

Praying with stones

Introduction

This is a Bible-based activity for a classroom reflection.

Preparation

You will need a collection of stones (you can get about 45 stones for around £9.99 from a garden centre), a base cloth or stand, some of the verses below, quiet music if you want it.

Here are some verses from the Bible about rocks and stones. Have a read through and choose ones you feel might be interesting to your class. Print the ones you choose on separate cards. You might want to leave off the reference so that the children don't try to read it out.

1. Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. Numbers 20:11
2. David sang to the Lord, 'The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge...' 2 Sam 22:2
3. David said, 'I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet upon a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.' Ps 40:1-2
4. 'Man's hand assaults the flinty rock and lays bare the roots of the mountains. He tunnels through the rock: his eyes see all its treasures... But where can wisdom be found?' Job 28:10-12
5. Isaiah said, 'Each person will be like... 'the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.' Is 32:2
6. Isaiah said, 'Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord: look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn...' Isaiah 51:1
7. God said through Ezekiel: 'I will put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.' Ezek 11:19
8. The devil said to Jesus, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.'

Jesus answered, 'People don't live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' Matt 4 3-4

9. Jesus said, 'The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.' Matt 7:25

10. Moses said, if someone commits certain terrible crimes, ' Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him. You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. Stone him to death.' Deuteronomy 13:8-10

11. Jesus said, 'If any of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' John 8: 7

12. Jesus said, 'You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church.' Matt 17:18

13. Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples.' 'I tell you,' he replied, 'if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.' Luke 19:40

14. Jesus said, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the capstone' Matt 21:42

15. When Jesus died, ' the earth shook and the rocks split.' Matt 27:51

16. Joseph placed Jesus' body in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. From Matt 27:60

17. On Easter Sunday, when the women looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. From Mark 16:4

18. Simon Peter, the Rock, wrote to a church: 'You, also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood.' 1 Peter 2:5

19. In the New Jerusalem, 'the foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone.' Rev 21:19

Development

1. Give the verses out to your good readers.

2. Pass the stone or stones round the class, with warnings if necessary about not dropping it onto your neighbour. Ask the class to feel how heavy each is, what the texture is, to note the colours in the stone and the shape of it. Has anyone used stones– played a game with them, built with them on the beach, hurt themselves on a rock perhaps?

3. Place one stone in the centre of the group on a suitable cloth or stand to set it apart.

4. Say that there is stone all around us. Paving stones... stepping stones... pebble-dashed houses... the rock under the topsoil of our gardens or parks... the boiling liquid rock at the centre of the earth... rocks careering round outer space as meteors...

Rocks and stones might mean different things to different people. Some people might

play with them, some might work with them, some see them representing something and some see them as just itself.

We use stones in the way we talk: stony-faced, a heart of stone, between a rock and a hard place!

In the Bible, stones and rocks are very important in different ways. Here are just a few verses from different writers in the Bible, who talk about stones in very different ways.

Ask the readers to read their verses in turn.

5. I wonder what your stone means to you today? Spend a moment listening quietly to what God wants to say to you.

You could put some quiet music on at this point.

6. If appropriate, ask the group to talk in turn about what the stone might mean to them and to place a stone in the centre with the other to make a cairn. Or else ask them to place the stones silently. The cairn is like a cairn on top of a hill, to mark the place where many people have arrived and from which they've moved on. We've all arrived with different stones and ideas, and now it's time to move on.

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