

Signs, Symbols and Wonders

This year, our theme is signs, symbols and wonders. We will be looking at the signs that point us to Jesus in the New Testament. We will develop our understanding of some of the most loved and well known stories, looking at them through a new lens, whilst drawing practical lessons that we can apply in our own lives.

<p>Tuesday 17th January 2023</p> <p>Year 3</p>	<p>The Star Last term, we looked at the symbolism of stars in the bible. We learnt that stars symbolise good and truth.</p> <p>Matthew 2:1-12</p> <p>2 Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. ²They asked, “Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We came to worship him.”</p> <p>³When King Herod heard about this new king of the Jews, he was troubled. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. ⁴Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ would be born. ⁵They answered, “In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this in the Scriptures:</p> <p>⁶ ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are important among the rulers of Judah. A ruler will come from you. He will be like a shepherd for my people, the Israelites.’” <i>Micah 5:2</i></p> <p>⁷Then Herod had a secret meeting with the wise men from the east. He learned from them the exact time they first saw the star. ⁸Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. He said to them, “Go and look carefully to find the child. When you find him, come tell me. Then I can go worship him too.”</p> <p>⁹The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. ¹⁰When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshiped the child. They opened the gifts they brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they went home to their own country by a different way.</p>	<p>Prayers</p> <p>Thank you for sending Jesus to be the king of the world.</p> <p>Thank you for the gifts of good and truth.</p> <p>Thank you for the magi.</p> <p>Thank you for the gifts that we receive.</p>
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<p>Tuesday 24th January 2023</p> <p>Year 2</p>	<p>The Way, The Truth and The Life</p> <p>Last week we learnt about the star that led the magi to the baby Jesus. Through our next 6 services we will look at symbols that Jesus assigned to himself to illustrate the many different sides of his character, but today we will think about the way he used himself as a signpost to direct people to God.</p> <p>John 14:1-14</p> <p>14 Jesus said, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. And trust in me. ² There are many rooms in my Father's house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you to be with me so that you may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going."^[a]</p> <p>⁵ Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. So how can we know the way?"</p> <p>⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way. And I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me. ⁷ If you really knew me, then you would know my Father, too. But now you do know him, and you have seen him."</p> <p>⁸ Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father. That is all we need."</p> <p>⁹ Jesus answered, "I have been with you a long time now. Do you still not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father.</p> <p>¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or believe because of the miracles I have done.</p> <p>¹² I tell you the truth. He who believes in me will do the same things that I do. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And if you ask for anything in my name, I will do it for you. Then the Father's glory will be shown through the Son.</p>	<p>Thank you for sending us Jesus.</p> <p>Thank you for the signs and symbols in the bible.</p> <p>Thank you for the promises in the bible.</p> <p>Thank you that we can trust in you.</p>

	<p>When Jesus refers to himself as the way, the truth, and the life, he is giving us a better way to live our lives through him.</p> <p>** You may want to include a miracle here to give the service more of a story. – Blind man healed demonstrates Jesus as the way, the truth and the life.</p> <p>Mark 10:46-52</p> <p>⁴⁶ Then they came to the town of Jericho. As Jesus was leaving there with his followers and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus) was sitting by the road. ⁴⁷ He heard that Jesus from Nazareth was walking by. The blind man cried out, “Jesus, Son of David, please help me!”</p> <p>⁴⁸ Many people scolded the blind man and told him to be quiet. But he shouted more and more, “Son of David, please help me!”</p> <p>⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, “Tell the man to come here.”</p> <p>So they called the blind man. They said, “Cheer up! Get to your feet. Jesus is calling you.” ⁵⁰ The blind man stood up quickly. He left his coat there and went to Jesus.</p> <p>⁵¹ Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?”</p> <p>The blind man answered, “Teacher, I want to see again.”</p> <p>⁵² Jesus said, “Go. You are healed because you believed.” At once the man was able to see again, and he followed Jesus on the road.</p> <p>Can you think of stories in the bible that show Jesus as the way, the truth or the life? If you were to make three claims about yourself, what would you claim to be? How can we shine good and truth?</p>	
<p>Tuesday 31st January 2023</p> <p>Year 1</p>	<p>The Good Shepherd</p> <p>A shepherd is a person who tends, herds, feeds, or guards flocks of sheep. To have a shepherd's heart means also to know your sheep and be known by them. The shepherd lives in close proximity to the flock. The sheep</p>	<p>Thank you that Jesus is the good shepherd.</p>

become accustomed to the sound of his voice. They follow the shepherd gladly and he cares for them with individualizing attention.

When in the wild, sheep have many predators. In Scotland, foxes, predatory birds and badgers are a threat to sheep. In other parts of the world, bears and lions plus many other predators can be added to this list.

This perhaps helps us to understand why Jesus symbolised his love for his people (the sheep) by using the analogy of a shepherd and the sheep.

Choose one or both of these stories.

John 10:11-18 (Don't cover the gate – the first part of the chapter - that is for next week)

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. ¹² The worker who is paid to keep the sheep is different from the shepherd who owns them. So when the worker sees a wolf coming, he runs away and leaves the sheep alone. Then the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The man runs away because he is only a paid worker. He does not really care for the sheep.

¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I give my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not in this flock here. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The Father loves me because I give my life. I give my life so that I can take it back again. ¹⁸ No one takes it away from me. I give my own life freely. I have the right to give my life, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my Father commanded me to do.”

Jesus being the Good shepherd points to Jesus’ statement I am the way, the truth and the life as in this passage he says, I give my life for the sheep.

Jesus also told a parable about the shepherd and the sheep.

Luke 15:3-7

³ Then Jesus told them this story: ⁴ “Suppose one of you has 100 sheep, but he loses 1 of them. Then he will leave the other 99 sheep alone and go out and look for the lost sheep. The man will keep on searching for the lost sheep until he finds it. ⁵ And when he finds it, the man is very happy. He puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. He calls to his friends and neighbours and says, ‘Be happy with me because I found my lost sheep!’ ⁷ In the same

Thank you for the love that Jesus gives to us.

Thank you for that Jesus protects us.

Thank you that he cares for each one of us.

	<p>way, I tell you there is much joy in heaven when 1 changes their heart. There is more joy for that 1 than there is for 99 good people who don't need to change.</p> <p>Jesus wants his followers to understand that he loves and cares for each one of them individually. He knows his followers and they know him. He will lead, guide, protect and nurture his people as a shepherd does his/her sheep.</p> <p>What qualities do you think makes Jesus an excellent shepherd for his people? How can we apply these teaching to us?</p>	
<p>Tuesday 7th February 2023</p> <p>Reception</p>	<p>The Door</p> <p>Last week we learnt about Jesus being the good shepherd. We thought about the unique and individual love and care that Jesus has for each of his followers. This week we will consider another symbol that Jesus used – I am the door. Jesus goes one step further in this analogy as he tells us that he not only looks after the sheep and knows them but that he is the door between the people and God. That anyone who wants to access God, must go through him. He isn't just the shepherd looking after the sheep but he is the door – the way.</p> <p>Doors have many uses they can keep things out and let things in – Jesus is the door.</p> <p>John 10:1-10</p> <p>10 Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. The man who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The man who guards the door opens it for him. And the sheep listen to the voice of the shepherd. He calls his own sheep, using their names, and he leads them out. ⁴He brings all of his sheep out. Then he goes ahead of them and leads them. They follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger. They will run away from him because they don't know his voice." ⁶Jesus told the people this story, but they did not understand what it meant.</p> <p>⁷So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth. I am the door for the sheep. ⁸All the people who came before me were thieves and robbers. The sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the door. The person who enters through me will be saved. He will be able to come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰A thief comes to steal and kill and destroy. But I came to give life—life in all its fullness.</p> <p>Jesus says that anyone who goes through him, the door, can receive a full life and find rest.</p>	<p>Thank you that Jesus is the door.</p> <p>Thank you that Jesus welcomes us in to his family.</p> <p>Thank you that you give life in all its fullness to us.</p> <p>Thank you for protecting us and keeping us safe.</p>

	<p>How is Jesus like a door? What will people who go through the 'door' receive? How will Jesus as the door protect people?</p>	
Half Term		
<p>Friday 21st February 2023</p> <p>Teacher Led</p>	<p>The Living Water</p> <p>In John, Jesus tells us twice that he is the living water. Water is essential to the existence of every living thing. In the Old Testament we heard that water represented cleansing, for example when the Israelites passed through the sea as they left Egypt. In the New Testament, Jesus is talking about the Holy Spirit when he speaks of the living water. Jesus promises that his followers will not be thirsty (have a spiritual longing) if they come to him.</p> <p>John 7:37 - 38 ³⁷The last day of the feast came. It was the most important day. On that day Jesus stood up and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸If a person believes in me, rivers of living water will flow out from his heart</p> <p>John 4:1- ⁴ The Pharisees heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more followers than John. ² (But really Jesus himself did not baptize people. His followers did the baptizing.) Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard about him. ³ So he left Judea and went back to Galilee. ⁴ On the way he had to go through the country of Samaria.</p> <p>⁵ In Samaria Jesus came to the town called Sychar. This town is near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from his long trip. So he sat down beside the well. It was about noon. ⁷ A Samaritan woman came to the well to get some water. Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." ⁸ (This happened while Jesus' followers were in town buying some food.)</p> <p>⁹ The woman said, "I am surprised that you ask me for a drink. You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan." (Jews are not friends with Samaritans.^[a])</p> <p>¹⁰ Jesus said, "You don't know what God gives. And you don't know who asked you for a drink. If you knew, you would have asked me, and I would have given you living water."</p>	<p>Thank you for water.</p> <p>Thank you for your promises.</p> <p>Thank you for loving all people from all nations.</p> <p>Thank you for showing us love and kindness.</p>

	<p>¹¹ The woman said, “Sir, where will you get that living water? The well is very deep, and you have nothing to get water with. ¹² Are you greater than Jacob, our father? Jacob is the one who gave us this well. He drank from it himself. Also, his sons and flocks drank from this well.”</p> <p>¹³ Jesus answered, “Every person who drinks this water will be thirsty again. ¹⁴ But whoever drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again. The water I give will become a spring of water flowing inside him. It will give him eternal life.”</p> <p>¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water. Then I will never be thirsty again. And I will not have to come back here to get more water.”</p> <p>Jesus can meet all of our essential needs and him being the living water represents this.</p> <p>How might people benefit from coming to Jesus – the living water? How might Jesus calling himself the living water help his believers to trust and rely on him?</p>	
<p>Tuesday 28th February 2023</p> <p>Year 3</p>	<p>The Bread</p> <p>Bread is a gift from God: Moses fed his people in the desert with food which fell from heaven, and during the last supper, the bread became the body of Christ. Jesus multiplied the bread to feed the crowd and bread became a sign of sharing. It also symbolises the Word of God which nourishes.</p> <p>Christians today take the bread to remind themselves of the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross. It tells us in Matthew 26:26 – The Last Supper</p> <p>²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”</p> <p>In John 6 Jesus performs one of his most famous miracles using bread.</p> <p>6 After this, Jesus went across Lake Galilee (or, Lake Tiberias). ² Many people followed him because they saw the miracles he did to heal the sick. ³ Jesus went up on a hill and there sat down with his followers. ⁴ It was almost the time for the Jewish Passover Feast.</p>	<p>Thank you for the love of Jesus.</p> <p>Thank you for the boy who shared his food.</p> <p>Thank you for the many miracles in the bible.</p> <p>Thank you for giving us new life.</p>

	<p>⁵ Jesus looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him. He said to Philip, “Where can we buy bread for all these people to eat?” ⁶ (Jesus asked Philip this question to test him. Jesus already knew what he planned to do.)</p> <p>⁷ Philip answered, “Someone would have to work almost a year to buy enough bread for each person here to have only a little piece.”</p> <p>⁸ Another follower there was Andrew. He was Simon Peter’s brother. Andrew said, ⁹ “Here is a boy with five loaves of barley bread and two little fish. But that is not enough for so many people.”</p> <p>¹⁰ Jesus said, “Tell the people to sit down.” This was a very grassy place. There were about 5,000 men who sat down there. ¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves of bread. He thanked God for the bread and gave it to the people who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish. He gave them as much as they wanted.</p> <p>¹² They all had enough to eat. When they had finished, Jesus said to his followers, “Gather the pieces of fish and bread that were not eaten. Don’t waste anything.” ¹³ So they gathered up the pieces that were left. They filled 12 large baskets with the pieces that were left of the five barley loaves.</p> <p>¹⁴ The people saw this miracle that Jesus did. They said, “He must truly be the Prophet^[a] who is coming into the world.”</p> <p>But later on in this same chapter we read that other people who hadn’t seen the 5,000 people fed questioned Jesus and his motive.</p> <p>³⁵ Then Jesus said, “I am the bread that gives life. He who comes to me will never be hungry.</p> <p>Would you have shared your food?</p> <p>What would you have thought if you had been there when Jesus did the miracle?</p>	
<p>Tuesday 7th March 2023</p> <p>Year 2</p>	<p>The Vine</p> <p>Last week we learnt that Jesus called himself bread, reminding us that we can be nourished if we believe in him. We heard that at the last supper Jesus instructed his followers to drink wine in remembrance of him too.</p> <p>Matthew 26:28 - 29</p>	<p>Thank you for giving us Jesus as the true vine.</p> <p>Thank you for the miracle of</p>

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the^[a] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Wine comes from grapes and grapes grow on a vine, this is why Jesus called himself the vine in **John 15:5**

⁵ "I am the vine, and you are the branches. If a person remains in me and I remain in him, then he produces much fruit. But without me he can do nothing.

Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine.

John 2: 1-11

² On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴ "Woman,^[a] why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.^[b]

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Jesus turning water into wine.

Thank you for the many signs and symbols of Jesus.

Thank you that we can always learn something new about Jesus.

	<p>Why do you think the disciples believed in Jesus when they saw the water change into wine?</p> <p>Jesus says that we must stay connected to him the vine so we can produce fruit, what fruits of the spirit would you like more of in your life?</p>	
<p>Tuesday 14th March 2023</p> <p>Year 1</p>	<p>The Cross</p> <p>John 19:16 – 30</p> <p>¹⁶Pilate gave Jesus to them to be killed on a cross.</p> <p>The soldiers took charge of Jesus. ¹⁷Carrying his own cross, Jesus went out to a place called The Place of the Skull. (In the Jewish language[Ⓜ] this place is called Golgotha.) ¹⁸There they nailed Jesus to the cross. They also put two other men on crosses, one on each side of Jesus with Jesus in the middle. ¹⁹Pilate wrote a sign and put it on the cross. It read: “JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.” ²⁰The sign was written in the Jewish language, in Latin, and in Greek. Many of the Jews read the sign, because this place where Jesus was killed was near the city. ²¹The leading Jewish priests said to Pilate, “Don’t write, ‘The King of the Jews.’ But write, ‘This man said, I am the King of the Jews.’”</p> <p>²²Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written!”</p> <p>²³After the soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross, they took his clothes. They divided them into four parts. Each soldier got one part. They also took his long shirt. It was all one piece of cloth, woven from top to bottom. ²⁴So the soldiers said to each other, “We should not tear this into parts. We should throw lots to see who will get it.” This happened to give full meaning to the Scripture:</p> <p>“They divided my clothes among them. And they threw lots for my clothing.” <i>Psalm 22:18</i></p> <p>So the soldiers did this.</p> <p>²⁵Jesus’ mother stood near his cross. His mother’s sister was also standing there, with Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶Jesus saw his mother. He also saw the follower he loved standing there. He said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son.” ²⁷Then he said to the follower, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this follower took her to live in his home.</p>	<p>Thank you for the life of Jesus.</p> <p>Thank you for the obedience of Jesus.</p> <p>Thank you for sending Jesus to be the king of everyone.</p> <p>Thank you for Jesus’ friends who stayed with him to the end.</p>

	<p>²⁸ After this, Jesus knew that everything had been done. To make the Scripture come true, he said, “I am thirsty.”²⁹ There was a jar full of vinegar there, so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it. Then they put the sponge on a branch of a hyssop plant and lifted it to Jesus’ mouth. ³⁰ Jesus tasted the vinegar. Then he said, “It is finished.” He bowed his head and died.</p> <p>Why do you think Jesus didn’t call on God to help him?</p> <p>How do you think his followers felt at this moment?</p> <p>What can we learn about Jesus from this?</p>	
<p>Tuesday 21st March 2023</p> <p>Admission to Holy Communion Rehearsal - Year 5</p> <p>Or Teacher Led if Y5 not ready.</p>	<p>The Life of Jesus – the Star to the Cross</p> <p>A recap of Jesus’ life going from the star to the cross, covering the stories from the services this term.</p> <p>Star – The Magi visiting Jesus</p> <p>Way, truth and life – Jesus statement</p> <p>Good Shepherd – The Lost Sheep</p> <p>The Door – Looking after the sheep</p> <p>The living Water – The woman at the well</p> <p>The Bread – feeding of 5,000 miracle / the last supper</p> <p>The Vine – the wedding at canna / the last supper</p> <p>The Cross – Jesus death</p>	<p>Thank you for the birth of Jesus.</p> <p>Thank you for all of Jesus’ miracles.</p> <p>Thank you for all of the signs and symbols in Jesus’ life.</p> <p>Thank you for Year 5’s drama. Help them to perform the drama well on Friday and help those being admitted to holy communion.</p>

Friday 31st March 2023 – 10am at St Mary’s – Easter Service – Led by Year 5