



### Expressive and visual arts in religions

- *How do Christians, Buddhists and Hindus express their faith in art, drama and song?*
- *Why do people of faith use art, drama and song to enrich their religious experience?*

#### **Lesson ideas**

- What is 'worship'? The word worship comes from the words '*worth ship*'. When people worship, they are expressing how much something means to them.

With a basic grasp of Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, pupils will understand that worship in these three faiths is bound to differ.....

**Buddhists** either do not believe in God or feel that the concept of God is beyond human understanding. They think of themselves showing respect to the Buddha as a great teacher and do not worship him as a god.

**Hindus** believe in many gods as different manifestations of one creator God. During worship they offer food and flowers to statues of their gods.

**Christians** (like Jews and Muslims) believe in one God, creator of the universe and everything in it. Through their worship they want to show reverence and thankfulness to God for all he provides.

Christians also believe Jesus is the son of God, sent by God to save the world. They believe he died on a cross to take the penalty for the sins of the human race so that people can be forgiven by God and go to heaven. That is something for which they are overwhelmingly grateful. Jesus is worshipped as God worldwide through all the expressive art forms in different cultures - particularly music, art, creative writing and dance.

Click [here](#) to look at our web page showing how Christians express their faith through flowers. The pictures were all taken at the Bushey Festival and the page is designed for children to use.

#### **1. Christians express their faith in: stained glass windows.**

**Aim:** to show that Christians express their faith in many different ways.

Stained glass windows have a twofold purpose - to give glory to God and to point others to God. The [BBC History Trail](#) website has lots of background information on the making of stained glass.

- Look at the Life of Christ portrayed through stained glass [here](#).
- **Activity:** Design a stained glass window - either individually or as a class.
- **Think about:** If you had to choose one Bible story to put in a stained glass window which one would it be and why?

## 2. Christians express their faith in: worship.

**Aim:** to explore how Christians express their faith in worship, using a website to investigate.

- Look at the [Educhurch](#) website together and compare and contrast the buildings. See what happens inside, especially the banners in all three churches and the paint wall at Mendelsham Christian Fellowship.
- **Activity:** Write a brief summary of the things the three churches do to express their faith.

## 3. Christians express their faith: through poetry.

- The website [Rejesus](#) has an interview with Christian poet Steve Turner together with a selection of his poetry.
- If possible find a copy of Steve Turner's poem 'My Dad'. Who is the poet talking about? What does the poet feel about the father in the poem? What does that tell us about Steve Turner's feelings about God.
- **Activity:** from what you know about God, write a short poem about him.
- **To think about:** Read the story of the hymn writer [Horatio Spafford](#). Could I write so positively if something terrible happened to me?

## 4. Christians express their faith: through drama.

- Look at the story of the prodigal son.
- Think about how the father and the two sons would have felt and explore body language for I'm sorry, I'm sad, I'm lonely, welcome etc.
- **Activity:** In groups of 3 or 4 act out the story.
- **Think about:** Why did Jesus tell this and other picture stories? Why do Christians continue to tell and act these stories?

## 5. Christians express their faith: through music.

- Play a selection of Christian music. (For example, hymn, choral music, modern worship song, rock/pop.) *The Trust has produced a CD to be used in this lesson, with an accompanying worksheet. Email for details.*
- Which one do you like best? All these songs were written by Christians who were trying to express their love for God and Jesus.
- **Activity:** listen and describe each piece in one sentence.
- **Think about:** Which one do you think God likes best?

## 6. Christians express their faith: through art.

'Jesus Through Art' and 'The Bible Through Art' both contain a wealth of material and lesson plans based around famous paintings.

- Visit the [National Gallery](#) website to see pictures on line or to book a free themed visit with a guide for an hour. You can specify your topic and ask to look at paintings of Jesus.
- The 'Expressions' section of the website [Rejesus](#) contains a gallery of images of Christ and also the work of Christian photographer, Lizzie Everard.

- The [Lindisfarne Scriptorium](#) website has beautiful examples of modern illuminated texts produced by Christian artists.  
Activity: Make your own illuminated text.

## 7. Christians express their faith: through textiles.

- Visit the website [www.church-textiles.co.uk](http://www.church-textiles.co.uk). The artist, Juliet Hemingray, has created beautiful banners, altar cloths and vestments which express various aspects of the Christian faith in richly coloured fabrics. Many churches today use banners as a way of inspiring worship. They are often changed to represent different seasons of the church year.
- **Activity:** Design a banner to illustrate one of the 'I am' sayings of Jesus, perhaps using coloured paper or collage.