

# Learning Outside the Classroom

## Buildings and Homes (Foundation Stage)

Your local church

### What were we trying to achieve?

#### Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- Culture and Beliefs: To begin to show feelings about significant events in their own lives  
To begin to talk about significant events involving their family or friends  
To develop an understanding of the significance of special events
- A Sense of Place: To develop an awareness of their environment  
To develop use of appropriate language to describe features of the church

#### Emotional, Personal and Social Development

- Sense of Community: To develop an early awareness of their own culture and that of others  
To begin to develop tolerance and understanding of different cultures and beliefs  
To develop an understanding of other beliefs and respect of them

**Cost:** Nil

### Who went? How many?

52 nursery children and 14 in reception class. Teachers, nursery nurses, teaching assistants and other helpers.

### Preparation:

In a previous topic on festivals, the Foundation Stage children had visited the church to hold a mock wedding ceremony. In the week before the church visit, we looked at big books on churches and had class discussions about church ceremonies. The children brought in photos to show their friends their experiences of churches and other buildings they had visited. Using the interactive whiteboard, we also viewed church buildings, their features, sounds and ceremonies.

### How did we organise the learning?

During the visit the children explored the church building and some of its features, for example the cross, font, altar and sacraments. Father Clay showed his cassock and surplice and the coloured stoles used at different times in the Christian year. He also demonstrated a baptism using a teddy. The children walked around the church both inside and out. They made drawings and used digital cameras to record their favourite features. The children also sang some songs while Father Clay played his guitar. Towards the end of the visit, the children showed their parents around the church and explained their drawings and photographs.

### What was the impact of the experience?

This visit had a great impact. Some children's comments include:

"I like the candles and God, they make me feel warm."

"That's the special cross to remember Jesus."

"Mammy, this is my church, it's very quiet, I can come here to think."

"Christians read the Bible, the words are very special."

### Follow up:

In the days following the visit, we compared and contrasted the church to other buildings used for worship, for example, the mosque. We then learnt about St Francis the builder and discussed his role as a saint.

### Contacts and links:

[www.stfranciscofe.btik.com](http://www.stfranciscofe.btik.com)

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

[www.stfrancis.stockton.sch.uk](http://www.stfrancis.stockton.sch.uk)