

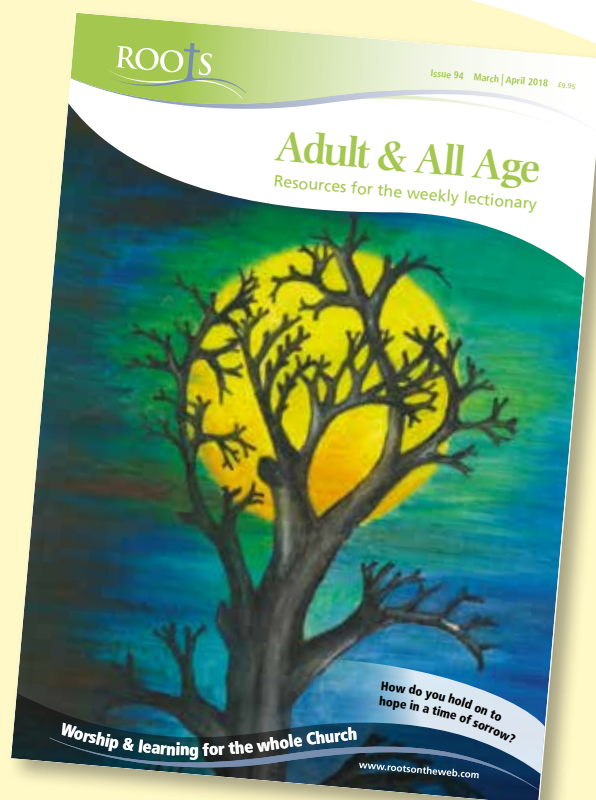
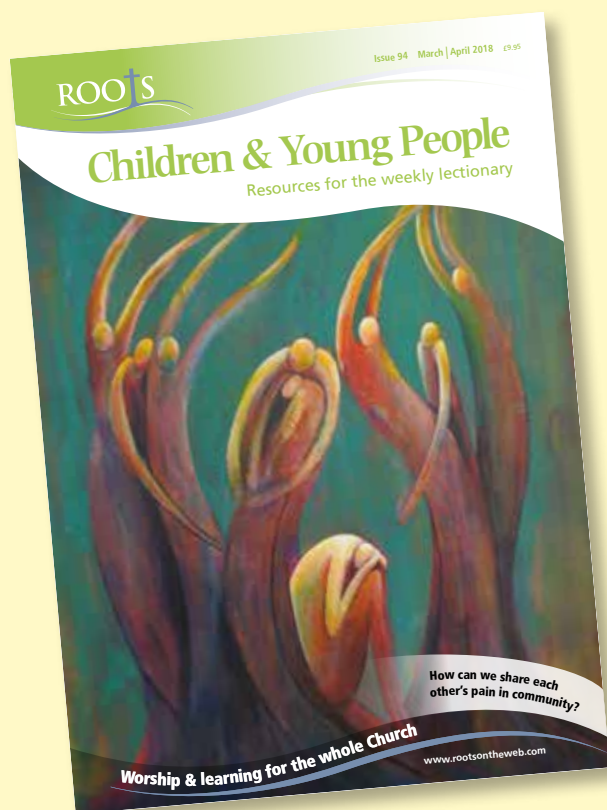


FREE sample materials

Resources for the weekly lectionary

Adult & All Age

Enriching worship and learning
with adults, families and all ages



Children & Young People

Flexible, engaging materials
for toddlers to teens

In print and online



Free inside

All ROOTS resources for one whole
week: **29 April – 5 May 2018**

www.rootsontheweb.com



Through our **Adult & All Age** and **Children & Young People** resources, ROOTS supports thousands of leaders in their ministry, *every single week of the year*.

Our subscribers include preachers and ministers; worship planning teams; children's and young people's leaders... could ROOTS support you, too?

Brand new resources – week in, week out

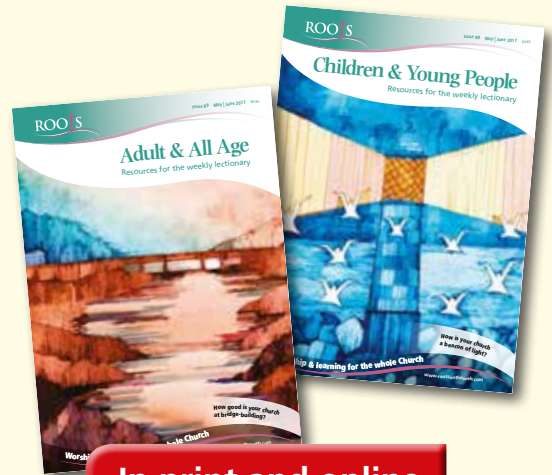
We publish new ROOTS resources every two months. By producing brand new material so regularly, we can keep ROOTS vibrant and relevant for today's generations.

Based on the weekly lectionary

ROOTS' lectionary-based resources enable us to hear the 'big story' of the Bible in our present generation – as a source of wisdom and insight in our lives today.

Building biblical literacy

We support you in equipping everyone to feel confident in joining the conversation about the Scriptures – a conversation that has been going on since they were written.



In print and online



Who produces ROOTS?

ROOTS is an ecumenical, not-for-profit partnership of denominations and other Christian organisations. The ROOTS team commissions, edits and produces the resources, in print and online.

Our contributors are from a wide range of backgrounds – ordained and lay, and from different denominations. Working together, we create resources that are fresh, up to date and grounded in practical experience.



Writers' conferences take place six times a year in different parts of the UK.

The ROOTS ecumenical partnership

Bringing together Churches and other Christian organisations since 2002

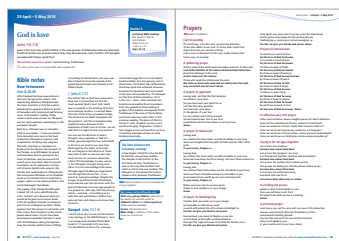


FREE inside Weekly resources for 29 April – 5 May 2018

Each week, the **Adult & All Age** and **Children & Young People** resources explore the same passage from the Revised Common Lectionary* – so everyone is worshipping and learning together, even if they're in their own groups.

* Where the Church of England's Common Worship Lectionary differs, we provide materials online.

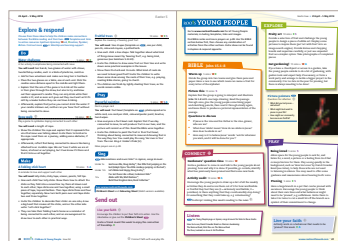
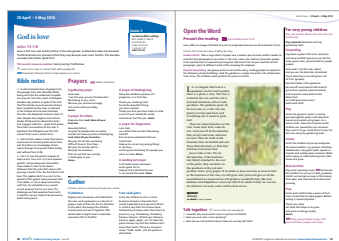
In this brochure you can try the materials for 29 April – 5 May 2018 for yourself.



Adult & All Age resources

View the 4 magazine pages (also published online)

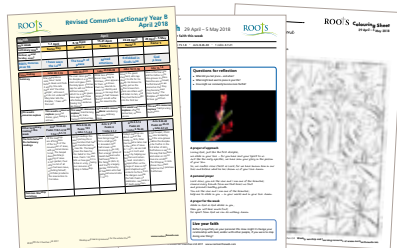
Go to
pages 4–7



Children & Young People resources

View the 4 magazine pages (also published online)

Go to
pages 8–11



Overview of ROOTS online resources

See the wealth of web extras that we offer

Go to
pages 12–14

Go to www.rootsontheweb.com/sample

You can access all these materials online – PLUS all our web extras for 29 April – 5 May 2018!



Free Join us as a **ROOTS** member – and get free resources every week

Members can log in to our website to access a selection of free materials for the following Sunday, such as

- Bible notes and prayers from the **Adult & All Age** resources, plus sermon points and worship ideas.
- Engaging ideas from the **Children & Young People** resources; prayer and craft materials, as well as youth materials.
- Plus **free seasonal resources**!

Sign up today at www.rootsontheweb.com/members


God is love

The materials focus on one lectionary reading each week, normally the Gospel.

John 15.1-8

Jesus is the true vine and his Father is the vine-grower. Fruitless branches are removed; fruitful branches are pruned so that they may become even more fruitful. The disciples are expected to bear good fruit.

This week's resources explore: hard pruning; fruitfulness.

 Look out for ways to connect faith with everyday life.

The direction of the resources is the same in both magazines, so everyone can explore the passage as a community – even when they're in their own groups.

Easter 5

Lectionary Bible readings

RCL Easter 5 Year B

Acts 8.26-40

Psalm 22.25-31

1 John 4.7-21

John 15.1-8

Bible notes

New Testament

Acts 8.26-40

After Stephen has been executed and Saul was 'ravaging the church' and imprisoning believers, Philip becomes the main character in Acts for a while, preaching the gospel in Samaria (north of Jerusalem and Judea) and performing cures. In this week's reading, Philip meets a most unusual man: an Ethiopian eunuch who had been worshipping in the Jerusalem Temple.

Back then, Ethiopia was, or included, what is now Sudan – it was very distant from Jerusalem and seen as the back of beyond. Ethiopians, however, had a reputation for being very religious. This man had been in Jerusalem on business for the Queen, the Candace. In the Temple, as an Ethiopian he would not have been able to go beyond the Court of Gentiles, and as a eunuch he would never have been able to convert to Judaism. So he represents a certain sort of pious Gentile who prays in the Temple and reads Scripture. Philip joined this anonymous Ethiopian as he travelled home on his modest and no doubt slow wagon, where he sat reading Isaiah in the Greek Septuagint translation.

The passage that stumps the Ethiopian is Isaiah 53.7-8, so he asks Philip who is the 'servant' who does not open his mouth as he goes to his unjust death. Is this the prophet himself, or someone else? It is an intelligent question. Philip explains that the servant is not Isaiah, and then moves from Scripture to the whole gospel about Jesus. It must have been an extensive exposition because it ends with the Ethiopian asking for baptism. Luke has already told the story of Philip

converting the Samaritans, and now uses this incident to show the spread of the gospel beyond Judea and Samaria to far distant lands.

1 John 4.7-21

The author tells us that love comes from God, and it is here that we find the much-quoted 'God is love' (v.8). God's love is revealed in the sending of his Son as an atoning sacrifice, a concept taken from the ritual of the Jerusalem Temple. The ritual acts out God's forgiveness for the penitent, and this is metaphorically applied to Jesus. Because of this expression of God's love in his Son, we are told that we ought to love one another.

You can see the direction of John's thought: love originates in God the Father, goes through the Son, and results in the love we enact in our own lives. God might be the origin of love but for us it begins at the other end. Twice John tells us that no one has ever seen God, so how can we know what God is like? This knowledge, he says, comes in the first place through loving each other. It is not a knowledge that comes through logical thinking or experiment but through the life we live – it is a practical, loving knowledge. Despite the images of punishment that Christianity has produced over the centuries, with the best of intentions to encourage people to

inanimate image that is as much about God the Father, the vine-grower, as it is about Jesus. The Father lops off branches that have aged and withered. However, branches that produce fruit are pruned to be even more productive. The disciples are the first of these branches. Yet it is the vine – Jesus – that nourishes the branches and enables them to produce fruit. The growth and harvesting of grapes in this parable corresponds to the fruitfulness of the lives of the brothers

Bible notes, written by a biblical scholar, focus on three of the week's lectionary readings and highlights connections between them.

The links between the lectionary readings

In the Gospel, Christ the vine tended by God the vine-grower enables the disciples to be fruitful. In the first letter of John, fruitfulness is seen in the way that brothers and sisters in Christ love one another. The Ethiopian in Acts shows the instant response that promises fruitfulness.

WEB Notes on Psalm 22.25-31 and ideas for using it together.

Background notes on the psalm and actions to accompany a response line, so that everyone can be involved.

Gospel John 15.1-8

'I am the true vine' is one of John's seven 'I am' sayings. In the Old Testament, 'vine' is an image used of Israel (Psalm 80.8; Isaiah 5.1-7; Jeremiah 2.21), but here it is transferred to Jesus. It is a strange,

See www.rootsontheweb.com

With very young children: resources on the reading to use with under 5s.

Children's Sheet and Colouring Sheet (Welsh versions available).

Drama: *Phil and the Gent*

Bible study: a selection of this week's resources to print out.

Items not to miss on the ROOTS website.

A variety of prayers for different times within worship. The text of all the prayers is also available in Welsh at www.rootsontheweb.com.

Prayers

WEB Welsh translations.

Call to worship

The Lord says, 'I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me, and I in them, bear much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing.'
Come now, as branches of the vine, ready to bear fruit.
Come now, to worship.

A gathering prayer

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord;
and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.
Dominion belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.
Those who seek him shall praise the Lord.
We come as those who seek and we shall praise the Lord;
may our hearts live for ever! Amen.

A prayer of approach

Loving God, just like the first disciples,
we abide in your love –
for you have sent your Spirit to us.
Just like the early apostles,
we have seen your glory
in the person of your Son.
So, we confess Jesus Christ as Lord,
for we have known him in our lives
and believe what he has shown us of your love.
Amen.

A prayer of confession

Loving God,
we confess the times when we did not abide in your love,
when we strayed from the path of faith and ran after other gods.
In your mercy, forgive us.

Loving God,
we confess the times when we did not abide in your love,
when we have been less than loving, and hurt those around us.
In your mercy, forgive us.

Loving God,
we confess those times when we did not abide in your love,
when we have not held ourselves accountable to you
and measured our worth by our own achievements.
In your mercy, forgive us.

Make your love real to us once again,
shape us and remake us in your image.
Amen.

A prayer of thanksgiving

Creator God, you made us in your image
and provide us with all we need:
a world with plenty for all to share and delight in.
For this we give you thanks and praise.

Saviour God, you came to forgive us our sins
and to show us the path we should follow
through the highs and lows of all that life throws at us.
For this we give you thanks and praise.

Holy Spirit, you were sent to equip us for the task ahead
and to get us into shape for the journey ahead,
challenging us, pruning us and encouraging us.
For this we give you thanks and praise. Amen.

Prayers of intercession

To all those in need of love:
let the love of God be known.
To a world in need of love:
let the love of God be shown.
To those in need of food:
let the love of God be shared.
By those in need of healing:
let the love of God be experienced.
By those in need of peace:
let the love of God be felt.
By those in need of hope:
let the love of God be seen.
To those in need of joy:
let the love of God be sung.
By those in need of justice:
let the love of God be heard.
By all those in need of love:
let the love of God be known. Amen.

A reflective way into prayer

After each sentence, leave a lengthy pause for silent reflection.

How can the world know of love, unless it is first loved?
How can we know of God, unless God comes to meet us?
How can we know forgiveness, unless we are forgiven?
How can we know of resurrection, unless we have tasted death?
How can we know our Scriptures, unless someone guides us?

A prayer for all ages together

Let us love one another;
because love comes from God.
Let us love the people in our lives:
our friends and families, teachers and workmates;
because love comes from God.
Let us love the community in which we live,
the groups we belong to, and the places where we go;
because love comes from God.
Let us love the world around us,
and tend and care for it.
Let us love God, who loves us. Amen.

A sending out prayer

Abide in God as God abides in you,
then you will bear much fruit;
for apart from God we can do nothing.
Amen.

Supporting you all week

You could use the prayers at a care home,
in school, at a meeting or you could print/
email some on a weekly news sheet.

Highlighting an aspect of everyday life relevant to our exploration of the reading.

Gather

All-age introduction

A way to begin worship when all ages are present.

Feeling fruity

You will need: a selection of fruit, a bowl, chopping boards, safe knives, a bin, small tubs with lids – and wet wipes for washing hands.

We are going to make a fruit salad. Hold up each fruit in turn. What do people know about how it grows, where it comes from? Ask for a volunteer who likes this fruit to help chop it up for the fruit salad – involve an adult with each child, for safety. As the fruit salad is made, invite comments about the mix, the variety of fruit being used. Ask: Are we a 'fruity' church family? Are we bearing fruit? Do we make a good 'fruit salad'? When the salad is complete, draw attention to any 'bad' parts of the fruit that were rejected, and to the clearing up and wiping of hands, as all part of the process of working together 'fruitfully'.

You could share the fruit salad after the service, or divide it into portions for people to take to others (not present) who may enjoy a bit of fruity love!

With very young children

WEB Resources on the reading to use with under 5s.

Open the Word

To help the listener

The reader could use these words to provide context.

Today's reading from 1 John has perhaps the greatest passage in the Bible on love: the love of God for the world, shown through his Son, is a love we should also show for each other. This is how we come to know God, and to know that God is love.

You can read out these notes before the readings to set the context of the passage for your congregation.

Present the New Testament

For a while in Acts, Philip becomes the main character in the story of how the gospel spread 'to the ends of the earth'. He meets a man, a pious Gentile from Ethiopia, who had just begun his journey home after coming to Jerusalem to worship. You need a narrator, and two people to speak the words of Philip and the Ethiopian. The narrator reads from a lectern or central place. Philip and the Ethiopian begin beside the narrator, walking slowly round the worship space, 'talking' to one another – although the only words spoken aloud will be those in the text – and arriving near to the place of baptism by verse 36. Pause the reading to act out the baptism. Then Philip and the Ethiopian go separate ways – the

Fresh ways to help all ages engage with the readings.

Present the Gospel


The reading has images of a living vine being pruned to encourage it to become more fruitful. While having a vine or similar to prune as the story is read would be ideal, it is impractical in most contexts. However, in the UK, this month is the time for the aftercare of daffodils that flowered back in March. Dig up some bulbs that are due for replanting anyway, selecting mostly those that still have the remains of the dead flower attached. While the passage is read, one or more people prune the bulbs, removing the flower heads and arranging the bulbs neatly on a tray and throwing away the flower heads. At the end of the reading, one of the pruners could say: 'We remove the flowers because it helps the bulbs save their energy for next year. What would be the equivalent for our church?'


Supporting you all week

A **very young children** page on our website offers a weekly mini Bible story, play and prayer activities. This helps you to engage the very youngest in worship, whether on Sunday or in a midweek toddler group.


Explore & respond

Sermon ideas

WEB *PostScript*: Linking this week's reading to the news .


 The reading from Acts shows how the gospel is spreading as Philip moves his focus of activity from Samaria to south of Jerusalem. This is certainly not a seamless progression – just before today's events is the stoning of Stephen, to which Saul assents. The Ethiopian is a traveller from a far-off land, a pious man prohibited from entering the Temple courtyards as a Gentile, and unable to become a Jew because he is a eunuch. Philip helps him make the connection between Isaiah's suffering servant and the crucified and resurrected Christ. The key exchange

Every Thursday we add *PostScript* to our website: a comment on events in the news, linked to the coming Sunday's readings.

 You could sum up this week's epistle reading – and perhaps the whole Christian faith – in a very simple, almost syllogistic set of phrases: God loves us, we can love God, we can love each other. The simplicity only underlines the difficulties of achieving this from a human perspective. However, the passage also puts some pragmatic flesh on abstract bones: God showed his love by the death of Jesus as sacrifice for human sin, and it is only by loving (and by implication, caring for) our brothers and sisters that we can show that we love God. Our response therefore is not a disembodied love of God, but a real-world, hard-work love. Church communities, full of different human beings, are a kind of testing ground for such love – and often it's far from easy.

● We should not be lulled into any false sense of comfort by this agrarian imagery of vines and grapes. These metaphors echo references in the Old Testament prophets (Isaiah 5; Jeremiah 12; Ezekiel 19; Hosea 10; Amos 5) where Israel as the vineyard is uprooted in God's anger. Here, in John's Gospel, is the culmination of this series as Jesus himself takes the place of Israel as the true vine. This opens the challenge or opportunity to engage with texts that culturally may be problematic for us now.

Look out for

The  symbol shows opportunities to link faith to everyday life – linking to people's own faith journey and to issues in today's world.

These ideas offer opportunities for the whole church community to respond to the Bible reading through interaction, discussion and participation.

● This passage from John's Gospel is uncomfortable for the Church. If we take a more communal reading rather than an individual one in terms of pruning, we might ask of all those activities we think

Encouraging conversation across the generations, helping them to connect faith with everyday life.

All-age conversation

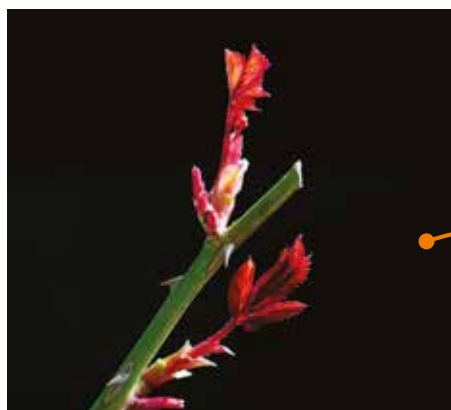
A way for leaders to help all ages explore the reading.

Read Acts 8.32-33. As the Ethiopian asks Philip, what is it all about? Or, rather, who is it about? How might you have answered? What Philip did not do was suggest he read a book, or send him to someone else ('go and ask the vicar'). He sat down with him and talked with him about Jesus. How can we relate the words that the Ethiopian read to the story of Jesus? What do you think Philip told the man about Jesus that led him to ask for baptism?


All this happened not long after the time of Jesus. We know that Christianity spread to Ethiopia very early on. Perhaps this was where it began, with this conversation between Philip and the Ethiopian traveller. We don't know, but it is a reminder that our witness to others is always important, and always effective in God's hands. How might we witness to the love of God today? Is it best done with words or deeds? If you were asked about your faith by a stranger – or a friend, for that matter – would you give up some time to respond?

How many of us are thinking: 'If only we had the time!?' The answer to that may come in today's Gospel reading about pruning. Are our lives too busy with the wrong things? Are there things we need to get rid of in order that what is left can grow stronger? What do you think?

Picture pointers



Active worship

Ideas to engage different ages, learning and preferences and spiritual styles. Key: **W**ord, **E**motion, **S**ymbol, **A**ction. Find out more  in *Worship and learning support*.

A simple worship activity for all ages

Give balls of coloured wool to people at the furthest edges of the congregation. Ask those people to hold onto the loose end and pass the ball towards the middle of the church. Ask the person who receives the ball to keep hold of the thread and again to pass the ball on towards the middle. When all the balls are together at the centre, ask several people who do not yet have hold of a thread to bring the balls towards the front of the worship space, weaving them together loosely as they do so. Place the balls at the front – e.g. on the Communion table. Invite everyone to consider how, through the threads, they are all interconnected to each other and – represented by the balls on the table – to God. Keep a short time of silence, and then sing 'Bind us together', or another suitable song. **E S**

Pruning the vine

Working in small groups, ask each person to share what events in their church life take up the most time and effort. Are they all 'fruitful'? When everyone has had a chance to speak, ask the groups to discuss together what elements of church life might be 'pruned' in order for other 'branches' to grow.

Invite feedback and see if there are any common threads. Are there some ideas that your church could take forward?

W E A

Feeding the vine

Divide the congregation into two or more age-related groups (at its simplest: children and adults). Ask each group to make a list of 'things that friends and/or family do that make you feel loved'. Bring the groups together to compare answers – are they the same? Encourage everyone to say something positive and affirming to someone sitting near them who is from a different age group. **W E**

Questions for reflection 

- ▶ What did you last prune – and when?
- ▶ What might God want to prune in your life?
- ▶ How might our community become more fruitful?

Growing the vine

Give everyone a veined leaf. Invite people to look closely at the veins, and in particular, at how the ends of the veins are thin and delicate. They are so fragile. Invite everyone to think about people who may be like these veins – at

'Spiritual styles' are different ways in which people connect with God. By taking these spiritual preferences (Word, Emotion, Symbol, Action) into account, ROOTS helps you to engage everyone in making a personal response to the reading.

Hymns & songs

Songs in italics are suitable for all ages.


*Music links on .

All creatures of our God and king
Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
*Ev'ry giant will fall**
God is love, his the care
God of hosts, you chose a vine
God's will for creation
Go forth and tell! O church of God, awake
Help us to help each other, Lord
*I love you, Lord, but I want to love you more.**
*I'm at the end of me**
I, the Lord of sea and sky
I want to be a history maker
Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, here among us
Kyrie eleison, have mercy*
Lord, I'm grateful, amazed

A suggestion for living out our faith during the coming week. You can also download a **Live your faith** sheet to hand out at the end of the service.

Send out

Live your faith

Encourage everyone to put their faith into action. Use the suggestion below or distribute the **Live your faith** sheet .

Reflect prayerfully on your personal life. How might it change your relationship with God, and/or with other people, if you were to stop doing one thing? **W E S A**

Each week we offer a thought-provoking image, plus questions, to stimulate reflection and discussion. You can download this image from www.rootsontheweb.com.

Children and young people not only explore the same passage as the adults, but also explore the same threads within the passage.

God is love

John 15.1-8

Jesus is the true vine and his Father is the vine-grower. Fruitless branches are removed; fruitful branches are pruned so that they may become even more fruitful. The disciples are expected to bear good fruit.

This week's resources explore: hard pruning; fruitfulness.

 Look out for ways to connect faith with everyday life.

 Download a Planning Sheet to help prepare your session.

Easter 5

Lectionary Bible readings

RCL Easter 5 Year B


Acts 8.26-40

Psalms 22.25-31

1 John 4.7-21

John 15.1-8

Look out for

The  symbol shows opportunities to link faith to everyday life – linking to people's own faith journey and to issues in today's world.

Bible notes

- A self-contained story of gospel fruit, the passage from Acts describes Philip being sent into the wilderness to speak to a eunuch from the courts of Ethiopia (modern-day Sudan). In spite of the fact that the Gentile eunuch would not have been accepted by the Jews, or allowed in the Temple since he was castrated, the man was desperate to know more of God. Despite the religious and cultural divide, Philip puts his discomfort aside and engages with him – great fruit grows from their conversation as the man is baptized. The Ethiopian was the first convert from such a distant land.

- John's letter makes it clear that love is a precursor to knowing God. God is love, and therefore our knowledge of him comes through loving each other, boldly and without fear (v.18).

- John 15 uses the poetic imagery of Jesus as the 'true vine' (v.1) and explores growth, and pruning and its benefits. Jesus makes it clear to his closest followers that the pain that comes with pruning is worth it for the fruit that it will bear. This applies both to us and to the spread of the gospel. Jesus promises that if we abide, or live in deep connection, with him, he will abide in us, nourish us and produce fruit in our lives. The challenge we find ourselves faced with is whether we are ready to be pruned by God's loving hand.

Bible notes give you the biblical context, and encourage your own reading and reflection.

Prayers Welsh translations.

A gathering prayer

Jesus said,
'I am the vine, you are the branches.'
We belong to you, Jesus.
We love you, and are so happy
to be here with you today.
Amen.

A prayer for others

Response line: **Lord, bless all your branches.**

Heavenly Father,
we pray for people who are alone,
and do not have any sense of belonging.
Lord, bless all your branches.
We pray for all who are facing
difficult times in their lives...
We pray for all who are ill...
We pray for ourselves,
that we will find our security
in belonging to you...
Amen.

The wording of these prayers
helps children to develop a
sense of the language of prayer.

A prayer of thanksgiving

*Show the children a picture of a
grapevine, or a fruit tree.*

Thank you, amazing Lord,
for all the beautiful things
you have created.
Thank you that you have made us to be
a part of your wonderful world,
and to bear fruit for you. **Amen.**

A prayer for forgiveness

Lord God,
we confess that we don't like being
told off.
But we know sometimes that we
need to be.
Help us to cut out any wrong things
in our lives,
and to grow into being the people you
want us to be. **Amen.**

A sending out prayer

Fruit tastes lovely and sweet
and is good for us.
Help us to be like fruit for you
in our world this week. **Amen.**

Gather

Choose a quiet or active way to begin your session.

Fruitfulness

Display some tomatoes, still attached to the vine, and a grapevine or a bunch of grapes. Look at how the fruit is attached to the plant. Encourage the children to pick some and eat it together. Talk about what it might mean to describe someone's life as 'fruitful'.

Fruit salad game

Invite the children to sit in a circle. Everyone chooses a favourite fruit (avoid duplication) and says what theirs is. Child A says their fruit name twice, followed by someone else's fruit twice to pass it on, e.g. 'Strawberry, strawberry, banana, banana'. Child B says: 'Banana, banana, apple, apple', etc. To make the game funnier, say that the children can't show their teeth. If they do, everyone shout: 'Teeth, teeth', and the person is eliminated.

Having two different ways to tell the story enables you to provide variety and encourages children to participate.

Open the Word

Present the reading Open the Bible at John 15.1-8

Jesus offers an image of himself as a vine to emphasise how we are all connected to him.

Choose from these two ways of telling the story.

Garden sketch Take a large sheet of paper and a marker pen and ask another leader to read the first paragraph as you draw it: the vine, roots, rain and sun, branches, grapes. Cross out branches to represent pruning and add more fruit. As you read the second paragraph, point to different parts of the drawing for emphasis.

Physical storytelling Use group mime to act out the story, inviting people to represent the following characters/things: God the gardener, a single vine plant, lots of branches, fruit, Jesus. The children could perform the piece in church.

For very young children

Play and wonder about Jesus the vine and fruitfulness.

Play materials: branches and toy gardening tools.

Storytelling

Lay down a green felt circle, and place and move card/felt pieces as you tell the story: green stem, green branches, purple grapes.

Jesus said, 'I am the vine, (stem) and you are the branches. (branches)

Those who stay in me will grow a lot of fruit. (grapes)

God the Father is the gardener.

You can use these materials on Sundays or in a midweek toddler group. Even more resources are available on our website.

Play

Invite the group to 'grow' a vine by piecing together green card strips and leaves, and purple card grapes, on a brown cloth. Have lots of pieces so the children can spread the vine wherever they want it to go. Invite them to care for the vine using toy gardening tools.

Create

Invite the children to pot up multipacks of seasonal plants, e.g. pansies, tomatoes, strawberries, using plant pots, spoons or trowels and multipurpose compost. Water with a spray or small watering cans, take home and grow.

Musical mime

Play some 'growing' music [WEB](#) and invite the children to curl up in a ball, gradually stretch out and grow, sway in the breeze, then open and close hands to show fruit growing.

Pray

Invite each child to take a piece of fruit from a bowl that includes grapes. Before eating it, repeat together:

Thank you, God,
for food that helps us to grow
and gives us energy to play.
Amen.

[WEB](#) Very young children page, with more activities, prayers and songs.

Let us imagine that God is a gardener, and in God's garden there is a plant: a vine. The vine is rooted in the soil, and the soil is rich and nutritious, full of God's goodness. The gardener pours all his love into it, so the vine has plenty of water and food, and everything else it needs to grow well.

There are many branches on the vine. Some have fruit, some do not. God cuts off all the branches that are dry and weak, and have no fruit. Then he looks at the branches that are fruitful and cuts those branches back, so that they will bear even more fruit.

Jesus is like a vine. We are the branches. If the branches stay firmly attached to the root of the plant, they can draw on the goodness in the soil and produce sweet, juicy grapes. If we abide in Jesus and stay as close to him as the branches of the vine, we will grow well. Jesus will give us all the nourishment we need and we will produce wonderful fruit, like love, kindness and helpfulness. Jesus says that if we abide in him, we can ask for whatever we want, and it will be done for us.



Glossary

to **abide** to stay, remain.

We try to keep the text as close as possible to the Bible translation (NRSV), providing a glossary to help children become familiar with biblical language.

Talk together Connect faith with everyday life.

- I wonder why Jesus used a vine as a picture of himself.
- Have you ever seen a vine growing?
- How are we connected to Jesus? How can we stay like that?

Questions to spark discussion and to link the story to children's lives.

It's easy to keep sessions fresh and varied, with a range of different types of activity. By taking different 'spiritual styles' into account, ROOTS helps you to engage everyone.

Explore & respond

Choose from these ideas to help the children make connections between the Bible reading and their lives. [WEB](#) Templates and links to online resources. Spiritual styles key: **W**ord, **E**motion, **S**ymbol, **A**ction. Find out more [WEB](#) in *Worship and learning support*.

Do

Water challenge

5 mins **W E**

A fun activity to emphasise being connected with Jesus

You will need: hair bands, two glasses of water with straws, two birthday candles, each in a blob of plasticine, matches.

- Ask for two volunteers and make sure long hair is tied back.
- Place the two glasses on a table, one at each end. Stick the candles some distance apart in the middle and light them.
- Explain that the aim of the game is to drink all the water in their glass through the straw, but also to try and blow out their opponent's candle. They can only drink while their candle is lit, and as soon as it goes out they must wait until it's relit by a leader before they can continue drinking.
- Afterwards, explain that just as you cannot drink the water if your candle is blown out, neither can you 'bear fruit' without being connected to Jesus.

Rope walk

10 mins **W E**

Play a game to symbolise staying connected to each other

You will need: a length of rope.

- Show the children the rope and explain that it represents the vine that Jesus was talking about. Invite them to hold onto the rope. Lead them on a journey, adding some obstacles, if appropriate.
- Afterwards, reflect that being connected to Jesus is like being attached to an invisible rope. We can't see it while we are at home, at school or out playing, but it's there and that it links us all together.

Make

A folding stick heart

10 mins **S A**

A reminder to love and support each other

You will need: lolly sticks, sticky tape, scissors, pencils, felt tips.

- Give each child four lolly sticks. Show them how to attach the sticks so they fold into a concertina: lay them all down next to each other; tape sticks one and two together, using a small piece of tape, top and bottom. Then tape sticks three and four together, separately. Now turn both pairs over and tape sticks two and three together.
- Invite the children to decorate their sticks: on one side, draw a big heart that crosses all the sticks, and on the other side write: 'Let's stick together!'
- They can take their folding hearts home as a reminder of being connected to each other, and an encouragement to show love to each other in practical ways.

Supporting you all week

The variety of activities, games and prayers provide plenty of material for both Sunday and midweek.

Fruitful trees

10 mins **W E S**

Explore the meaning of bearing good fruit

You will need: tree shapes (template on [WEB](#)), one per child, pencils, coloured crayons, a potted herb.

- Give each child a tree shape. Talk together about what kind of things Jesus meant by 'bearing fruit', e.g. being kind, generous (see Galatians 5.22-23).
- Invite the children to draw some fruit on their tree and write down some practical examples in the leaves.
- Show them the herb and its roots. What kind of roots do we need to bear good fruit? Invite the children to write down some ideas among the roots of their tree, e.g. praying, reading Bible stories, going to church.
- The children can finish by lightly shading their trees, so the words remain visible.

Pray

Prayerful painting

5 mins **W S A**

Paint a prayer card

You will need: fruit bowl (template on [WEB](#)), photocopied onto white card, one card per child, coloured poster paint, brushes, hand wipes.

- Give everyone a fruit bowl card. Explain that if we stay connected to Jesus, he will produce fruit in our lives, and the picture will remind us of this. Read the Bible verse together.
- Invite the children to paint the fruit in their fruit bowl,

Ideas for songs, and tracks to sing to, are listed by age group; they include contemporary songs available on popular CDs and online.

Sing

[WEB](#) Abbreviations and music links* in *Hymns, songs & music*.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Under 5s | God Loves Me, Doug Horley*; Five little fruit jumping on the bed (Adapt rhyme 'Five little monkeys jumping on the bed'). |
| Under 12s | Let's Make God Happy, Doug Horley*;
I've Got Peace Like a River, Cedarwood Kids* |
| 12+ | Abide with Me, Matt Redman*;
Build Your Kingdom Here, Rend Collective* |

See www.rootsontheweb.com

Children's Sheet and **Colouring Sheet** (Welsh versions available).

Send out

Encouraging discipleship during the week by connecting faith with everyday life.

Live your faith



Encourage the children to put their faith into action. Use the idea below or give out the **Children's Sheet** [WEB](#).

Invite a friend round this week to enjoy the connection of friendship. **E**

ROOTS YOUNG PEOPLE

Go to www.rootsontheweb.com for all Young People materials, including templates, links and images.

Find Bible notes and more prayers on p.38. Use the BIBLE section below first, then choose any combination of activities from the other sections. Extra ideas can be found in *Explore & respond* opposite.

BIBLE John 15.1-8

Imaginative approaches to Bible study.

Warm up 5 mins W E

Divide the group into two teams and give them pens and paper. Have a race to see which team can name a fruit for every letter of the alphabet.

Picture this 15 mins S

Explain that the group is going to interpret and illustrate John 15.1-8 with one large drawing. Read the passage through once, give the young people some lining paper and sketching pencils, then read it through slowly again, and leave them to produce a pictorial representation of the passage.

Questions to discuss

- If Jesus is the vine and his Father is the vine-grower, who are we?
- What does 'abide' mean? How do we abide in Jesus? How does he abide in us?
- How easy is it to believe Jesus' words: 'ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you'?

CONNECT

Ways to connect faith with today's world.

Gardeners' question time 10 mins W

Invite a gardener to come in and talk to the young people about pruning: how and why it is done. If possible, go outside, identify what has previously been pruned and find some new buds.

Activity audit 10 mins W A

Encourage the young people to draw up a list of all the weekly activities they do and score them out of 5 for how worthwhile or fruitful they feel they are (5 = extremely worthwhile; 0 = pointless). Is there anything that they could sensibly stop doing? Or something that they could take up, e.g. volunteering?

WEB PostScript: Linking this week's reading to the news

Listen

Contemporary music to listen to.

WEB See *Young People* page or *Hymns, songs & music* for links to these tracks.

How He Loves, David Crowder Band on *Passion: Awakening*
The Narrow Road, Rick Pino on *The Narrow Road*
The Door, Leeland on *Love Is On The Move*

EXPLORE

Fun, interactive ideas to explore the passage further.

Fruity art 10 mins E S

Provide a selection of fruit and challenge the young people to design a piece of edible art. Display some pictures to inspire them (put 'art with fruit' into an image search engine). Provide knives and chopping boards and supervise carefully, or just use unpeeled fruit as a simpler option. Take photographs of completed pieces.

Get gardening! 15 mins+ W A

If you have a churchyard or access to a garden, take the young people outside to do a bit of gardening, with garden tools and expert help if necessary, or form a work party and arrange to tackle a bigger project in the community. It is too late in the year for pruning, but there is always weeding to be done!

Picture pointers **WEB**

Questions for reflection

- ▶ What did you last prune – and when?
- ▶ What might God want to prune in your life?
- ▶ How might our community become more fruitful?



A thought-provoking image, plus questions to stimulate discussion.

PRAY

Being loved 5 mins S

Allow space for the young people to ask for, and listen for, a word, a picture or a feeling from God that conveys his love for them. Play a song quietly in the background, such as 'How He Loves' by David Crowder Band (see *Listen*), to help those who are not used to listening in silence. You may need to offer some guidance and reassurance about hearing God's voice.

Pruning 5 mins E S

Have a large branch in a pot that can be pruned with secateurs. Encourage the young people to think about their own lives and what behaviour might need to be 'pruned', e.g. selfishness. Invite them to take it in turns to cut a small bit off the branch as a symbol of their commitment to change.

Encouraging discipleship during the week.

Live your faith

Actively work on a behaviour that needs to be 'pruned' this week. **E A**

Online weekly resources at www.rootsontheweb.com

All the magazine materials that you see in this brochure are also published online at www.rootsontheweb.com.

But that's not all! In addition to the wealth of resources in the magazine, every week the website offers:

- **Support for your planning**
- **Extra downloadable resources and links**, such as drama scripts, images, links to relevant websites and templates for activities
- **A selection of the week's resources that you can use for a group Bible study**
For Adult & All Age subscribers
- **A *Live your faith* Sheet to support discipleship during the week**
You could email this to your church community, or put the text on the back of a handout (e.g. a notice sheet)
For Adult & All Age subscribers
- **PostScript** – added to the site every Thursday morning. PostScript is a comment on the news, linked to the coming Sunday's readings
- **Children's Sheet** (in colour, black & white and Welsh versions)
- **Colouring Sheet** for very young children
- **A whole page of ideas to use with very young children** – including storytelling, craft, a Bible story and prayer activities.
You can use this during Sunday worship or in a midweek toddler group.

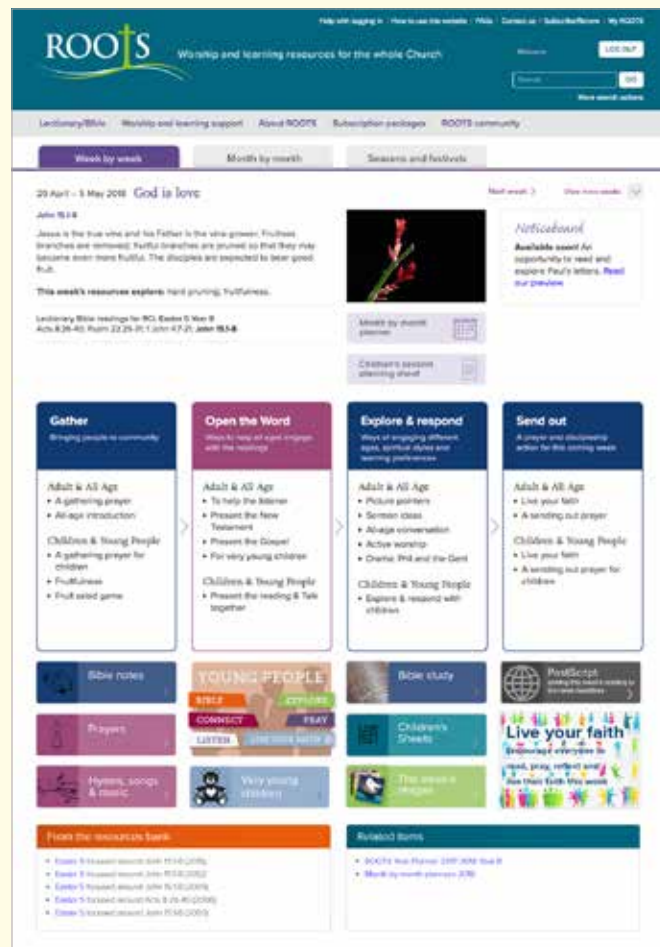
PLUS Online resource bank

ROOTS has been publishing weekly materials for 15 years. As well as the freshly written materials for each week, subscribers can access **all** our past resources too!

Thousands
of prayers

Hundreds of
sermon ideas

15 years of children's and
young people's sessions



A selection from the week's resources help you to plan and run a Bible study.
For Adult & All Age subscribers

29 April – 5 May 2018 **God is love**
Related Bible reading(s): Acts 8.26-40; Psalm 22.25-31; 1 John 4.7-21; John 15.1-8

Bible study

A selection from this week's resources to help you plan and run a Bible study.

Welcome and opening prayer (5 mins)

A gathering prayer

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord;
and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.
Dominion belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.
Those who seek him shall praise the Lord.

We come as those who seek and we shall praise the Lord;
may our hearts live for ever!

Amen. Read the text (10 mins)

Consider different ways to read the text. For example, sharing parts between several readers, or hearing it more than once using different versions, or using/adapting this suggestion.

Present the Gospel

The reading has images of a living vine being pruned to encourage it to become more fruitful. While having a vine or similar to prune as the story is read would be ideal, it is impractical in most contexts. However, in the UK, this month is the time for the aftercare of daffodils that flowered back in March. Dig up some bulbs that are due for replanting and...

Just some of the resources that you can download at www.rootsontheweb.com

Download this week's resources for free at
www.rootsontheweb.com/sample



Templates


[illegible]

Lotus time

Name _____

John 15: 1-8

Jesus offers an image of himself as a vine to show how we are all connected to him.



ROOTs Children's Sheet

29 April – 5 May 2018

Draw!

Jesus talks about us being like grapes growing on a vine. Draw a bunch of grapes and add faces to the grapes to represent you and your friends at church.

Write

Fit the words into the puzzle and write a sentence about each one.

father, Jesus, faith, pruning, vine

Family time

Talk How can we stay connected to Jesus?


Go to a garden or park to look at the plants. Can you spot new growth after pruning, e.g. roses, hydrangeas?

Pray Look at a picture of a grape, vine, or fruit tree.

Thank you, amazing Lord, that you have made us to be a part of your beautiful world, and to bear fruit for your Father.

Puzzle

fit the words in



Puzzle

Match up the clues with the whole fruit.

Puzzle

Fit the words into the puzzle and write a sentence about each one.

father, Jesus, faith, pruning, vine

© ROOTs for Churches Ltd

Write a word and a sentence response at www.rootsofchurch.com

rootsofchurch@nswb.com

Children's Sheet


Available in colour, black and white and in Welsh-language versions

Name.....

ROOTS **Colouring Sheet**
29 April – 5 May 2018

Colouring time

John 15:1-8
Jesus says that he is like a vine.



© ROOTS for Churches Ltd. **Weekly worship and learning resources at www.rootsforthechurches.co.uk**

Colouring Sheet



Images

Images for the week that you can download, print and project

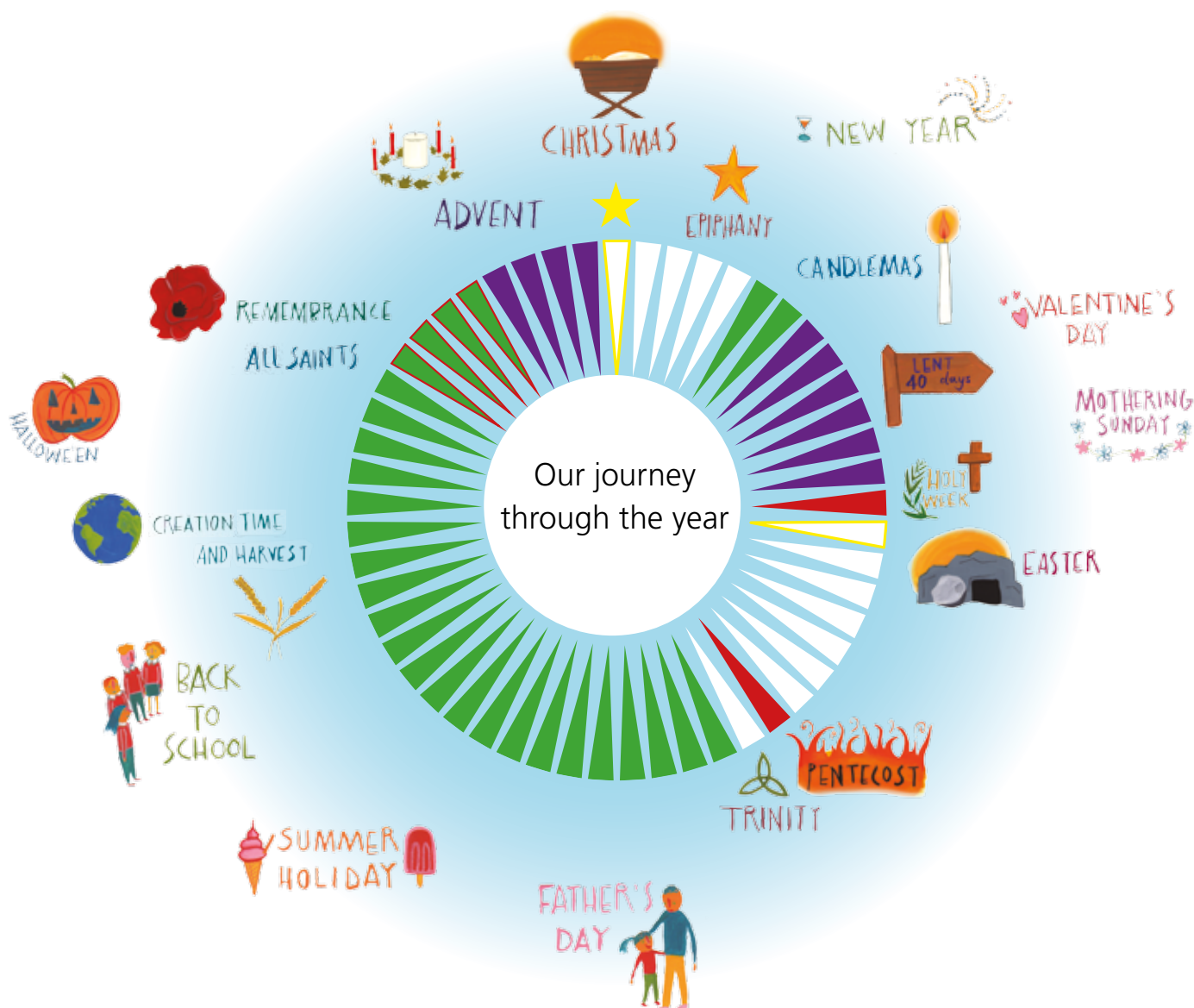


Go to www.rootsontheweb.com/sample to view these resources online 13

Seasonal resources

Our huge bank of online seasonal resources enables you to mark the church seasons all through the year.

As well as resources for key Christian festivals, we offer biblical materials for 'secular' events. By enabling you to weave the sacred into the secular, the resources help you reach out to your wider community.



A selection of the types of resources you'll find in our seasonal resources bank

- All-age services
- Prayers and prayer activities
- Craft and other activities
- Drama sketches
- Holiday club resources.

Where can you use ROOTS?

The breadth and flexibility of the ROOTS resources equip and empower people in many different contexts – on Sundays and throughout the week.

Our subscribers use ROOTS in all these situations – and more!

Adult & All Age resources

Formal and informal worship
Preaching
Family services
Bible studies
Prayer groups
Messy Church
Pastoral visiting
Fresh Expressions
Café church



Children & Young People resources

Sunday School/Junior Church
Midweek children's groups
School assemblies
Toddler groups
Youth work



ROOTS' versatile materials can support all sorts of leaders and volunteers.

Highly experienced New to a role



Working on your own Part of a team



Serving daily Weekly On a rota



Our subscribers include preachers and ministers; teams of all-age worship leaders; and a huge variety of children's and young people's leaders – both experienced and new!

Let's see what some subscribers have to say...

'Help is available from you in an otherwise very daunting task – spreading the gospel to young and old alike!'

Phoebe Natrass

'A fantastic resource which has really developed our children's understanding of faith... Always fresh and stimulating.'

Meena Tomlinson
Sunday school teacher, St Peter's Church, Burnley

'It's fresh and constantly renewed and gives me the confidence to put an interesting service together which will stay with people longer than the drive home from church!'

Diana Barker
Reader in Great Ashfield

'As a worship leader who has to plan Local Arrangement services it provides me with ideas and excellent prayers, also comments on the Bible readings and activities to do during the service.'

Ann Thorley
Methodist worship leader

Want to subscribe?
Take a look at the back page



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£51.00
for the year

Both sets of resources

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for the year

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