

KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

The theme for the sixth week of 'God in this place' is 'Journeying with God'. The focus of this week's worship is thinking about God's promise to Jacob – 'I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go'. Jacob's dream and the promises he received from God was transformational for him, and influenced his life from then on.

Each of the collective worship plans in this instalment provide an opportunity for the school community to reflect upon the journey of their own spiritual lives.

Gathering

Follow the school's normal gathering routines, using words of liturgy which are familiar to students and adults

or

Light a candle and offer the following prayer: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you'. Response: *and also with you*. (To support student understanding of the Christian belief in God as Trinity here, why not light a single candle which has three wicks, lighting them in turn as each 'person' is acknowledged?)

Recap our 'God in this place' journey so far – that we have explored themes of 'journeying through life', 'dreams', 'promises' and 'worshipping' through the story of Jacob's Ladder in Genesis 28. This week, we will be drawing upon this narrative to help us think about 'Journeying with God'.

Engagement

- 1) "If... I wonder how often we have tried to bargain with family and friends? If you do this, I will... I will be your friend, if you... I will forgive you, if..."

I wonder if this has ever happened to you? People have set conditions on you in order to restore/maintain a relationship. I wonder how it made you feel?"

- 2) "In the story of Jacob, Jacob tried to make a bargain with God". Display and ask a student to read bible verse:

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's household, then the Lord will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth." (Genesis 28: 20-22)

- 3) "The issue was that Jacob got this wrong. He was setting conditions on worshipping God. 'Yes I will worship you God, if you do X, Y and Z for me first'. God, through love, was already with him on his journey and watching over him." Explain the difference between conditional love (that Jacob was showing) and unconditional love (that God was showing).

- 4) Watch **VLOG – Journeying with God** (https://youtu.be/P0n_rUYb62s)

Response

- 5) Invite a time of quiet reflection: I wonder how often we have made bargains or conditions in our own relationships? With friends? Family? God? E.g. 'You can be my friend if you like these hobbies, wear these clothes, listen to this music...', 'I will help at home if...?', 'I will worship you, God, if...?' Do we love conditionally, or unconditionally?

Sending

Prayer: from <https://cnhfaith.wordpress.com/2013/01/20/gods-unconditional-love>

**Dear God, We give thanks for
your unconditional love.**

LOVE is patient
is kind
it does not envy
it does not boast
it is not proud
it is not rude
it is not self-seeking
it is not easily angered
keeps no record of wrongs
does not delight in evil
rejoices with the truth
always protects
always trusts
always hopes
always perseveres
never fails

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

**Teach us to love as you love
us, unconditionally.**

Follow schools sending out routines – blessing, blowing out the candle, music etc.