

ST PAUL'S CHURCH, GRANGE OVER SANDS

THE EASTER JOURNEY

Our prayer spaces initiative was a special Easter activity for all the children in Grange CE Primary School organised by the Rector, Nick Ash, and St Paul's Young People's Committee and helped by members of the church congregation. It took place over three days in the Fell Church.

Fell Church was set up in 6 prayer areas with a whole group discussion space.

Our focus was on the emotions and feelings of the people around Jesus as the Easter story unfolded; and importantly, the feelings the story evoked in us and how we can explore those feelings in our lives today.

Each session began with discussion about the Easter Story. A very poignant and powerful moment was when one young child, asked how Jesus felt, said 'used'. Another said, 'I am sure he felt lonely on the cross'.



Throughout these sessions the children talked knowledgeably of the life of Jesus, showing their developing understanding of Christian beliefs in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Many of them were able to name the people and places in the story.

One of our helpers said, 'Generally I was impressed by how much of the fine detail they knew of the story, from Reception to Year 6, and how seeing the story through their eyes gave me a new way of looking at it...'

There were six prayer spaces and each child experienced each one.

JOY: the atmosphere and feelings of the crowd on Palm Sunday. WHEN ARE WE HAPPY? CAN WE MAKE OTHERS HAPPY TOO? IS IT EASY? HOW WERE THE PEOPLE FEELING? WHAT WAS JESUS FEELING? The children used leaves to record their happy feelings and to hang on the tree of joy.



FRIENDSHIP: the relationship of Jesus and his disciples as they sat down together to enjoy a special meal; HOW CAN WE SHOW FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE TO THOSE AROUND US? HOW CAN WE DO THIS TO THE WORLD? HOW DOES SHARING A MEAL WITH FRIENDS MAKE US FEEL? Loyalty came out as most important for one's friends. The children made pipe cleaner figures, depicting key people in their lives, to hang on the friendship obelisk.



BIG QUESTIONS: the questions Jesus asked of himself and of God when alone in the Garden of Gethsemane. WHAT BIG QUESTIONS DO WE HAVE TODAY? WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT WORRY US? WHAT ARE OUR WORRIES FOR THE WORLD? WHO HELPS US TO 'GET THROUGH' THESE WORRIES? The breadth and depth of questions was amazing and gave the adults much food for thought. The children hung their big questions on the big questions fishing net.

HELPING OTHERS: when Jesus was tried and was made to carry his own cross someone stepped forward to help him: HOW CAN WE HELP OTHERS WHEN TIMES ARE DIFFICULT? IS IT EASY TO STAND UP FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE? A lot of the children were able to think about their own helpfulness in terms of fulfilling a need, although it must be said that many said they often wanted to do things but met with resistance from small brothers and sisters! They hung their ways to help on the helping trellis.



FORGIVENESS: Jesus found the grace to forgive those who had plotted against him: CAN WE FORGIVE PEOPLE FOR THE THINGS THEY DO? IS THIS EASY? CAN WE SAY SORRY WHEN WE ARE IN THE WRONG? A child in Reception class thought the forgiveness bowl was about the foot washing (amazing that they should make that connection at such a young age). As the children felt able to forgive they warmed their stone in their hands and released it into the forgiveness bowl.

HOPES AND DREAMS: how did the disciples feel when they saw Jesus crucified and how did this change when they knew he was still with them. WHAT ARE OUR HOPES AND DREAMS FOR OURSELVES, OUR FRIENDS, OUR FAMILIES AND OUR WORLD? Our discussions (inside the tent) ranged from nuclear energy, clean water, equal rights, freedom, litter, eco-friendly issues to hoping a pet was happy to see them when they got home from school. It was particularly poignant when one child, drawing a house, said it was to represent his own house to hope everyone had a family like his. A very memorable moment was when one year 2 child looked at his table mat (used as a clip board for the activity) and said 'I know what we're going to do, we're going to celebrate the feast of the Passover!' Wow!



The tent of hopes and dreams is displayed with all the other prayer space displays in St Paul's Church to share with our congregations and visitors over Easter.