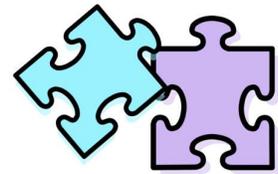


Our School: Together-Apart Rebuilding Community: Jigsaws



A note for parents and carers:

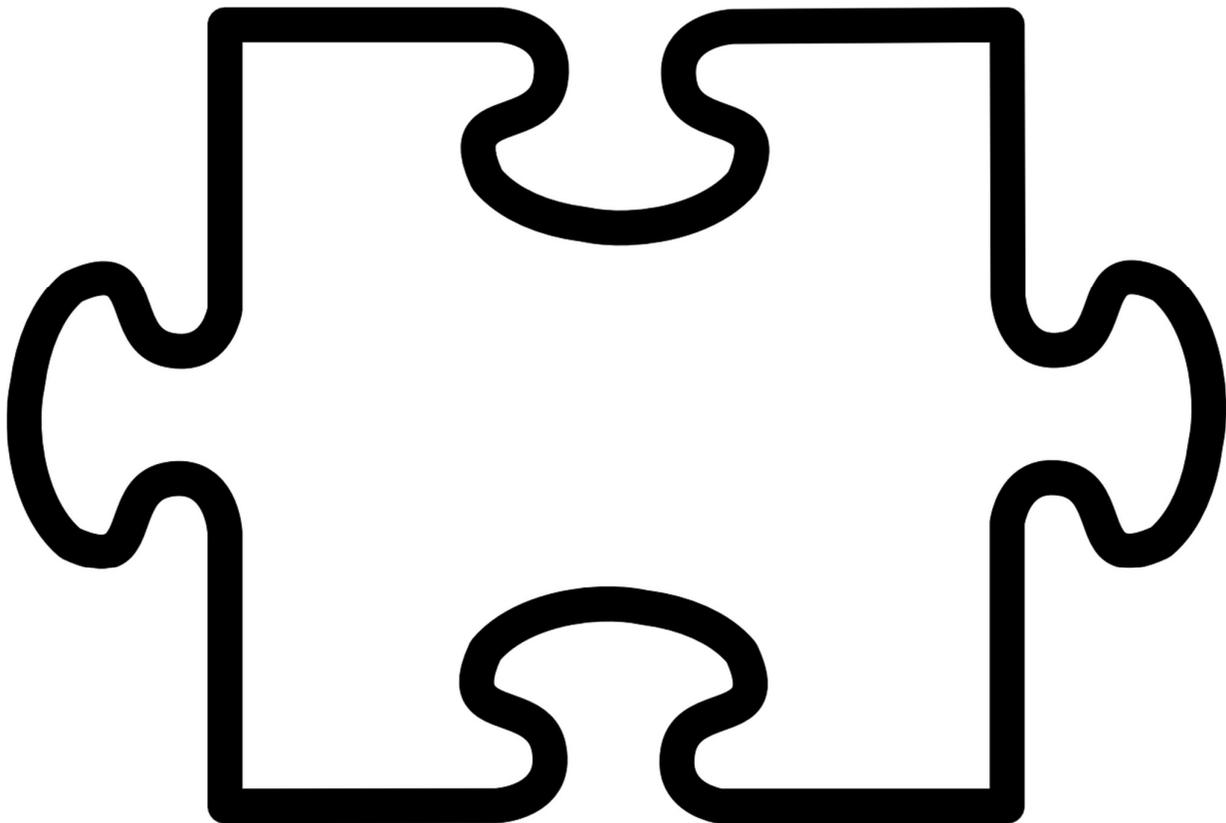
At school, your child will be used to taking part in collective worship every day (they might call it 'assembly'). This is not the kind of worship that some of you might have been part of in a religious building. In church schools this collective worship is planned to be:

- **Inclusive:** something for children and teachers, of all faiths or of none to be able to join in with
- **Inspirational:** a time in the day to think about the big questions in our lives; an occasion that supports the school community's spiritual development, creates an opportunity to gather around and reflect on a common theme and 'feeds' their inner being;
- **Invitational:** in school, children and teachers are invited to pray, think, or reflect, it is the child's or teacher's choice how they respond.

As you know, some children are returning to school, whilst others are not. These resources are for the children at home, to help provide that sense of normality, and prepare them for their return in due course. They will be similar to materials we have prepared for use in school, helping your school community to feel that it still belongs together. Please be clear: these ideas are for you to use, adapt, or not use at all. You choose!

<p>Theme: Jigsaws (use a picture, or a puzzle you have in your house)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the picture of the jigsaw (overleaf), at https://pixabay.com/photos/puzzle-game-solution-connection-226743/ or use a real one. • For the reflection, you will need pieces of an old jigsaw puzzle. If you don't have one, use the cut-out outline, which you can decorate as part of one of the 'Things to do' or with your own patterns. • There is also a story to share together (p3), which children in school are also using. 	
<p>Things to talk about together:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which things can you 'build'? Try to think of as many different ideas as possible e.g. words, Jenga, house, boat, jigsaw, friendships etc. • What do you like / not like to build? • Look at the picture of the puzzle. How do you 'build' a jigsaw puzzle? • Does everyone in your family like to build jigsaws in the same way? • Is our school community a bit like a jigsaw puzzle? How? (e.g. for now, we only have a few children in school. But we're all part of the same school, a bit like completing a jigsaw puzzle, one section at a time.) • What other things do you build in sections and then assemble gradually? 	
<p>Things to do together:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the story of 'Nehemiah's Big Rebuild' together, joining in the actions of your choice. Use the 'wondering' questions to help you think about the story. • Build something together: plan what you will make, assign 'jobs' to different people, work together as a team. You could build a den, use any construction kit you have, or build with recycled materials. Afterwards, talk about how you overcame difficulties during your build. Would you make modifications? Can you use the same materials to build something different together? • Use the large puzzle piece outline (overleaf) and draw things that are important to you inside it. If you were to do the same for things that matter to your school community, what would you draw? Keep this for the reflection time. • If you fancy a trip down memory lane, watch some episodes of 'Bob the Builder'! What problems do the team have with their building and how did they overcome them? 	
<p>Things to reflect on or pray about together: you will need pieces of an old jigsaw puzzle, or the cut-out (overleaf)</p>	
<p>We're going to use our puzzle piece in the quietness now - you can choose whether you think, or whether you pray. [Point out 'lugs' and 'holes' as you think together] Our school community is like a big jigsaw.</p> <p>Look at the 'holes' in your puzzle piece - the bits where the lugs fit: at the moment, we are missing from our school community, but we are part of our school 'at home'. School will not be properly complete until we are all back together - but children at school are thinking about you, just as you are thinking about them. Hold them in your heart - and pray for them in the silence if you want to....</p> <p>Now look at the 'lugs' on your puzzle piece - the bit that helps it to 'fit in' with other pieces: we all 'fit' somewhere in the puzzle, and it will take time to build it up again. While you're at home, we need to be patient with each other and to be kind to each other. Think about what you can do to help everyone in your household get along, because it will help when you get back to school.</p> <p>Lastly, look at the patterns or pictures on your puzzle piece: the piece of the puzzle that you hold is as unique as you: and each one of you matters, to our school community - and to God.</p> <p>God, Please help us to remember that we are all important in our school community, that we each matter. We might be at home, but we are still part of our school. Help us to be patient. Amen</p>	





Nehemiah and the Big Rebuild (Part One)

Every time you hear the word '**build**' or '**rebuild**', 'build' using your fists (like in the Wise & Foolish Man song) - or use the Bob the Builder® refrain 'Can we fix it?!', whichever you think your school community would prefer - or just read the story! You choose.....

Nehemiah was not a **build-er**: he was the cup-bearer to the King of Babylon. It was a very important job in the royal household.

Most of God's people were once again far, far away from home, living in exile in Babylon. They had never forgotten about Israel, the land that they called 'home' but had begun to **build** new lives for themselves in Babylon, not ever imagining that they would return.

One day, Nehemiah had a visitor from his homeland, a long-lost brother, who told him stories of Jerusalem that filled Nehemiah's eyes with tears.

'The walls of our great city, Jerusalem, are crumbling, it's gates have been burned to the ground and all the **build-ings** lie in ruins.' Nehemiah's brother said.

Nehemiah's heart was as broken as the walls, but he did the very best thing that he could do - he wept....and he prayed.... and he poured out his heart to God who **built** the world, and asked him to once again help His people.

Next day, Nehemiah took wine to the king, who noticed his tear-stained face and sad eyes and asked him what was wrong.

'I want to go home' Nehemiah replied 'and **rebuild** Jerusalem, which lies in ruins. If you are willing, O King, please let me go. I will also need wood to **build** with, so please send this too.' Then Nehemiah took the long journey home to Jerusalem, surrounded by the King's soldiers to keep him safe. That night, he went out to the walls to see what needed to be done - and to plan the great **rebuild**. He knew that God, the great Master-**builder** would be with him and help him to know what to do. Everyone who was left in Jerusalem helped to **build** the gates and the walls, to keep the people safe. It was an enormous job!

But Nehemiah knew that he wasn't just **building** the city, he was **building** a community again, so when he saw that some of the people were hungry, he fed them: when people were being unfair, he challenged them and reminded them of what's important to God, who **built** the world.

Now they were ready for some of the people to return from Babylon, to help **rebuild** the rest of the city: houses, shops, businesses, farms - and to **rebuild** the great Temple. They brought with them everything they could to help with the work and **rebuild** their communities: gold, silver, cattle and **building** materials.

The **rebuilding** of Jerusalem continued for seven months until people had homes to live in and families were settled. But God, the master-**builder**, had more work to do. He knew that his people needed more than buildings and homes - they needed to remember who they were.....to **rebuild** their hearts. *And you'll hear how next time!*

I wonder....?

...why Nehemiah was so sad when he heard the news from his brother?....

...how Nehemiah felt to be given the job of re-building Jerusalem?...

....or how it felt to return home?....

....I wonder what the most difficult part of the re-building was?....

....and how you might re-build a community?....or someone's *heart*?!....

....I wonder how this story might help us today?....

