



# Christian Aid Week: Reflective journey

A resource with ideas for assembly,  
collective worship or to support  
spiritual development

This learning journey has been written to provide ideas for assembly, collective worship or to support SMSC development. The material has been divided into 5 sections so that it can be used during Christian Aid Week with a different emphasis to reflect on each day. The ideas can be used flexibly, selected from, and adapted for your context. This whole learning journey can also be used at an alternative point during the academic year to fit most appropriately within your assembly/curriculum plan.

Photo credit: Christian Aid/David Brazier



# This is Christian Aid – a reflective journey

## Reflection 1 - ‘Mighty oaks from little acorns grow’

### Introduction

#### ‘Mighty oaks from little acorns grow’

I wonder, have you ever heard this saying or something similar? It could be read as a simple statement of fact, but do you think it has a deeper meaning? Can you think of other statements that are similar or have the same meaning?

Discuss the meaning of this proverb and talk about any examples of great things which have grown from small beginnings. Try to think of examples from your local community if possible.

### Christian Aid Link

This week is Christian Aid Week – a fundraising week which has taken place each year since 1957. During Christian Aid Week Christians, churches, and supporters of Christian Aid work with their local community to raise awareness about the effects of extreme poverty and injustice, wherever it is found in the world, and to enjoy taking part in fundraising activities together. The money raised helps support community projects all over the world.

### Reflection and Bible Link

The people who began the work of Christian Aid were Christians who tried

to live out Jesus’ teaching about the importance of loving our neighbour as we love ourselves.

Read an age-appropriate version of the parable of the Good Samaritan and share thoughts about why Jesus might have told this story and what the parable means.

You could look at a painting of the parable [for example, the version by Vincent Van Gogh] as a starting point for discussion followed by reading the parable.

Alternatively, use an updated version of the parable – or ask pupils to devise a modern-day retelling of the story once they have listened to the original version.

Ask pupils to reflect on what would change if we all ‘loved our neighbour as ourselves’ – in school, in families, in communities, in friendship groups, in the world?

**Sing or listen to:** When I needed a neighbour were you there? [Author: Sydney Bertram Carter]

### Going deeper

Could you find out more about how the [work of Christian Aid began](#)? Perhaps each class could try to share something they have discovered later in the week. **Background information for teachers:** [About us - Christian Aid](#)



# Reflection 2 - That's not fair!

## Introduction

Read or tell a short story on the theme of fairness.

I wonder if you have ever said 'that's not fair!' or felt cross because you think something has been unfair. Can you share any examples?

## Christian Aid Link

Christian Aid Week provides an opportunity to think about the world in which we live, to celebrate all the good things, but also to talk about some of the things that are unfair in the world. It's an opportunity to share ideas about how the world could become a fantastic place for everyone to live. I wonder, what sort of things do you think spoil our world and make life unfair for some people?

Give an opportunity for paired discussion and then gather some of the pupils' ideas.

Share some key facts about extreme poverty and the distribution of resources in the world:

[THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/)

Christian Aid believes that it is unfair for so many people on the earth to live everyday with the challenges and consequences of extreme poverty. However, Christian Aid believes that, working together, it is possible to find ways to share the earth's resources more fairly and to find ways to live peacefully and in cooperation with one another.

## Reflection and Bible Link

Read Acts 2:43-46 or describe to pupils how the first followers of Jesus looked after each other.

*"<sup>43</sup> The apostles were doing many miracles and signs. And everyone felt great respect for God. <sup>44</sup> All the believers stayed together. They shared everything. <sup>45</sup> They sold their land and the things they owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those people who needed it. <sup>46</sup> The believers met together in the Temple every day. They all had the same purpose. They broke bread in their homes, happy to share their food with joyful hearts.*

## *International Children's Bible*

The very first followers of Jesus tried to live peacefully with one another and to care for each other in a way which showed respect and fairness to members of their community. What questions or thoughts do you have about this?

## Going deeper

Perhaps you could find out more about the ways in which [Christian Aid works](#) to help bring an end to poverty, and the causes of poverty and unfairness in the world.



# Reflection 3 - Firm Foundations

## Introduction

Build a series of towers – one from cardboard boxes; one from Jenga bricks; one from Lego which is fixed onto a Lego base. Ask a pupil to try to topple each tower – which one stands firm? The Lego tower should remain intact because it is fixed on a firm foundation and the bricks are secured. Discuss the importance of secure foundations for making buildings secure, long lasting and safe – if possible, show some pictures which demonstrate this.

The image of a building with good foundations is sometimes used to help us understand the importance of firm foundations in other aspects of our lives. For example, you can't read a longer book without first learning to read simple words and to grow your vocabulary; you can't play a complicated piece of music on the guitar without first learning simple chords and notes. You can't become best friends with someone without learning about their likes, dislikes, feelings and talents. I wonder if you can think of other examples.

## Christian Aid Link and Reflection

Those who began the work of Christian Aid knew that for their work to flourish they would need to build it on firm foundations – on values and beliefs which would help them realise their vision of a world without poverty and where the earth's resources are shared fairly.

As Christians they tried to put into practice the things that Jesus taught – the things that he told his followers about sharing God's love in the world and loving their neighbour as they love themselves. They believed that this would help them build the work of Christian Aid wisely and based on secure foundations; a bit like the wise man described in one of Jesus' parables:

*<sup>24</sup> "Everyone who hears these things I say and obeys them is like a wise man. The wise man built his house on rock. <sup>25</sup> It rained hard and the water rose. The winds blew and hit that house. But the house did not fall, because the house was built on rock. <sup>26</sup> But the person who hears the things I teach and does not obey them is like a foolish man. The foolish man built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> It rained hard, the water rose, and the winds blew and hit that house. And the house fell with a big crash."*

*Matthew 7:24-27 ICB*

## Going Deeper

Today the work of Christian Aid continues and is underpinned by the values of dignity, equality, justice motivated by love for our neighbour. Discuss what each of these values means and think about how these values can be lived out practically in people's everyday lives.

What are your school values? How do they provide a firm foundation for the life of your school community?

## **Background notes:**

### **Some dictionary definitions**

**Dignity** – being worthy of honour or respect and to be treated ethically

**Equality** - the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.

**Justice** - just behaviour or treatment. the quality of being fair and reasonable

[More about Christian Aid's values and work](#)



# Reflection 4 – You're Welcome!

## Introduction

I wonder if you've ever thanked someone for doing something and they've responded, 'You're welcome'? What does their response mean?

We use the word 'welcome' in many ways and today we're going to explore what it really means to be someone who welcomes and includes others and how it feels to be welcomed.

If a new pupil was going to join our class/school today, how could we make them feel welcome and quickly a part of our community? What sort of things would we all need to do?

**Learn their name and introduce ourselves.**

**Show them where things are kept.**

**Tell them about important parts of the school day – assembly, timetable, lunchtime etc.**

**Make sure they have all they need for their lessons – PE kit, pens/pencils etc.**

Welcoming someone involves thinking about how they might be feeling, being interested in getting to know them and thinking about how you can help them 'feel at home' in their new surroundings. Welcoming involves listening as well as speaking, and it sometimes involves putting someone

else's needs ahead of your own. It involves being generous with your time and sharing your belongings or friendships.

In pairs talk about situations when we need to be welcoming - can you remember a time when you've had to welcome someone new into your class, family, club, or community?

**Share some examples.**

I wonder if there has ever been a time when you were welcomed? How does it feel when you're meeting people for the first time or going to a place for the first time? I wonder, can you remember how you felt on your first day at school? What helped you to settle in and get used to your new surroundings and to make friends? How do you feel when other people show you kindness and welcome you?

## Christian Aid Link

Christian Aid's ground-breaking work began in 1945 with a focus on helping and welcoming refugees following the second world war. For more than 75 years, Christian Aid has continued to work with local communities worldwide to help bring an end to poverty and injustice - to help create a world where everyone can flourish and to live safely.



An attitude of welcome and hospitality is at the heart of their work - lived out through the values of dignity, justice, equality and love.

Talk about how these values might help us show respect and welcome to other people, for example:

When we show dignity, justice, equality and love – we notice other people, listen to them, have empathy and compassion, put other people's needs before our own.

### **Reflection and Bible Link**

Tell or read an age-appropriate version of the story about Zacchaeus meeting Jesus. Stop at key points of the story to talk about how various characters might be feeling or what they might be thinking/saying. Who showed welcome and hospitality? How? Talk about whether you notice any of the values of dignity, justice, equality and love lived out in this story.

*Luke 19:1-10*

*19<sup>1-4</sup> Then Jesus entered and walked through Jericho. There was a man there, his name Zacchaeus, the head tax man and quite rich. He wanted desperately to see Jesus, but the crowd was in his way—he was a short man and couldn't see over the crowd. So he ran on ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus when he came by.*

*5-7 When Jesus got to the tree, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, hurry down. Today is my day to be a guest in your home." Zacchaeus scrambled out of the tree, hardly believing his good luck, delighted to take Jesus home with him. Everyone who saw the*

*incident was indignant and grumped, "What business does he have getting cozy with this crook?"*

*<sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus just stood there, a little stunned. He stammered apologetically, "Master, I give away half my income to the poor—and if I'm caught cheating, I pay four times the damages."*

*<sup>9-10</sup> Jesus said, "Today is salvation day in this home! Here he is: Zacchaeus, son of Abraham! For the Son of Man came to find and restore the lost."*

*The Message Version*

### **Going Deeper**

If you wanted to reflect on this theme over several days, you could explore the story of Ruth from the Old Testament. Use an age-appropriate version of the story of Ruth or summarise the story for pupils. As you tell the story stop at key points to ask how the different characters might be thinking or feeling at this point. Talk about where you notice the values of dignity, justice, equality and love lived out in this story. Who showed welcome and hospitality? How did they show it?

Ruth and Naomi had to flee from their home and to find a new place to live. Use some of the [school learning resources](#) to find out about the challenges faced by refugees and how Christian Aid works to support displaced people.

If pupils raise questions about the current situation with the war in Ukraine, you might find [these resources helpful](#).



# Reflection 5 - United by Hope

## Introduction

Show pupils the following film created in 2023 by Christian Aid:

### [United By Hope 2023](#)

## Christian Aid Link

This short film/advert was made to share on TV and social media and aims to introduce people to the work and values of Christian Aid.

What message or messages are shared through the film? What do you think Christian Aid hopes people will think, feel or do because of watching it? Do you think this short film would encourage people to find out more about the work of Christian Aid? Why/Why not?

The key message is about hope and about the things that unite all people wherever they live in the world.

Talk about what 'hope' means in this context - that it is more than just wishing for something to happen but rather about believing that something is possible even when the obstacles seem enormous. Invite pupils to share ideas and thoughts about their hopes for the world and about their personal hopes for the future.

How does having hope change a difficult or challenging situation? In what way does having hope make a difference?

## Reflection and Bible Link

Read a story about change/transformation or talk about transformation seen in nature e.g., caterpillars and butterflies; dragonflies; seeds or bulbs to fully grown plants. Can these stories or examples teach us anything about hope or about the possibility of transformation? Talk about how hope is an important and shared value for many people, for those of all faiths and none.

For the individuals and church communities who started the work of Christian Aid 'hope' motivated and transformed their actions so that change happened.

For Christians 'hope' is at the heart of the Easter story. As they remember the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, they celebrate the promise of new life and hope for the future. At Easter they think about the disciples and how their lives were transformed - from feeling sad, despondent and as if all their hopes were dashed when Jesus died to feeling full of hope and joy when Jesus rose from the dead. For Christians the Easter story is one of hope and transformation – believing there can be hope for the future and hope that even the most hopeless situations can be transformed for the better.

This year during Christian Aid Week we are invited to learn from families, communities and farmers living in Malawi – to develop our understanding





of how climate change effects their lives and communities.

We are also invited to reflect on how hope unites us together. **Use the PowerPoint to introduce this year's Christian Aid Week theme.**

### **Going Deeper**

Plant a garden of hope – either create a small garden in a pot to symbolise

growth and transformation or create a 'garden' display which includes pupils hopes for the future or quotations about hope.

Could pupils create their own short film or art piece on the theme of hope. Could you join in with the [Letters for Creation project?](#)

