

# Sensory Ways into RE

Claire Fernandes



Whilst you are waiting...

Take a pot of play dough and  
create an animal of your choice  
(KS1 starter)

We will explore a range of kinaesthetic and sensory approaches to teaching scripture and liturgy in primary RE:

- Lat Blaylock's ideas
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
- Godly Play
- Story stack





## Learning Styles

*“Good teachers take account of learning styles by employing a variety of strategies, including explanations, visual illustrations and opportunities for pupils to touch and feel, but they are aware that the prime intention is to help children gain knowledge and shape their understanding.”*

Hayes, D (2012, p.224) *Foundations of Primary Teaching*.



# Religious Education Curriculum Directory

for Catholic Schools and Colleges in England and Wales



## Outcome of Catholic RE

*“The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.”*

Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD),  
2012



## Engaging Catholic RE

RECD (2012) “plan and teach schemes of work that are engaging and accessible”



## Kinaesthetic RE

*“If we are serious about deepening the spiritual life of children, helping them to learn from religion, we need to take lessons from religion and rely more on the active, kinaesthetic modes they use.”*

Blaylock, L. (2008)

‘Ten Ways to build more kinaesthetic learning into RE’

RE Today Spring 08:26







Lat Blaylock suggests...

- Clay modelling
- Back as a pad
- Clay and Sculptor

*“Kinaesthetic learning is about the capacity to use the body, and learn from the physical, the movement and the experience embodied.”*

Blaylock, L. (2008)  
‘Ten Ways to build more kinaesthetic learning into RE’  
*RE Today* Spring 08:26





## Clay Modelling – emotions & moods

- As a starter, ask pupils to quickly model something connected with the theme or concept you will be exploring e.g. a favourite animal for creation, or a face of fear for founding of the Khalsa in Sikhism.
- Good for kinaesthetic learning because ... of the relationship between thinking and modelling. The pupils will remember this RE lesson.



## Back as a Pad

- Pupils take turns to 'write' a key word on the back of their partner with their finger. Can they work out what the word is?
- Could use to recall key words from last lesson, or use words such as peace, hope, courage to describe emotion and mood in a scripture story.
- Good for kinaesthetic learning because ... it attends to sense of touch. Some pupils who don't do well at read/write RE are very good at it.



## Clay and sculptor

- Children work in pairs – one as clay and one as sculptor. Then swop over.
- The sculptor has to shape the 'clay' into a moment from a scripture story e.g. Prodigal Son asking for money, carousing, feeding pigs, meeting his Father.
- Good for kinaesthetic learning because...it requires attention to the other person's body, and to expression of emotion or feeling in body language.





## What is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd ([CGS](#))?

- An approach to the religious formation of children by Sophia Cavalletti, and her Montessori collaborator Gianni Gobbi.
- Rooted in Bible, Liturgy and Montessori Principles.
- Children hear the Gospel through the use of sensory-rich materials.
- First developed for use within parishes, now used around the world and elements used in schools.



## Cavalletti's observations

From her observations, Cavalletti believed there exists a deep relationship between the child and God, a bond which manifests itself before RE or the experience of Church, which may be described as *“the certainty of a presence, a presence of love that attracts with a great force...but appears to await a response”*

Cavalletti (1992)



## Education to wonder about scripture

*"We could compare it to a magnet. The nature of wonder is not a force that pushes us passively from behind; it is situated ahead of us and attracts us with irresistible force toward the object of our astonishment; it makes us advance toward it, filled with enchantment"*

Cavalletti, S (1992, p.138) *The Religious Potential of the Child*





*“Education to wonder is correlative with an education that helps us to go always more deeply into reality. If we skim over things we will never be surprised by them”*

Cavalletti, S (1992 p.138)  
*The Religious Potential of the Child*



John 10:3-5, 14  
Central parable to CGS





## Good Shepherd continued

- **Main focus:** personal love/ protective presence of the Good Shepherd.
- Children realise the parable is a text that has something hidden to discover.
- “An aspect that is not immediately clear to the children is that **we** are the sheep; we should take great care not to explain this. We would deprive the children of the **joy of the discovery.** “

Cavalletti, S (1992, 66) *The Religious Potential of the Child*





Fig. 8





Training available through Catechesis of the Good Shepherd UK

[www.cgsuk.org](http://www.cgsuk.org)

# Godly Play developed by Berryman



- Godly Play was coined by Berryman after hearing Cavalletti speak to describe **his** approach to children's formation.
- Formation based on creating a sacred space to present stories of the faith. Children are given **time to wonder** about stories, and are **invited to explore** them through open-ended opportunities, often with art materials.



# Godly play

*“Inviting the children to enter the lessons and **discover for themselves** what the lessons mean is an existential teaching/learning.*

*This type of learning teaches children how to use the appropriate tools **to discover personal direction and meaning** in life and depth”.*

Originally developed for parishes, it is now also used to supplement RE in some UK Church primary schools.

Training through [godlyplay.uk](http://godlyplay.uk)





## CGS, Godly Play and Age-Related Standards (ARS)

- Bible stories are enacted and reflected upon, religious language and concepts are used and **pupils are encouraged to find meaning for themselves.**
- Engagement & Response (AT2) e.g. 'Say what they wonder about', 'Ask wondering questions about all areas of study' (ARS 5-7)
- Knowledge & Understanding (AT1) eg "Retell, in any form, a narrative that corresponds to the scripture source used" (ARS 5-7)



## Wondering questions

- I wonder what you like best about this story?
- I wonder which is the most important part?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder if there is any part we could leave out, and still have all the story we need?

[www.godlyplay.org.uk](http://www.godlyplay.org.uk)







## Bible Storybags

Scripts for RE and assemblies that are ideal for KS1 and KS2 in all schools

Draws on insights from:

- **Godly Play**
- Story sacks
- Brain based learning
- Thinking skills
- Christian spirituality
- Use of the creative arts
- Spiritual development and faith development

*Barnabus in schools* catalogue







# STORY STACK

....for stacks of stories



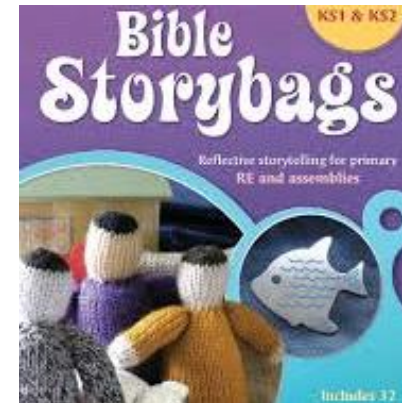


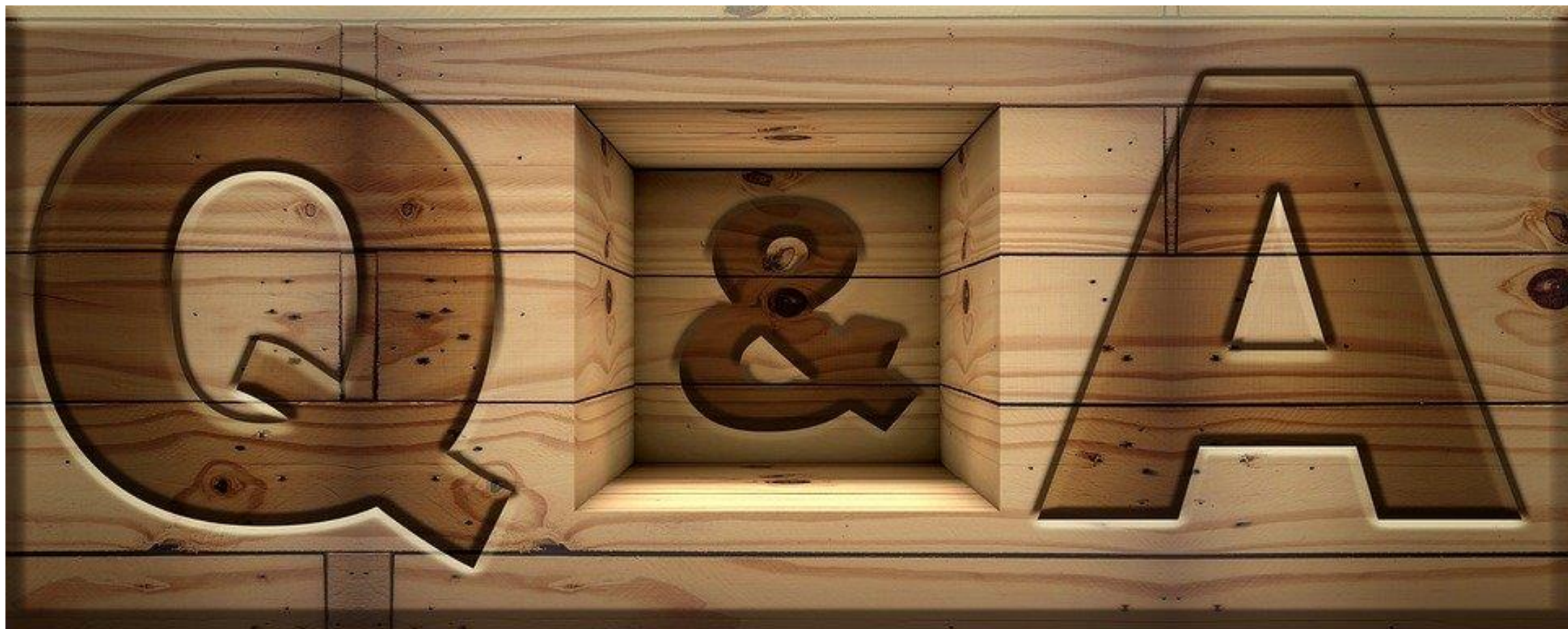


# STORY STACK

Sensory resources can help pupils engage, think and reflect

*“The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.” RECD, 2012*







Thank you!

A hand-drawn illustration on a black background with a white border. The words "Thank you!" are written in a playful, stylized font. Each letter is outlined in white and filled with a different color and pattern: 'T' is red with a white zigzag, 'h' is blue, 'a' is green with white dots, 'n' is pink with white dots, 'k' is yellow with black stripes, 'y' is orange, 'o' is purple with white dots, 'u' is green, and '!' is red with a white zigzag. To the left of the word "Thank" is a yellow star. To the right of the word "Thank" is a red heart. Below the word "you!" is a red dot and a white swirl.