



## Reflecting on fonts

Fonts, as the place of baptism, are related to membership of the church and being received into the church. They are also used as a symbol for the forgiveness and washing away of sin. They are often near the door in a church as the beginning of the Christian journey.

### You could use this...

- When looking at baptism or other initiation rites
- When looking at journeys, in particular the spiritual journey and significant places and events in a person's life
- To encourage children to reflect on their own lives so far and into the future
- To look at the significance of water in religious practice

### Bible passages

- The baptism of Jesus is found in Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22
- Acts 2:36-41 and Romans 6:3-4 Teaching on baptism
- Acts 8:35-38 Baptism of the Ethiopian official



## Watch the whole slide show

It may be appropriate to show all the photos a few times, with a fresh question for each showing. Allow time between questions for children to adjust to the new question.

- Which font represents your life journey so far?
- Find a font which represents your life at the moment.
- Which font represents how you would like to see the rest of your life journey?
- Which font best describes baptism for you? What aspects of baptism does it explain?

## Show one font

Choose a font that attracts you in some way rather than one that you think will generate a specific response from the children. If you are using several questions allow plenty of time between the questions, so the children don't feel rushed.

### When the font was new

- Who do you think was the first person to be baptised in this font?
- What would their parents have been like?
- What would everyone have been wearing?
- What was their life like?
- What was going to be the most important event in their life?
- What might it have felt like for the parents on the first baby baptised in this font, knowing their baby was the first?

### The font now

- Who do you think might have been the last person to be baptised in this font?
- What would their parents be like?
- What would everyone have been wearing?
- Why did the parents decide to have their baby baptised?
- Who else has come?
- What does this font say about the role of baptism in this church?

### The start of the journey

A font represents baptism, which is the start of the Christian journey.

- Where might the journey started at this font lead?
- What does this font say about the journeys that start here?

## Imagine

Use the sections in brackets if appropriate for your setting.

Show a photograph of one of the fonts.

Ask the children to imagine standing by the font on their own.

What does it feel like to be standing here?

The font is a place of forgiveness and starting again.

Think about things you have done wrong in the past, this might be things you said or did or thought, or it might be things you didn't say or do that maybe you should have done.

Pause before the font and think about placing these in the font.

When you are ready imagine putting or throwing these things into the font. Let go and leave it there if you can.

(Imagine Jesus taking that event and getting rid of it. Imagine him telling you it's OK, he will make everything clean and new.)

Stand away from the font and pause.

How does it feel to have got rid of that?

Is there anything you need to do now because of this?

You are now going to be invited to look inside. In the font there will be a gift (from God) for you for the rest of your journey of life. It's not the usual sort of gift, like birthday presents, but something that will make you a better person.

When you are ready imagine walking up to the font and looking inside.

What can you see? Or is the gift unseen, but you know there is something there?

What is the gift there for you?

Dare you take it?

How does that gift make you feel?

What would life be like with that gift?

Spend a moment accepting the gift, recognising it as being for you.

Who do you want to thank for the gift?

Move away from the font and pause. What was that like?

How do you feel now?





## Reflecting on church buildings

These reflections are designed to encourage children to think about and to approach aspects of church buildings from a different perspective. Each gives a series of questions to encourage children's thinking, followed by a longer imaginative exercise, in which they are invited to imagine being in the picture and often have an imaginary conversation with someone about some aspect of the church building. In this they are encouraged to notice how they feel about the building and to see it from a different viewpoint. Many of the questions will fit in well in the 'Learning from religion' strand of the RE syllabus and give opportunities for reflecting and considering. They will also work well in PSHE sessions. Suggestions have been given for times when some of the reflections might be particularly relevant for the children, or appropriate for their learning.

You may choose to show the entire slide show and give the pupils one question to think about as they watch. Or the photographs could be printed out and paper copies displayed for children to use, or as the focus on a display using some of the questions the children have been exploring. You could show the slide show more than once, posing a different question with each showing. Sometimes the questions follow on from each other, others are unconnected.

Rather than showing the series of photographs in the slide show, you could choose one photograph (or use a photo of a similar feature in your local church) and choose a few questions from one section to ask the children. If you visit a church you could use the reflection as part of your session in the church and use the real objects as the focus rather than the photographs.

If pupils are not used to working in this way, you may need to give them some pointers first, or model your thoughts, but emphasise that there is no 'right' answer to the questions, and that their experience is valuable, even if it is completely different to anyone else's. It is a space for their personal reflections.

Some sections will be more appropriate for use in church schools. Use your judgement on which is suitable for your school context and your pupils.

After the reflection allow children the opportunity to share something of what they were thinking about if they want to, but also give them permission not to share it. For some pupils deep issues might be raised and they might prefer to talk to you or another member of staff about this quietly later.

The reflections could be used alongside a story for collective worship, and Bible references are given for related passages you might include.