

RE Today: socially distanced learning in groups for 5-14s

D. The Shouted Story (example: Moses and Exodus)

These flexible suggestions for teachers provide outdoor or socially distanced learning ideas for groups of pupils in the 5-14 age range. As schools follow demanding guidance about distancing, these ideas can be used creatively with your pupils to provide good RE out of doors or in larger indoor spaces, making a wide range of learning opportunities possible. The activities can lead on to individual work at desks, but bring some energy, movement and interaction from RE to the class. These are flexible ideas - you can tailor them easily to your needs.

Engaging socially distanced learning

This is one of a series of separate session ideas which we are making available in this learning pack, via the NATRE website.

Each idea within the pack involves some engaging learning out of doors, or in larger indoor spaces, some thinking all together and some opportunities to take the learning and record thoughts and ideas individually afterwards through good RE writing activities. We hope these ideas will flex across the 5-14 age range.

The activities in this pack are:

- A. The chalk circle of enquiry (you can use masking tape on an indoor floor instead)
- B. 101 words, 30 leaves, 30 pieces of RE knowledge – a religious knowledge memory test. A 30 piece factual account of three religions is tested and pupils count their scores with leaves or stones, then retest to improve.
- C. The walk of faith-exploration. In which a faith community's practice is understood at increasing depth by collecting information. Example from Islam
- D. The shouted story. In which a faith story in 30 or 40 pieces is related by pupils in groups of 10-20-30 in size.
- E. The Golden Rule in forms from different communities explored through movement and decision making.
- F. Feeling sad? Feeling happy? Feeling brave? Feeling miserable? Four squares on the floor to identify your responses, linked to some sacred texts.
- G. Bring It All To Me – a musical lesson derived from the Psalms, holy text for Jewish, Christian and Muslim people.

The Shouted Story

Example: Moses and Exodus.

For this learning strategy you need a version of a faith story written into numbered sentences. 40 sentences is probably about right, but you could use less or more. The activity can work with up to 30 pupils, but if your group size is smaller, say 10-20 pupils, it works even better.

For this simple knowledge-building way of exploring a story, copy the 40 pieces of the story on pages 4-5 below onto cards and cut them up. Pupils will only need to handle their own pieces of the story, maybe three cards each.

This is a nice outdoor lesson – you could stand or sit pupils in distanced rows or around a large circle. The lesson could be done indoors at desks and tables, or on the floor in a large space. 5 steps:

1. Give each pupil a share of the story cards in a random order – use the set of cards with numbers on them to start with, from pages 4-5.
2. Tell the class they are all going to shout out the story in 40 sentences, in the right order. As teacher, you give the numbers (it works well if you have numbers 1-40 written on cards, and hold them up so the children can see who is next) Hear all the sentences of the story shouted out one by one in the right order. It may be good to run through this twice. Can they do it better second time round? Reinforces the factual learning as well.
3. Ask some interpretive questions – see examples on page 3, but you could make up your own, to discuss the story and think through some of its meanings. Ask the pupils to ask a question for others to consider as well.
4. Can pupils do the story in the right order at a shout using non-numbered cards, just from their understanding of it?
5. Back in class, each pupil can create an art page based on one of the sentences, and these can be edited together into a class picture book of the Moses story, which is central to the Jewish religion up to this day – teach the class there are over 15 million Jewish people in the world, and about a quarter of a million in the UK.
6. Set a written task too if appropriate, using some of the discussion questions.

Variations

Can you or the class come up with another key story from Jewish tradition or from another religion that you can retell in 30 or 40 sentences? Run the activity again. If you are working in a group of mixed ages, could the older pupils run this activity for the younger ones?

Discussion questions

The story of Moses and the slaves set free

1. Which bit of the story did we like best?
2. Who has a scary card?
3. Who has a hopeful card?
4. What was the worst thing the Pharaoh did?
5. What was the best thing Moses did?
6. Which cards have something about what God did on them?
7. What do religious people mean by the word 'Miracle'? Who has a card with a miracle on it?
8. Who's got a card with Miriam's name on it? How many cards is that in all? Was her part in the story important?
9. The Pharaoh is a clear baddie – a racist, a bully and a slavedriver. Is there anyone like the Pharaoh today?
10. In this story, God is the great liberator, and sets people free. What beliefs about God do we know?
11. Jewish people remember this story at the Passover Festival every year. It's been going on for about 3400 years. What makes the story so important for Jewish people?
12. Some people think the movie 'A Bug's Life' is similar to Exodus. Can you spot 5 similarities?
13. Do you know any songs about freedom? There's a famous one called 'Exodus' by Bob Marley you could listen to.
14. What kind of song do you think Miriam sang at the end of the story?

A Forty Sentence Story of Moses

1. How did the People of God escape from Slavery in Egypt? The amazing story of Moses and Pharaoh, featuring a baby basket, a murder, a firebush, the Angel of Death and finally a song and dance.
2. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, forced the Israelites to be his slaves. The enslaved Israelites had to build. They worked terribly hard, for nothing.
3. The Task Masters of Pharaoh forced the Israelites to make bricks out of straw. They had no life or liberty.
4. The Pharaoh was scared that the slaves were too many and would make his rich life of luxury unsafe. told the Israelite midwives to kill all baby boys who were born to Israelite women, but they would not do it.
5. God blessed the midwives because they would not harm the tiny children of the slaves.
6. Pharaoh was still scared of the growing numbers of slaves. He told his soldiers to throw all the Israelite baby boys into the River Nile, where crocodiles lived.
7. Baby Moses was born in secret, and his mum and dad kept him quiet for weeks, but when he was 12 weeks old, he was too noisy to hide.
8. Moses mum made a little basket from rushes and covered it with waterproof pitch. She put the baby in the basket, and hid it on the River Nile.
9. Miriam, Moses big sister, hid in the bullrushes to keep watch on the baby Moses in his basket.
10. Pharaoh's daughter, the Egyptian princess, bathed in the River Nile every day. Perhaps she was praying for a child – the Egyptians believed fertility came from the river. One day she heard a baby crying as she bathed.
11. The Princess sent her servant to see where the crying was coming from. She found baby Moses in the basket. I wonder what she was thinking.

12. Miriam, Moses' big sister, said a quick prayer, then she stepped bravely out. "Would you like me to find someone to look after the baby for you Princess?" she asked. "Well, yes, I would, thank you" said the Princess
13. Miriam ran home, and got her mum to look after her own baby! The princess saved Moses life, then she adopted him for her own son.
14. Moses grew up in Pharaoh's palace but he did not forget he was one of God's people, the Israelites. One day he saw a Task Master beating a slave. He ran to protect the slave, very angry at what he saw!
15. In a fight with the Egyptian Task Master, Moses killed him. He was scared, and buried the body in the ground.
16. When someone told Moses they had seen him kill the Egyptian, he was scared, and felt guilty. He ran away from the palace and into the faraway desert at Midian.
17. Moses met a girl at Midian Well. Some shepherds were bullying her, and he stood up for her. She took him home, and her family welcomed him.
18. Moses lived with the family at Midian, caring for the sheep. After a time he married the girl, Zipporah. Then they had a baby as well. They called him Gershom. Many years passed. Did Moses feel his old life as a prince was gone forever?
19. One day Moses led his family's flocks of sheep deep into the desert, to Mount Horeb, to graze the grass. It was a huge mountain, and people called it 'The Mountain of God.'
20. While the sheep were grazing, Moses suddenly noticed a dry bush, not far away. It burst into flames. The yellow and orange tongues of fire shot up into the sky, but the bush wasn't burnt up.
21. Moses was surprised by the burning bush. He got up, and walked towards it, slowly and carefully.

22. An amazing thing happened: the bush was flaming powerfully, but it was not burnt up. The flames went on burning, but the bush did not get burnt up.
23. Then another amazing thing happened: Moses heard – or felt – a voice. “Take your shoes off” said the voice.
24. Moses was full of curiosity now, but also a bit afraid of the very strange events. He quickly took off his shoes, and stood there in front of the bush.
25. Then the Voice said to Moses “I am the God of your father and grandfather, God of your ancestors. I’ve seen what Pharaoh is doing to my people in Egypt, and I’m going to rescue them”
26. Now Moses was really scared! He hid his face in his hands. All the while, the Bush kept on burning and the Voice rang in his ears.
27. The Voice of the Almighty rang out: “I’ve decided to send you to Egypt to rescue my people Moses. Go and tell Pharaoh to let them free.” Moses was speechless.
28. Then Moses said to the Voice: “I’m not good at speaking in public, and I have a stammer. The people will never believe me. Pharaoh will probably kill me. Send someone else.”
29. But God answered all Moses’ questions and fears, and sent him to Egypt, with his brother Aaron, to set the people free.
30. Moses walked back to Egypt, the way he had come many years earlier, thinking all the time about the burning bush, and what God had said. He felt brave. He marched into Pharaoh’s palace. ‘God says: LET MY PEOPLE GO!’ he announced.
31. Pharaoh was hard- hearted. No way will I let my slaves go! Moses told him there would be plagues and disasters until he freed the slaves.
32. Then the plagues started: frogs, locusts, disease for cattle, darkness all day and the River Nile turned to blood-red. Still Pharaoh would not release the slaves.
33. Finally, Moses told Pharaoh that God would send the Angel of Death and all the first born sons of the land would die. Pharaoh didn’t believe him.

34. Moses told the Israelite slaves to sign their doorposts with the blood of a lamb and get ready to leave. They baked flatbread because there was no time for the dough to rise.
35. That night the Angel of Death came to Egypt. All the Israelite children were safe. But first born children from Egyptian houses died. Pharaoh told Moses: ‘You! Take all the slaves at once, and get out.’
36. Moses led the people out into the desert towards the Promised Land. They wondered how they would cross the Red Sea. Then they noticed Pharaoh had changed his mind and was chasing them with hundreds of chariots!
37. Moses asked for help from God, and stuck out his staff over the water. A strong wind blew and the Red Sea parted ahead Moses, making a safe path, and the escaping slaves all crossed over safely.
38. But when the Egyptians chased them, the waters crashed back in huge waves. The Pharaoh’s chariots were no good at the bottom of the Red Sea.
39. Miriam sang a song and led the dancing as the escaped slaves celebrated their freedom. Moses made his plan to lead the people through the desert to the Promised Land.
40. And that is the end of the amazing story of Moses and Pharaoh, featuring a baby basket, a murder, a firebush, the Angel of Death and finally a song and dance.

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