becomes one big love story, as God tries to win His people back, or “save” them.
- God chooses to work with one particular family of people.. The second story tells how, against all odds, a “miracle baby” is born to Abraham, who seems to be the one person on earth who is tuned into God and in relationship with Him. This is the beginning of the Jewish nation, and as Abraham’s family grows in numbers (like the stars of the sky...) his descendants carry with them the understanding of that relationship (which is not the same thing as saying that everyone was as in tune with God as Abraham).
- The family grows significantly in numbers, but eventually, through no fault of their own, the people are enslaved in Egypt. God rescues / saves His people through Moses who does battle with Pharaoh in God’s name and leads the people out of Egypt in a dramatic fashion. This is a high point of the Jews’ salvation story and is still celebrated annually in the most important of Jewish festivals – the Passover. At a much later Passover Jesus himself would be crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem, and in Christian thinking links can be made between the lambs sacrificed for Passover and the sacrificial death of Jesus as “the Lamb of God”.

- If you were expecting all to be well and the relationship between God and man to be restored after the dramatic episode of the Exodus and the nation's subsequent settlement in the "Promised Land" you would be disappointed (God was). The Jewish nation becomes settled in Palestine and religious, moral and social corruption becomes part of the fabric of society. The prophets, who see all this happening, know that something radical needs to occur to get the relationship back on track – they begin to talk both of destruction and a new beginning. The new beginning includes the coming of a particular person with the title Messiah (Christ) who will bring in God's glorious kingdom. Christians later equate the Messiah with Jesus, but the Jews are still waiting for him to arrive. It is difficult to grapple with the teachings of the prophets in detail, so this session uses a famous musical version of a prophecy of Isaiah to continue the story.
- Eventually God Himself intervenes in the salvation narrative by sending His Son, Jesus, in fulfilment of the prophecies. Jesus opens up the salvation message to all people as he moves around the countryside of Galilee and Judea. His message appeals to ordinary people (there is a special emphasis on welcoming the marginalised – including women,) but brings him into conflict with members of the religious hierarchy who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo and see his teaching as an attack on established religious structures. Eventually it is their plotting which brings about Jesus' arrest and crucifixion.
- The mission of Jesus does not end with his death: his resurrection, and the subsequent coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost, means that God's Love Story continues. Through his innocent death the breach between God and mankind has been repaired – but it is not a blanket restoration of the relationship, because each individual man or woman has to consciously accept the offer of salvation through belief in God and Jesus. With Pentecost it becomes the mission of Jesus' followers, soon to be known as the Church, to spread the message of salvation and God's love throughout the world. The BIG STORY in the Bible itself ends with the first decades of the spread of the salvation message, chiefly through following the story of Paul.

The last two sessions bring the salvation story right up to the present day, by asking how the Church continues to share the message of Jesus and provides a home or community for God's followers. Both baptism into the Church, and remembering the sacrificial death of Jesus through a re-telling of the Last Supper (Holy Communion / Eucharist / Mass) have been part of the Christian tradition from earliest times and can be clearly found in the New Testament narrative. The intention of concluding the enquiry unit with these two sessions is to lift the BIG STORY in pupils' thinking from something which is ancient history to something which is of relevance today and which they can actually see and be part of in their local church.

Make the unit your own

The unit concentrates on asking enquiry questions and it is certain that you will have many creative ideas about better ways of presenting elements of the enquiry, arranging assessments, or even better enquiry questions altogether! Do not feel constrained by what you see on the next few pages—these are suggestions—pick what will work with your pupils, improve upon them—enjoy the act of discovery together!



Key Christian Concepts

Bible

Salvation

Baptism

Church

Holy Communion

UNIT TITLE: How can people today be part of the BIG STORY of the Bible?

Key Question: How does the BIG STORY begin? (This is a BIG UNIT for a BIG STORY and will take one term)

*Rather than presenting pupils with the fait accompli that this is one BIG story you are looking at, you could take on the role of detectives and look for clues to build the stories into one story **or** create a treasure chest putting an object relating to each story into the chest (this could work well later for *sequencing activities and assessing understanding through play and conversation*).*

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To understand that the whole Bible is telling an important story for Christians</p> <p>To retell and think about the beginning of the Bible's story</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk together about the notion of temptation – when you know that something is wrong, but you decide to go ahead and do it anyway – how do you feel afterwards? • Use a Bible storybook or other resource to share the oldest temptation story – the Fall (Genesis chapter 3). Talk together about what went wrong. Create your own small group drama to reinforce the idea that actions have consequences or about falling out with important people in your life. • Introduce the idea of this being the beginning of a long story – things have gone wrong between people and God so how are they going to put it right? The Bible tells the BIG STORY of how this happened. • Begin individual storybooks or clothes-line timelines to record the BIG STORY as it develops. (Note phrases on the timeline such as “two thousand years ago” are more helpful than B.C. / A.D dates with this age group.) 	<p>I can recall the story of Adam and Eve (AT1 L1)</p> <p>I can tell why the story of Adam and Eve is important in the Bible (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can talk about a time I have done something wrong on purpose (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can recognise what has motivated me when I have done something wrong (AT2 L2)</i></p>	<p>Helpful resource: Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden Jane Ray Eerdmans, 2005</p> <p>You could use a cross-shaped cube net to record the BIG STORY will allow you to build up the four Old Testament stories as the upright of the net and the crossbeam as the two New Testament stories – this then becomes a visual reminder of the key point of the story of salvation. (This could be done as a class— or pupils could each have their own copy which could be annotated.)</p> <p>A story which can be used to think about sin/getting it wrong is “Two Monsters” by David McKee.</p>

What do we want from working with this story?

Pupils to know that this is an ancient story which tells us that every person used to know God well on a one to one relationship, but the relationship has totally broken down. How is it going to be repaired?

Key Question: Which special baby was an important part of the beginning of the BIG STORY?

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To understand the important role of Abraham and his son Isaac in the Bible story</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look together at family trees and see if you can create your own for your own immediate family. You could do this as a class in circle time, or in small groups, by creating a family tree with dolls. Know that if we had enough information we could go back centuries listing our ancestors. There are long family trees in the Bible – look together at the list of Jesus’ ancestors in Matthew chp 1 vss 1-17 – who is at the top of the tree? You can look at photographs of Jesse Trees to illustrate this and may choose to make one together as a way of recording the BIG STORY. Using a Bible storybook or other resource, share the story of Abraham being chosen for a special task by God as father of the Jewish nation and the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah in their old age (Genesis chps 17-21). Talk together about what made Abraham so special that he was chosen by God for this important role. Think about the special <i>promise</i> he was made about having a huge family. Add to the BIG STORY record. <p><i>If you would prefer to do so you can use the story of Noah instead of Abraham and Isaac—here the themes would be a new relationship with God (covenant) and hope, both symbolised by the rainbow.</i></p>	<p>I can retell the story of Abraham and baby Isaac (AT1 L1)</p> <p>I can suggest why Abraham was chosen by God to be Isaac’s father in the Bible story (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can talk about my family that I know (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can recognise how my family and other people’s families go back in time (AT2 L2)</i></p>	<p>The unit is tracking key incidents in the Biblical story of salvation moving from the Fall to the resurrection of Jesus – it is important to convey that these isolated stories are in fact all part of one story that covers many centuries. As you move from one theme to the next continue to remind the class of the story so far and the fact that they are dealing with the same “family” over generations.</p> <p>Jesse trees often figure in stained glass windows, but are also made at Advent time when trees are decorated with symbols to remind people of different key Bible stories –plenty of examples on line.</p> <p><i>This notion of being chosen may be referred back to when you reach the session on baptism.</i></p>

What do we want from working with this story?

Pupils to see that this is the start of the relationship between God and people being repaired— Abraham has become a special friend of God, and God has promised to be a special friend of his family for generations.

Key Question: How did Moses help save God's people?

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To know that the important role that Moses played in saving his people from slavery is still remembered and celebrated today</p> <p>To respond sensibly and sensitively to an unusual story</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about whether it is important to always do what people ask us to. What if it is something which frightens us, or we think is too difficult to do? • Share the story of Exodus chp 3 (burning bush) where Moses is called by God to save his people. (dare you light a small fire (safely!) for the class to sit around and stare into the flames?) Empathise with Moses' predicament and his fears - what would you do? • Share, using an appropriate resource, the story of the plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus chps 5-14). The latter is an exciting story to act out with large pieces of material for the sea etc.or using small <i>world play</i> toys. • You could tell the story in conjunction with a "Passover food tasting session" and understand how the Jewish people still remember this freedom story every year with a special meal/foods. Record the foods and their meaning on a special "menu" card as you go through or create an illustrated "Passover plate" using individual cardboard plates. • Add to your BIG STORY record. 	<p>I can retell the story of Moses (AT1 L1)</p> <p>I can suggest why the story of Moses is still remembered today (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can talk about being frightened (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can respond sensitively to the story of Passover and the plagues (AT2 L2)</i></p>	<p>The story has moved on 650 years to c.1200 B.C. when Abraham's now numerous descendants have been enslaved in Egypt.</p> <p>The cartoon "Prince of Egypt" is an excellent resource for this story – it can be viewed free at a number of websites including http://ebiblemovies.com/watch/the-prince-of-egypt-moses/online-free/ and Youtube.</p> <p>The BBC has a useful set of webpages on Passover at http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/holydays/passover_1.shtml —remember to check out all the links!</p> <p>Keywords: saved, salvation.</p>

What do we want from working with this story?

Pupils to understand that this is a story about God saving his people which is still remembered as important today.

Key Question: What is the special promise at the centre of the BIG STORY?

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To use a well known piece of Christian music or prophecy to find out about a Bible message</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If someone promises you something, how long are you prepared to wait? Talk together about the difficulty of waiting a long time for something to happen – when would you give up hoping? • We have reached the point in the BIG STORY of the Bible where prophets (messengers from God) were beginning to talk about the arrival of someone special to help save or rescue people and get them back to being right with God. We are suggesting two possible approaches here (a) adapt the materials found at http://www.westminster.coresense.com/common/pdf_links/9780310684350Lesson.pdf (in particular the activity introduction and the interview materials) and use with the film “Operation no more tears” at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ptb5tyzvrCE OR (b) Listen to a prophecy which has been put to music: “Unto us a Son is born” from Handel’s Messiah – what do the words tell us about the special person who is coming? How did the music make you feel? (What does the music say about the specialness of the person?) Can you guess who the special person might be? I wonder how long people will have to wait? • You could Create a working wall “lift the flap” display with the title on the top flap and beneath pupils’ different ideas about the titles’ meaning. • Add the key words of the prophecy to your BIG STORY record. 	<p><i>I can recognise special religious words in a piece of music or a story (AT1 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can explain the special religious message in the words of a piece of music or a story (AT1 L2)</i></p> <p><i>I can talk about how a piece of music made me feel (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can understand how Christians might feel listening to a special piece of Christian music (AT2 L2)</i></p>	<p>We have now leapt on another 500 years in Biblical history to the late 8th century B.C. and the prophet Isaiah.</p> <p>There are several versions of the Messiah on Youtube – this one includes the words: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlV9NrN67ps The prophecy can be found in Isaiah chp 9 vs 6.</p>

What do we want from working with this story?

Pupils to understand that this is a story about God promising to save his people even though they kept turning their backs on him and messing up the new relationships made through Abraham and Moses.. The promise was that a special person would come to do this. It took hundreds of years before someone arrived who Christians believe is the person being talked about by Isaiah(Jesus).

Key Question: How did Jesus call people to be part of the BIG STORY?

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To think about stories of Jesus and his message that God loves everyone</p> <p>To link the story of Jesus to life today</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind each other of the promise of the coming of a special person in the last session, and stories you have already heard about Jesus. Jesus came to bring people the message of how to get right with God. Engage creatively (art, drama, craft) with some of the stories and teachings which have this underlying message, e.g: the calling of the disciples; Zacchaeus; parables of the Good Samaritan (the golden rule), Lost Sheep and Lost Son; verses from the Sermon on the Mount. Which are your favourite stories and why? Add to your BIG STORY record <p>Discuss what happened to Jesus next (death and resurrection). You might like to do this by using a secular story for comparison and to get you thinking e.g: Self sacrifice of Aslan in the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEae4NSLfwY Alternatively favourite books that might be in your library are “Sandbear” by Shen Roddie (self-sacrifice) or “The Selfish Crocodile” by Faustin Charles (forgiveness/reconciliation) or “The Rescue Party” by Nick Butterworth.</p> <p>Use the egg and gunk activity (see right) to help children visualise what the word “salvation” means in this context. <i>Writing up the activity can be an assessment piece.</i></p>	<p>I can recall stories of Jesus (AT1 L1)</p> <p>I can suggest meanings for the stories of Jesus (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can talk about whether the stories of Jesus are important for me (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can recognise how the stories of Jesus are important for some people and not others (AT2 L2)</i></p>	<p>This lesson links with work from the core enquiry question “Who was Jesus? A great leader and teacher?” It will need adaptation depending on which scheme is engaged with first.</p> <p>Key vocabulary: resurrection, salvation,</p> <p>Egg and gunk—this summarises the BIG Story and Jesus’ role in it: Take an egg and place it in a bowl—this is us as God meant us to be. Then start to pour all kinds of “gunk” into the bowl until the egg “disappears” - this is what has been happening over the hundreds of years of the BIG Story right up to today as all kinds of things mess up people’s lives until they are covered in muck. Put your hand into the bowl, rescue the egg and clean it up—this is God intervening to save the egg / person as his hand/Jesus immerses himself in the gunk of the world and pulls it out. The egg is not permanently tainted, it can be made clean—just as people who believe in Jesus as their saviour are made clean from sin and are back in their right relationship with God.</p>

What do we want from working with this story?

Pupils to know that Christians believe Jesus is the person spoken of by Isaiah in the “special promise”, and that following Jesus will mend the broken relationship between a person and God.

Key Question: How did the news of Jesus and the BIG STORY start spreading round the world?			
Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
To recognise the importance of the story of Pentecost and the beginning of the Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play a game of Chinese whispers round a circle. Did the message get all the way round safely? What would people use to spread an important message today? (telephone, TV, newspapers) How could they manage it in Jesus' time without technology? Look at paintings of Pentecost and talk about what seems to be happening in the story. What is surprising that you can see? Share the story of Pentecost (Acts chp 2) including the important information (a) the story that the disciples were sharing was the BIG STORY of the Bible and how Jesus (who had been crucified and had risen from the dead) was the one who had put things right between people and God and (b) the BIG STORY was now going to be carried all round the world by the disciples themselves and by the people who heard it on this day. Add imaginative thought bubbles to your Pentecost image to show the kind of things the disciples might be thinking or saying. Include the word for "peace in as many different languages as possible. Understand that Pentecost is like the "first birthday of the Church" – throw a birthday party! 	<p>I can recognise what is happening in a painting of Pentecost and tell the story (AT1 L1)</p> <p>I can explain how the story of Pentecost is linked to stories of Jesus (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can talk about what I find puzzling (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can talk about the experiences and feelings of the disciples at Pentecost (AT2 L2)</i></p>	<p>You may like to have dramatic music playing when looking at the Pentecost pictures e.g. the finale of Stravinsky's "Firebird – see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTep91oqgVk</p> <p>If you have crated a cross-shaped BIG STORY record this can be used here to illustrate this session and remind the class of the overall BIG story. This could also be used for assessment as pupils sequence and narrate the BIG story.</p> <p><i>There may be a natural discussion link here between the Pentecost story and EAL pupils in the class, but this should be handled sensitively.</i></p> <p>Website for multilingual "peace": http://www.salsa.net/peace/translate.html</p>
<p><i>What do we want from working with this story?</i> Pupils to understand that the BIG story of Jesus and how to get right with God as now spread around the world.</p>			

This could be the end of this unit if you just want to look at Bible stories. The last two key questions (either of which will probably take more than one session) bring the BIG story up to date by looking at two contemporary Christian rites of passage. Either of the two key questions which follow could be adapted to be an enquiry question ion their own right.

Key Question: How can people today become part of the BIG STORY?

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To understand that at baptism Christians become members of the Church</p> <p>To know that the Church today goes all the way back to the Bible, Jesus and to the first Pentecost</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind each other that in the Pentecost story when people asked what they needed to do next they were told they should be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Ask if anyone has been to a baptism (christening) or if they know that they themselves have been baptised. Watch a video of a baptism and talk about what you see happening, especially symbols and promises.. even better, invite the vicar to act out a baptism with the class. Create questions for a Christian visitor about why they decided to be baptised (or have their children baptised) and invite someone to respond to them (in person if possible). (This could be part of the conversation with the vicar.) Understand that baptism makes people part of the worldwide family of the Church, God's family, not just of the local church in which the ceremony happened. They then become part of God's BIG STORY, even if they are not in the Bible. Add people being baptised as Christians to your BIG STORY record. 	<p>I can recognise what is happening at a baptism (AT1 L1)</p> <p>I can explain why baptism is important to Christians (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can ask questions about baptism (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can ask questions about a person's baptism and respond with empathy (AT2 L2)</i></p>	<p>This key question relates to the growth of the Church and shows the BIG STORY is not just history, but current.</p> <p>Videos of baptisms can be found on CLEO net http://www.cleo.net.uk/resources/index.php?ks=2&cur=15 note that both adults and babies can be baptised.- the website has both. See also http://www.request.org.uk/unpacked/christian/christian.htm</p> <p>It would be possible to extend this theme by e.g. (a) a questionnaire for families on baptisms, naming ceremonies or confirmations (b) creating a display of photographs and memorabilia from the children's families.</p>

What do we want from working with this story?

Pupils to understand that since the time of Jesus people have been baptised as a sign they want to get right with God and be part of the Church.

Key Question: How do Christians celebrate being part of God's BIG STORY?

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To understand the importance of the Holy Communion service for many Christians</p> <p>To understand how the individual stories over the term have linked up together to form one BIG (SALVATION) STORY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember together how earlier in the BIG STORY you discovered how people celebrated being saved from slavery with special food – Christians today celebrate being saved by Jesus in a similar way. Share the story of the Last Supper (e.g. Lion Storyteller Bible). Either invite a member of the clergy to talk about and demonstrate Holy Communion at an appropriate level, OR use the REQuest online materials OR re-enact the meal yourselves using bread and grape juice.—think how important it must be to Christians to share together in Holy Communion as a way of remembering the BIG STORY and showing how they are part of it. Use your BIG STORY record to bring the steps of the BIG STORY together for one last time – from the Fall and people getting in the wrong with God, through the Old Testament heroes, to Jesus showing people how to get right with God again and this message being carried on by the Church. Can we now answer the main unit question? 	<p>I can recognise what is happening at a Holy Communion service (AT1 L1)</p> <p>I can suggest how the Bible stories we have looked at are linked to each other (AT1 L2)</p> <p><i>I can talk about how important my family and friends are to me (AT2 L1)</i></p> <p><i>I can recognise why the Holy Communion service is important to many Christians (AT2 L2)</i></p>	<p>There is a presentation and supporting notes on Holy Communion at http://www.request.org.uk/unpacked/christian/communion/communion.htm</p>

What do we want from working with this story?

Pupils to understand that Holy Communion is a special meal which reminds us all of Jesus and his role in the story of salvation.