



Nottingham Roman Catholic
Diocesan Education Service



Desert to
Garden

Branch 4

EYFS Planning for Lent 2

Version 1: September 2026

Branch 4: Desert to Garden
Lent Term (2)

The Big Question: What special signs and symbols do we have during Lent and Easter?



EYFS Skill Words: recognise, talk about, label, name, match, sort, retell, sequence, recall

Characteristics of effective teaching and learning for religious education: Wonder, awe, playing, exploring, active learning, creating, and thinking critically

Hear - By the end of this unit of study, pupils will be able to:

- Know Lent is a time to care for others.
- Know that Jesus died on a cross and it is a sad time.
- Know a simplified version of key events of Holy Week especially Good Friday and Easter Sunday (to enable pupils to recognise key events).
- Know Jesus was given new life by God his Father.
- Know that Jesus rose and everyone celebrates.
- Recognise that we should love God and love everyone (The great commandment Luke 10:25-28).

Believe - By the end of this unit of study, pupils will be able to:

- Listen to and talk about the season of Lent and Easter.
- Know that Jesus died on Good Friday and rose again on Easter Sunday.
- Recognise that Easter is a celebration that Jesus is with us still
- Know that Easter celebrates new life.
- Recognise simple religious symbols in Lent and Easter.

Celebrate - By the end of this unit of study, pupils will be able to:

- Recognise simple signs of Lent (purple, seeds, growing) and Easter (colour white, growth, Easter Garden).
- Know that the Church uses purple and ashes as signs of Lent and being sorry.
- Recognise representations of Holy Week and Easter: palms, the cross, Easter gardens, and symbols of new life

Live - By the end of this unit of study, pupils will:

- Recognise that we should care for others.
- Recognise that we celebrate with signs and symbols – hot cross buns, garden growth, Easter eggs.
- Know that we try to help others by what we do in Lent. (CST – Rights and Responsibilities, Jesus wants the people who already have what they need to help these others)

(Each session includes 2 lessons' work)

Desert to Garden – EYFS (Lent 2)						
	Session 1 SEE (UNDERSTAND)	Session 2 SEE (UNDERSTAND)	Session 3 JUDGE (DISCERN)	Session 4 SEE (UNDERSTAND)	Session 5 JUDGE (DISCERN)	Session 6 ACT (RESPOND)
Learning focus	Know that Lent is a time to get ready.	Know that Lent is a time to grow closer to Jesus.	Know that Lent is a time to care for others.	Know Jesus came to Jerusalem on a donkey (Palm Sunday).	Know that Jesus died on the cross and it is a sad time (Good Friday).	Know that Jesus was given new life by God his Father (Easter Sunday).
Recall and retrieval	What are the 4 seasons of the year? What season are we in now?	Why did Jesus go to the desert?	What is Lent?	- What is Lent? - What does Jesus teach us to do? - Days of the week	- What happened on Palm Sunday? - Days of the week	- What happened on Good Friday? - Days of the week
Sequence of knowledge and learning throughout the lesson	Key knowledge Pupils will know: - That the church has seasons too! (Liturgical Year) - We waited in Advent for Jesus’ birth and now we are waiting again in Lent. - God had a special plan for Jesus - Jesus went into the desert to get ready to carry out God’s plan. (Luke 4:1-13) Read Luke 4:1-13 Jesus went into the desert. God always had a special plan for Jesus. Jesus spent some time on his own in the desert to get ready to do His special job of loving and helping others. He was tempted to not listen to God, but Jesus knew what was right! Discuss how Lent is a time to get ready to celebrate Easter and how we do this. Shrove Tuesday - Share the story of Mama Panya’s Pancakes. Ash Wednesday - On Ash Wednesday we especially take time to tell Jesus that we are sorry and that we love Him. Lent is 40 days long and begins with Ash Wednesday, where we place ashes on our head to show we believe in Jesus. Ashes are a symbol of being sorry. Jesus taught us to love everyone and Lent is a special time to do this. In Lent we try to pray more, to fast or give something up and to give to others. Share ‘He Fasted for 40 days’ song. Explore Lenten calendar - For week 1, focus on a person in their family they are grateful for.	Key knowledge Pupils will know: - Jesus spent time in prayer in the desert, and that we can grow closer to Jesus through prayer in Lent. - Lent helps us to get ready for Easter. - Jesus taught us to care for others; Lent is a special time to do this (link to CST – Rights and Responsibilities). Recap Luke 4:1-13, explaining Lent is a time to grow closer to Jesus and we can grow closer to Jesus through prayer, because Jesus spent time in prayer when he was in the desert. Explore ways in which we get to know new people. Share with children a special invitation that you have ‘found’ in the classroom written to the children. Read them an invitation from Jesus himself- asking them to spend some time with Him this Lent, to talk to Him, tell Him about themselves. Or even just to sit quietly and think about Him. Explore Lenten calendar - In week 2, invite them to say thank you for a friend that they are grateful for.	Key knowledge Pupils will know: - The great commandment (Luke 10:25-28). - The story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 28-37) - Jesus taught us to care for others; Lent is a special time to do this (link to CST – Rights and Responsibilities). Read the Greatest Commandment and the Good Samaritan, Luke 10: 25-37, and explain Jesus wants us to grow in love and to share what we have with other people – especially in Lent. Jesus knows all the kind things that we do for others. Discuss ‘What do you think it looks like to love God with all of your mind, all of your heart, and all of your strength? What does it mean to love your neighbour as you love yourself?’ You may want to share other stories about caring for others, such as ‘Giving is Better’ linked below. Explore Lenten calendar - In week 3 invite them to say thank you for a special place that they are grateful for – e.g. the beach, my bedroom etc	Key knowledge Pupils will know: - The story of Palm Sunday – Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-40) - Jesus rode on a donkey to Jerusalem where people were waving palms and shouting “Hosanna” Read Luke 19:28-40. Explain that at the end of Lent we begin Holy Week, which starts with Palm Sunday. This is when Jesus left Nazareth and came to Jerusalem. Use maps to show how the story shifts to another place. Show a simple map of where Jesus grew up and lived as an adult (Nazareth) and where the events you are going to hear about occur (Jerusalem). Jesus had come to Jerusalem with his loyal followers, called disciples, to celebrate Passover. Crowds had gathered because they had heard Jesus was coming. Jesus rode towards Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. The people waved palm leaves and lay them in his path. They shouted, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel!” The day when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem is called Palm Sunday because people waved palm leaves and lay them in Jesus’ path. Palm Sunday is the start of Holy Week for Christians. This is the week leading up to Easter. Often, on Palm Sunday, churches give people a cross made from a single palm leaf. Many churches have a procession in or around the church while people sing songs of praise and wave palm leaves. This helps them to imagine what it was like for Jesus and the people in Jerusalem. Sing songs of praise e.g.	Key knowledge Pupils will know: - Jesus dies on the cross - Jesus died so that we can go to heaven - God had a plan to bring Jesus back to life Read Luke 23: 44-46 Explain that on Good Friday, we remember when Jesus dies on the cross. We are sad when we remember that Jesus died for us because we love Him and we are sad that He was hurt. We say sorry to God for all the things that we have done wrong. Explore crosses in and around school, explaining the cross is a sign of a Christian, someone who loves and follows Jesus. Think about how sad it was when Jesus died. Even the earth and the sun was sad. The sun stopped shining and all the land was dark. Light a candle with the children and ask them to describe the light. Then blow out the candle and ask the children what it feels like without the light. Invite the children up to take turns blowing out the candle – each time saying ‘Jesus we are sorry.’ Talk about life after death Show the life cycle of a caterpillar into a butterfly. This is similar to what Christians believe about when a person dies, the way they live changes – they no longer live on Earth but in Heaven with God.	Key knowledge Pupils will know: - Jesus rose from the dead - That we remember and celebrate this on Easter Sunday Read Luke 21:1-12 After Jesus died on the cross, He was buried in a tomb. Three days later God gave new life to Jesus and He rose from the dead. He appeared to His friends and everyone was happy. We believe that Jesus is alive! We celebrate His resurrection on Easter Sunday by going to Mass. We also sometimes give each other symbols of new life like eggs. We often give each other Chocolate or decorated eggs at Easter to help us to remember the new life that God gave to Jesus and to celebrate the new life He promises us. We also have other symbols to help us to celebrate and remember, for example Easter Gardens and symbols of new life in spring.

Desert to Garden – EYFS (Lent 2)						
	Session 1 SEE (UNDERSTAND)	Session 2 SEE (UNDERSTAND)	Session 3 JUDGE (DISCERN)	Session 4 SEE (UNDERSTAND)	Session 5 JUDGE (DISCERN)	Session 6 ACT (RESPOND)
				Wave Your Palms or ‘Hosanna to the King’ Explore Lenten calendar - In week 4 invite them to say thank you for a special day that they remember e.g. a birthday or holiday	There are lots of ways that Christians remember the story of when Jesus died on Good Friday. Some people go to the church and look at special pictures called the stations of the cross which tell the story of how Jesus died.	
EYFS Skills Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	 Recognise, name, talk about, retell	 Talk about Label	 Recognise Talk about Recall Sort Match	 Recognise Talk about Recall	 Recognise Name	 Recognise Talk about Name
Ways of knowing wonder See Judge Act	 I wonder what people fast from?  I wonder how it will feel to fast from or give up something I enjoy?  I wonder what I could do this Lent to show I am getting ready for Easter? Could I pray more? Fast from (give up) something? Do something for our class charity?	 I wonder what people fast from?  I wonder how it will feel to fast from or give up something I enjoy?  I wonder what I could do this Lent to show I am getting ready for Easter? Could I pray more? Fast from (give up) something? Do something for our class charity?	 I wonder what people fast from?  I wonder how it will feel to fast from or give up something I enjoy?  I wonder what I could do this Lent to show I am getting ready for Easter? Could I pray more? Fast from (give up) something? Do something for our class charity?	 I wonder what leaves people used to wave at Jesus? I wonder if Jesus had a long journey on his donkey?  I wonder if I would have liked to have been there when Jesus came to Jerusalem? I wonder how Jesus felt with people waving palms and greeting him?  I wonder if I could praise Jesus today?	 I wonder who was in the crowd? I wonder why it is called ‘Good’ Friday?  I wonder about the people who were there when Jesus died. How did they feel? I wonder what they said to each other?  I wonder if I can thank Jesus today? I wonder if I can help someone who is sad today?	 I wonder where the tomb was?  I wonder about the people who heard about the resurrection. How did they feel? What did they say to each other?  I wonder if I can tell someone about Jesus today?
Characteristics of effective teaching and learning for RE	Wonder, awe, playing , exploring, active learning , creating , and thinking critically	Wonder, awe, playing, exploring, active learning, creating , and thinking critically	Wonder, awe, playing, exploring, active learning, creating, and thinking critically	Wonder, awe, playing, exploring, active learning, creating , and thinking critically	Wonder, awe , playing, exploring, active learning, creating , and thinking critically	Wonder, awe, playing , exploring, active learning, creating , and thinking critically
Main teaching activities	- Kindness pancakes. Invite the children to remember all the ingredients that Mama Panya used to make her pancakes. Write all the words collected onto paper and add them to the mixing bowl. - Make and share pancakes together. You could write invitations and have a pancake party! - Mud pancakes in the mud kitchen. - Charcoal artwork: Invite the children to draw their own cross in charcoal and to place them on the prayer table and invite them to tell Jesus that they love Him and are sorry. Get creative with charcoal and create a Lent artwork. (You could use masking	- Speak to Jesus Invite the children to create a special quiet tent in or outside the classroom where they can go to spend time and talk to Jesus in Lent. Explain Jesus always listens to us and our prayers. - Desert animals Invite the children to learn about some of the animals that Jesus may have encountered in the desert. Read stories about desert animals (e.g. Way Out in the Desert) and set up a ‘tuff-tray’ desert sand tray to allow the children to role-play Jesus’ time in the desert.in small world.	- Love artwork around the greatest commandment - Small worlds retell - After watching the Lego Bible video, allow the children to explore the story through retelling with small world – e.g. Lego figures. Give them some speech bubble cards to help them to use some of the key phrases from the story. - Lent promise Invite the children to make a promise to Jesus about how they are going to try and be more loving at home and at school and place it in an envelope and invite the children to give them to Jesus.	- Retell the story using small world or acting it out in role-play. Give them some key vocabulary to include in their retelling – Jerusalem, Donkey, Hosannah - Dress up and role play Palm Sunday, waving palms (you could trace around pupils’ hands to make palm branches out of them). - Palm printing artwork - Cutting skills – use pinking shears to create different leaves. - Jerusalem was where the Temple was – build temples out of construction materials.	- Make a crown of thorns for Jesus using green playdough and toothpicks - Make a large cross as a class – thinking about how Jesus died for us all, write and add your name to the cross. - Make hand prints, adding in marks for the nails. - Go on a cross hunt around the school – how many different ones can you see? - Invite the children to make their own cross – from beads, clay, sticks, construction, painting ... they can choose! - Make playdough hot cross buns.	The Easter Story can be sad, make a stained-glass cross to remind you of the beautiful ending – Jesus has risen. Create tomb artwork. Sequence the story with pictures. Invite them to add some dialogue to the images with speech bubbles – ‘what do you think they might be saying here?’ Explore some of the key vocabulary and give some vocabulary words to the children to help them – e.g. Died, Rose, Alive, Jesus, Friends, Sad, Happy, Tomb, Garden

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	tape to make a cross and charcoal around). Gross motor: 40 is an important number during Lent. What can the children do to 40? Anything to 40! Jumping, skipping, hopping, throwing. Can pupils skip, hop, clap, jump, throw to 40?	- Shelter building Invite the children to think about where he may have slept in the desert. - Cactus cards make Jesus a cactus card and invite them to write or draw inside something that they think will help Jesus to know they are thinking about Him.	Toy hospital - Invite the children to practise caring and looking after the dolls and toys, like the Good Samaritan. How can they make them feel cared for and loved?	Create a piece of artwork showing the donkey Jesus rode into Jerusalem.	- Hot cross bun tasting. - Look at the pictures of the station of the cross.	FreeBibleimages :: Jesus is alive - part 2 :: Peter, John and Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb (John 20:1-18) - Explore sensory trays with symbols of new life- toy eggs, chicks, lambs, bunnies etc. - Decorate their own eggs to celebrate Jesus’ new life at Easter. You could give them emptied real egg shells to paint or decorate or card or clay eggs. Give the children lots of choices of different colours, collage, glitter, buttons, paper etc to choose from for their designs. - Easter crafts around signs and symbols – decorating easter eggs, chicks’ nests (new life) etc
Adaptive teaching examples – adapt to suit cohort	Adults to support through play partnering. Support and introduce new vocabulary e.g. generous, kind, giving, inviting, welcoming, sharing. Children recall ingredients verbally or by drawing. Collect words on paper strips to “mix” into a bowl. Encourage counting aloud.	Offer different levels of tools (e.g. spring-loaded scissors, loop scissors) for card making and den making. Adults to model vocabulary when exploring desert animals.	Adults to prompt with key words and visuals to help retell the story, or model role playing with small world. Use Lego, small world figures, and speech bubble cards to retell stories about the Greatest Commandment.	Trace hands to make palms, print or paint patterns, cut leaves with scissors.	Adult modelling noticing different crosses around school and how/why they are different.	Adults to support fine motor activities (easter crafts/stained glass craft). Sequence picture cards, add speech bubbles, explore key vocabulary: Died, Rose, Alive, Jesus, Friends, Sad, Happy, Tomb, Garden.
Challenge	Talk about why Jesus went into the desert.	Discuss what it would have been like for Jesus during his time in the desert.	Explain how we can grow closer to Jesus during Lent.	Talk about the people in the crowd – Did everybody like Jesus?	Explain why it is called ‘Good Friday’ independently.	Talk about why God gave Jesus new life.
Key vocabulary and definition (teacher subject knowledge) / explicit vocabulary instruction	Lent is a period of 40 days during which Christians remember the events leading up to and including the death of Jesus Christ. The 40-day period is called Lent after an old English word meaning 'lengthen'. Desert of Lent Jesus spent 40 days in the desert Lent gives us the opportunity to be led into the desert as well. Ash Wednesday is a significant day in the Catholic Church, marking the beginning of Lent, a season of prayer, fasting, and repentance. On this day, Catholics receive ashes on their foreheads as a sign of mortality and repentance, reminding them of their need for spiritual renewal.	Lent is a period of 40 days during which Christians remember the events leading up to and including the death of Jesus Christ. The 40-day period is called Lent after an old English word meaning 'lengthen'. Desert of Lent Jesus spent 40 days in the desert Lent gives us the opportunity to be led into the desert as well. Ash Wednesday is a significant day in the Catholic Church, marking the beginning of Lent, a season of prayer, fasting, and repentance. On this day, Catholics receive ashes on their foreheads as a sign of mortality and repentance, reminding them of their need for spiritual renewal.	Lent is a period of 40 days during which Christians remember the events leading up to and including the death of Jesus Christ. The 40-day period is called Lent after an old English word meaning 'lengthen'. Holy Week The events surrounding Jesus’ death and resurrection took place during the last week of his life in Jerusalem. This week began on the Sunday that Jesus rode into the city in triumph and ended with his resurrection a week later.	Palm Sunday The Jews were waiting for their messiah – but they imagined (and needed) a messianic King with a military and political agenda who would overthrow the Romans occupying their land. The symbolism of Jesus riding a donkey or 'colt' is, therefore, very significant. Armies rode horses: someone riding on a donkey came in peace. Luke's account of Palm Sunday does not actually mention palm branches being waved at Jesus, although other accounts do. However, it was customary for the subjects of a ruler or king to pay homage to him by spreading clothing on the road and waving branches from nearby trees. Any branches that were waved in honour of Jesus were most likely to have been olive branches. Olive branches were plentiful in the region and were a sign of peace. They also alluded to the narrative of Noah and the Flood.	Jesus the Son of God, born in Bethlehem and sent by God for the whole world.	Jesus the Son of God, born in Bethlehem and sent by God for the whole world.

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	Session 1 SEE (UNDERSTAND)	Session 2 SEE (UNDERSTAND)	Session 3 JUDGE (DISCERN)	Session 4 SEE (UNDERSTAND)	Session 5 JUDGE (DISCERN)	Session 6 ACT (RESPOND)
Resources	PowerPoint Pancake ingredients Kindness pancakes – mixing bowl, spoon, paper Charcoal/hairspray to set Gross motor equipment – skipping ropes, hula hoops etc Jesus went into the desert video link - 26 Let's Go! (0.49-2.58) He Fasts for 40 days song video link - "He Fasted Forty Days" Matthew 4:2 Catholic Songs for Kids Bible Memory Verses Song for Lent Ash Wednesday video link - What is Ash Wednesday (for KIDS!) - YouTube	PowerPoint Special invitation Desert animals for small world play Den making materials for gross motor activity Card making materials Jesus went into the desert video link - 26 Let's Go! (0.49-2.58) He Fasts for 40 days song video link - "He Fasted Forty Days" Matthew 4:2 Catholic Songs for Kids Bible Memory Verses Song for Lent	PowerPoint Any artwork resources for love piece – collage, paints etc Good Samaritan video link - LEGO Bible The Good Samaritan Stop-Motion Animation Love One Another Lullaby - YouTube Giving Is Better A Little Arrow Story!	PowerPoint Palm leaves Paints Small world resources donkey, people, leaves Boxes for temple building Wave your palms Bing Videos	PowerPoint The Big Red Umbrella story Parachute games Arts/crats materials for display Bread/fish / costumes for role play Big Red Umbrella Read Along Video - Bing Videos Glory Be Video - Bing Videos	PowerPoint Toy pet for class to take care of Maddi's fridge story or similar Materials to construct boats (gross motor) Glory Be Video - Bing Videos

Desert to Garden – EYFS (Lent 2)	
	Session 7 ACT (RESPOND)
Learning Focus	Recall all learning from the branch
Recall and Retrieval	• End of branch celebration of the word • Respond booklet • Assessment focus: sort/match pictures in response to the Big Question: What special signs and symbols do we have during Lent and Easter? Simple recall and sequencing of the events of Holy Week.
Sequence of Knowledge throughout the Lesson	Recognise, Talk About, Recall
EYFS skills/disciplinary knowledge	 I wonder what special signs and symbols we have during Lent and Easter? (Big Question)
Ways of knowing wonder questions: See, Judge, Act	Wonder, awe, playing, exploring, active learning, creating, and thinking critically
Characteristics of effective teaching and learning for religious education	1. Take part in the whole school celebration of the word. 2. Complete the Respond booklet with the help of an adult. 3. Assessment tasks: sort/match pictures in response to the Big Question: What special signs and symbols do we have during Lent and Easter? Simple recall and sequencing of the events of Holy Week.
Main teaching activities	Adults to support scribing Respond booklets
Adaptive teaching examples – Adapt to suit cohort	Provide visual prompts and photographs to support participation in the celebration of the word. Complete the Respond booklet using adult scribing, picture choices, and simple oral questions. Use a drawing template with boxes and visual prompts to help children organise their ideas for the Big Question. Offer a picture word bank to support discussion and understanding. Model responses through talk and drawings, using sentence stems before children complete their own assessment task.
Challenge	Recap all vocabulary explored across the branch.
Key vocabulary and definition / Explicit vocabulary instruction	Celebration of the word PowerPoint/planning EYFS Desert to Garden Respond Booklet
Resources	Recall all learning from the branch.