

‘In conversation with Margaret Pritchard Houston’: Storytelling

Top Tips and Take-Aways

Margaret’s top tips and wisdom	Questions to reflect on as a school
‘We need to be open in how we tell stories...they should be seen as a gift...something for pupils to play with, to make use of for themselves, rather than something that they need to figure out and determine what the adult wants and repeat back’. 	• Are biblical stories seen as a gift within collective worship? • Are biblical stories kept open for pupils to play with and ponder, or are they presented as closed with a particular moral/message? Which do you think is better?
How are we viewing children? Are we viewing them as passive, empty vessels to be filled, or active agents who construct their own spiritual identity? 	• Ponder the questions on the left. How is the school’s conception of children influencing how biblical stories are presented and reflected upon?
‘I wonder questions are particularly useful as there is no right answer about what the story means. They allow all pupils to have different ideas and opinions about what that story means’. 	• How useful do you think ‘I wonder...’ questions are/might be in collective worship? • Might they enable collective worship to become more inclusive, invitational, inspirational?
When using storytelling: - create a clear beginning and ending - allow opportunities for a response – play? Creative? Reflexive? 	• How might you create a clear beginning and ending for storytelling? How would this link to the collective worship structure of GERS (gather, engage, respond, send)?

The following might be useful for those wishing to explore some of these ideas further:

- Jerome Berryman. *An Imaginative Approach to Religious Education* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Books, 1991) [Godly Play can be adapted for use within RE and CW]
- Elisabeth Sutcliffe - a range of guidance on spiritual development and collective worship, including *Class collective worship: supporting primary pupils' well-being in the pandemic*: http://csoc.org.uk/activities_resources/resources/collective-worship
- Godly Play UK: <https://www.godlyplay.uk/>
- Margaret Pritchard Houston. *Beyond the Children's Corner: Creating a Culture of Welcome for all ages* (London: Church House Publishing, 2020)

If you'd like to discuss aspects of collective worship further, please contact Ryan Parker (RE and Christian Ethos Adviser) – rparker@stalbens.anglican.org.